MILTON ABBAS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on 12th November 2025
in the READING ROOM, MILTON ABBAS, at 7.30pm

PRESENT

Mr I. Baker (Vice Chair)	Mr S. Driver (Chair)
Mr P. Ford	Mr S. Gould
Mr T. Ives	Mrs J. Jordan
Mr L. Usherwood	Ms D. Wyatt

IN ATTENDANCE Mrs E. Sellen (Clerk) and 17 members of the general public.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Mr S. Martin (ill) and Mrs. Emma Parker (Dorset Councillor)

2. **DISPENSATIONS**

The Clerk clarified that any administrative roles undertaken for the Steering Group are carried out independently of the Parish Council and do not represent the views or position of the Parish Council in relation to the Steering Group's activities.
SG declared his role as lead for The Hambro Steering Group; with respect to item 12 he can provide background information, but not vote.

3. **CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS**

SD thanked the members of the public for their attendance.

4. **OPEN FORUM**

The following points were raised:
Mr R. Golledge asked what the Parish Council plans to do with the £77,000 bank balance. It was pointed out that £14,064 is committed to payment for tree works carried out at Jane's Wood and Seymour Woodland.
Mr & Mrs Steve and Trish Quick introduced themselves as the applicants for the planning application for the Threshing Barn at Long Ash Farm, and happy to answer any questions that may arise.
Mrs F. Robinson asked what is happening with the broken bench outside St James' Church (also raised by Ms S. Lawrence immediately prior to the meeting). It was agreed that Mr S. Bewers would remove the plaque and retain for safekeeping, prior to PF collecting the timbers for the Sports Club bonfire. It was acknowledged that the original bench had been purchased by the Street Fair Committee as a tribute to Lieutenant Commander Dickie Dyer in 1993. The Clerk will follow up with the PCC and the Street Fair Committee with respect to a potential replacement.
Mrs V. Macnamara asked for clarification regarding Wilson Wood (formerly known as Exchange Cottage Woods), regarding ownership and whether there is a permissive path. Residents added that the owner's views have been made

clear on social media. Some discussion ensued regarding permissive footpaths and LU explained what the law defines regarding permissive footpaths, but not as they relate to Wilson Wood, since he was not in possession of the full facts of this case. Mrs A. Southcombe expressed concerns regarding the cameras which have been sited in the woods. TI clarified that this is private woodland with no public right of way through the woods and pointed out the process required to remove rights to permissive access (if it is proven to exist). AS (as owner of land bounding on Wilson Wood) asked whether the owner can remove trees. LU explained that since it's within the Conservation Area, 6 weeks' notice of works is required, but due to the nature of the growth it is likely reasonable and required to remove the dead and dying ash etc. A licence will be required from the Forestry Commission and will likely come with conditions regarding restocking. VM pointed out that the two discussions need to be dealt with separately; i) is there a permissive footpath and is there a strong case for protecting it? ii) Appropriate woodland management. LU and SG will arrange to meet with the owner (who could not attend the November meeting due to work commitments) and report back at the next meeting.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2025 had been circulated. It was proposed by IB, seconded by TI, and agreed by those who had attended the previous meeting, that they should be accepted as a true record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

Scheduled highways works to Catherine's Well have been postponed until after the winter, due to delays in the schedule and forecast unfavourable weather. Interim works for localised issues will be carried out as required.

Mr P. Goodland (Highways Officer Dorset Council) has reported back on his September footways inspection. He has forwarded details of issues to the Asset Management team, but there is no guarantee that works have been scheduled.

The Clerk submitted a response to the Local Plan Consultation following circulation and discussion with Councillors via email.

Works to Jane's Wood and Seymour Woodland are now completed for 2025. A further Dorset Council inspection has been requested to address works for the 2026 program.

SG met RG at the Millennium Green to discuss grass seeding.

The application to designate The Hambro as an Asset of Community Value was submitted on 22nd September 2025 following circulation to Councillors and FR by email. The 8 week assessment period is nearing its end and a response is due within the next two weeks.

The Hambro Steering Group have met and arranged two public consultation events, which will be publicised as widely as possible.

The Community Fund have forwarded a contribution towards the Jubilee Bench representing the remainder of the Lottery Grant (cheque hand delivered to the meeting).

