

# THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M10/2025

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN MERTON VILLAGE HALL  
AT 7.30PM ON 13 OCTOBER 2025

PRESENT: D. Marshall (Chairman) DM  
Martin Smith, David Richardson, L. Wainwright and R. Gurprashad. (Councillors) MS/DR/LW/RG

IN ATTENDANCE: Clerk: Tracey Charlesworth TC  
W. Meads (Village Hall Booking Clerk) WM  
C. Newton  
1 Member of the Public.  
P. Murphy (Film Club)  
District Cllr. G. Coton

1. APOLOGIES:

**RESOLVED:**

- To accept apologies from Cllr. P. Stubbs and County Cllr. L. Gordon.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST: To receive declarations of interest from councillors in relation to matters on the agenda and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct: None received.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: The following matters were raised:

1. Traffic Calming: The Pneumatic Speed strips; quote to be considered as part of the agenda. Awaiting approval from O.C.C.; proposed siting to be just before Forge Close, the position can be changed.
2. Footpath Stile at the end of the Village: As there is no obstruction to the footpath, County Council has closed the case.
3. Footpath to Fencott: It was noted that the stile has been replaced but is too high. Both matters to be raised again with County Council.

4. VILLAGE HALL BOOKINGS CLERK AND CLEANER:

1. Clerk to add self employment insurance quote to next agenda and;
2. Provision of a generic Email address.

5. MINUTES:

1. To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8 September 2025 at 7.30pm previously circulated and taken as read:

**RESOLVED:**

- That the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8 September 2025 at 7.30pm were accepted and approved and signed by the Chairman Cllr. Duncan Marshall.

6. REPORTS:

- a. Chairman's Report: Matters on the agenda.
- b. Clerk's Report: Matters on the agenda.

7. VACANCIES/CO-OPTION:

1. Consider any applications: None.

8. COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLOR(S): To receive reports: District Cllr. G. Coton was welcomed and reported as follows:-

1. Cherwell Parish Liaison Meeting scheduled for 12 November 2025 online.
2. Cherwell have approved the proposed Bicester Market Square development.
3. Puy Du Fou application has been submitted.
4. Flooding Workshop at Castle Quay.
5. Cherwell are planning several seminars over the next few years.

***The Chairman thanked District Cllr. G. Coton for attending; left at 8:47pm.***

9. PARISH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE:

1. Civility & Respect Pledge:

- a. Pledge Update:

**RESOLVED:**

- To accept and approve the updated version of the Pledge; signed by the Chairman Cllr. D. Marshall.
- b. Registration: To be completed.

2. Website:

- a. Accessibility: WCAG 2.2 AA compliance: Accessibility Statement followed up with Verve Creative Solutions.

3. Risk Assessment: Review of Village Hall Risk Assessment and update with regards to Fire Safety in Village Halls: Consider the updated Community First Oxfordshire Information sheet 37 and any action: Following meeting, documents to be updated and circulated for consideration: In progress; clearer guidance to be provided for hirers of the hall.

4. Asset Register: Seven Cricket Bat Willows have been felled and paid for; asset register to reflect this and the remaining 41 trees; replanting to take place before Christmas.

5. Communication Strategy: To consider/approve draft:

**RESOLVED:**

- To approve and accept the draft Communication Strategy as a working document.
- a. Questionnaire:

