

## **Merton Parish Council**

[www.merton.com](http://www.merton.com)

[clerk@mertondevon.com](mailto:clerk@mertondevon.com)

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026 at The Clinton Hall.

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

Also present: D. Cllr Chris Wheatley, 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**

Resolution to approve apologies (with reasons) made to the Clerk prior to the meeting. Cllr Nancekivell previously excused himself due to early harvest as has Cllr. Cottle Hunkin. Resolved to accept.

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

Councillors to consider the Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026. Proposal to accept by Cllr. Papworth, seconded Cllr. Kops. Carried.

#### **4. Declarations of Interest:**

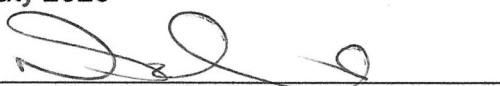
Cllrs to declare any interests they may have in items on this agenda, including the nature of the interest. Cllrs are reminded of their responsibility to keep their register of Interests updated. New registers circulated and signed by all councillors' present.

#### **5. Public Speaking Time:**

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

Minutes of meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026

Signed as a correct record



A concerned resident raised an issue with the speed many vehicles are travelling through the village. He lives near the road; the tractors and cars are exceeding the speed limit. He would like some extra signage in the centre of the village. Cllr. Littleales pointed out that the council had found Devon Highways unhelpful in this matter, refusing to allow us to pay for our own speed signs and not being available to discuss any other resolutions. Council to contact DCC to enquire as to what evidence we need to get something done. Resurrecting the Speed Watch programme was also considered a good idea as a way of gaining evidence of the true speed of vehicles in the village.

### **County Councillors**

a) County Cllr. Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin not present

b) District Cllrs. Chris Wheatley provided a written report. Wanted to highlight the following – AI data centre and battery storage – there is a petition for signing online. The company will not be putting forward their proposals until January next year.

Pothole handbook – one delivered to Parish council. Want to create a road warden scheme working with Highways with initial costs refundable to Parishes. Circulate digital copy to Cllrs.

### **7. Current and New Business:**

a. Asset Inspection updates from Councillors – most assets inspected and found in good order – a few still to do. For next meeting to finalise.

b. Drainage in the Square – this matter is still ongoing. A contractor is attending this week to give some further advice. Cllr. Littleales has contacted other contractors to also advise but none of the additional 3 have replied. Questioned when the Church wall is going to be rebuilt as this is something that should coincide with any building/ground works.

Need to look at who may be available to clean the square with a rotating brush. Cllr. Littleales to find a Gardening company to deal with this quarterly.

c. Cleaning of the Playpark - Aquabusters has now been sold by Jade and so she is not available to clean the park. The new owner has made contact and is preparing a quote. Cllrs. agreed we need to obtain 2 further

Minutes of meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026

Signed as a correct record



quotes for the cleaning. There are a lot of weeds in the park - contact Dave to see if this is something he can tackle.

**d. Playground Trampoline** – date been amended by Torridge District Council to Aug 2027 for spending the funds. £22,781.49 to spend. Cllr. Littleales provided Cllrs. with a comparison document of 4 companies asked to quote for the Trampoline. Cllrs read these quotes and asked about like for like comparisons and the various qualities of the different surfaces offered. They also compared the quality of the different trampolines on offer and their available 'bounce space' Cllrs. discussed that though not the cheapest of the quotes, TK Play seemed to provide not only the largest sized bounce space for the trampoline, but also the highest quality 'fall' surface. They were satisfied that the trampoline itself was of a high-quality modular rubber that is resistant to vandalism and the pit itself is fully covered by the mat meaning that there is no likelihood of falling through gaps or cutting of straps.

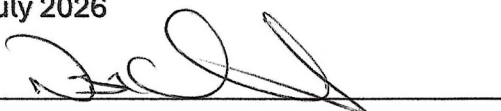
Cllr. Papworth proposed that TK Play be award the contract. Seconded by Cllr. Kops and all Cllrs. in agreement. Motion carried.

There was then further discussion that after the monies were allocated to the Trampoline project, there should be in excess of £2,000.00 remaining. Cllr. Littleales informed Cllrs. that he had been looking at several companies who provided seating in the form of picnic benches and normal benches made from recycled plastic bottles and that we should be able to purchase 2 or three benches/picnic benches/children's benches with the remaining monies. Cllrs. agreed that this was a good idea and raised the possibility of one bench having a cover for inclement weather. Cllr. Littleales to formalise 3 quotes so that Cllrs. can return to vote on the matter asap.

**e. Online Website** - The Clerk provided Cllrs with a comparison document of 3 website providers she had contacted, along with quotes for the work and comparisons on time to build, features of the new website etc. Cllrs were able to view examples of the different website formats. Cllr. Kops proposed that the contract be awarded to ParishCouncilsonline. Seconded Cllr. Littleales and carried. There was

Minutes of meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026

Signed as a correct record



one query – the offered domain name didn't have 'Devon' in it and Cllr. Papworth asked that this be explored as the process went through.

f. Savings Bank account – there was insufficient time and some information is still awaited for this matter and so it was put back to the next meeting.

g. Speed signs – a lot of this was covered in the discussion with the resident in the open part of the meeting. A report has gone to DCC about the faulty lower speed sign, and we await its repair.

h. Merton Wildlife Group- letter from Clinton Devon Estates Wildlife manager. For Cllrs. information only. The group was disbanded some years ago with any monies left in the coffers transferred to The Clinton Hall account and ringfenced.

## **8. Policy Updates**

**a. MPC05 Complaints and Grievances** – no changes to be made. Prop. Cllr. Kops and 2<sup>nd</sup> Cllr. Littleales. Carried.

**b. MPC06 Date Retention and Disposal** – no changes to be made. Prop. Cllr Papworth, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cllr. kops. Carried

**c. MPC07 Freedom of Information** -no changes to be made. Prop. Cllr. Kops, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cllr. Papworth. Carried

**d. MPC08 Equality and diversity** – no changes to be made. Prop. Cllr. Littleales, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cllr. McLaughlan Carried.

**e. MPC12 Risk Management** – the Clerk proposed a new policy and risk register. Cllrs took the time to read both documents and Cllr. Kops highlighted that with the new website happening soon, there should be an entry on the Risk Register relating to it. Clerk to write this into the register and re-present both documents at the next meeting.

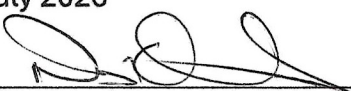
## **9. Financial Matters (Clerk):**

**a. To review Bank Reconciliation against statement** – documents reviewed and signed by Cllr. kops

**b. To conduct banking checks (payments made against bank statement) between 19th May 2026 and 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026** – reviewed and signed by Cllr. Kops

Minutes of meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026

Signed as a correct record \_\_\_\_\_



- c. **Budget review.** - reviewed by all Cllrs. Cllr. Littleales proposed Cllrs. accept and happy with progress of the Budget, Cllr. McLaughlan seconded. Carried.

#### **10. Cllr reports and Items for future agendas**

a. Cllr. Papworth has been contacted by a resident concerned about the overbearing hedges in Limers Lane. This matter has arisen before and Cllrs. believe that these hedges are the responsibility of The Clinton Devon Estate. Unfortunately, it was thought that the hedges would only be felled by the Estate and so this can't happen until after the bird nesting season and can only be hedge trimmed.

Cllr. Littleales offered to put out a post to residents advising them how to contact the relevant authority for such issues as we have no powers to remedy this.

b. The clerk informed Cllr. that she had raised the issue of the overgrown pavement from Torridge Gates towards the school with DCC highways. Again, this is a matter that residents can report for themselves as it is not the responsibility of the Parish Council. Cllr. Littleales reported that he had seen that some of the pavement has now been cleared. The council have not been contacted by DCC to say it has been done or why only partially?

c. The clerk had received leaflets from MP Geoffrey Cox advertising his surgery as Baxter Hall later this week. Leaflets put on notice boards and at the Clinton Hall.

d. The Clerk asked for consideration next meeting to attend an Agar seminar in Saltash in November.

There being no further matters to discuss the Chair closed the meeting at 9.00pm

#### **11. Confirmation of next meeting date:**

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September at 7.30pm The Clinton Hall.**

Minutes of meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026

Signed as a correct record

