

Minutes of Mersham Parish Council

Meeting held on Monday 21st September 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 and Tracey Block (Clerk)

To receive and approve apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Ball, these apologies were accepted.

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 July 2026

Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 20th July 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 County/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/>

LGR has been suspended for legal reasons. IBF was discussed at the JTB, ABC has written to the Prime Minister to find out what is happening, no response has yet been received. The island on the A20 is to be installed in the Spring. The Village Alliance has suggested that people respond to the scoping exercise to encourage the Mersham Wall. Local Plans must be NPPF compliant. Development within the village confines will have an immediate yes. Outside of settlement development will also be assessed in a different way. Rural business, infilling and development where there is an unmet need are all likely to be approved. Highways impact is not really arguable. Paul's report will have more detail. Smaller villages will no longer be protected. Infill is the most worrying side of the new NPPF, some of the smaller villages are likely to be developed. A new Local Plan is to be produced by March 2028. *How long will the IBF be there?* HMRC are only moving the transit goods. Therefore, DEFRA and ABC Port Health Authority are not necessarily moving. DEFRA indicated they might stop their work on site in June 2027. ABC has not had any notification that the Port Health will alter. The site is designated as "distribution warehousing" in the Local Plan, so the site policy for the land is unlikely to change, therefore housing is unlikely, although the land is owned by the Government. There are currently 950 jobs on site and the number of job losses is a concern. *J10a traffic lights, when will they happen?* This is a £1.6 million project and the DfT is working on this. KCC are convinced they will get the contract for the work and are proceeding as though the work will come to them. No time frame has yet been provided.

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

There were no public in attendance.

To receive any updates on the following:

i) Highways and Transport matters (to include the Highways Improvement Plan)

The HIP has been updated on the website. The PC wondered whether a SLOW sign can be requested from Bower Road heading towards the shop. The bridge at The Forstal is to be repaired in summer 2027.

ii) Village Amenities and infrastructure (to include The Village Hall and Beacon)																			
The Village Hall report had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The beacon – a quote has been received. It was agreed that Cllr Wells would ask that the quote be broken down. Cllr Stewart said he would ask a competitor for an alternative quote who was a steel fabricator. JPF – Cllr Wells has obtained some prices for replacement items. The price for replacing items is likely to be £95,000+.																			
iii) Financial matters:																			
a) To note the Parish Council's financial position.																			
The PC noted the £36,401.26 held in the bank account as at 31 st August 2026.																			
b) To authorise any payments																			
The PC authorised the following payments:																			
	<table> <tr> <td>Ian King</td><td>169.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>HMRC</td><td>275.57</td></tr> <tr> <td>Clerk</td><td>790.92</td></tr> <tr> <td>Ian King</td><td>169.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>HMRC</td><td>119.82</td></tr> <tr> <td>Clerk</td><td>434.92</td></tr> <tr> <td>JRB Enterprise</td><td>140.52</td></tr> <tr> <td>Play Safely Ltd</td><td>123.60</td></tr> <tr> <td>JRB Enterprise</td><td>70.26</td></tr> </table>	Ian King	169.00	HMRC	275.57	Clerk	790.92	Ian King	169.00	HMRC	119.82	Clerk	434.92	JRB Enterprise	140.52	Play Safely Ltd	123.60	JRB Enterprise	70.26
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v) Community Engagement (to include a discussion about a suggestion to run a fete)																			
Cllr Ball has approached the Council regarding organising a Village Fete. This is to be held on the Millennium Green, the PC discussed this idea. RESOLVED: Cllr Ball will be asked to discuss this at the next meeting.																			
vi) IBF Update																			
Cllr Wells explained the latest news on the planning applications for the IBF. The applications have been submitted to the Borough Council.																			
vii) Housing and Development, to include any planning applications																			
Cllr Pearson reported that Emily from the Rural Housing Trust communicated that the Heads of Terms for the affordable housing scheme are being approved and plans will be forthcoming.																			
viii) Local Government Reorganisation																			
Cllr Bartlett had previously updated the meeting.																			
ix) Local Plan																			
The Clerk will respond to the latest consultation on behalf of the Parish Council.																			
Any Other Business (for information purposes only):																			
Cllr McBarnett will attend the Parish Forum Meeting. There is no KALC meeting date confirmed at the moment. It was reported that there is someone living on some land in Blind Lane. This was reported as a safe-guarding issue to the local Police Officer. Cllr Stewart had been busy dealing with a membership issue at the Sports Club. There are trees obscuring the lights in Bower Road, Cllr Hawkins will contact KCC? ABC regarding these. There was a request for a list of Councillor telephone numbers, the Clerk will collate these.																			
Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.																			
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																			