**RESOLVED:**

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- To approve the questionnaire; a two week deadline, in time for the next meeting, to be provided.
  - GDPR: No personal details to be taken at this stage.
6. Freedom of Information: Review of ICO model.
- RESOLVED:**
- To approve the ICO model, details and costs to be completed.
7. Community Emergency Plan: Annual Review: To be reviewed for consideration at the next meeting.
10. C.D.C. - Report of Parish Remuneration Panel 2025/2026: To consider the report at a future meeting and decide whether the PC wishes to use these recommendations, amend these recommendations to form a Members' Allowance Scheme, or alternatively, decide not to adopt a Members' Allowance Scheme:
- RESOLVED:**
- Not to adopt a Members' Allowance Scheme.
11. ASSET MANAGEMENT:
1. Recreational Field/Play Area/Allotments:
- a. Play Area:
- i. Replacement of Safety Caps: Order for more caps placed as previously agreed.
  - b. – Playsafety Ltd: RoSPA Play Safety Inspection Report: No actions from the report noted.
2. Recreational Area:
- a. Bookings Update:
- i. To confirm with Uggy's Pizza attendance on the 19<sup>th</sup> as they have not attended the last two dates.
  - ii. Camping and Caravanners: Booked Friday 24-Sunday 26 October and Friday 5-Sunday 7 December.
  - iii. Launton Youth FC: Have booked to play Sunday matches, they can advise of two dates in advance. They have paid £120.00 for four games in advance (including access to the toilets) and a refundable deposit of £50.00, to be ring-fenced.
  - iv. Communication: The Parish Council have asked to be advised of any future bookings.
  - v. Clerk to ask website provider if the PC can have a linked calendar through the website/email addresses.
- b. Damage to Field: To investigate the cost of bollards.
- c. Goal Posts: C/fwd.
3. Village Hall:
- a. Village Hall Bookings: Nothing to report.
- b. Village Hall Hire Agreement: To be updated inline with Fire Safety requirement: See 9.3.
4. Grass and Hedge Cutting Merton Woodland: Review of contractual agreement: Following a site meeting with the contractor a quote for works has been received, the Parish Council funds cannot meet the high quote.
- RESOLVED:**
- To approve a spend of £600.00 from the Woodland Fund and £400.00 from the sale of the Cricket Bat Willows for the Woodland Working Group to apply to the Vale Countryside Volunteers to carry out some of the work required.
12. COMMUNICATIONS:
1. Merton PC Facebook Page: Contact administration to see if Parish Council information can be published at the top of the Village Facebook page: To follow up with Facebook administration regarding shared information with the village Facebook page.
- a. To consider matters for publication: The following approved for publication:-
- i. Cherwell Bulletin: Matters published.
13. COMMUNITY:
1. Planning Applications: To consider all recent applications received from Cherwell District Council detailed below and any other planning applications submitted and published on the CDC planning portal between the agenda being published and the meeting:
- a. **Application No: 25/02188/F**  
Applicant's Name: Miss Samantha Bryce  
Proposal: Proposed single and double storey rear extension.  
Location: Winford, Main Road, Merton, Bicester, OX25 2NF  
Parish(es): Merton  
Comments by 23 September 2025.  
Deadline passed, no comments or objections recorded.
- b. **Application No: 25/02398/F**  
Applicant's Name: Mir Bashir  
Proposal: Loft conversion with new dormer.  
Location: 3 Gulley Row, Merton, OX25 2UH  
Parish(es): Merton  
Comments by 17 October 2025.
- RESOLVED:**
- That the Parish Council made no comments or objections.
- c. **Application No: 25/02277/F**  
Applicant's Name: Mr and Mrs O'Neill  
Proposal: Demolition of existing storage barn and erection of two dwelling houses with associated works  
Location: Merton Stud, Merton, Bicester, OX25 2NF  
Parish(es): Merton  
Comment by 29 October 2025
- RESOLVED:**
- That the Parish Council would make the following objections:  
Merton is a Category 2 village (reference policy number) as defined in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan. Within such villages new residential development is restricted to conversions and infilling.

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Infill: Previous applications refused as did not meet criteria (reference reasons); Parish Council supports reasons for refusal, the linear nature of the village should be maintained, where possible, in order that a precedent is not set putting this at risk in the future.

Merton as a Category 2 village does not have the Infrastructure 'services or facilities' to support the development (reference policy number).

Access: The proposed access, a single track, currently serves three dwellings and busy dog care/training business, the proposal would lead to an unacceptable level of increased traffic along the track. The visibility on existing the track onto Merton Road is already limited especially on bin day.