Dorset Council Planning department confirmed that solar panels on properties within a conservation area are included within permitted development rights and the email has been circulated to Councillors for information.
The Clerk advises that responses from Dorset Council Highways in relation to items on the Milton Abbas Risk Register have been less than adequate in addressing the concerns forwarded. The Councillors should consider whether a further site visit is required or whether it is time to escalate concerns.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence had been circulated by email or was available on the table.
The clerk drew attention to the following:
A letter from the claimant injured by the zip wire has been forwarded to the insurer for a response. Various reports have been submitted to the loss adjuster.
Three residents have emailed and a further telephone call has been received in respect of Wilson Wood. Social media posts were referenced. The Clerk has spoken to the owner of Wilson Wood at length and he is happy to attend a meeting to discuss concerns when this fits with his work schedule.
The Post Office have announced the retirement of the postmaster (Mr M Gibbons) and withdrawal of the post office facility in Milton Abbas from 31st December 2025. The online consultation period will end on 4th December 2025.
Dorset Council have confirmed that they are engaging with landowners regarding the trees opposite the Old Hospital in an attempt to avoid recurrent tree falls.
A resident reported the failure to restore his boundary fence following access for tree works in Jane's Wood. He has now emailed to confirm that the boundary has been restored to an acceptable standard.
MATCH are looking for new trustees and have requested an article be published on the Parish Council website (wording supplied by MATCH). This has been posted.
Mr G. Cooper supplied photo evidence of a trip hazard on the pavement outside Little Westwood which is currently disguised under the fallen leaves. He had reported it to Dorset Council without a response. The Clerk forwarded it to the Highways team and reported through the online reporting system.
Mr A. Whale emailed to say that the beech trees overhanging his property have grown too big for him to maintain safely and are overbearing on his property. LU visited and confirmed that the aggrievance is justified and the trees require significant reduction in height and spread so that AW can continue to safely manage them on an annual basis (within his common law rights). The Clerk has identified that these trees would have been a Matchpatch responsibility, however Matchpatch are no longer including the orchard and boundary within their remit of works and likely works will fall to the Parish Council. The Clerk will obtain quotes.
The Sports Club have enquired about the placement of a bin for disposal of dog waste. The Clerk has obtained information about the process and costs and forwarded to the Sports Club for comment.
Two separate incidents were reported on the Milton Abbas Play Park Facebook Messenger chat. The felled gate post was reported on 2nd November and missing bolts on the fireman's pole were reported on 3rd November. The Clerk requested

the groundsman Mr C. Lovell to attend on 3rd to ascertain materials required for the post, and following the report about the fireman's pole, SG and PF arranged to visit the site on the morning of 4th November to carry out a visual inspection of the play equipment and arrange repairs for the identified faults.
SD has received a complaint about the placement of a postbox outside a property in the street. The Clerk confirmed that this is a planning issue and should be forwarded to Dorset Council.
SD has received an enquiry about changing the colour of window frames within the street. The Clerk confirmed that due to Article 4 this will require a planning application but should be free of charge.

8. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLOR None

9. REPORTS

ELLIEGRAM/COMMUNICATIONS

SD advised that the usual communications continue to be circulated by Elliegram, with the odd bounced emails which will be removed from the list.

MATCH/JANE'S WOOD/MILLENNIUM GREEN

RG reported that following the removal of the chalk flint to the rear of a property in Catherine's Well, the remaining exposed roots and ruts are still too extreme for the mower to handle and there are still Wessex Internet cables exposed.
SG will contact Wessex Internet to ask them to bury the cables as it is now a health and safety hazard.

PLAYPARK

SG has met with CL and liaised to close the play park for 1 day, weather permitting, for weed clearance. The fence panels will be removed at the same time. SG's contact number is now displayed on the play park sign as an emergency contact, but it is very small and easy to miss, so he will order a dedicated sign to be more prominently displayed.
SG provided some additional information regarding the site visit with PF advising that CL replaced the gate post and arranged for longer coach bolts for the fireman's pole. Whilst other maintenance was discussed (benches and bandstand still need treating), there were no other equipment failures to attend to.

TRANSPORT None

WELCOME PACK None

CSW

The spare SID battery has been returned to Winterborne Stickland.

JUBILEE BENCH

The Jubilee bench is now safely stowed in FR's garage. A local police officer has made some suggestions regarding security marking of the bench (although CCTV may not be a feasible option!). FR will supply a sketch location plan to the Councillors so that an appropriate can be circulated and agreed and minuted at the January meeting.

MILTON ABBAS SPORTS CLUB

IB reported that they are currently progressing their application for licencing.

EMERGENCY PLAN
VM reported that she has been taking advice on the formation of a WhatsApp group for Defibrillator access / issues and reports for trees / fire etc. It would likely require 4-5 resident admins to maintain and she called on the Parish Council to decide whether they support the formation and how peoples contact information can be acquired to add to the group. The Clerk is happy to receive all contact information and forward to VM and admins for inclusion. SD suggested that an article can be included in The Bulletin, circulated by Elliegram and publicised on social media. TK advised that he'd be happy to be included as an admin. TK reported that one of the defibrillators has a battery issue which he is still trying to resolve. Additionally it is worth noting that there is a defibrillator down at Mr Kyall's farm. TK will put out a Facebook notice advising that the second defibrillator is temporarily unavailable.
REPORTS FROM OTHER PC OFFICERS None

