

Merton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 10th March 2025 at
7.30pm at the Clinton Hall.

Cllrs present: Neil Littleales (Chair) Gordon McLaughlan (Vice-Chair) Rob Nancekivel,
Steve Papworth, Giles Kops,

Also present: Kerry Littleales (Clerk) and District Cllr. Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin and several
members of the community.

Business Transacted

1.3.25 Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting and informed everyone that a recording was taking place to assist in the preparation of the minutes which would be deleted once they had been drafted.

2.3.25 Apologies for absence:

Cllr. Nigel Lang and County Cllr. Andrew Saywell had previously made their apologies with reasons to the Clerk – Cllr. Littleales proposed that they be accepted and seconded by Cllr. McLaughlan. Motioned carried RR2024/82.

3.3.25 Minutes of the last meeting

Cllr. Kops proposed that the minutes of the last meeting dated Monday 13th January 2025 be signed as a true record of the meeting. Cllr. Papworth seconded. Motion carried. RR2025/83

4.3.25 Declarations of interest

No declarations made.

5.3.25 Public speaking time

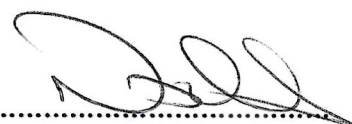
A resident highlighted that there was moss on the pavement outside of the school near to the bench which was becoming very slippery and dangerous. Also pointed out that some of the village signs were getting very dirty. Noted by councillors to explore who is responsible for the area's maintenance.

A resident explained that they were exhibiting flags, photographs, cap badges and all sorts of other memorabilia for VE day in the Clinton Hall on Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th with donations being split between the hall and SAFA. There will be teas and coffees/refreshments etc.

6.3.25 District and County Councillor Reports

- a) County councillor Andrew Saywell – apologies received prior to the meeting and a report forwarded to the Clerk which was forwarded to all councillors. Report attached.
- b) District Cllr. Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin was present and gave her report - a copy of which is attached.

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7.3.25 Current and New business

a) Transfer of title of playground was found to be a release of the tenancy between Torridge District Council and Merton Parish Council on behalf of the Clinton Hall. Cllrs read through the document drafted between Torridge District Councils legal team and solicitors engaged by the Clinton Hall and were happy with the document. The Parish Council are Trustees of the Clinton Hall and therefore need to sign on behalf of the Clinton Hall.

Cllr. Kops proposed that it be signed, seconded by Cllr. Nancekivell. Motion carried. RR2024/84

Councillors also read through a draft agreement submitted by Michelle Stacey – Chair of the Clinton Hall design to allow the Hall to rent the playground land with the Council equipment upon it, to the Council for a peppercorn rent and were happy with the contents. Cllrs. discussed various matters in relation to the maintenance of the area (Council to approach Dave who already maintains the hall area and for him to separately invoice the Council) the information sign on the gate etc., Cllr. Papworth proposed that this also be signed. Seconded by Cllr. Nancekivell. Motion carried. RR2024/85

b) Speed watch Cameras – the Clerk explained that enquiries with Mark James from Torridge District Council had thrown up some queries and Mark James needed to liaise with Devon County council to further this matter. Awaiting a response from him.

c) Approval to engage Penny Clapham as our internal Auditor for this year – Proposed Papworth and seconded by Cllr. Kops. Motion carried. RR2024/86

d) Bank Account – Currently only the Clerk has full access and has asked for other Cllrs. to also be able to access the accounts. Cllr Kops volunteered.

e) The Parish Council Annual meeting and election of officers. Date for this is fixed for Monday 12th May 2025 in The Clinton Hall.

f) Planning Consultation Taw and Torridge Coaches – 1/0691/2024/FUL

All councillors had had an opportunity to view the revised application. Cllr Papworth highlighted that it was difficult to see from the paperwork exactly what had changed, and that some information was missing.

Cllr. Littleales suggested that after the meeting the Clerk contact Planning and ascertain if the change is to the entrance and a reintroduction of the double door on the south side and the possibility of the hedge being removed. This had been a concern for Cllrs during the original application and Cllrs need to consider their response if this is the case.

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g) VE day arrangements.

