

Minutes of Mersham Parish Council
Meeting held on Monday, 15th September 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 Collins, Cllr Bartlett and Tracey Block (Clerk).

To be actioned by:

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 21st July 2025	
Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 21st July 2025 were approved as a true record and were signed accordingly.	
To discuss matters arising from previous minutes not covered by the agenda.	
Cllr Murphy is still awaiting an update from Ben Oxney regarding the Cut and Cover.	
To receive report from County/Borough Councillor	
County Councillor Cllr Collins introduced himself as the newly elected Councillor for Ashford Rural East; he is also the Deputy leader of Kent County Council. He noted the installation of the 2 new pedestrian in road signs. Cllr Collins noted that we may have noticed additional work on the roads, extra money has been invested but the roads will cost £billions to repair. Kent Highways are negotiating with a new contractor; they hope that a warranty could be provided. Cllr Osborne is the portfolio holder for Highways, he is aware that processes need to change and all are encouraged to report pot holes. KCC are working on plans for a pothole reporting app and hope that something will be available early next year. Please report pot holes, if they are marked but not fixed within 4weeks, please contact Cllr Collins. Cllr Collins was asked about fly tipping, he said this needs looking at because use of the tip is not easy. Speeding in the village was discussed; no traffic calming measures would work because the roads are too narrow. Cllr Collins suggested that signalling could be looked into and asked for copies of the HIP. The light having been removed from the junction on the A20 was discussed. Cllr Collins is to look into this. Cllr Collins also explained that he is waiting for an update on the bridge at lower Mersham. Cllr Collins was asked to provide an update, this is scheduled for 2026. The tractors damaging the bollards by the bridge in lower Mersham, this is thought to have been the Sims Agri driver, and Cllr Murphy said he would write to them to raise the issue. Cllr Collins explained that the 14 Councils have been asked to submit plans, 12 of the Councils are suggesting either a 3 or 4 split Unitary Authority but KCC are submitting plans for a single Unitary Authority. A response has to be submitted to the Government by November 28th and a response is expected in Spring/Summer 2026. Now that Angela Rayner and Jim McMahon are no longer part of the cabinet, it may be that Unitary Authority division is not on track. Borough Councillor A detailed report had been circulated; a copy can be found on the website:	

Cllr Bartlett reported:

There is a consultation on the Local Plan on 25/9 at the Village Hall. This is an “Areas of search” consultation and it was suggested that the PC could concentrate on Highways access to the Church Commissioners land.

Currently access is difficult over the narrow bridge on Cheesemans Green Lane, on the bend on Station Road and the bend at the shop in Mersham. The original plans showed a road from J10a to Finberry but this was not built.

The Borough Council Planning Committee meeting on 24th September will include the Borough Council response to the PINS application for the IBF. Cllr Murphy will attend to speak on behalf of Mersham. The main points that Cllr Bartlett noted were:

Lost lorry issues must be fixed, the protection of High Field needs to not be ambiguous and needs a management plan in place. The lorry “hum” needs to be dealt with, lighting, litter and the weak acoustic barriers are all issues. The temporary solutions need to be fixed now that this is a permanent feature. The lighting could be reduced dramatically if only the used lanes were lit. A transport plan is required to ease the traffic on the A20 and to stop lorries from parking on J10a.

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

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Local Plan update

Nothing further to discuss.

To receive any update on the following:

**i) Highways and Transport matters (to include the Highways Improvement Plan)
M20 Noise Mitigation**

Noise from the motorway is causing some issues for residents in Mersham. This is due to the break down of the sound barrier surfacing. PC to contact National Highways.

ii) Village Amenities and infrastructure(to include The Village Hall)

An update was circulated by Cllr Wells ahead of the meeting.

iii) Environment and Sustainability (to include The green buffer zone in High Field/IBF).

The response to PINS from the Village Alliance was noted as robust and thanks are extended to them.

iv) Finance & Governance:

- (1) To note the Parish Council’s financial position as at 31st August 2025. The Parish Council noted the £40,053.95 in the bank as at 31st August 2025.
- (2) To authorise any payments, the Parish Council authorised payments in line with the payment schedule:

Litterpicker (September)	£162.50
HMRC	£79.80
Clerks Wages (September)	£336.79
Ransley Turf Bollard installation)	£780.00
Jacksons Rail	£30.60
Astro glue	£7.69
Kingsfords	£1374.31
JRB Enterprise	£100.08
Clerk expenses	£106.11

Purchase of a new noticeboard was agreed.

v) Community Engagement Consultation event news needs to be spread for the Local Plan meeting. vi) Housing and Development Cllr Pearson gave a brief update on the Teams meeting attended on the potential Affordable Housing plans. There is to be a pre-application discussion with the Borough Council Planning Department and English Rural Housing. vii) Local Government Reorganisation No further update at this time.		
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		
PA/2025/1546 had been received. The Parish Council raised no objection to this application.		
Any Other Business		
Cllr Hawkins raised a problem with 2 trees on cherry Glebe, he stated they had been ringed. The Caretaker will take a look and the Clerk will report to ABC if necessary. The bus shelters on Oaklands and the A20 need some maintenance. The Clerk will arrange this with the Caretaker. High visibility "Mersham PC" vests are to be costed for the litter picker to wear.		
Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.		
Monday 20th October 2025 Monday 19th January 2026 Monday 16th March 2026 Monday 18th May 2026	Monday 17th November 2025 Monday 16th February 2026 Monday 20th April 2026	