

MILTON ABBAS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on 9th July 2025
in the READING ROOM, MILTON ABBAS, at 7.30pm

PRESENT

Mr I. Baker (Vice Chair)
Mr P. Ford
Mrs J. Jordan
Ms D. Wyatt

Mr S. Driver (Chair)
Mr S. Gould
Mr L. Usherwood

IN ATTENDANCE Mrs E. Sellen (Clerk), Dorset Cllr Mrs E. Parker and 1 member of the general public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Mr T. Ives (holiday) and Mr S. Martin (Working)

2. DISPENSATIONS None

3. VACANCY & CO-OPTION

The vacancy arising from the resignation of Mr T. Khandwala had been duly advertised. Following a subsequent call for applications for co-option, an application had been received from Mr L. Usherwood. It was proposed by SD and unanimously agreed that LU should be co-opted to the council. LU signed his acceptance of office and joined the councillors.

4. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

SD asked whether the councillors could consider a combined effort to revive the boules pitch. DW advised that it has been weeded twice but appears that no one is using the facility. SG suggested that it should be part of the routine play park maintenance and further suggested that the park should be closed long enough to allow Mr C. Lovell to spray weed killer to repress the weeds. The Clerk agreed to discuss with CL and report back.

SD reported that four residents had expressed concerns regarding the future of the Hambro Arms when the current Landlord moves. It was agreed that SD or the Clerk should ascertain Admiral Taverns intentions for the future of The Hambro Arms.

SD stated that following concerns raised regarding the open cemetery's condition, the Reverend/PCC indicated that gardening work was scheduled for Saturday, 5 July and is ongoing. PF noted that maintenance of the open cemetery typically occurs at least once a month.

5. OPEN FORUM

The following points were raised:

Mr R. Golledge requested an update on scheduled works to Catherine's Well. It appears no works are yet planned for the upper part of Catherine's Well. The Clerk will liaise with Dorset Highways team for an update.

6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 14th May 2025 had been circulated. It was proposed by SG, seconded by DW, and agreed by those who had attended the previous meeting, that they should be accepted as a true record.

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2025 had been circulated. It was proposed by JJ, seconded by IB, and agreed by those who had attended the previous meeting, that they should be accepted as a true record.

The minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 25th June 2025 had been circulated. It was proposed by SG, seconded by JJ, and agreed by those who had attended the previous meeting, that they should be accepted as a true record.

7. MATTERS ARISING

The Welcome Pack has been revised to incorporate the Street Fair amendments, and the updated version is currently available on the website.

Information regarding DMMO T491 has been sent via email to Councillor Mrs E. Parker; however, the Clerk has not yet made a follow-up phone call.

There has been no response from Mr D. Judd about the trees at the Millennium Orchard.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

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

The clerk drew attention to the following:

Mr M. McAvoy had circulated a copy of the "Milton Abbas Experience" leaflet by email and supplied paper copies for the Councillors. MM has also circulated the leaflet to other local organisations such as Milton Abbey School, Milton Abbey and the History Group for feedback. It is his intention to make these available to the public at the Street Fair.

DAPTC have circulated a call for councils to campaign for continuing funding for Neighbourhood Plans.

Mr S. Gorson (SGn) had reported that the splits in the timbers of the child swings at the play park appear to have widened and a bolt is missing from the MUGA framework. SG (Cllr) has viewed the splits and confirms they are no worse than in previous summers and they are not going through bolt holes, but it is worth reviewing in October. SG suggested that some locknuts should be put on the MUGA and the bolts cut down. PF agreed to look with a view to fitting lockbolts. SG advised that the picnic bench by the Captain Mannering installation requires new timbers. The Clerk will arrange for the timbers to be replaced. The weekly inspections by SGn are to be reported to SG who will document the findings and then carry out a monthly inspection. The monthly inspections will be fed back into the Risk Register via the meeting report.

A resident had telephoned the Clerk to complain about the condition of the long grass at the open cemetery.

A resident had emailed to enquire regarding repainting woodwork within the Article 4 area. The Clerk had replied confirming a free of charge planning application is required.

