THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M5/2026

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN MERTON VILLAGE HALL AT 8PM (Started later than advertised 8:27pm) ON 11 MAY 2026

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Clerk: Tracey Charlesworth
Village Hall Bookings Clerk/Cleaner.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR: To sign 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office': Cllr. L. Wainwright proposed, seconded by Cllr. R. Gurprashad that Cllr. D. Marshall be elected Chair.
RESOLVED:
   - To approve the election of Cllr. D. Marshall as Chair. The 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office' was signed as Chair and witnessed by the Clerk.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR: Chair Cllr. D. Marshall proposed, seconded by Cllr. R. Gurprashad that Cllr. L. Wainwright be elected Vice Chair.
RESOLVED:
   - To approve the election of Cllr. L. Wainwright as Vice Chair.

3. APOLOGIES:
RESOLVED:
   - To accept apologies from County Cllr. L. Gordon.

4. PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION MAY 2026: To note the result following a Non-contested Election, newly elected Councillors D. Marshall, L. Wainwright, M. Smith and R. Gurprashad.
   1. Term of Office Ends 11 May 2026 for existing Councillors; new Term of Office starts on 11 May 2026 for newly elected councillors.
   2. Acceptance of Office' signed by newly elected councillors witnessed by an Officer: 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office' signed by newly elected councillors witnessed by the Clerk.
   3. DPI Registration: To be completed by newly elected councillors and submitted to C.D.C. by Monday 8 June 2026: Completed DPI Registrations to be submitted to C.D.C.
   4. Candidate Spending Form must be completed and submitted to C.D.C. by Monday 4 June 2026.
   5. Co-Option: Three vacancies can be filled by co-option after the 11 May 2026.

5. 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.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None present.

6. MINUTES:
   1. To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13 April 2026 at 7.30pm previously circulated and taken as read:
RESOLVED:
      - That the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13 April 2026 at 7.30pm were accepted and approved and signed by the Chair Cllr. Duncan Marshall.

7. REPORTS:
   a. Chair's Report: Matters on the agenda.
   b. Clerk's Report:
      i. O.C.C. Spruce up Your Signs: The equipment is available to the parish council upon confirmation of information required: Awaiting confirmation from Zurich that volunteers to carry out the sign cleaning are covered by the Parish Council insurance policy. Model risk assessment provided.
      ii. Website: Clerk has requested that the website provider updates the contact details for the Clerk to link to the new email address.
      iii. District Council Elections: Cllr. Timothy Faltermeyer (Liberal Democrat) has taken Cllr. G. Coton's seat (she did not stand).

8. COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLOR(S): County Councillor's written Annual report was taken as read and noted.

9. PARISH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE:
    1. Risk Assessment: Rolling review: Ongoing.
        a. Spring Clean/Volunteers Risk Assessment: To approve:

    RESOLVED:
    - To accept that guidance was in place for the volunteers and a Risk Assessment completed.

    2. Pension Regulator: On-line details completed. Letter to Clerk offering the ability to opt in or out to be sent.

10. ASSET MANAGEMENT:
    1. Recreational Field/Play Area/Allotments:
        a. Recreational Area:
            i. Bookings Update:
                - The campers/caravanners have extended their visit in June. The option of hiring bins through the C.D.C. business waste scheme to be explored with a view to amending the Village Hall hiring agreement to include an opt in/out cost of hiring.
                - Uggy's Pizza: Concerns raised regarding the volume of music played on a Sunday to be addressed.

            ii. Goal Posts: C/fwd until the football season has finished and the weather improved. Noted that the old broken goal posts have now been removed and disposed of as they posed a 'Health & Safety' hazard.
            iii. Trees: Update on felling of diseased or damaged trees: Work completed.
                - To consider concerns raised regarding tree felling: The Clerk was tasked with responding, stating that the contractor had the relevant RAMS for the tree work and is aware of relevant guidance and required notifications. The Parish Council did not contact individual residents as the tree is on the other side of the field (approx. 40m) to the properties on Otmoor View and so the risk level was low.

        b. Village Hall:
            i. Appointment of Village Hall Cleaner and Bookings Clerk:
                - Contract: Filed.
            ii. Village Hall Bookings:
                - Bookings for a private Martial Arts session have been taken.
        c. Merton Woodland:
            i. Cricket Bat Willows:
                - Ownership and Proceeds Query: The Parish Council is continuing its research and will act upon any evidence.

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. Agenda link published.