2. Decision Notices: To consider all recent notices received from Cherwell District Council detailed below and any other planning notices submitted and published on the CDC planning portal between the agenda being published and the meeting: The following noted:-
    - a. **Application No: 25/01825/PIP**  
Proposal: Permission in Principle for 2 No self and custom built dwellings,  
Location: Arrochar House, Merton, Bicester, OX25 2NF  
Parish(es) Merton  
Decision: Permission in Principle for the development described in the above-mentioned application and the accompanying plans and drawings.  
Date of Decision: 17 July 2025.
  3. Withdrawal Notices:
    - a. **Application No: 25/01713/F**  
Applicant's Name: Louise Hunter  
Location: 4 College Cottages Street Through Merton Merton Bicester OX25 2NH  
Proposal: First floor extension to existing garage and conversion into an annexe  
Parish(es): Merton  
Cherwell District Council, as Local Planning Authority, hereby confirms that the above-mentioned application has been withdrawn by the applicant.
  4. Planning Matters: None noted.
  5. Traffic Calming:
    - a. VAS Equipment: See 3.1.
    - b. 40mph buffer zone: Request submitted to County Council.
  6. Merton Wood Management:
    - a. Options for management: No update.
    - b. Schedule of Works: See 11.4.
    - c. Cricket Bat Willows: Work completed.
  7. Footpath Stile at the end of the village: See 3.3.
  8. School Bus Service: The application to have the bus stop in the village has been successful.
  9. Dog Bin Emptying: Carried out fortnightly.
14. FINANCE:
1. Quotes:
    - a. Seating (Recreational Area): To compare cost of materials to make a bench with the cost of purchasing new: A test bench is being made.
    - b. Playdale Playgrounds Ltd – Playdale Quote 105428 for Merton Parish Council – Safety Caps and washers - £163.20: Order placed as approved at last meeting.
    - c. MetroCount UK Ltd – Quotation – Pneumatic Strips: Noted that the PC was in receipt of one quote for the sale of the equipment and one for the hire.
- RESOLVED:**
- To approve the quote for £1,591.80 incl. VAT. From MetroCount UK Ltd; as they are the only manufacturer that sells the equipment.
  - d. Merton Woodland – Hedge Cutting etc.
- RESOLVED:**
- That the Parish Council was not in the position to approve the quote for £14,472.00.
2. Receipts: To record and approve any receipts received listed on receipts and payments schedule: The following receipts recorded as received:-
    - a. Village Hall/Recreational: To confirm income from Village Hall Bookings: Income £170.00 cash to be banked.
    - b. C.D.C. - Remittance Advice from Cherwell District Council – Ref: 30049375 - Precept Final payment 2025/26 - £10,750.00.
    - c. C.D.C. - Remittance Advice from Cherwell District Council – Ref: 30049836 - £63.25 – Adopt a Site Agreement – January-March 2025.
  3. Accounts Paid Prior to the Meeting: The following payments were verified:-
    - a. Salary September 2025 - £316.80 Gross: To be verified: Power to spend under LGA1972 s112 (1)(2) = Including salary increase backdated to April 2025 – September 2025 = £51.60 .
    - b. HMRC – Payment September 2025.
    - c. Unity Trust Bank Plc – Statement No: 050 Bank Charges 1.8.2025-31.8.2025 - £6.00 – 30.9.2025
    - d. Playdale Playgrounds Ltd – . Playdale Order Confirmation 0000056522 - For you to review – Inv. No: 0000062340 - £163.20.
    - e. Castle Water Ltd – Inv. No: 10007684544 - £39.17 – Period 31.7.2025-31.8.2025.
  4. Accounts for Payment:

**RESOLVED:**

    - To approve the following for payment; to be set up with Unity Trust online banking:-
    - a. Salary October 2025 - £ 273.80 Gross: To be approved for payment at the end of October: Power to spend under LGA1972 s112 (1)(2).
    - b. Expenses:
      - i. Expenses September 2025 - £1.60 – Stationery £22.99 – Postage £4.99 - plus Home Working Allowance

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£26.00: Power to spend under LG (Financial Provisions) Act 1963 s5

Total Exp £55.58.