Dorset Council have proposed a booking system for use of the Household Recycling Centres. IB clarified that this proposal has been modified, and will now be trialled at Dorchester, Wimborne, Shaftesbury and Sherborne. SG expressed concerns that this will lead to an increase in fly-tipping.

Dorset Council are hosting a Town & Parish Council engagement event re the Dorset Local Plan. LU has agreed to attend.

MM requested an update on the Jubilee Bench, which has been forwarded to JJ & FR for a response.

9. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLOR

EP confirmed receipt of the DMMO information and acknowledged that the delay in sending this to appeal has been unacceptable. She will follow this up when her new laptop is received and feedback in due course.

10. REPORTS

ELLIEGRAM/COMMUNICATIONS

SD has actioned two new requests to be added to the circulation list.

MATCH/JANE'S WOOD/MILLENNIUM GREEN

RG asked whether MATCH still exists. PF advised that Mr I. Maxwell has confirmed that there is money in the budget to repair/replace some damaged benches on the Millennium Green. RG advised that everything is fine with the Millennium Green although following the removal of the hedge from the rear garden of a house in Catherine's Well a large amount of stone has been dumped on the green and asked the Cllrs to follow up with the resident concerned.

RG commented that nothing ever happens with Jane's Wood. LU introduced himself as a tree specialist and explained that he has been asked to make recommendations on tree works in the parish. He explained that the Parish Council have a responsibility to ensure that the woods are safe within reason, but that responsibility does not automatically extend to cutting back overhanging limbs – this responsibility falls under common law rights conveyed by the Occupiers Liability Act 1954. The Parish Council must ensure woodlands are routinely inspected by specialists to assess whether they are reasonably safe, but they do not have to carry out cosmetic works as there is no "right to light" where deciduous trees are concerned (this excludes high hedges act). Landowners whose grounds are affected by overhanging growth can, subject to the appropriate approvals and skills, cut back to their boundaries as appropriate. All trees in Jane's Wood greater than 75mm diameter stem are protected, as they fall within a Conservation Area, so to carry out works the landowner must submit a free 6 week notice of intent to Dorset Council, supplying photos, location and type of tree, and a description of proposed works via the portal or by email. (A slightly more complex procedure is required for trees with a TPO). A significant number of trees within Jane's Wood

have Chalara and will be addressed in the coming months, but the Parish Council have limited funds and will be targeting necessary works over cosmetic works, guided by the Dorset Council inspection undertaken in 2023. Risk areas will be defined as footpaths and bridleways and proximity to dwellings (for example) where largest footfall is to be anticipated. [This information will be presented on the Parish Council website as part of a helpful guide to tree works.]

PLAYPARK

SG requested that the Parish Council consider having the timbers on the bandstand treated, and for the slats to the benches to be replaced. The Clerk will discuss with Mr C. Lovell.

TRANSPORT

SG confirmed that the service has been running exceptionally well and that there are often two buses per route, indicating that the service is gaining momentum.

WELCOME PACK

TK has supplied a July v17 which has been published on the website.

CSW

JJ reported that no additional volunteers have come forward.

JUBILEE BENCH None

MILTON ABBAS SPORTS CLUB None

EMERGENCY PLAN

Mrs V. Macnamara has been busy inspecting trees in the parish and reporting on pests and diseases and suggests that this should be incorporated into the Emergency Plan. SD will schedule a meeting for VM, SG, LU, SD, IB and the Clerk.

REPORTS FROM OTHER PC OFFICERS

SD asked whether the Defibrillators are still being regularly inspected and maintained. The Clerk will ask TK for an update.

SG advised that the Street Fair Committee do not require the PC land for car parking, but he feels that we ought to get it cut and tidied to minimise the tick risk to walkers. We could potentially arrange for someone to use the field as grazing land and raise an income. IB suggested it may be more sustainable to arrange for wide paths to be strimmed to maintain the public right of way. The Clerk will obtain recommendations and quotes.

11. PLANNING

Decisions None

Applications

P/FUL/2025/03515 Bagber Farm access to Bagber Farm Cottages – Retain farm track. It had been anticipated that Mr J. Hawkins would attend the meeting. Since he was not available for comments, SG suggested that a site meeting would be useful. The Clerk will liaise with JH to see what can be arranged.