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. None noted.
    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. Adderbury Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2042 – Regulation 14 Consultation: To consider: No

comments noted.

5. Traffic Calming:
   a. VAS Equipment: To approve siting of second set of Pneumatic Speed Strips: Volunteer Group to arrange a meeting to discuss.
   b. 40mph buffer zone: No update.
6. Footpaths:
   a. Footpath to Fencott: No update.
7. Film Club: No update.
8. Telephone Kiosk: To consider advice with regards to permission to re-site nearer to the bus stop; to be considered at the next meeting.
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? The Clerk had forwarded the information to the interested parishioner.
10. Bus Shelter Timetable: The new notice board to be utilised once purchased.
11. Defibrillator: To note replacement of adult/child Electrode pads. Mr P. Stubbs to continue monitoring as registered in his name.
12. Neighbourhood Safety: To be followed up with the parishioner that requested that this be considered by the Parish Council as not in attendance.

13. FINANCE:
    1. Quotes:
       a. Drainage Survey: Further quotes to be obtained.
       b. Tree Survey: Report: Approved at previous meeting.
       c. Risk Assessor: To consider approve quote for a professional Risk Assessor:

RESOLVED:

- To approve the quote from E. Byrne -£300 for a day to include travel costs to carry out a Village .Hall Risk Assessment.
- Cost to be covered by the 'Special Project Fund'.

       d. Fire Assembly Sign in the Park: Consider/approve estimate: Three online comparisons considered:

RESOLVED:

- To approve purchase of one A4 Fire Assembly Point sign in 2mm rigid plastic from SafetySigns4Less at a total cost of £11.91 (incl. VAT) plus delivery.

    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: Cash received was verified at £160.00 this was £10.00 more than noted on the accounts: To be double checked with Bookings Clerk prior to banking and verified at next meeting.
       b. the following paid by bank transfer/credit:-
          i. Hall Hire/Recreational Area - # - £60.00
          ii. # - £70.00
    3. Accounts Paid Prior to the Meeting: The following payments were verified:-
       a. Salary April 2026 - £282.40 Gross (Incl. Underpaid by £8.60) To be verified: Power to spend under LGA1972 s112 (1)(2).
       b. HMRC – Payment March 2026.
       c. Unity Trust Bank Plc – St. No: 058 – Charges £7.00 – 1.3.2026-31.3.2026 – Payment to be debited from account 31.3.2025.
    4. Accounts for Payment:

RESOLVED:

- To approve the following for payment; to be set up with Unity Trust online banking:-

       d. Salary - May 2026 - £ 273.80 Gross: To be approved for payment at the end of May: Power to spend under LGA1972 s112 (1)(2).
       e. Salary – Overtime 2025/2026: £1,403.23: Approved payment for the end of May inclusive of May Salary.
       f. Expenses:
          i. Expenses April 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: 03 - £30.00 – 1.3.2026-31.3.2026.– Inv. No: 04 -

£26.36 (Incl. £11.36 mats) – Period 1.4.2026-31.2026 – Total £56.36.

e. Morleys (Bicester) Ltd - £454.80
f. M.R. & J.S. Cross – Inv. No's: Inv. No's: 405 - £312.00 (Grass cutting Recreational area 22.4.2026) – 406 - £205.20 (Grass cutting Merton Woodland 28.4.2026) – Total £517.20.
g. Good Energy – Inv. No: KI-0CC2242E-0007 - £592.81 – Period 1.3.2026-31.3.2026 – 1.4.2026-30.4.2026.
h. WTG Consultants Ltd – Inv. No: TG/45/26 - £112.50 – Internal Audit 2025/26 – Final Invoice.

- CFO – Membership due for CFO's Halls Advice Service for the 2026/27 financial year - £50: To consider membership:

RESOLVED:

- Not to pay membership.

5. Funding/Grants: To consider/approve applications:
   a. O.C.C. - County Council – Laura Gordon – Councillor Priority Fund: Application form to be completed.
   b. O.C.C. - community Transport grants 2026-27: Applications invited: To consider application: To be reviewed for next meeting.
6. Training: Consider/approve any training opportunities offered by OALC, NALC and SLCC: None noted.
7. Good Energy: Electricity prices are increasing from 1st November: Review tariff:
   a. Clear Solutions – Your OALC partnership – National Council Energy Scheme: Consider/approve: Cllr. L. Wainwright to review for next meeting.
8. Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation:
   a. Budget Comparison: 1.4.2026 – 31.3.2027 up to 11.5.2026: Presented prior to the meeting, accepted and approved, noted that there were no anomalies as beginning of the year.
   b. Bank Reconciliation presented prior to the meeting, accepted and approved.
      i. 1.1.2026 – 31.3.2026 (Unity Trust St. No: 058 31.3.2026): IT Transfer of £13.00 balance of Petty Cash float paid into the Unity Trust Bank Account.

