

MILTON ABBAS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on 13th May 2026 in the READING ROOM, MILTON ABBAS, following the Annual Parish Council Meeting

PRESENT

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

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

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Mr S. Martin & Mr L. Usherwood (both working away) and Mrs. Emma Parker (Dorset Councillor) (convalescing)

2. DISPENSATIONS None

3. OPEN FORUM

The following points were raised:

Mr S. Bewers remarked on the number of 20mph zones appearing in local communities and asked why Milton Abbas does not also qualify for similar traffic calming. It was pointed out that an active Community Speedwatch team is a fundamental criterion for consideration and JJ reported that only four part time volunteers have been identified. At least ten are required for training and four are required per session. TI and JM expressed their interest in volunteering and TI suggested some previous members who continue to be interested in volunteering. SB suggested that future publicity should highlight both the need for a 20mph and the steps required, to encourage willing volunteers, and agreed to write an article for inclusion in The Bulletin.

Mrs F. Robinson asked whether the SID Rota problem has been resolved. JJ confirmed that the old rota is still active, although the Winterborne Stickland representative has confirmed that he will not always be able to collect on time. JJ requested additional help with the SID in the coming months as it is difficult to place on the post without assistance.

FR suggested that the data from the SID could be used to support a 20mph application. The Clerk will request information regarding updated software.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2026 had been circulated. It was proposed by SD, seconded by SG, and agreed by those who had attended the previous meeting, that they should be accepted as a true record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk read an email from Mr G. Cooper referring to the draft minutes and the first item under General Planning Concerns. The property belongs to Mr John

Guard who lives in Exeter. The recent applications to deal with the ash dieback have been submitted by him. The most recent felling was completed by Vale Tree Surgeons. GC's personal interest related to potential damage to his property. GC suggested that a letter from the Parish Council to the landowner notifying him of their interest and any ongoing concerns would be advisable. GC also confirmed that a tree and shrub planting scheme is nearing completion at The Beeches (the approved name of the new house).

SG confirmed a site visit between LU, SG and GC was carried out and LU confirmed the substantial presence of ash dieback.

SD confirmed further complaints from residents regarding the mural at Little Westwood. The Clerk confirmed that the Planning Team had been contacted and an enforcement case has been raised. The Clerk has requested an update from the enforcement team, but the enforcement team do not usually feedback during an investigation.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence had been circulated by email or was available on the table.

The clerk drew attention to the following:

Hilton Parish Council have forwarded photographs of significant cracks in the bridge over the road to Hilton and subsequently degradation of the wall alongside the road has been reported. These concerns have been forwarded to Dorset Council, who confirmed that the bridge is privately owned by Milton Abbey School. The Clerk has sent emails to Mr J. Watson (Head), and Mr N. Barrow, copying in Dorset Council and JW confirms that a full structural survey has been commissioned. Mr S. Lane (Milton Abbey School) has today stepped in to cover for NB who is currently off sick. SG confirms present road signage has failed to prevent artic lorries and other inappropriate traffic from attempting to pass under the bridge. SD will add the issue to the Risk Register until it is apparent that a resolution has been actioned. The Clerk confirmed that a new Highways Officer has been appointed for the area and Cllr Parker has offered to arrange a walk around the village with members of the PC when the officer is in post.

SG noted that the grit bin at Long Ash Lane has been removed from site. The Clerk has reported to Dorset Council for investigation.

The Parish Council insurers have confirmed their intention to admit liability for the recent injury claim.

Following a further complaint from the Middleton Row resident, the Clerk has invited the tree surgeon to visit sooner to quote for village tree works and will include the Millennium Green beech trees in this visit.

The proposed fire stations closures consultation ends at 5pm on 15th May. Proposed closures include Hamworthy and Maiden Newton.

Councillors are invited to a Planning & Building Control Forum on 16th June 10-12.30 at Dorchester Corn Exchange and 2.30-4.30 online.

Residents reported a fault on the basket swing at the play park. PF visited to ensure that it was safe for use pending repair. SG subsequently added a zip tie to the broken link. It was proposed by SD, seconded by SG and unanimously

agreed that the item should be replaced urgently. SG and the Clerk are meeting with a play park maintenance co on Thursday 21st May.

7. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLOR None

8. REPORTS

ELLIEGRAM/COMMUNICATIONS/WELCOME PACK

SD confirmed the elliegrams continue to be circulated as appropriate and an updated version of the Welcome Pack will be available soon. SG asked whether the elliegram service could be publicised further as many of his customers are still unaware of the service. SD will produce an updated poster for circulation by usual means.

MATCH/JANE'S WOOD/MILLENNIUM GREEN

PF confirmed that he will cut the grass at the Millennium Green this week.

PLAYPARK

SG confirmed that we have an inspection coming up. He confirmed that the grass seed has taken successfully, the emergency telephone sign is now in place and reminded PF to place a locking bolt on the MUGA. The Clerk confirmed that Mr A. Whale has offered to treat and stain the bandstand if the Parish Council supply the materials.

TRANSPORT

The Transport team are waiting for a meeting with the PlusBus representative to discuss the future use of the service. Eight villages now benefit from the service.

CSW

JJ will liaise with neighbouring villages and the police. FR suggested that the Police are invited to place a temporary speed camera in the village.

MILTON ABBAS SPORTS CLUB None

EMERGENCY PLAN

The Clerk confirmed that Mrs V. Macnamara is forging ahead with the identification of relevant land owners and requires assistance to document the results. VM, SG, SB and the Clerk will meet with a view to the documentation of the results and the establishment of a communication system. SD offered his help with the communications element.

