

MILTON ABBAS PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL held on
13th May 2026 in the Reading Room, Milton Abbas at 7.00pm**

PRESENT:

Mr I. Baker (Vice Chair)
Mr P. Ford
Mr T. Ives
Ms J. Macleod

Mr S. Driver (Chairman)
Mr S. Gould
Mrs J. Jordan

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs E. Sellen (Clerk) and 5 members of the general public.

1. APOLOGIES Mr S. Martin & Mr L. Usherwood (both working away) and Mrs E. Parker (recuperating).

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

IB took the chair. It was proposed by IB and unanimously agreed that SD should be elected Chairman. SD took the chair.

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by SD, seconded by SG and unanimously agreed that IB should be elected vice chairman.

4. CO-OPTION TO VACANCY

SD advised that applications have been received from Mr S. Bowers, Mr N. Carmichael and Ms J. Macleod. (Both SB and JM were present). IB thanked all three candidates for their interest and said he wished there were three vacancies so all could be retained. He added that, whether co-opted or not, their involvement with the Parish Council will always be welcomed. SD confirmed that the Parish Council aims to build a wider team of people willing to support the initiatives that interest them.

SG noted that support is currently needed for the Neighbourhood Plan, Speedwatch, the Playpark and defibrillators, and asked whether the candidates would be willing to help in any of these areas. JM said she is already a member of the Playpark committee and would be happy to assist with the Neighbourhood Plan. SB said he was interested in supporting Speedwatch.

Following a vote, JM was co-opted by a majority of two votes.

SD thanked SB for his interest and asked the Clerk to thank NC on behalf of the Councillors. SD reiterated that all are welcome to work with the Parish Council in whatever capacity they are comfortable with.

5. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

SD advised that a new Planning role has been created this year. The Planning Officer will be offered training to provide support to the Councillors when considering planning applications. SG suggested that meetings could be preceded by an opportunity to consider the applications on the agenda, however this would not allow time to resolve questions arising from the application.

Following discussion regarding the newly created officer role, no councillor felt that they are currently in a position to volunteer. The Chairman therefore agreed to assume the role temporarily to support its establishment and ongoing development until such time as another councillor may wish to take it forward.

Planning Officer	SD
Transport Adviser	SG
DAPTC Rep	SD & SG
Rights of Way Officer	SG
Tree Warden	LU
MATCH /Jane's Wood Rep	LU & PF
Flood Warden	SG
Emergency Officer/Contact	SG & Mrs V. Macnamara
Communications / Elliegram	SD
Community Speed Watch & SID	JJ & Mr S. Bowers
Playpark	SG, TI & JM
Millennium Green	PF, SD & a volunteer rota
Neighbourhood Plan Working Party	SM, JM & SG
Welcome Pack	SD & Mrs P. Driver
Milton Abbas Health & Disability Fund	TI
Tregonwell Almshouses	Mr R. Pressland
Website Liaison	SM
Emily Faulkner Trustee	IB
Defibrillator Management	TK, IB & PF
Fingerposts	SD, PF & TI
Lloyds Bank Signatories	IB, SD, TI, SM
Village Flower Boxes	Mrs S. Saunders & PF
BT Kiosk	SD & Ms D. Wyatt
Electric Car Charge Points	SM

6. FUTURE MEETING DATES

It was unanimously agreed that the council should continue to meet on the second Wednesday of January, March, May, July, September and November.

7. REVIEW OF GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

Councillors had reviewed the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Risk Assessment Document, Privacy Policy, Welcome Pack and other policies. It was proposed by SD, seconded by IB and unanimously agreed that subject to item 15 of the May meeting the governing documents are adequate. The Clerk reminded Councillors of their legal responsibility to ensure that their Register of Interests is kept up to date, particularly with reference to changes of address and appointment.

SD & PD will carry out a review of the Welcome Pack.

8. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

It was proposed by IB, seconded by SD and unanimously agreed to continue the appointment of Darkin Miller Ltd.

9. MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Council meeting of 14th May 2025 had been approved at the Parish Council meeting on 9th July 2025. There were no matters arising.

10. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

SD apologised for the fact that the report was not available at the meeting and confirmed that he will circulate the Chairman's Report by all means available to the Parish Council.

11. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk presented the financial report. (See ADDENDA)

12. DORSET COUNCILLORS REPORT None

Mrs F. Robinson expressed thanks to SD, the Councillors and the Clerk on behalf of the residents.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm.

Signed:
(Presiding Chairman)

Date:

ADDENDA:

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2026

It has been another busy and productive year for Milton Abbas Parish Council, with a great deal of work taking place behind the scenes to maintain village assets, address local concerns and plan for the future of our community. None of this would be possible without the dedication of our Parish Clerk, fellow Councillors, volunteers and residents who continue to give their time and support throughout the year.

One of the most significant areas of activity has been the continued management of our community assets. Extensive tree works were completed in Jane's Wood and Seymour Woodland following professional inspections and detailed review of quotations. These works represented one of the largest investments undertaken by the Council this year and will help ensure the long-term safety and sustainability of these important community spaces. Additional work has also been carried out or planned for Millennium Green, the Orchard and other Parish-owned land.

The Play Park continues to be a major focus. Councillors and volunteers have invested considerable time in maintaining equipment, improving safety standards and addressing recommendations arising from inspections. Work has included repairs to equipment, improvements to signage, grass restoration, regular inspections and planning for future maintenance. The Play Park remains one of the village's valued community assets and we remain committed to keeping it safe and enjoyable for residents and visitors alike.

Highways and drainage issues have continued to generate significant concern throughout the year. Councillors have maintained regular dialogue with Dorset Council regarding the ongoing problems at Catherine's Well, including flooding, road surface deterioration, drainage concerns and pavement

repairs. Similar concerns have been raised in several other areas of the village, and these issues remain firmly on the Parish Council's agenda.

The future of the Hambro Arms became an important topic during the year. Following concerns regarding the pub's closure, the Council supported efforts to protect this valuable community asset, including an application to register the property as an Asset of Community Value and support for local discussions regarding its future. We were encouraged by the strong level of community engagement but are ultimately delighted that a new owner took possession, invested in and reopened the premises. We wish them every success as their journey unfolds!

Planning and the future development of Milton Abbas continue to be important issues. The Council has become increasingly aware that our Neighbourhood Plan now requires review if it is to remain effective alongside the emerging Dorset Local Plan. Preliminary work has therefore begun to consider how this review may be undertaken, with provision made within future budgets to support the process. Community involvement will be essential as this work progresses.

Community transport through the PlusBus scheme has continued to develop successfully, with additional neighbouring villages now benefiting from the service. The Council has continued to support discussions about the future of the scheme and ways in which it can continue to provide a valuable service to residents.

Across the year we have also continued to support local communications through the Elliegram and Village Bulletin, progressed work on emergency planning, maintained our defibrillator provision, supported Speed Watch initiatives and considered numerous planning applications, all while responding to the day-to-day issues raised by residents.

Financially, the Council remains in a stable position. While significant expenditure has been incurred on tree works, play park improvements and other community assets, careful budgeting and the considered use of reserves have enabled important projects to proceed whilst maintaining healthy reserve balances. External and internal audit processes have once again confirmed the Council's commitment to good governance and sound financial management.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my fellow Councillors, our Parish Clerk Liz Sellen, local volunteers and all residents who have contributed their time, expertise and enthusiasm during the year. Milton Abbas benefits enormously from the willingness of people to become involved and support their community. Many of the improvements achieved in the village are only possible because residents are willing to become involved and support community initiatives. We look forward to continuing that work together in the year ahead.

As always, your Parish Council welcomes constructive feedback, volunteers and new ideas.

Stu Driver
MAPC Chair

FINANCIAL REPORT 2026

Receipts

Our precept for 2025/2026 was £22,820 with the understanding that the major outlay towards tree works had been precepted in previous years. Other receipts included £280 from the Community Fund towards the purchase of the Jubilee bench and a VAT rebate of £4,484.

Expenditure

Expenditure of £28,063 included £11,720 tree works in Jane's Wood and Seymour Woodland, and £4,465 towards skate park and Millennium Green repairs. Donations appear suppressed due to a refund of £500 from the Community Transport / PlusBus scheme.

Overview

Reserves remain steady at £62,000 and the precept has been minimally increased to £22,820 with the expectation that some budgeted activities will continue to be funded from reserves.