Minutes of Mersham Parish Council
Meeting held on Monday 16th November 2026 in the Church Room at St John the Baptist Church.

Present:	Melanie Wells (Chair)	Peter Hawkins
	Gill McBarnet	Donna Pearson
	Kenton Stewart	
In attendance:	2 members of the public, Cllr Bartlett, Kent Cllr Collins and Tracey Block (Clerk)	

To receive and approve apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Ball & Ross.

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 19th October 2026

Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 19th October 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

Cllr Collins reported that the Highways Improvement Plan team is positive. The Forstal bridge is being upgraded in the spring 2027. A resident's tree needs to be reduced. There will be a diversion in place which is likely to be for circa 8 weeks. The previously designed bridge was not attractive but the new design is in keeping with the rural setting. It will be about the same size as the current one. The PC requested priority signage. There has been some resurfacing at Bank Road, The Street and Smeeth crossroads. There will be pothole emergency repairs only going forward. A patching approach is being taken. Kingsford Street has recently had some repairs.

The gulleys in The Street have been cleared and Cherry Glebe should also soon be cleared. Cllr Hawkins suggested resurfacing in Cherry Glebe. There were 2 potholes by The Farriers repaired recently. The plan for the next 2 years is an approach for resurfacing.

There is a problem getting an electrical source to the A20 improvements, this is causing a hold-up with the work.

A detailed report had been circulated by Cllr Bartlett; a copy can be found on the website:

http://www.mershampc.org.uk/community/mersham-parish-council-18392/borough-cllr-reports/

Cllr Bartlett reported that the IBF was discussed at Council last Thursday. There was disquiet about using this as a lorry park because of the congestion that will be caused on J10a to allow the lorries to emerge on to the M20. HMRC have suggested that the site could be sold as a distribution centre. More detail is expected when the EU reset is announced. The original Plan was for retail and small distribution.

Brock is likely to be scaled back when the additional capacity is created at Dover and Dover TAP.

The Local Plan consultation is starting in January. Cllr Bartlett reported that East Stour valley should be protected, infrastructure restrictions, green buffers and the glacial speed of the Church Commissioners' developers.

The field near Rectory Close has been cleared recently but no plans have yet been submitted. Phil Cook to be asked to review the 2 Turkey Oaks in Rectory Close and the 1 on the JPF, as there is no TPO on these. They are symmetrical and lovely.

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

2 members were in attendance to discuss their issues regarding the highways.

The member of the public had looked at the minutes, the PC had been told in 2023 that they would have to fund the speed reduction by the school (at a cost of £10,000+) but have not yet undertaken this. *The Chairman explained that the school need to provide a Travel Plan, the criteria for speed limit reduction requires this in order for it to be considered. The Chairman said that the Parish Council has been communicating with the School to encourage a Travel Plan to be produced.*

Cllr Collins explained that the data says that the speed limits are not being exceeded. One of the members of the public in attendance believes that the village should have a blanket 20-mph limit. Vehicles parking at the school are creating a speed limiter. The road at the stores is so narrow this means that the speed is not being exceeded.

The speed reduction at the school has pressure being applied at this stage by Cllr Collins. SpeedWatch scheme has been suggested, the other offers are only a token gesture. Cllr Collins has said that there are videos being shared of cars over-shooting the corner. The Highways assessment team are looking at this issue. KCC has a new contractor, Ringway, this means there has been a backlog of works. This issue is to be discussed on 18/11 at Kent Highways. A no-entry sign was suggested but this does not meet the legislation. A sharp bend sign was requested, this is being considered by KCC as KCC can only put the signs on Kent Highways land. Cllr Collins is following this up.

Cllr Wells has asked for an update on the Travel Plan, this is in hand at the school. There are 126 children at the school. 15-20 of these live in Mersham. The numbers are reducing, Cllr Collins offered to go to the school. The PC had requested a crossing to be put in on Church Road, this is not possible as the road does not have a safe crossing location with pavements either side of the road at the correct location.

What is stopping a 20-mph blanket reduction? This would not be enforceable. One member of the public suggested traffic calming. The road is not wide enough for a build out. Cllr Collins is looking at what is possible. Cllr Collins suggested the member of the public start a petition and he will take this forward. One was created recently and taken to the JTB. Cllr Bartlett suggested a letter to the residents to show support from the community.

A speed limit reduction could cost in the region of £24,000. This would be at a cost to the parishioners through an increase in their Council Tax, the residents of Mersham would therefore need to approve this.

To receive any updates on the following:

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

Following communications regarding speeding vehicles in the village, 2 Parish Councillors and the Clerk had met with 2 members of Kent County Council Highways Improvements team, Cllr Collins had been present at this meeting.

Items discussed are on the Highways Improvement Plan – copy to be published on the website.

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

Cllr Wells explained that there was not much to report on the Village Hall. She provided a brief report. Cllr Wells had received a quote from Playdale, this was circulated and forwarded to the land agent for the JPF landowner. It was noted that there appeared to be a lot of swings.

Cllr Ball had sent an email confirming that the beacon repair should have been completed in the last few days.

iii) Financial matters:

a) To note the Parish Council's financial position.

The PC noted the £49,819.55 held in the bank account as at 31st October 2026.

b) To authorise any payments

The following payments were authorised:

Litterpicker	£ 169.00
HMRC	£ 119.82
Clerk	£ 434.92
Litterpicker	£ 209.00
HMRC	£ 120.02
Clerk	£ 434.72
JRB Enterprise	£ 58.55
Village Caretaker	£5490.90
Clerk	£ 93.61

c) To agree the budget for 2027/28

The Parish Councillors agreed the proposed budget for 2027/28

d) To agree the precept for 2027/28

The Parish Councillors agreed to precept for £31,000.

iv) Community Engagement

Cllr Ball had reported that a sub-committee is coming together for the Fete.

v) Housing and Development, to include any planning applications

There was nothing to report at this time.

vi) Local Plan

There was nothing to add at this time.

Any Other Business (for information purposes only):

EDF had sent another invoice.

Christmas Tree Festival is taking place on 5th and 6th December.

Cllr McBarnet attended the Parish Forum.

Christmas Tree is to be installed, the lights will be switched on at 5.30pm on 5th December. Ashford Pantomime will come along and sing as will the school choir.

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

Monday 18th January 2027
Monday 15th February 2027
Monday 15th March 2027
Monday 19th April 2027
Monday 17th May 2027