Merton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 15th July 2025 at 7.30pm at The Clinton Hall.

Cllrs. Present: Cllr. Littleales (Chair), Cllr. McLaughlan (V. Chair) Cllr. Papworth, Cllr. Nancekivell, Cllr. Kops, Cllr. Dilley, Cllr. Tagg.

County/District Cllr. Cottle-Hunkin, District Cllr. Wheatley.

Also present: Kerry Littleales (Clerk)

Business Transacted

Welcome:

Chair to open meeting and inform the meeting that a recording is taking place to assist in the preparation of minutes, the recording will be deleted once the minutes have been approved.

2. Apologies for absence:

No absences.

3. Minutes of the Last meeting – as available on website (Chair)

Councillors to consider the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 12th May 2025 and Monday 27th May 2025 – Proposed Cllr. McLaughlan, seconded Cllr. Nancekivell. Motion carried.

4. Welcome new Cllr. Ben Tagg

Declaration and signing of papers – completed and Cllr. Tagg welcomed as the newest member of the Council.

5. Declarations of Interest:

Cllrs. Papworth and McLaughlan declared an interest in the item re Churchyard request.

6. Public Speaking Time: None present.

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7. District/County Councillors

a) **County Cllr. Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin** – report attached. Updated that Police had been monitoring speeds through the village recently. There is sporadic monitoring by Community Speed Watch though their reports will trigger a police presence. The idea of a crossing over the A386 was discussed – Cllr. Cottle-Hunkin has a meeting with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer Mark James tomorrow. Cllr. Dilley is going to attend as well. Cllr. Cottle-Hunkin suggested that a petition might help to raise the profile of the need for a crossing with all the new children into the village.
Mark James has responded to the council with the information that the speed signs are owned by Devon Highways and that we are not on the list for repair or replacement this year – and will be considered in line with all other applications to be put on the list next year. Cllrs. asked if we could explore offering to pay for the new speed sign. Do we have School crossing signs into the village?

b) **District Cllrs. Chris Wheatley** – report attached. Slight amendment to report as has received email about meetings being held re Devolution and the way forward. Parish Council representatives attending. Update on the Globe – match funding obtained as long as the crowd funding reaches its limit. Torridge Estuary – draft stages – Jan 2026 should be able to update. No further comments re Cllr. Wheatley's report.

8. Current and New Business:

a) Asset Inspection – Councillors to report on assets of their responsibility for damage, repair, renewal, and condition. The Asset register to be updated accordingly – all Assets reviewed, and register updated as some assets no longer exist. All current assets were reported as in good order.

- Cllr. Nancekivell to arrange for the large white bags in the carpark to be lifted over the wall into the churchyard.
- Queries over the number of benches on the register over the actual benches the councils owned. Cllr Papworth highlighted that the only ones the council are responsible for are – opposite the

Malt Scoop, one at the top of Beaford Road, and outside the school – the 2 benches in the Square have been dismantled as no longer safe. Any other benches in the village have been placed there by persons unknown and no permission was sought. Cllr. Littleales suggested that we try to discover who placed/owned these other benches and then decide what to do with them and also if the Council want to replace The Square Benches.

- The notice board at the Malt Scoop needs to be removed and there was a query over the ownership (part?) of the Clinton Halls notice board.
- Has Jade now power washed the playground?

b) Review of current policies – all of which were sent to Cllrs. prior to the meeting

i)MPC03 – Financial Regulations – Cllr. Kops proposed acceptance of the new version as decided at the meeting – seconded Cllr. Papworth. Motion carried.

ii)MPC05 – Complaints and Grievance Procedure – no change to the policy. Proposed Cllr. Kops, seconded Cllr. Papworth. Motion carried.

iii)MPC06 - Data Retention Policy – no change to the policy. Proposed Cllr. Papworth, seconded Cllr. Kops. Motion carried.

iv) MPC07 – Freedom of Information Policy – a new version(2)of the policy (recommended by NALC) was adopted. Proposed Cllr. Papworth, seconded Cllr. Dilley. Motion carried.

v) MPC08 – Equality and Diversity Policy – a new version of the policy (recommended by NALC) was adopted. Proposed Cllr. Papworth, seconded Cllr. Tagg. Motion carried.

vi) Risk Management Policy – some minor changes regarding the Clerks salary payments being made through Torridge District Council, and the loss of the Malt Scoop notice board. Fire and water-resistant bag – Cllrs. agreed to purchase this bag. Proposed Cllr. Kops, seconded Cllr. Papworth. Motion carried.

c) Drainage in the Square – Cllr. Kops reported that the purchase of a grate is still ongoing due to some difficulties.

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d) Lord Clinton Memorial update – Cllr. Nancekivell reported that the Clinton family are very happy with the idea of the memorial, and they are arranging for a framed photo of Lord Clinton

e) S106 monies update on any progress – Cllr. Dilley has struggled to arrange a meeting with Adrian Avery. Cllr. Littleales to try and make contact. In the meantime, Cllr. Dilley has asked for some quotes.

f) To review quote from TK, Play for maintenance repairs to playground – Cllr. Papworth proposed acceptance of the quote and to have the playground repaired. Cllr. Tagg seconded. Clerk to decide where the monies come from. Motion carried.

g) Review of Church Grant - after discussions Cllrs. thought that 50% of the total costs was a fair outcome = £575.00. Proposed Cllr. Kops, seconded Cllr. Dilley. Cllrs. Papworth and McLaughlan abstained. Motion carried by remaining Cllrs. Cllrs. Papworth and McLaughlan to try to find out why the outside door/gate has to be removed and paid for? Budget for Square improvements.

h) Review of Football Goal post grant – no grant papers received.

i) Review letter from Southwest Ambulance charity asking for funds – Cllrs felt that the funding need further investigation as to how and where any monies would be used - pending.

j) To Note: Planning applications

1/1078/2024 FULL – conversion of barn into ancillary accommodation at Great Potheridge House – Granted. Noted by Cllrs.

1/0691/2024/Full Erection of storage building and workshop Taw and Torridge - granted. Noted by Cllrs.

k) Review of Reserves/EMR funds – Cllrs felt that there was insufficient time to deal with this matter and put it back to the next meeting.

Cllr. Littleales proposed a resolution to extend the meeting beyond the allocated time. Motion carried.

l) Poster for Sir Geoffrey Cox to be placed in Councils notice board – denied. Posters for upcoming surgery to be circulated.

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k) Cllr. Papworth notified meeting that Dartmoor Dog Agility group are using the hall and field over the Augst Bank Holiday and so the Air ambulance will be unable to land.

9.Financial Matters (Clerk):

a) To approve the Bank reconciliation (Reserves balance against Bank statement) –. considered and signed by Cllr. Kops and McLaughlan

b) To carry out banking checks (payments made against Bank statement) between 13thth May to date of both retrospective and pre-authorised payments. Banking checks reviewed and signed for by Cllr.Kops and Mclaughlan.

c) Quarterly Budget review – conducted and further forecasting required for the next meeting.

10. Cllr reports and Items for future agendas

a. Christmas Tree Festival – for next meeting

b. Cllr. McLaughlan – the need for accounts to be submitted for a Grant Application.

11. Meeting concluded at 9.50pm

Confirmation of next meeting date: Monday 8th September 2025 at 7.30pm at the Clinton Hall

Further meetings on 10th November 2025, 12th Jan 2026 and 11TH March 2026

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