Balance B/fwd:	£42,220.44
Add Receipts:	£ 1,081.00
Less Payments:	£ 3,428.56
Total C/fwd:	£39,872.88

      ii. 1.1.2026 – 31.3.2027 (Unity Trust St. No: 059 30.4.2026): IT Transfer of £13.00 balance of Petty Cash float paid into the Unity Trust Bank Account.

Balance B/fwd:	£39,872.88
Add Receipts:	£11,630.00
Less Payments:	£ 3,239.60
Total C/fwd:	£48,263.28

9. Financial Controls Checks: Financial Controls Check presented and signed by Financial Controller; RFO signed, Minute reference to be completed.
10. Banking:
    a. Review Bank Signatories: To authorise existing/removal or addition of signatories:

RESOLVED:

- That Cllrs. D. Richardson and P. Stubbs be removed as signatories on the Unity Trust Bank Account as they are no longer Councillors.
- That Cllrs. D. Marshall, L. Wainwright and R. Gurprashad remain as signatories on the Unity Trust Bank Account.
- As Financial Controller Cllr. M. Smith only has access to the account but is not a signatory.

11. Payroll: HMRC:
    a. PAYE:
       i. Submissions update:
       ii. Final Submission: To note submission, provision of P60 and new year Tax Code set up.
    b. HMRC – DM PAYE – Outstanding costs £181.83: Query update:

RESOLVED:

- That as there had been no response to the query the Parish Council would have to write the dispute off. Clerk to remove from agenda.

12. Funds/Reserves: Review c/fwd to next meeting.
13. Account Year Ending 31 March 2026:
    a. Internal Audit: To consider interim report 2025/2026 and any action: Report circulated for review at next meeting.

i. Provision of further documentation: Clerk submitted.

b. Oxon SA/Moore Uk – To note official notification to submit your authority's return 2025/2026: Noted.

c. End of Year Accounts 2025/26: To be accepted and approved. Circulated for review and consideration at next meeting.

14. EMPLOYMENT:
    1. Clerk's Contract and Job Description: Review comments to be forwarded to Chairman.
        a. Health & Safety: Consider lawful requirement: C/fwd.
        b. Annual Appraisal: Recommended by Internal Auditor: To be considered.
    2. HMRC – Working arrangements, travel, cars and staff benefits: Circulated.

15. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS/TRAINING: To confirm or approve attendance at meetings or training provided by NALC, SLCC, C.D.C. and OALC:
    1. Breakthrough Communications – Data Protection Part 3: Clerk attended 27 April 2026.
    2. Scribe 'Unlock the Power of the Yellow Book' Clerk attended on 6 May 2026.

16. GENERAL
    1. Correspondence: Comments to be considered and any matters for the next agenda not already considered as part of this agenda:
        a. MPC358(17): O.C.C. - Spruce up your signs! - Would your Parish like to borrow our Road Sign Cleaning Kit? PC to borrow the road sign cleaning kit: See Clerk Report 7-b-i. PC to borrow kit dependent on Insurance and Risk Assessment.
        b. MPC358(36): O.C.C. - Review of Financially Supported Bus Services: The H5 service is financially supported for the current year; to monitor.
        c. MPC359(24): County Councillor - Islip Bridge update: Noted.
        d. MPC359(26): O.C.C. - Please display Notice and Plan - Merton Bridleway No. 4 (part) Modification Order: Published on website.

17. Matters for Further Information or Discussion:
    1. Matters for Further Information: None.
    2. Matters for Further Discussion:
        a. Spruce up your Signs: Insurance and Risk Assessment.
        b. Bulb/Seed Planting:
        c. Notice Board: Update.
        d. Village Hall Risk Assessment: Report.
        e. Asset Register: Review addition new Cricket Bat Willows
        f. GDPR Documents: Recommendations Internal Auditor.

18. NEXT MEETING: To confirm:
    1. Parish Council meeting to be held on 8 June 2026 at 7:30pm in Merton Village Hall.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:40pm.

Draft Minutes subject to confirmation:

Minute Ref: *M6/2026-6.1*

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

Date: *8 June 2026*