- c. Unity Trust – St. No: 051– Bank Charges 1.9.2025-30.9.2025 - £6.00 – 30.10.2025
- d. W. Meads - Inv. No: 027 - £57.63 (Incl. £6.63 Mats) – 1.9.2025 – 30.9.2025
- e. M.R. & J.S. Cross – Inv. No's: 375 - £198.00 (Grass cutting Merton Woodland 29.9.2025) – Inv. No: 376 - £600.00 (Grass cutting recreational ground 11.9.2025 – 29.9.2025 – Total £798.00
- f. MetroCount UK - Invoice INV11166 - £1,591.80.
- g. Blackthorn Parish Council - SLCC – Contribution to annual membership costs paid in full by BPC - £150.00 – Contribution £75.00.
- h. Age UK Oxfordshire - £320.00 – Film Club Licence.
- i. C.D.C. - Inv. No: 20027694 - £226.51 - Half Yearly Charge for Emptying Dog Bins. £226.51 Cost includes 10% Admin Fee. 3 Dog Bins.
- j. Castle Water Ltd – Inv. No: 10007984932 - £68.79 (Incl. Of previous invoice £39.17 already set up for payment) – Period 1.9.2025 – 30.9.2025 - £29.62 outstanding.
5. Funding/Grants: To consider/approve applications:
  - a. O.C.C. - County Council – Laura Gordon – Councillor Priority Fund: To contact Councillor L. Gordon to see if it would be possible to claim for bollards.
  - b. C.F.O. - Energy Audits (free) and Information on the 'Green Fund' match funding to support your low carbon projects from the Low Carbon Hub: The Parish Council is not eligible.
6. Training: Consider/approve any training opportunities offered by OALC, NALC and SLCC: No interest expressed.
7. Film Club/Age UK Performance Rights: Age UK have confirmed the conditions under which the Parish Council would purchase the Licence, payment approved 14.4-h; a copy of the Licence to be requested.
8. Good Energy: Electricity prices are increasing from 1<sup>st</sup> November: Review tariff.
9. Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation:
  - a. Budget Comparison: 1.4.2025 – 30.9.2026 up to 13.10.2025. Presented prior to the meeting, accepted and approved, noted that there were no further anomalies.
  - b. Bank Reconciliation presented prior to the meeting, accepted and approved.
    - i. 1.7.2025 – 30.9.2025 (Unity Trust St. No: 052– 30.9.2025):

Balance B/fwd:	£38,568.24
Add Receipts:	£18,495.50
Less Payments:	£ 10,021.28
Total C/fwd:	£47,042.46
    - ii. 1.10.2025 – 31.12.2025 (Unity Trust St. No: 052 30.9.2025):

Balance B/fwd:	£47,042.46
Add Receipts:	£ 0.00
Less Payments:	£ 1,357.91
Total C/fwd:	£45,684.55
10. Financial Controls Checks: Financial Controls Check presented and signed by Financial Controller; RFO signed, Minute reference to be completed.
11. Banking:
  - a. Hinckley & Rugby Building Society – Savings Solutions Tailored for Town and Parish Councils: Information to be reviewed i.e., accessibility.
  - b. Unity Trust Bank Ltd: Update on new signatories: New signatories should have access in five days time.
12. Payroll: HMRC:
  - a. PAYE: Submissions update: Up to date.
  - b. HMRC – DM PAYE – Outstanding costs £181.83: Query update: No response to date.
13. Audit Year Ending 31 March 2025:
  - a. External Audit: Oxon SA/Moore UK - Signed External Auditor Report and Certificate 2024/25: To consider and approve any action: C/fwd to next meeting.
  - b. Completion of Audit: Publication: Published as required.
14. Budget 2026/27: To commence process: Draft based on current costs to be drawn up.
  - a. Village Notice Board: To be considered as part of the budget.
  - b. To consider the proposal to create a category for future spending:
    - i. External paving/refurbishment of rear store room.
    - ii. Village Hall Car Park: Consider proposal to purchase matting to extend parking area.
    - iii. Bollards if unable to get funding.
15. ADOPT A SITE AGREEMENT 2025/26:
  - a. To approve the Agreement 2025/26.

**RESOLVED:**

  - To accept and approve the Adopt a Site Agreement 2025/26 signed by the Chairman Cllr. D. Marshall; checks to be carried out by Chairman Cllr. D. Marshall.
  - b. To note the new Legislation: Noted.
16. EMPLOYMENT:
  1. Clerk's Contract and Job Description: Review comments to be forwarded to Chairman.
    - a. Health & Safety: Consider lawful requirement: C/fwd.
17. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS/TRAINING: To confirm or approve attendance at meetings or training provided by NALC, SLCC, C.D.C. and OALC:
  1. **C.D.C.** - C.D.C. - Parish Liaison Flooding Workshop - Council Chamber Castle Quay - 6.30pm on Thursday 16 October in the Council Chamber at Castle Quay: Attendance Cllr. M. Smith.
  2. **EWR** Co Oxford to Bletchley Enhanced Local Representatives Group (LRG) meeting – to be held virtually on Thursday 2nd October between 06:00pm – 07:30pm: No attendance.

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3. **O.C.C.** - Highways Depot Open Day - 27 September 2025 - The timed slots are being planned to start at 9.30am and 11.30am: No attendance.
  4. **C.D.C.** - Thank You for Joining Us at the Bicester Together Networking Event! - The Healthy Bicester Annual Stakeholder Event will be held on Wednesday 11th March 2026, from 9:45 AM to 1:45 PM, including lunch: Cllr. R. Gurprashad to attend if available.
  5. **C.F.O** - Free online training for community halls from Community First Oxfordshire week beginning 20th October - Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 7pm until 9pm we have Damian Deer from ARC Thermal Solutions giving a presentation about thermal heating in community buildings - online training from experts at Community First Oxfordshire on Fundraising and Bid Writing on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 7pm until 9pm: No attendance.
18. GENERAL
1. Correspondence: Comments to be considered and any matters for the next agenda not already considered as part of this agenda:
    - a. MPC352(35) **O.C.C.** - TTRO (T16646) Temporary Emergency Footpath Closure - Merton, Footpath 295/5/10: Facebook.
    - b. MPC352(65) **O.C.C.** - Bicester Movement and Place Plan - Presentation Documents.
    - c. MPC352(70) **C.D.C.** - Information on behalf of Returning Officer regarding Parish election recharges in 2026/2027 – Election Schedule – Charges.
    - d. MPC352 (75) **C.D.C.** - Cherwell Parish Bulletin\_29 September 2025 – Cherwell Parish Liaison meeting 12 November 2025.
    - e. MPC353(01) **C.D.C.** - Independent Remuneration Panel 2025 - information gathering – Survey Link - respond by the end of the day on Friday 31 October 2025.
    - f. MPC353(04) **O.C.C.** - Bicester and Mid-Cherwell Movement and Place (MAP) Plan Engagement briefing - We are suggesting two timeslots to see which one would be more convenient for you.- 10:30 am on 13<sup>th</sup> October (Monday) - 5:30 pm on 16<sup>th</sup> October (Thursday).
  19. Matters for Further Information or Discussion:
    1. Matters for Further Information:
      - a. None.
    2. Matters for Further Discussion:
      - a. None.
  20. NEXT MEETING: To confirm:
    1. Merton Parish Council Meeting to be held on 10 November 2025 at 7.30pm in Merton Village Hall.
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There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:30pm.

**Draft Minutes subject to confirmation:**

**Approved and Signed by the Presiding Chairman:** Cllr *D. Marshall*.

**Date:** 10 November 2025

**Minute Ref:** M11/2025-6.1