10. PLANNING
Decisions
P/FUL/2024/06969 The Croft Delcombe – Erection of 1No dwelling (demolition of existing) - Granted
P/FUL/2025/04431 Chalk Stone 1A Catherine's Well – Retain storage building and formation of hardened forecourt - withdrawn
P/LBC/2025/05068 Damer Cottage 41 Milton Abbas – Rethatch using water reed in place of wheat straw - Granted
P/PAPA/2025/05956 Land at Delcombe Wood, Ibberton Hill to Woolland Hill Jct and viewpoint - lane Woolland – Construct agricultural track – Prior approval not required
Applications
P/FUL/2025/05471 & P/LBC/2025/05472 Long Ash Farm Threshing Barn – Convert barn to dwelling. SD complimented the aesthetics of the application. It was agreed that there were no further comments.
P/HOU/2025/05987 Spring Cottage, 1 Long Close – Erect single storey rear extension with roof lantern (Demolish boot room). No comments.
P/FUL/2025/06359 Land adjacent to Chalk Stone 1A Catherine's Well – Retain storage building. No comments.

11. REVIEW HIGHWAYS & RISK REGISTER CONCERNS
SD reported that Highways had carried out a great job of resolving the subsidence of the road adjacent to the Farm Shop.
PF reiterated GC's observations regarding the pavement down from the top of the Street. IB suggested that DWP should be asked to remove the leaves as soon as possible as it's currently safer to walk in the road than on the pavements.

12. THE HAMBRO STEERING GROUP UPDATE AND REQUEST FOR FUNDS
Ms J. Macleod reported on the activities of the Steering Group and explained that to date costs have been kept to a minimum whilst the feedback is reviewed. (room hire, printing, website and email costs). JM outlined next steps, including

membership of PlunkettUK, legal costs, survey fees etc and requested the Parish Council to consider contributing £1,500 towards the cost of these next steps.
SG outlined some community engagement results, including over 200 people signed up to the circulation list, 81 responses to the questionnaire, 85% of whom feel retention of the pub is important to the village. 72% of respondents are willing to invest (36% under £500 and 16% over £1,000).
SD asked for greater clarification of what the £1,500 was required for. A long discussion regarding the condition of the pub and the current line up of prospective purchasers. SD suggested that the Steering Group should present a breakdown of specific costs that they need funded and the Parish Council would review these specific costs rather than hand over a sum of money arbitrarily.

13. BUDGET AND PRECEPT
The Clerk reminded Councillors that the budget will have to be submitted by 31st January to Dorset Council and requested Councillors to email estimates of funds required for 2026/2027 for items such as defibrillator maintenance, the BT kiosk, play park etc to be forwarded by email during December, for circulation prior to the meeting.

14. MOWER REPAIR
Following the end of the season breakdown of the mower and communications from RG's preferred repairer that it would take too long for him to carry out repairs, a quotation for repair by Hunt Forest Group of £304.11 plus VAT was circulated to the Councillors by email. The clerk wished for the Councillors to confirm whether this quote was acceptable. RG has seen the quote and SG advised that the mower looks like new and in his view this is a very reasonable price from a reputable repairer. It was proposed by SD, seconded by SG and unanimously agreed that this quote should be accepted.

15. 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	£77,608.97
Playpark A/c	£8,602.24

The following cheques were authorised:
Current Account

Hugo Fox Website	DD 18/9	£11.99
Hugo Fox Emails	DD 22/9	£20.99
Mrs E Sellen Clerk's Salary September 2025	01484	£485.28
Mrs E Sellen Clerk's Expenses September 2025	01485	£29.09
Lloyds Bank Charges 10082025-09092025	DD 6/10	£4.25
Hugo Fox Website	DD 18/10	£11.99
Hugo Fox Emails	DD 22/10	£20.99

Mrs E Sellen Clerk's Salary October 2025	01486	£419.48
Mrs E Sellen Clerk's Expenses October 2025	01487	£98.35
Lloyds Bank Charges 10092025-09102025	DD 04/11	£5.05
Mrs F Robinson Jubilee Bench	01488	£404.10
S Draper Jane's Wood & Seymour Woodland	01489	£14,064.00
BDO External Ltd Assurance Review	01490	£252.00

Playpark Account

Lloyds Bank Charges 10082025-09092025	DD 6/10	£4.25
Mr R Golledge Mower Fuel reimbursed	0167	£83.90
Lloyds Bank Charges 10092025-09102025	DD 4/11	£4.25
Dorset Sign Company	0168	£25.00

16. CHAIRMAN'S URGENT BUSINESS None

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Councillors were reminded that the next meeting would take place on 14th January 2026 and, there being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Signed:

(Presiding Chairman)

Date: