



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE **CHURCHYARD COMMITTEE** HELD AT ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH ON MONDAY 13th OCTOBER AT 12.00PM

PRESENT: David Anderson Julie Boyd
Kevin Cunnane Mary Evans
Mathew Martin Wendy Sadler

Also in Attendance: Faye LeBon, Clerk to Aylsham Town Council and Andy Bell, Aylsham Town Council Groundsman.

As apologies been received from Kay Montandon, it was **agreed** that Mary Evans should Chair the meeting.

1. To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Kay Montandon.

2. To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Request for Dispensation

None raised.

3. To Agree the Minutes of the Meeting of 1st September 2025

The minutes from the previous meeting held on the 1st September 2025 had been circulated. These were **agreed** by the committee as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting, not forming part of the agenda

Julie queried ideas for waste bins as this needs to be taken to PCC for a faculty application. Andy will send this to Julie.

Julie queried whether the resurfacing of the roadway could be considered as part of the budget discussions. The Clerk advised that it was not believed that a full resurface was required, but a re-shingle could be costed.

5. To Adjourn the Meeting to Allow Members of the Public and Councillors with Prejudicial Interests to Speak

No matters raised.

6. To Receive Update on the Church Wall

a) To Receive Report from Onsite Meeting on 26th August 2025

There had yet to be a report sent from the Structural Engineer who attended site on 26th August. The Clerk will continue to chase for this information.

7. To Receive Update to Improve Drainage at School House Lane Entrance.

The Clerk reported that the Maintenance Manager had approached two contractors about these works but neither had responded with availability. The Clerk and Maintenance Manager will follow this up as a matter of urgency as funds had been received to complete these works. It was noted that it would be useful to complete the works over the half term period, as this area is often used as a thoroughfare to access the school.

8. Ground Maintenance

a) To Receive Update on Completion of Memorial Garden Project

Aylsham in Bloom had completed a significant amount of clearance works over the weekend, with Andy taking away the green waste. Wendy distributed a diagram of with the proposed place for the paving slabs on which the bench would be installed. It was proposed to use shingle in a demarcated area to prevent the eventual degradation of bark. Edging would be installed to prevent the slippage of the shingle.

Colours of shingle/slate were discussed, with Julie's preference not to have white. It was **agreed** to budget for a mixture of greys with darker colour paving slabs.

Wendy will send Julie the updated design, along with the slate and paving colours.

Andy will check the dimensions of the paving slabs in relation to the size of the seating. Julie will need all this detail to enable a faculty to be submitted.

The Clerk will progress with the plaques.

b) To Receive Update on the Maintenance of the Repton Grave

The effort of a local volunteer was noted to remove the diseased box hedging. Andy presented two options for replacement, both of which were more resilient than box. These were:

Japanese Holly at £2.71 each.

Euonymus Green Spire at £2.80 each.

It was **agreed** to proceed with the Japanese Holly as this is a closer match to the box.

Julie presented information on the Repton Grave from the Norfolk Gardens Trust.

This group would like to be involved in this work and *may* be able to give a contribution. Andy will contact the Norfolk Gardens Trust.

It was **agreed** to add the cost of compost to the project cost.

9. To Receive Update on Night Silencer for the Church Clock

It was reported that the clock is no longer chiming on the quarter hour. The Clerk will raise this with the maintenance manager.

10. To Receive Update on Repairs / Replacement Fencing at the Paupers' Graveyard

Wendy reported that there continues to be a problem with dogs being exercised in this area, with dog toys being left along with dog waste. It was noted that the fence and gates were installed by local developers and therefore had no history to them.

It was agreed to a trial removal of the gate to make the area more open and discourage disrespectful behaviour in a graveyard.

11. Budget

a) To Consider Items for the 2026/2027 Budget

Shingling of roadway

Completion of Memorial Garden Project

Bins near the lychgate

b) To Consider any Projects for the 5 Year Aylsham Master Plan

Lychgate – does this require maintenance or any more substantial works?

12. To Note Items for Information or for Inclusion on a Future Agenda

- To carry forwards items from this meeting.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Monday 24th November at midday, at St Michael's Church.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 12.45pm.