The Clinton Hall are having an exhibition of memorabilia and flags and Cllr. Littleales proposed that the Council fund a T dance within the Hall alongside tea and cakes and children's games. Tony Hunt has offered his vintage vehicles as exhibits for the event. Cllr Littleales suggested that the TAP fund could be used to help with funding this and Cllr Cottle Hunkin also offered to assist with funding - something she would put in motion following the meeting. Cllrs. discussed how this could be advertised as a whole week of celebrations with the VE day T dance on the 5th and Tarka Treats doing a celebration on Thursday 8th and the Bells being rung and finishing with the exhibition on the 10th and 11th.

Cllr. Littleales suggested that the Tap fund be used to assist funding this event and Cllr. Kops asked that some of the funding could be used to pay for the Tarka treats event to be free to villagers.

Cllr. Littleales proposed the use of the TAP fund for VE day celebrations/ children's games and fete – seconded Cllr. Papworth. Motion carried RR2024/87.

Cllr. Papworth proposed some funding was set aside to pay for Tarka Treats on Thursday 8th March as a free VE day event for villagers. Seconded Cllr. Kops. Motion carried RR2024/88

h) Review of Kompan Playground report and action for recommendations.

Cllrs. happy with the inspection report, though some minor repairs are required. Cllr. Littleales proposed that TK play are approached to complete the repairs. Seconded Cllr. McLaughlan. Motion carried. RR2024/88

8.3.25 Financial matters and other (Clerk)

a) Invoices/payments checked against the Financial schedule as set out below and individually signed by Cllrs. McLaughlan and Kops.

Ref	Amount	Payee	Details	Power	Funding source
PM25/039	£20.00	K. Littleales	Poppy Appeal	LGA 1972 s.137	Poppy Appeal
PM25/047	£21.60	Clinton Hall	Hall Hire	LGA 1972 s.111	Admin
PM25/048	£325.00	Andy Winsbury	Oak Tree in Square	RTRA1984 s.57	Village maintenance
PM25/049	£36.00	K. Littleales	Training DALC	LGA 1972 s.111	Training
PM25/050	£473.16	Kompan	Inspections Feb and August	LG(MP)A 1976 s.19	Maintenance
PM25/51	£10.00	K. Littleales	Phone Sim	LGA 1972 s.112	Admin

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Payments for authorisation (retrospective or otherwise)

Ref	Amount	Payee	Details	Power	Funding source	
PM25/52	£52.00	K. Littleales	WFH allowance	LGA 1972 s.111/s.112	Staff Costs	

Receipts for information.

Ref	Amount	Payee	Details
PR25/006	£4.00	E. Mehrtens	Accidental payment for car parking – made as a donation- no refund.
PR25/006	£60.00	Lloyds Bank	Compensation

Bank reconciliation as of 03/03/2025: £35671.90.

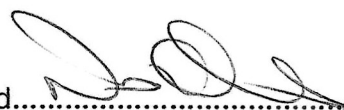
Monies held as reserves:

Amount	Details
£1500.00	Election cost
£8000.00	Village Improvements
£2305.62	Defibrillator Fund
£344.97	Defibrillator supplies
£636.00	Tap fund
£1167.88	Asset fund
£100.00	Hall Hire
£3250.00	Precept contingency
£2647.57	General Reserve
£9910.00	Play Equipment
£1972.55	Staff costs and training
£651.81	Admin
£2150.00	Legal
£34636.40	Total

Bank situation:

Bank total 03/03/25 = 35671.90

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Less EMR = 34636.40

Less payments estimate of Clerks salary/WFH = £2057.36

Total = -£ 1021.86

Cllr. Papworth highlighted that new Defib pads to function as backups and a new G3 battery for one of the units will be required shortly.

Cllr Kops concerned that we need to better identify the assets fund for replacement of them.

Cllr. Littleales informed meeting that Scribe will be starting for the next financial year and hopefully will assist with some of these issues.

b) Updating register of Interests

Cllrs had all been sent their forms and were in the process of filling them in and returning to the Clerk.

9.3.25 Reports and items for Future agendas

Cllr. Kops asked for an EMR review.

He also asked that the playground be cleaned.

Playground/s106 monies need to be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Cllr. Nancekivell – Lord Clinton room

10.3.25 Confirmation of the next meeting and Annual Meeting on Monday 12th May 2025 at 7.30pm followed by the annual meeting at 8pm.

11.3.25 Confidential matters (Part 11) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1(2)

Nothing for this.

There being no further business the chair closed the meeting at 9.30pm.

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