

Minutes of Mersham Parish Council
Meeting held on Monday, 19th May 2025 in the Church room at St John the Baptist Church

Present:

Gavin Murphy (Chair)	Peter Hawkins
Gill McBarnet	Donna Pearson
Stewart Ross	Kenton Stewart
Melanie Wells	

In attendance: Cllr Bartlett and Tracey Block (Clerk).

To be actioned by:

Election of the Chairman and any Vice-Chairman for the Council year 2025-26	
Cllr Stewart proposed Cllr Murphy be elected as Chairman, Cllr Wells seconded this. All were in favour. Cllr Murphy took the Chair. Cllr Murphy proposed Cllr Wells be Vice-Chairman, Cllr Pearson seconded this. All were in favour.	
Completion of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form	
Cllr Murphy completed and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form as Chairman.	
To receive and approve apologies for absence	
There were no apologies for absence.	
To receive declarations of interest (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests). The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared.	
Cllr Wells noted a personal interest in the Inland Border facility as a family member works on the site and a personal interest in the Village Hall.	
To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 28th April 2025	
Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 28th April 2025 were approved as a true record and were signed accordingly.	
To discuss matters arising from previous minutes not covered by the agenda.	
There were no matters arising to discuss.	
To receive report from Borough Councillor	
<p>A detailed report had been circulated; a copy can be found on the website: http://www.mershampc.org.uk/community/mersham-parish-council-18392/borough-cllr-reports/</p> <p>The Stonestreet Solar application is being heard by the Planning Inspector who as agreed to hear from the Kent Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p>There is no news on the IBF planning application submission. Cllr Bartlett asked whether the new EU deal will result in the activities at the IBF being changed.</p> <p>The Local Plan draft is likely to be brought forward in July – Cllr Bartlett is meeting with ABC Officer on 21st May . One of the biggest issues is how much Finberry will expand. It could be considered unwise to give teh Church Commissioners approval when the Finberry build has been glacial at best, with current permission being given in 2003 and the build not anticipated to be completed until 2035.</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett was asked when the Community Centre at Finberry is likely to be built. ABC have asked for a redesign of the building to incorporate a ground source heat pump. It is not likely to come forward until 2027-28.</p> <p>After the new KKC election, the new Councillor will need to be asked about the Highways. The Joint Transportation Board should have a response following the hearing of the petition about Church Road. The Forstal bridge works were also still planned, the road closure is the main issue here.</p> <p>Operation BROCK is going to be in place for half-term.</p>	

Public Session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item	
There were no members of the public in attendance.	
To confirm eligibility to use the General Power of Competence	
The meeting was informed that with the Clerk holding a recognised professional qualification (Certificate in Local Council Administration) and the Council meeting the electoral mandate of having at least two-thirds of the council elected, the Parish Council is still eligible to use the General Power of Competence. Resolved – that having met the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and SI 965. The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012, the council adopts the General Power of Competence from 19th May 2025 until the next relevant Annual Meeting of the Council. The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous).	
To agree representatives on other Committees for 2025/26	
Village Hall Representative – Cllr Wells Caretaker Committee Representative - Cllr Murphy KALC Representative – Cllr Pearson Mersham Sports Club – Cllr Stewart	
Appointment and Scope of the Internal Auditor	
The meeting was circulated with the Clerk’s recommendations regarding the Internal Auditor for 2025-26. The Parish Council approved that Mrs Lister should be appointed as the Internal Auditor for 2025-26.	
To review the Terms of Reference for the Caretaker Committee	
The Parish Council reviewed and approved the Terms of Reference for the Caretaker Committee.	
To receive any update regarding the creation of a green buffer zone in High Field/IBF. To include planting delays to the green buffer zone near Highfield Lane.	
There was no update on this.	
To receive an update on Highways issues (to include the Highways Improvement Plan)	
The HIP will be discussed at the next meeting. BT trench repairs were noted for The Street.	
To receive an update on the Village Hall	
Cllr Wells had circulated the report. There is a water leak on the Parish Council’s land. The Parish Council agreed to pay for the repair up to the value of £5,000.	
Planning matters: to authorise a response to any application(s) and to note any recent planning decisions by Ashford Borough Council or any correspondence on planning matters	
The Parish Councillors had responded to the applications.	
To approve the Standing Orders, Asset Register and Risk Assessment and confirm arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.	
The Parish Council approved the Standing Orders, Asset Register and Risk Assessment and confirmed arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.	
Review of the Council’s subscriptions to other bodies ie KALC	
The Parish Council reviewed the Council’s subscriptions to other bodies ie KALC	
Financial matters: a) To approve the following financial documents: i. To receive the end of year accounts for 2024-25 The end of year accounts were received and approved by the Council. ii. To receive the report from the Internal Auditor The report from the Internal Auditor was received and approved. iii. To approve the Governance Statement 2024/25, section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2025 The Annual Governance Statement was approved and signed.	

- iv. **To consider and approve the Accounting Statements 2024/25, section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2025 and the supporting Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March 2025, the explanation of significant variance. To ensure that the Accounting Statements 2024/25 are signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting.**

The Accounting Statements 2024/25 were considered and approved. The Accounting Statement was signed and dated by Cllr Murphy.

- b) **To note the Parish Council's financial position for the beginning of the new Financial Year.**

The PC noted the £31,639.12 held in the bank account as at 31st March.

- c) **To authorise any payments:**

Litterpicker	£162.50
Flag	£127.20
Clerk	£336.99
HMRC	£79.60
Litterpicker	£162.50
Internal Audit	£60.00
Village Caretaker Account	£4675.00
KALC	£604.88
Arthur Gallagher Insurance	£653.19
HMRC	£79.80
Clerk	£336.79
M Wells	£20.00

Any Other Business

Congratulations go to Cllrs Hawkins and Stewart for a fantastic beacon event.

The beacon needs some repairs ahead of the next lighting.

Cllr Hawkins was thanked for cleaning the noticeboard.

Cllr Wells was thanked for organising the window cleaning of the old telephone kiosk.

Cllr Murphy explained that the flag pole needs a new pulley.

It was suggested that a flag pole could be erected on Oaklands.

There was a suggestion of a grant for a community orchard for the Cut and Cover. Cllr Murphy will chase the Head of Terms before this is taken forward.

Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

Monday 16th June 2025	Monday 21st July 2025
Monday 15th September 2025	Monday 20th October 2025
Monday 17th November 2025	Monday 19th January 2026
Monday 16th February 2026	Monday 16th March 2026
Monday 20th April 2026	Monday 18th May 2026