Our ref: SJA\BBR\23588~01h

08 November 2025

Faye LeBon
Aylsham Town Council
Town Hall, Market Place
Aylsham
Norwich NR11 6EL

By email only: TownClerk@aylsham-tc.gov.uk

Dear Faye,

RE: ST MICHAELS CHURCH, AYLSHAM - BOUNDARY WALL

I was pleased to meet your and others on 26 August 2025, and to carry out an inspection of the damaged south boundary wall at the above church. In particular, I considered the condition of the west section of the wall that is currently propped into the churchyard and enclosed by Heras fencing.

The wall is constructed of soft red bricks and lime mortar. The bricks are typically of 50mm gauge, but larger bricks of 65mm gauge have been used for the coping. Many of the bricks are broken and there are large patches of cement mortar pointing and parging of the deeply eroded brick faces. The wall has thickened piers and panels of brickwork above a wider plinth.

The coping is brick comprising a soldier course and over-sail course, and the wall is typically leaning at the west end by up to 75mm to the north into the churchyard. The thickness of the wall is 220mm to the panels, and the piers thicken the wall by quarter of a brick to each face and are one and a half bricks wide. The bays are typically 2.7m long, except the one to the west, which is 3.2m long and the last 1.5m of the west end of the wall has collapsed and the adjacent corner pier is badly damaged by tree roots (since cut down) and movement.

The condition of the wall is poor, it has been damaged principally by vegetation roots and water ingress. It has also been subject to an extent to unsuitable past repairs using cement mortar.

The lean of the wall in combination with the poor condition of the coping and the bricks generally, does make it vulnerable to further collapse. For this reason, work of improvement or repair is certainly required to the wall before the props and the fence cordon can be removed; left as it is, a greater length will likely collapse.

The ground level presently on the south side of the wall is about 225mm lower than that on the north side (churchyard).

During my inspection, I was able to gain an understanding of the general condition of the four westernmost panels of the wall and set out two options for their stabilisation. These are as below:

Option 1 – Minimum works primarily undertaken from churchyard side

The work would be:

- To strengthen 4No. existing brick piers by encasing them on the churchyard side by an additional skin of brickwork, built off a new footing to act as a brick buttress. This would wrap by half a brick width the sides of each pier, and be at the base projecting a minimum of one and a half bricks forwards; this would make it one and three-quarter bricks deep and two and a half bricks wide in total from the face of the recessed panels of the wall. The footing would be 600mm x 600mm x 750mm deep concrete. The temporary propping would need to be improved and added to before the ground is dug for the foundation pads.
- To rebuild the west corner of the wall, including at least half of the damaged panel and the west corner pier entirely, building off an existing footing, or at the far west end a new concrete pad footing to the pier, if the wall base is found to be irreparably damaged.

RE: ST MICHAELS CHURCH, AYLSHAM - BOUNDARY WALL

- The new buttresses would need to be built of an appropriate soft red brick and hydraulic lime mortar, Grade 3.5 and mixed at a ratio of 1:2.5 with sharp sand.
- Open joints to the coping should be cleaned out and pointed with the same mortar mix to a minimum depth of 30mm from each face.

Proceeding with the above Option 1, may give a life of say, 15-20 years to the wall section, but would not deal robustly with the condition issues.

Option 2 – Repair works undertaken from churchyard and neighbouring side

The work would be:

- To dismantle the top of the wall over the length of 4No. panels and 4No. piers and rebuild it closer to plumb off the retained existing and cleaned wall base from above plinth offset level. This is an approximate height of up to 1.4m measured from the top and applies over a length 12.5m. Carry out localised repairs to the plinth brickwork.
- The new wall top would be built of an appropriate soft red brick and hydraulic lime mortar, Grade 2.0 to the main body of the wall and Grade 3.5 to the coping, and mixed at a ratio of 1:2½ with sharp sand. It is unlikely that many of the bricks will be suitable for salvage and reuse as many have perished, and it should be assumed that new bricks of a matching types will be required, laid to a matching bond, and mortar joints finished flush to match.

Proceeding with the above Option 2, may give a life of say 50 years plus to the wall section.

In terms of the long term improvement of the wall and the durability of the repairs, I would advise that Option 2 is the better option, but obviously this will require more extensive access to the wall from the neighbouring property and a greater extent of works and greater cost.

If agreement can be reached in the first instance on the Option that is to be a way forward, we can provide a fee proposal to provide further details in a drawing and specification. This can be used to present the details in respect to Consents (Conservation Officer, DAC and any Party Wall) and to a contractor to price and work to. We would include for site inspections during the works to discuss any details and to confirm at the end, that the work are complete as intended.