REPORTS FROM OTHER PC OFFICERS

TI asked the Clerk to request a progress update on DMMO T491 with Dorset Council.

9. PLANNING

Decisions

P/FUL/2025/05471 Long Ash Farm – Convert barn to dwelling - granted

P/HOU/2026/00197 42-43 Milton Abbas – Carry out garden works including formation of composite deck with seating, erection of shed, replacement steps, installation of steel edging, low wall, water feature and associated landscaping - granted

P/LBC/2026/01296 Milton House – Demolish chimney on south west elevation – granted

Applications

P/FUL/2026/01759 Luccombe Farm & Holiday Cottages – Erect chapel / quiet room.

P/FUL/2026/02289 Land west of Parkwood – Erect 1no dwelling.

Having viewed both applications online, the councillors had no comments at this time.

General Planning Concerns

TI noted that many homeowners find that their insurers now require chimneys serving open fires or woodburners to be raised to modern safety specifications in order for cover to continue or for appliances to remain in use. However, there is a perception amongst residents that applications to raise chimney heights within Milton Abbas have not always been viewed favourably due to the sensitive planning constraints affecting the village. He asked the Clerk to obtain clarification from Dorset Council Planning department.

10. HIGHWAYS AND RISK REGISTER CONCERNS

SD reported that the carriageway verges in the location of the BT exchange / Views Café are now as bad as they were last year and it was unanimously agreed that the gully could rip off a tyre from a wheel or throw a cyclist off their bike. The Clerk was asked to report to highways.

SG confirmed that the gullies at the top of the street have now been emptied.

11. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Clerk reported that 6 planning consultants had been invited to talk to residents for about 30 minutes followed by a question and answer session, to cover

- A brief overview of the current role and weight of a Neighbourhood Plan
- The implications of an outdated plan in the context of an adopted Local Plan
- The process, scope, and typical timeline for reviewing and updating a Neighbourhood Plan
- The importance of community involvement, with a view to encouraging residents to participate in a steering group or committee

Two declined the invitation and one quotation was received for about £360+VAT. This does not seem good value for money given the usual number of attendees for the Annual Parish Meeting. It was agreed to postpone the event, liaise by email on a suitable format and time and ensure that it is thoroughly publicised. (consider publicising the elliegram and CSW at the same time?)

12. CATHERINE'S WELL / MIDDLETON ROW SIGNAGE

After investigating a resident's complaint, Dorset Council asked the Parish Council to consider funding extra signage at Catherine's Well to show the location of Middleton Row. Dorset Council said this would be more effective than changing Middleton Row's postcode, but it has no budget available for the signs. The Clerk has obtained quotes ranging from £500 to £800.

IB suggested that what3words offers a simpler, free way to identify an exact 1m² location and is already used by the emergency services, recognised by Google Maps and other organisations worldwide.

It was unanimously agreed not to fund signage at this time.

13.REPLACEMENT BENCH ST JAMES' CHURCH

St James' Church PCC asked whether the Parish Council could fund a replacement for the Dickie Dyer memorial bench, which was removed last year. Councillors noted that four benches in the area remain in use and did not consider additional seating necessary. A member of the public said the original bench had been funded by the Street Fair to commemorate Mr Dyer's role in managing the event, and suggested that any replacement would be more appropriately funded by the Street Fair. SB added that he still has the commemorative plaque in his garage for safekeeping.

14.LIABILITY INSURANCE RENEWAL

The Parish Council are currently in a fixed rate agreement with Clear Councils Insurance Co until 01/06/2027. Despite the current claim the renewal price is £691.92. The documents were circulated to councillors by email. It was unanimously agreed to accept the renewal price.

15.ADOPTION OF CO-OPTION POLICY AND REVIEW OF IT POLICY

It has been noted that the Co-option Policy required administrative adjustments to email and website information but that otherwise the NALC policy template is still suitable. It was proposed by JJ, seconded by IB and unanimously agreed that with the latest amended copy of the Co-option policy should replace the one adopted in 2024.

The Councillors agreed to review the IT policy before the next meeting to ensure that it is updated specifically in relation to Milton Abbas Parish Council.

16.FINANCE

The receipts and payments spreadsheet, latest bank statements and list of cheques for payment had been circulated by email and was available at the meeting.

Balances:

Current A/c	£59,513.77
Playpark A/c	£8,378.14

The following cheques were authorised:

Current Account

Hugofox Website INV-24727	DD 18/03	£11.99
Hugofox Emails INV-24860	DD 23/03	£20.99
Mrs E Sellen Clerk's Expenses March 2026	1504	£27.89
Lloyds Bank Charges 10022026-09032026	DD 05/04	£6.67
Hugofox Website INV-26097	DD 20/04	£11.99
Hugofox Emails INV-26226	DD 22/04	£20.99
Mrs E Sellen Clerk's Salary April 2026	1505	£419.48
Mrs E Sellen Clerk's Expenses April 2026	1506	£95.63
Lloyds Bank Charges 10032026-09042026	DD 05/05	£4.25

DAPTC Annual Subscription	1507	£264.44
Playpark Account		
Lloyds Bank Charges 10022026-09032026	DD 05/04	£4.25
Lloyds Bank Charges 10032026-09042026	DD 05/05	£4.25
Cllr Mr S Gould Grass Seed	172	£19.99
Dorset Sign Company	173	£35.00
Hunt Forest Group Ltd	174	£329.80

17. CHAIRMAN'S URGENT BUSINESS None

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Councillors were reminded that the next meeting will be an extraordinary meeting to approve the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) following the internal audit on 4th June. The next ordinary meeting will take place on 8th July 2026 and, there being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed:
(Presiding Chairman)

Date: