

Merton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Council and the Annual Council Meeting held on Monday 12th May 2025 7.30pm at The Clinton Hall.

The Chair informed those present that an audio recording was taking place to assist with the minutes and would be deleted once the minutes had been approved.

Annual Parish Meeting.

1. Welcome – there were several members of the public in attendance. Cllr. Littleales welcomed everyone and introduced the Cllrs. present and the clerk.

2. Chairmans report - attached

3. Reports from Parish Organisations – none submitted.

4. Floor open to any members of the public who wish to raise or discuss any matters.

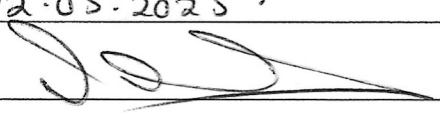
i) Tarka Treats thanked the Council for their donation which paid for the refreshments for VE Day and highlighted the wonderful VE display by Paul Jennings.

ii) A parishioner highlighted a car that had been abandoned since Covid and though SORN has become an eyesore. It is known that the owner is in America. It was discussed that it is not known if the parking space is private property or part of the highway. Cllr. Littleales agreed to make some enquiries and respond directly to the parishioner.

iii) Tarka View was raised as having some issues with concerns for the safety of young children playing in the street unsupervised and some other issues. Cllr. Dilley and Clerk Kerry Littleales agreed to contact the housing officer for Livewest and take the matter forward in an attempt to amicably resolved the concerns. North Devons Neighbour Dispute Resolution Information was also circulated. County Cllr. Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin offered to speak to the Highways Officer as she is meeting with him anyway.

iv) A sign telling traffic that vehicles are in the middle of the road coming around the corner and uphill was raised/asked for. Cllr. Cottle-Hunkin agreed to add this into the agenda for the meeting with the Highways Officer.

Minutes of meeting held on 12.05.2025.

Signed as a correct record 

Annual Council Meeting

All Councillors are hereby summoned to attend for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the business to be transacted as set out hereunder.

All members of the public are welcome to attend.

Business Transacted

Cllrs. present: Cllr. Littleales, Cllr. McLaughlan, Cllr. Nancekivell, Cllr. Kops, Cllr Dilley, Cllr. Papworth.

1.5.25: Election of Chair

The Chair and Vice chair stood down from their positions and handed the meeting over to the Clerk.

The Clerk asked for nominations/volunteer for the position of Chairman. Cllr. Littleales volunteered. Seconded Cllr. Papworth. Carried and resolved.

To include signing of declaration of acceptance of office form –read out and signed at the meeting.

2.5.25: Election of Vice-Chair

Cllr. Littleales asked for nominations/volunteer for the position of Vice Chair.

To include signing of declaration of acceptance of office form – Cllr. McLaughlan volunteered. Seconded Cllr. Nancekivell. Carried and resolved. Declaration read out and signed at the meeting.

3.2.25: New Co-opted Councillor signing of declaration of acceptance of office form.

Maria Dilley – read out the declaration of acceptance of office and signed at the meeting. Cllr. Dilley welcomed as our new Councillor.

4.5.25 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs. are invited to declare any interests they may have in items on this agenda, including the nature of the interest. Cllrs. are reminded of their responsibility to keep their Register of Interests updated.

Cllr. Papworth declared an interest in the discussions around the Churchyard Grant as he is their treasurer and so will take no part.

5.5.25: Apologies for absence

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Resolution to approve apologies (with reasons) made to the Clerk prior to the meeting.

No apologies required.

6.5.25 – To consider and approve minutes of meeting held on 15th April 2015

Approval proposed by Cllr. McLaughlan, Seconded Cllr. Kops. Cllr. Dilley abstained as not present. Carried and resolved.

7.5.25: Public speaking time

Members of the public are invited to speak on issues on this Agenda, or on matters over which the council has some control. The Public may not speak during other items of Parish Council business unless invited to do so.

Resident Connie Coleman raised an ongoing issue with the drain for rainwater from the Councils village square through their wall into a drain in their garden. This drain was recently blocked by crisp packets and caused some nasty back up of water and effluent.

8.5.25 Annual Review and approval of: (Clerk/Chair)

a) Annual subscription to NALC/DALC

Power to spend: LGA 1972s.143(1)(b) Budget = Prof. Fees/Subs

Subscription was £139.13. Proposed Cllr. Kops, Seconded Cllr. Papworth - Carried and resolved.

b) To review and approve the Council's Insurance.

Power to spend: LGA 1972 s.111 Budget: Admin/Insurance

2 quotes received and some questions raised by Cllrs.

Cllrs. agreed to go with Hiscox again and approved the three-year contract. Proposed Cllr. Littleales, seconded Cllr. Nancekivell. Carried and resolved.

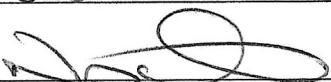
c) Cllrs roles and membership on external groups-

Churchyard Committee – Cllrs. Papworth and McLaughlan – to continue.

Liaison with Handyman – Cllr. Papworth and Clerk – to continue.

Snow warden – Cllr. McLaughlan (to check whether Bill Brown also wishes to continue with this role – during the meeting he was contacted, and it was confirmed he no longer wished to perform this role) Cllr. Nancekivell offered to step in and work with Cllr. McLaughlan.