It is highly advisable that the works are carried out by a Contractor that has experience of conservation works, or a Contractor with whom it would be possible to agree the nature of the conservation repairs and the materials and discuss the specialist approach necessary.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

For THE MORTON PARTNERSHIP LTD



STUART ARMITAGE C.Eng MICE

Churchyard Committee Meeting – 24th November

Item 8 – Grounds Maintenance

Item a) To Receive Update on Completion of Memorial Garden Project

Costings for churchyard remembrance garden

Item	Cost	Picture
Everedge flexible steel garden edging in CorTen finish (2no. bags at £36.90 ex VAT)	£73.80	
Black basalt decorative aggregate from MKM North Walsham (2no. bags at £131.53 each + VAT)	£263.06	
600mm x 600mm dark grey peak riven utility paving slabs from Clarkes of Walsham (1no pack at £9.21 + VAT)	£9.21	
Glasdon Phoenix seat with armrests with tamper resistant paving slab fixing kit	£685.88	
ScrewFix Apollo heavy duty weed control fabric	£11.65	
2no. Plaques (Budget Price)	£200.00	
TOTAL	£1,243.60	

Members will have to consider what budget this is to come out of. The Churchyard budget for 2025/2026 is as follows:

Budget Line	Budget	Actual to date	Remaining
War Memorial	£100	0	£100
Wall and Footpath Repairs	£4,000	0	£4,000
Clock	£300	£280	£20
Lychgate	£100	0	£100
Repairs and Maintenance	0	£14.52	0
Grass Cutting & Grounds*	£1,015	£676.67	£338.33

*This is payment for hire of machinery which will continue throughout the year.

The only budget line in the revenue account is to take the funds from the church wall budget

With regards to the earmarked reserves, the Town Council has the following options:

Churchyard balance is £55,505

Open spaces balance is £70,400

Transfer from either reserve would require full council approval.

b) To Receive Update on Maintenance of the Repton Grave

The replacement for the box hedging has now been planted.

Item 9 -To Receive Update on the Repair of the Church Clock

All repairs have now been completed to the church clock. It should now be chiming correctly at the appropriate time.

Item 10 - To Receive Update on the Paupers' Graveyard

The gate has been removed to prevent the area being used to exercise dogs, however this has made no impact on the level of dog waste being found.

New sign designs from Broadland District Council have been issued, so a sign can be made up for the area.

A report has been made to Broadland District Council's street cleaning team to ask for assistance in enforcing their public spaces protection order in relation to dog fouling.

Should a larger project to replace the wooden fencing with open fencing make the area more attractive and increase natural supervision? A quote for £3750 has been received to produced ornate gates. Should more open fencing complement this?

Item 11 - Budget

a) To Consider Churchyard Budget for 2026/2027

A suggested budget is:

Budget Line	25/26 Budget	Actual to date	Proposed 26/27 Budget
War Memorial	£100	0	£250
Wall and Footpath Repairs	£4,000	0	£5,000
Clock	£300	£280	£600
Lychgate	£100	0	£500
Repairs and Maintenance	0	£14.52	£250
Grass Cutting & Grounds	£1,015	£676.67	£1056
TOTAL	£5,515.00	£971.19	£7,656.00

War Memorial

£100 seems very low for any potential repair. The suggested increase to this is £250.

Wall and Footpath repairs

The £4,000 allocated for this year is likely to be expended on the following:

£650 existing commitment for initial church wall report

£3,000 for engagement of a professional to draw up the plans and specification ready for the church wall work to go out to tender

A budget of £5,000 for 2026/2027 would cover:

£3,500 in further professional fees

£1,500 for approx. 20t of pea shingle, delivered to over the area below:



Church Clock

The callout charge for the horologist is £200, therefore a budget of £600 would support two minor callouts in the year.

Lychgate

A moderate amount of £500 would help to do basic repairs, with the Lychgate being added to the five year plan.

Repairs and Maintenance

A moderate amount should be placed in the budget for general repairs and maintenance.

Grass cutting and grounds

This is a standard amount to cover the hire of machinery and fuel for the same, divided amongst areas of the town. The churchyard is allocated 6% of this total cost. An increase of 4% has been allocated to last years budget.