

Merton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 10th November 2025 at The Clinton Hall.

Cllrs. Present: Cllr. Littleales (chair) Cllr. McLaughlan (vice chair) Cllr. Papworth, Cllr. Kops, Cllr. Nancekivell, Cllr Tagg.

Also present: C. Cllr Cheryl-Cottle Hunkin, Kerry Littleales - Clerk

Business Transacted

1. 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 the minutes had been drafted.

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr. Wheatley – committed elsewhere. Apologies accepted.

3. Minutes of the last meeting – available on the website (chair)

Cllr. Littleales proposed that the minutes of the last meeting dated 8th September 2025 be signed as a true and accurate record. Motion carried.

4. Declarations of Interests

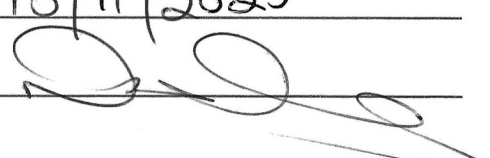
No declarations of interests made.

5. Public speaking time

No members of the public present.

6. County/District Councillors

Minutes of meeting held on 10/11/2025

Signed as a correct record 

a) D.Cllr. Wheatley provided a report for Council which was sent to Councillors prior to the meeting and had been read by them. No matters arose from this report though it was noted that there was an acknowledgement of thanks to Mr Keith Sheppard reference the recycling lorries.

b) C.Cllr. Cottle-Hunkin provided a report which she went through at the meeting. The Farmwise Event was very good. There is a consultation starting on the 24th of November for 12 weeks coming up on libraries – budget, open access, etc. Stagecoach are looking to make changes to Zones/ prices etc. from January 2026. The report also contains further information on the current stage of the Devolution process.

7. Current and New Business

a) White bags in the Square – have now been removed thanks to Cllr. Nancekivell.

b) Drainage in the Square and out of the Square into private drain.

Cllrs. discussed the email received from Mrs Connie Coleman and the blockage of the culvert caused by pine needles causing a large puddle to grow within the Square at the base of the church wall.

The drain/sump in Mrs. Coleman's property was discussed as was the idea of engaging legal advice which was not something the council wished to pursue. Cllr. Littleales proposed that a letter is sent to Mrs. Coleman informing her that the Council do not believe it is responsible for maintaining the drain or cover within her property boundaries. Motion carried with 1 abstention.

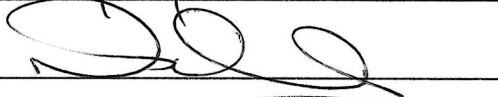
The puddle and block culvert was also discussed. Cllr. Tagg volunteered to keep it clear of debris until a more permanent solution can be found. Cllr. Littleales proposed that if Cllr. Tagg need a tool or implement to assist with the cleaning that funds should be made available. Seconded Cllr. McLaughlan. Motion carried.

Cllr. Littleales proposed that the council approach Groundwork companies for quotes and ways of lifting the corner of the square for better drainage. Seconded Cllr. Kops. Carried.

Minutes of meeting held on

10/11/2025

Signed as a correct record



d) s.106 monies – Cllr. Littleales updated that the monies (£22,700.00) are available to us before August 2027. Details of some styles of shelters were provided with estimates. Cllr. Littleales highlighted that any money we don't spend goes back into the TDC pot – discussed that there is a balance to spending slightly under so no cost to the Parish, or slightly over so the Parish uses all the monies and may be able to claim back the VAT. The playground committee also have some monies available which the council may be able to rely on. The issue of maintenance, repair and replacement was also discussed as monies that the council will have to find as the years go on. A meeting area for older children plus something else (a climbing frame?) was discussed. C.Cllr. Cottle-Hunkin offered that there is a grant available for up to £3,000 available from TDC upon application. Cllr. Littleales asked Cllrs. to take time prior to the next meeting to research what could possibly go into the playground area available and come back to the next meeting with ideas we can put forward to the Parish.

e) Christmas Tree Festival – the clerk gave a verbal estimate of the costs for this year - £80.00 for the trees, £70 (approx.) for scaffolding planks and extra monies to pay for 2 x sets of batteries for the lights. Cllr. Papworth proposed a release of Grant monies amounting to £200.00 Seconded by Cllr. Kops. Carried.

Cllrs. agreed to run the Festival on the same premise as last year and that donation monies go to The Friends of the Church.

f) Grass Cutting contract for next year – no indication of monies from TDC has yet been received. Cllrs discussed obtaining quotes for all the grass cutting and maintenance within the parish – clerk to send e mail asking for quotes to both current providers.

g) Secure emails for clerk and councillors – Clerk has already changed email to .com and Councillor's emails are already .com. The quote from Hugo Fox for the .gov.uk email and website was £500.00. Cllrs. Nancekivell and McLaughlan to sort out their access to their Cllrs. Emails rather than using personal ones. Clerk to send both Cllrs. their passwords again to set up the accounts again. Cllr. Tagg offered help with the Website if needed.

Minutes of meeting held on 10/11/2025

Signed as a correct record 

h) Auditor – matter moved to the next meeting as an auditor not yet secured.

8. Policy Updates

a) MPC013 - Internal Financial Control Policy - changes made to 3.g; 5 and 6. Proposed Cllr. McLaughlan, Seconded Cllr. Tagg. Motion carried.

b) MPC020 - Disciplinary Policy - No changes required. All councillors happy with Current policy.

c) MPC021 Training Policy - No changes required. All councillors happy with current policy

d) MPC011 - Press and Media Policy . No changes required. All councillors happy with current policy.

9. Financial Matters (Clerk)

a) Clerks Pay increase back dated from April 2025 – Agreed by Cllrs.

b) Bank Reconciliation – against statement – reviewed and signed by Cllr. Kops.

c) Banking checks were conducted by Cllr. Kops for payments made against the bank statement between 3rd September 2025 and 4th November 2025.

d) Budget review conducted

10. Future Agenda Items

a) Planters around the village – Cllr. Papworth

b) Speed signs – have they been renewed by county?

There being no further matters to discuss the Chair closed the meeting at

11. Confirmation of next meeting date

Monday 12th January 2026 at 7.30pm

Minutes of meeting held on 10/11/2026

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