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Asset Inspections – assets allocations confirmed with Cllrs. who will inspect them in time for the next meeting. See attached. Cllrs. to note disposal of outdated Lenovo laptop and the broken goal posts. (Prop Cllr. Littleales, Seconded Cllr. Kops carried and resolved.

d) Release of Grants (Clerk)

Merton Churchyard Committee - £300.00 Prop Cllr. Littleales, Seconded Cllr. Kops Carried and resolved.

North Devon Records Office £50.00 – Prop Cllr. Littleales, seconded Cllr, Kops, Carried and resolved.

Citizen's Advice £50.00 Cllr discussed a recent report from them regarding the number of enquiries from members of our parish. Cllr. Littleales proposed raising to £75. Cllr. Dilley seconded. Carried and resolved.

(Power to spend: LGA 1972 s.137 – Budget: Grants and donations)

e) Review of the following policies:

MPC01 – Standing Orders – Proposed Cllr. Papworth as fit for purpose. Seconded Cllr. Littleales. Carried and resolved.

MPC02 – Code of conduct – Cllr. Littleales proposed fit for purpose. Cllr. Nancekivell seconded. Carried and resolved.

MPC03 – Financial Regulations – Cllr. Littleales proposed fit for purpose. Seconded McLaughlan caried and resolved.

MPC04 – Scheme of Delegation. – Proposed fit for purpose Cllr. Nancekivell seconded Cllr. McLaughlan. Carried and resolved.

9.2.25 Current and New business

a) Drainage in the square – e mail from resident regarding further flooding. Some temporary remedial work to prevent the drain in the square gathering rubbish has been made and a grate needs to be permanently put in place. The issue of the broken manhole cover over the drain hole in the private garden was also discussed.

Cllr. Littleales proposed the purchase of the grate for the drainpipe in the square, seconded Cllr. Papworth - Carried and resolved.

Cllr. Littleales proposed that quotes are obtained for the manhole cover and to go from there with discussions with the householder.

b) Cllr. Papworth – wishes to flag that in previous meetings the council agreed to covering half the cost of a replacement lawn mower with the churchyard committee and the need to put aside finances. – Noted as around £1700.00

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- c) Michelle Stacey has a further document relating to the transfer of title of the Playground land for signing TR1. – Cllr. Littleales Signed.
- d) Approval of using Aqua busters for cleaning the playpark – at the cost of only travel and fuel expenses. Proposed Cllr. Littleales, seconded Cllr. Kops. Carried and resolved.
- e) Notification that the Landing lights are being inspected on the 14th of May. No time given and no need for anyone's attendance. Cllr. Papworth already informed.
- f) To consider approving the application by the Clerk for a Lloyds Bank debit card to be used for council purchases. Proposed Cllr. Papworth, seconded Cllr. Dilley – abstention Cllr. Kops and Cllr. Littleales. Remaining Cllrs. in favour. Carried and resolved.
- g) Update on the Lord Clinton sign/memorial at Clinton Hall – Cllr. Nancekivell and Cllr. McLaughlan to progress this now that we have agreement in principle with the Clinton Hall Committee.

10.5.25 Finance (Clerk) to present documents for this item at the meeting.

a) To approve the financial schedule (Reserves balance and Net position by cost centre) Attached. Proposed Cllr. McLaughlan and seconded Cllr. Papworth Carried and resolved.

b) To carry out banking checks (payments made against Bank statement) between 1st April 2025 and 12th May 2025 of both retrospective and pre-authorised payments. Carried out and signed by Cllrs. Kops and McLaughlan

Bank total as of 1 st April 2025	£35563.55
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c) Notification of holiday - 14th July 2025 – opportunity to discuss whether other evening dates are available for everyone. Noted and agreed to change the next meeting date to Tuesday 15th July 2025. Proposed Cllr. Nancekivell, seconded Cllr. Dilley. Carried and resolved.

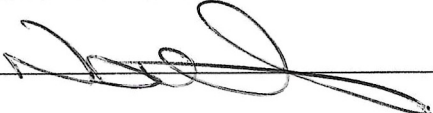
d) \$106 monies – are we going to apply for these monies and who is going to manage the process? Cllr. Dilley volunteered to take this on with support from the Clerk and Cllr. Littleales

e) Mandatory e mail and website with .gov.uk or org.uk addresses – Cllr. prefer .gov.uk – to investigate this matter and potential new hosting platform.

11.5.25 Cllr. reports and Items for future agendas

Councillors are requested to use this opportunity to report information and to raise items for future Agendas.

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Cllr. Cottle Hunkin – report attached.

Due to the length of this meeting the clerk has offset the current matters to the July meeting – EMR review, village speed signs.

12.5.25 Confirmation of the next Council meeting:

Tuesday 27th May 2025 at 7.30pm to deal with Annual Accounting matters.

Tuesday 15th July 2025 at 7.30 pm at The Clinton Hall Merton.

11.5.25: Confidential Item (Part II) Public Bodies (admission to Meetings Act 1960 s1(2))

There being no further business to discuss the Chair closed the meeting at 9.27 pm.



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