

Minutes of Mersham Parish Council
Meeting held on Monday 18th May 2026 in the Church Room at St John the Baptist Church.

Present: Melanie Wells (Chair) Peter Hawkins
Gill McBarnet Donna Pearson
Stewart Ross Kenton Stewart

In attendance: Cllr Bartlett, The local PC, 2 members of the public and Tracey Block (Clerk)

Election of the Chairman and any Vice-Chairman for the Council year 2026-27

Cllr Stewart proposed Cllr Wells be elected as Chairman, Cllr Pearson seconded this. All were in favour. Cllr Wells took the Chair.

Cllr Wells proposed Cllr Pearson be Vice-Chairman, Cllr McBarnet seconded this. All were in favour.

Completion of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form

Cllr Wells 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 20th April 2026

Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 20th April 2026 were approved as a true record and were signed accordingly.

To discuss matters arising from previous minutes that are not covered by the agenda

There were no matters arising to discuss.

To receive reports from the Borough Councillor

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/>

The Borough Council has accepted the reality that the Local Plan consultation will not be undertaken in time so will have to wait until the Government has address the new NPPF. The most likely outcome is that there will be some allocation for house building which completely missed the allocation in the last Local Plan, i.e. the smaller villages. Stodmarsh will remain an issue but when the matter is lifted in 2030, the reasonable sized developers are likely to come forward to build out houses from the existing allocation.

In 2030, the water companies go into a new cycle so Southern Water are likely to have to upgrade the water treatment plants. More development on Finberry is likely. The Church Commissioners' development has been so painfully slow so there may not be too much expansion of that.

Cllr Bartlett feels that it is likely that Conscience Farm may be brought forward although access remains an issue. This is, however, just speculation.

The IBF has gone quiet – a member of the public asked what the situation is to date. The applicant has actively engaged with the PCs for the noise, lighting, parking, littering etc. There are J10a plans for amendment of the layout and this is in the hands of KCC. The DfT will need to provide an extension of powers to the areas that the Borough Council can undertake parking enforcement. Cllr Bartlett approached Sojan Joseph MP regarding this.

Noise is an issue for a resident. Cllr Bartlett believes this is down to the machinery enabling the consistent

ambient temperature of a room on the site.

To receive an update from the Village Alliance

Paddy and Linda attended the meeting to discuss the Village Alliance and provided a proposal to work with the Parish Council.

The Village Alliance will be reviewing the Local Plan, focussing on the following –

1. To retain Policy SP7.
2. No development within the 'Mersham Wall.'
3. On the village side of the Mersham Wall we are willing to take our share of the 1,000 homes shared between 39 villages (average of 25.6 dwellings per village).
4. Concerns over cumulative effect of amount of development – hospitals, schools, ecology and so on.

The next consultation from ABC will be site specific and is likely to be in 2027.

The work undertaken on the High Field demonstrates the benefit of working together. What has been achieved by protecting the 'green buffer' cannot be under-estimated.

NB Stone Street Solar development will be going ahead because the Judicial Review failed. It is expected that the site might well be sold to a different developer; it is hoped that we can engage with this.

Public Session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item

The local PC addressed the meeting. The Police are targeting rural crimes as a preventative action. They are checking fly tipping regularly. They have an operation to tackle speeding and poaching.

The Policeman was asked to undertake speed checks between 7-8am. They will check The Street, Bower Road and Church Road.

There are limited crime issues in the area.

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 Council's (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012, the Council adopts the General Power of Competence from 19th May 2026 until the next relevant Annual Meeting of the Council. The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous).

To agree representatives for 2026/27

Highways and Transport Representative – Cllrs Stewart/McBarnet

Village Hall Representative – Cllr Wells

Caretaker Committee Representative – Cllr Ross

Environment and Sustainability Representative – Cllr Wells

KALC Representative – Cllrs Pearson/McBarnet

Community Engagement Representative – Cllr Hawkins

Mersham Sports Club – Cllr Stewart

Housing and Development Representative (including Planning Applications) – Cllr Pearson

Appointment and Scope of the Internal Auditor

The meeting was circulated with the Clerk's recommendations regarding the Internal Auditor for 2026-27. The Parish Council approved that Mrs Lister should be appointed as the Internal Auditor for 2026-27.

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 updates on the following:		
Highways and Transport matters (to include the Highways Improvement Plan)		
No update at this time.		
Village Amenities and infrastructure (to include The Village Hall)		
Cllr Wells had circulated a report prior to the meeting.		
Environment and Sustainability (to include the green buffer zone in High Field).		
No update at this time.		
Financial matters:		
a. To approve the following financial documents:		
To receive the end of year accounts for 2025-26		
The end of year accounts were received and approved by the Council.		
To receive the report from the Internal Auditor		
The report from the Internal Auditor was received and approved.		
To approve the Governance Statement 2025/26, section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2026		
The Annual Governance Statement was approved and signed.		
To consider and approve the Accounting Statements 2025/26, section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2026 and the supporting Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March 2026, the explanation of significant variance. To ensure that the Accounting Statements 2025/26 are signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting.		
The Parish Council considered and approved the Accounting Statements 2025/26, section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2026 and the supporting Bank Reconciliation as at 31 st March 2026, the explanation of significant variance. The Accounting Statements 2025/26 were signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting.		
To note the Parish Council's financial position for the beginning of the new Financial Year.		
The PC noted the £51,258.77 held in the bank account as at 30 th April 2026.		
To authorise any payments		
	HugoFox	11.99
	JRB Enterprise	70.26
	Clerk	363.72
	HMRC	165.50
	Lushland	430.00
	KALC	649.54
	Village Caretaker Account	5000.00
	I King	169.00
	Arthur Gallagher	655.40
	S Lister	74.00
	Ian King	169.00
	Clerk	363.72
	HMRC	88.67
	Clerk	363.72
	Ian King	169.00

	HMRC	86.67	
Community Engagement			
Nothing to update.			
IBF Update following meeting with DfT planning team			
Cllr Wells reported on the recent IBF meetings she had attended. A brief discussion took place regarding the Information Panel content.			
Housing and Development, to include any planning applications.			
No update.			
Local Government Reorganisation			
No update.			
Succession Planning			
Following the vacancy on the Council, the Clerk is to notify those interested in standing as a Councillor. The Councillors will then proceed to short-list the applicants.			
To approve the Standing Orders, Asset Register and Risk Assessment, IT Policy, Data compliance Policy and confirm arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.			
The Parish Council approved the Standing Orders, Asset Register and Risk Assessment, IT Policy and Data Compliance Policy and confirmed arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.			
Review of the Council's subscriptions to other bodies i.e. KALC			
The Council agreed to continue with KALC but decided not to subscribe to Kent ACRE.			
Any Other Business (for information purposes only):			
Parking on the roundabout is to be reported to the Police.			
Double yellow lines by the shop need to be discussed.			
Sports Club are not able to run their fun day this year.			
Brass Band concert on 30 th May at the Church, Afternoon Tea at Stonegreen Farm on 13 th June.			
Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.			
Monday 15 th June 2026		Monday 20 th July 2026	
Monday 14 th September 2026		Monday 19 th October 2026	
Monday 16 th November 2026		Monday 18 th January 2027	
Monday 15 th February 2027		Monday 15 th March 2027	
Monday 19 th April 2027		Monday 17 th May 2027	