THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M7/2026

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN MERTON VILLAGE HALL AT 7:30PM ON 13 JULY 2026

PRESENT: D. Marshall (Chair)
Martin Smith and L. Wainwright. (Councillors)

IN ATTENDANCE: Clerk: Tracey Charlesworth
Village Hall Bookings Clerk/Cleaner.
4 Parishioners.
County Cllr. L. Gordon (Arrived 8:12pm)

1. APOLOGIES:
RESOLVED:
   - To accept apologies from Cllr. R. Gurprashad.
   - To accept apologies from District Cllr. Timothy Faltermeyer.

2. PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION MAY 2026:
   1. DPI Registration: To be completed by newly elected councillors and submitted to C.D.C. by Monday 8 June 2026: Final DPI Registration submitted.

3. CO-OPTION: To consider any applications: None received.

4. 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:
   - Chair Cllr. D. Marshall declared an interest in Planning Application No: 26/01529/F.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: The following matters were raised:
   - Asylum Seekers Accommodation: The Parish Council had not been represented at the meeting called by C. Miller MP as it had not received an invite and has since requested inclusion.
   - Traffic Calming: The Parish Council has been advised to hold of on fitting the second set of pneumatic strips as Thames Water have plans to dig up the road. It was noted that the strips either side of the village are for the proposed 40mph buffer zones by Oxfordshire County Council.
   - The Parish Council had not received notification of the hole being dug at the end of the village.

6. MINUTES:
   1. To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8 June 2026 at 7:30pm previously circulated and taken as read:

   RESOLVED:
   - That the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8 June 2026 at 7:30pm were accepted and approved and signed by the Chair Cllr. Duncan Marshall with the addition of 3.1: Co-Option: None.

7. REPORTS:
   a. Chair's Report: Matters on the agenda.
   b. Clerk's Report: Matters on the agenda.
      i. Laptop antivirus has been renewed.

8. COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLOR(S):
   1. County Councillor's written reports was taken as read and noted.
      a. Botley Road is expected to re-open early September this will the change to Traffic Filters; home owners to receive leaflets.
   2. District Councillor: Cllr. T. Faltermeyer reported that he had been working on the proposed Asylum Seekers Accommodation.

9. PARISH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE:
   1. Risk Assessment: Rolling review:
      a. Village Hall Risk Assessment: To consider report from Risk Assessor: Provisionally arranged for Saturday subject to village hall bookings.

2. Asset Register: Review addition of new Cricket Bat Willows and Pneumatic Strips: Updates approved; further amendment; to note the three old dog bins destroyed.
3. Insurance Policy: To note the addition of 1 x RoadPod VT Plus inc RC/Field Kit & Cradle (pneumatic speed Strips) and Community Notice Board at no extra cost; to check the removal of the three old dog bins.
4. Pension Regulator: Clerk to respond to letter.
5. GDPR Documents: To consider/approve review of recommended documents by Internal Auditor for adoption.
   a. Privacy Notice for Staff and Councillors:

RESOLVED:

- To adopt the Model Privacy Notice for Staff and Councillors.

   b. Subject Access Request (SAR) Procedure:

RESOLVED:

- To adopt the Subject Access Request (SAR) Procedure.

   c. Data Breach Policy:

RESOLVED:

- To adopt the Data Breach Policy.

   d. Data Roadmap: In hand.
6. **Internal Audit 2026/2027:** Consider/approve Letter of Engagement:

RESOLVED:

- To approve the Letter of Engagement and the re-appointment of T. Goss as an Independent Internal Auditor.

10. ASSET MANAGEMENT:
    1. Recreational Field/Play Area/Allotments:
       a. Recreational Area:
          i. Bookings Update: No food vans currently booked.
          ii. Goal Posts: Launton FC have finished their season so will look to fit over the summer.
          iii. RoSPA/Playsafety Inspection – To consider report upon receipt: Noted that they had not yet attended.
          iv. Fire Assembly sign in the park:To confirm fitting: Complete.
          v. Active Places Data - Sport England Active Places - 6001250 - MERTON VILLAGE PLAYING FIELDS: To provide information: Chair to review.
       b. Village Hall:
          i. Village Hall Bookings:
             - The next booking is for the 1 August 2026.
          ii. Kitchen Sink: Leak repair: Requires urgent repair.
          iii. Windows/fascias and soffits: Consider professional cleaning:

RESOLVED:

- That the Parish Council did not require a professional cleaning service as a volunteer had agreed to clean the windows.

          iv. Disabled Toilet: Replacement syphon: Requires urgent repair.
          v. Rear Door Lock: Report of not locking properly: This would be reviewed as part of the Risk Assessment on Saturday.
          vi. PAT Test: Clerk to make arrangements.
       c. Merton Woodland:
          i. CPRE - Best Green Space Project category of the Campaign to Protect Rural England Centenary National Awards: Nomination: Noted that Cllr. L. Wainwright has nominated the Woodland Working Group.