P/PABA/2025/03605 Hill Dairy, Hewish Farm – Erect agricultural building – for information only.

12. REVIEW HIGHWAYS & RISK REGISTER CONCERNS

SD will follow up with Mr P. Goodland (Dorset Highways) for clarification on the Catherine's Well works timings. SD noted that the verge degradation on the road from Winterborne Whitechurch still doesn't seem to have been addressed, so this will also be followed up.

13. TREE WORKS JANES WOOD & SEYMOUR WOODLAND

LU had reviewed quotes from Shawyers (£20,523 incl VAT), S Draper (£14,064 incl VAT) and Knighton Countryside Management (£23,558 incl VAT). He noted that the Knighton quote is not greatly detailed. S Draper's quote represents a saving of £6,459 incl VAT for the same works. S Draper's team are qualified, capable and include the Chapter 8 Highways management skills for Seymour Woodland. They propose to mainly chip cuttings and leave in the woodland and form habitat piles with the remnant. The Parish Council should monitor discretely to ensure that this is carried out appropriately. It was proposed by SD, seconded by IB and unanimously agreed that S Draper should be invited to carry out the works from September onwards.

14. CONSIDER CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO REINSTATE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GRANT FUNDING (TEMPLATES SUPPLIED)

It was unanimously agreed that neighbourhood planning empowers local communities to shape the development and growth of their areas through the creation of Neighbourhood Plans. The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans requires significant time, expertise, and financial resources, often placing a burden on parish and town councils. Neighbourhood Plans contribute to more democratic, locally-informed planning decisions and support the delivery of sustainable development aligned with community needs and aspirations.

It was therefore resolved to -

1. Call upon His Majesty's Government to provide increased and sustained funding to support the development, review, and implementation of Neighbourhood Plans.
2. Request that the Government ensures funding is accessible to all communities, to promote inclusivity and fairness in the planning process.
3. Write to Mr S. Hoare (MP) and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government to communicate this resolution and advocate for enhanced support for neighbourhood planning.

15. CLERKS CONTRACT

It was proposed by SD, seconded by PF and unanimously agreed that the model contract (amended) should be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

16. AGAR ASSERTION 10

An introduction to the changes to the audit requirements had been circulated by email. The Clerk has signed up for a webinar in July. Assertion 10 – Digital and data compliance has been added to clarify controls previously included under Assertion 3. The Clerk confirmed that some standards have been met already, some require regular updates and monitoring. The Parish Council must sign up to

the ICO and have an IT Policy such as the draft template circulated by NALC. It was proposed by SD, seconded by PF and unanimously agreed that the Parish Council should adopt the template IT Policy circulated by NALC.

17. FINANCE

The receipts and payments spreadsheet, latest bank statements and list of cheques for payment were available at the meeting.

Balances:

Current A/c	£ 67,075.23
Playpark A/c	£ 8,620.04

The following cheques were authorised:

Current Account

Hugo Fox Website May 2025	DD 25/5	£11.99
Mrs E Sellen Clerk's Salary May 2025	1471	£406.32
Mrs E Sellen Clerk's Expenses May 2025	1472	£150.69
Lloyds Bank Charges 10042025-09052025	DD 3/6	£4.25
Hugo Fox Website June 2025	DD 25/6	£11.99
Mrs E Sellen Clerk's Salary June 2025	1473	£406.32
Mrs E Sellen Clerk's Expenses June 2025	1474	£53.89
Community Transport Group PlusBus contribution	1475	£350.00
DAPTC mailbox extn final year	1476	£47.75
Clear Council Insurance	1477	£686.23
Darkin Miller Ltd	1479	£200.46
Lloyds Bank Charges 10052025-09062025	DD 6/7	£8.25

Playpark Account

Lloyds Bank Charges 10042025-09052025	DD 3/6	£4.25
Mr C. Lovell Works to 31/03/2025	165	£700.00
Lloyds Bank Charges 10052025-09062025	DD 6/7	£5.05

18. CHAIRMAN'S URGENT BUSINESS None

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Councillors were reminded that the next meeting would take place on 10th September 2025 and, there being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed:

(Presiding Chairman)

Date: