

Minutes of Mersham Parish Council
Meeting held on Monday, 17th November 2025 in the Church room at St John the Baptist Church

Present:

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

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

To receive and approve apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr 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 20th October 2025

Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 20th October 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.

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

PC Picton introduced himself to the meeting. He is the beat officer for Mersham. Fly tipping and Rural crime is an issue in the village. There is £8400 unspent for spiking kits, applications can be obtained for the local public houses.

To receive report from County/Borough Councillor

Borough Councillor

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

<https://www.mershamparishcouncil.gov.uk/community/mersham-parish-council-18392/borough-cllr-reports/>

- PB spoke to Linda Harman last Monday. Aldington and Bonnington PC have decided to go ahead with a Judicial Review. They are considering, Mersham PC could contribute. PCs are not expected to meet more than ½ of a JR. However, if this goes through the first stage, only 25% of these are accepted, the costs are £55,000. There is seed-funding available from CPRE.
- There is a hearing date for the IBF, this is 2nd December at 10am. PB is attending and is a registered party. Planning Inspector knows what PB intends to say. Lighting, noise, litter etc.
- EScooter rider getting to work at the IBF has now ceased travelling on the A2070 to get to work.
- New app for walking safe in the dark is to be launched on 25th November.

Any idea how long tankers will be travelling up and down Kingsford Street? This will be completed by Christmas. Kent Highways have explained the permit runs until January. The size and number of vehicles in Kingsford Street is not appropriate. The emergency access route could logistically be used through the IBF, this is inappropriate impact in Mersham. The IBF could relieve the pressure on the village of Mersham. There are no passing places for vehicles this size. TB to contact Kent Highways and CC in Cllr Collins.

Vehicular access to Finberry extension is likely to be announced in Summer '26 as part of the call for sites.

To receive any update on the following:

To receive any updates on the following:

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

There is no update at this time.

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

Village Hall report has been circulated.

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

The PC has attended the IBF introductory meeting. PCs met with planning team and provided a good input from PCs. Lighting has been updated and additional measures have been put in place. We would like to feedback on the lighting.

The aesthetics problems do not appear to be met. Many hedges have been removed and seems stark.

They are talking about Landscape Management Plan.

Hoping to get Mersham included in the noise assessment plan.

They have indicated that they will carry out an Environmental Impact survey as trees in the area are dying.

GM has circulated the lighting amendments that have been made and went through these for the IBF. The buildings are lit and we look to them turning these off. GM wants to report back on whether there is an improvement in the lighting. The High Field is to be protected for 30-year period whilst the IBF is in place.

iv) Finance & Governance:

1) To note the Parish Council's financial position as at 31st October 2025.

2) To authorise any payments

Litterpicker	£162.50
HMRC	£105.79
Clerk	£402.71
Litterpicker	£162.50
HMRC	£82.20
Clerk	£347.12
Village Caretaker	£4,675.00

There was a discussion surrounding the JR and the costs involved. At this point in time Aldington and Bonnington PC have not contacted the Parish Clerk or Chair. We will consider this once contact has been received and then take a vote at a Parish Meeting.

3) To approve a Budget for 2026-27

The budget was approved.

4) To approve a Precept for 2026-27

A precept for £30,000 was agreed.

v) Community Engagement

There is a concern that The Villager will not exist going forward. There is a concern that volunteers may not come forward. There is an article in The Villager. GM offered to put something on Facebook. A leaflet drop is possible.

There was a discussion about the shop and it's viability.

Christmas Tree switch on is taking place on 29th November, all welcome to attend. Ashford Pantomime will be in attendance.

vi) Housing and Development, to include any planning applications.

PA/2025/2099 – Mersham Sports Ground (extended permission for temporary storage) – No objection

PA/2025/1877 – Petworth (change of use) – comments to be submitted.

PA/2025/1819 – Little Swanton (listed consent) – No objection

PA/2025/1047 – Mersham Post Office (listed consent) – No objection

PA/2025/1687 – Stone Green Hall (listed consent) – No objection

vii) Local Government Reorganisation

No further news at this time.

Any Other Business

Consider dropping the number of meetings down to 6. There was a discussion about whether the meetings need to be considered. It is considered that we should continue with 10 meetings a year.

Church Christmas Fair is on from noon-3.30pm on 29/11.

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

Monday 19th January 2026 (G McB absent)

Monday 16th February 2026

Monday 16th March 2026

Monday 20th April 2026

Monday 18th May 2026