11. COMMUNICATIONS:
    1. Merton PC Facebook Page:
       a. To consider matters for publication: The following approved for publication:-
          i. Cherwell/Oxfordshire Bulletins: Matters published.
          ii. To advertise the Parish Council vacancies.
          iii. Road closure.
          iv. Skills request.

12. 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: 26/01529/F**

Applicant's Name: Mr and Mrs O'Neill
Proposal: Conversion of barn to form two dwellings - Location: Merton Stud, Merton, Oxfordshire, OX25 2NF
Parish(es): Merton
Comments by 22 July 2026
Noted that as Chair Cllr. D. Marshall had declared an interest the Parish Council was no longer quorate to make a decision.

b. **Application No.: 26/01616/F**

Applicant's Name: Mr Frank Cassidy
Proposal: Change of Use from commercial car storage to private car storage
Location: Boxengasse, Langford Lane, Merton, Oxfordshire, OX25 2NS
Parish(es): Merton

RESOLVED:

- That the Parish Council made no observations or comments.

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. None noted.
3. Withdrawal Notices:
   a. None noted.
4. Planning Matters:
   a. O.C.C. - Important consultation on a local Oxfordshire policy for community benefit contributions and community shared ownership: Consultation closed.
   b. C.D.C. - Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan- Regulation 18 Decision Notice: Noted.
   c. Meeting with Puy du Fou: Clerk to extend invite to the next Parish Council meeting in September unless they have planned public engagement and are holding a general meeting that a member of the Parish Council could attend.
5. Traffic Calming:
   a. VAS Equipment: The Parish Council has been advised to hold of on fitting the second set of pneumatic strips as Thames Water have plans to dig up the road
   b. 40mph buffer zone: No update.
6. Footpaths:
   a. Footpath to Fencott: Still closed.
7. Film Club: No update.
8. Telephone Kiosk: To consider advice with regards to permission to re-site nearer to the bus stop: Having been advised that the Telephone Kiosk is no longer available the Clerk was tasked with removing from the agenda.
9. O.C.C. FixMyStreet Super User – Would the parish council be interested in having a councillor or local resident volunteer as a FixMyStreet Super User? No update.
10. Neighbourhood Safety: To be followed up with the parishioner that requested that this be considered by the Parish Council as not in attendance.
11. Spruce Up Your Signs: Information to be forwarded to Cllr. L. Wainwright.
12. 'Jazz' in the Church: To be followed up with the Church once confirmation has been received that the venue is suitable.

13. FINANCE:
    1. Quotes:
       a. Drainage Survey: To consider quote(s) following report that the drains are blocked: The Parish Council is in receipt of one quote for consideration:

RESOLVED:

- To approve the quote from OPC Drain Services for £350.00 plus VAT.

       b. Village Hall Patio Area: To consider quotes: To review as part of the budget process in September.
       c. Church Clock Service: To consider/approve: Clerk to clarify with the Church if the service has already been carried out.
    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 Clerk: £75.00 cash

received and verified; to be banked.

i. Hall Hire #76 – 2 June 2026 £25.00 - (£50 deposit cash held)
ii. Hall Hire #77 (Buckhamshire Caravan & Motorhome Club - £75.00.
iii. Recreation Hire #78 (Buckhamshire Caravan & Motorhome Club - £456.00
iv. Hall Hire #79 - £25.00 Cash to be banked.

b. Allotment Rent 2026/27 – Plots 9 & 10 - £29.00.
c. Allotment Rent 2026/27 – Plots 5 & 6 - £27.00.

3. Accounts Paid Prior to the Meeting: The following payments were verified:-
   a. Salary June 2026 - £ 273.80 Gross: Power to spend under LGA1972 s112 (1)(2): Verified.
   b. Unity Trust Bank Plc – St. No: 060 – Charges £7.00 – 1.5.2026-30.5.2026 – Payment to be debited from account 30.6.2025.
   c. Castle Water Ltd – Inv. No: 10010370885 - £52.86 – Period 1.5.2026-31.5.2026
4. Accounts for Payment:

RESOLVED:

   a. To approve the following for payment; to be set up with Unity Trust online banking:-
   b. Salary July 2026 - £ 273.80 Gross: To be approved for payment at the end of July: Power to spend under LGA1972 s112 (1)(2).
   c. Expenses:
      i. Expenses June 2026 - £1.60 - plus Home Working Allowance £26.00: Power to spend under LG (Financial Provisions) Act 1963 s5

      Total Exp £27.60
   d. C. Newton – Village Hall Cleaner – Inv. No: 06 - £32.25 (Incl. £2.25 mats) – Period 1-30 June 2026.
   e. M.R. & J.S. Cross – Inv. No's: 420 - £624.00 (Grass cutting recreational area 3/16 June 2026 – 421 - £410.40 (Grass cutting Merton Woodland 3/16 June 2026) – Total £1,034.40
   f. Castle Water Ltd – Inv. No: 10010691079 – Period 1 June 2026 – 30 June 2026 - £47.86 – o/s from previous month £52.86.
5. Funding/Grants: To consider/approve applications:
   a. O.C.C. - County Council – Laura Gordon – Councillor Priority Fund: It was noted that if the Parish Council wished to change the use of the money that was applied for then it would need to return any funds and reapply.
   b. O.C.C. - Oxfordshire County Council community transport grants 2026-27: APPLICATIONS INVITED: To consider application: Not applicable.
6. Request for Funding:
   a. MPCC – St Swithun's Church - Contribution towards graveyard: To consider and approve contribution 2025/26 – 2026/27:

RESOLVED:

- To approve the contribution towards the upkeep of the graveyard of £150.00 budgeted for 2025/26 and £180.00 budgeted for 2026/27.

7. Training: Consider/approve any training opportunities offered by OALC, NALC and SLCC:
   a. CFO - Halls training events on July 2nd and 16th and links to book: Noted.
8. Good Energy: Electricity prices are increasing from 1st November: Review tariff:
   a. Clear Solutions – Transfer from Good Energy to Yu Energy – Request for Bank Details: Consider/approve.

RESOLVED:

- To approve that the Clerk/RFO was to provide the bank details and make arrangements for a direct debit to be set up with Unity Trust Bank requiring the approval of two bank signatories.

9. Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation:
   a. Budget Comparison: 1.5.2026 – 31.3.2027 up to 30.6.2026: Presented prior to the meeting, accepted and approved, noted that there were no anomalies.
   b. Bank Reconciliation presented prior to the meeting, accepted and approved.
      i. 1.4.2026 – 30.6.2027 (Unity Trust St. No: 061 30.6.2026):

Balance B/fwd:	£39,872.88
Add Receipts:	£12,885.00
Less Payments:	£ 8,112.02
Total C/fwd:	£44,645.86

10. Financial Controls Checks: Financial Controls Check presented and signed by Financial Controller; RFO signed, Minute reference to be completed.
11. Banking:
    a. Review Bank Signatories: Update on removal of signatories: Completed.
12. Payroll: HMRC:

a. PAYE:
   i. Submissions update: Complete.

13. Funds/Reserves: Review: Details to be considered as part of the budgeting process in September.
14. Account Year Ending 31 March 2026:
   i. Exercise of Public Rights: To note publication.
   ii. To note required documents sent to the External Auditor by 30 June 2026.
   iii. Publication: To note documents published as required by the Audit and Transparency Codes.
   iv. External Auditor: Request for further information: Clerk to submit information as requested.
   v.

It was noted that for future reference that the Parish Council should, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, make a Resolution, proposed and seconded with a majority vote before excluding the public and press from the meeting for the minutes numbered 14.1-a-d on the grounds that it could involve the likely disclosure of private and confidential information which was not in the public domain.

14. EMPLOYMENT: No discussions; all matters carried forward to the next meeting.
   1. Clerk's Contract and Job Description: Review update:
      a. Health & Safety: Consider lawful requirement: C/fwd.
      b. Annual Appraisal: Recommended by Internal Auditor: To be considered.
      c. HMRC - Employer Bulletin: important information for employers: To note circulated.
      d. HMRC - Tax Update 2026: simplification, modernisation and fairness: To note.

15. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS/TRAINING: To confirm or approve attendance at meetings or training provided by NALC, SLCC, C.D.C. and OALC:
   1. OALC - OALC AGM 25 June 2026: No attendance noted.

16. GENERAL
   1. Correspondence: Comments to be considered and any matters for the next agenda not already considered as part of this agenda:
      a. MPC361(28): BBOWT Community Network newsletter sign-up: Chair to review.
      b. MPC361(42): OCC - Winter Preparedness 26/27: Salt bags: C/fwd.
      c. MPC361(53): O.C.C. - General review of speed limits on Oxfordshire's rural A and B class road network - Stakeholder consultation - Cherwell district: Circulated/
      d. MPC362(01) OALC June Newsletter for Member Councils – Would your Parish Council be interested in a payroll service? - Adoption of a a suitable complaints policy: C/fwd.

17. Matters for Further Information or Discussion:
   1. Matters for Further Information:
      a. C.D.C. Liaison planned following the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) result.
   2. Matters for Further Discussion: None noted.

18. NEXT MEETING: To confirm:
   1. Parish Council meeting to be held on 14 September 2026 at 7:30pm in Merton Village Hall.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:58pm.

Draft Minutes subject to confirmation:

Minute Ref: *M8/2026 – 8.1*

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

Date: *14 September 2026.*