



**Minutes of the Merriott Parish Council meeting held on Monday 13th April 2026, 19.00 in the
Community Pavilion**

Those present:

Cllr Jeremy Graham (JG/Vice Chair)	Cllr Rich Tucker (RT)
Cllr Deb Matthewson (DM)	Cllr Caroline Reed (CR)
Cllr David Aslett (DA)	Somerset Council – Cllr Steve Ashton (SA)
Cllr David Shillibier (DS)	

Apologies for absence:

Cllr Brian Rogers (BR)

26/001 Public Open Sessions

The Vice Chair (at present Acting Chair) opened the meeting at 19.03

- DM raised the request for January and February 2026 Open Spaces Reports to be added to the Website. RT will send through to DM (stepping in as Clerk during recruitment of a new Clerk).
- Jane Bailey, representative from the Merriott Allotment Association, attended the meeting to inform Councillors of the reason for a grant request of £160. This was an item (Number 8.) on the agenda but brought forward to the Open Session. All agreed that the request would be supported once receipts received. **Proposed DS/Seconded JG**
- Cllr Jo Roundell-Greene was unable to attend the meeting; Cllr Steve Ashton attended in her place. SA informed us of the substantial changes to planning, with consultation due to close on 24th April 2026.

Merriott Parish Council (MPC) may be required to hold extraordinary meetings to meet the time frame planning will now be governed by. Housing developments of 9 or less properties will no longer be submitted to planning and be dealt with by the designated County Planning Officer.

Appeals will be fast tracked and decisions will be based on the original information submitted.

All the above has been implemented to reduce the requirement of Central Government intervention. Somerset has been given a 75,000 house build target.

26/002 Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interest

RT has an expenses claim on the Financial report
DM has an expenses claim on the Financial report

26/003 Minutes of February 2026 MPC meeting

a. To review and resolve that the Minutes of the March 2026 meeting are an accurate record.

All agreed

Proposed JG/Seconded DS

b. To consider any matters arising within the minutes, not on the agenda

No requests

26/004 Governance

- a. JG has agreed to be the second name on the County Emergency Contact list. DM to forward details to County
- b. IT Policy was agreed and adopted, with a review in the year ahead to confirm alignment with County Policy and greater depth of guidance for each section. DS requested a small amendment re the 3.6 IT backup time frame to be agreed with our IT support contractor.
- c. SLCC will be renewed, especially as a new Clerk will be in situ in the near future. The organisation does assist Clerks and Councillors with information and access to training, including Cyber Security etc. Agreed by all. **Action** – DM will purchase the membership and request a refund claim for the next MPC meeting.
- d. The Microsoft software was required immediately in order to support continued documentation development etc. The online purchase was agreed by all through the financial request and has been purchased as a lifelong upload by DM and claim has been added to the financial payments.
- e. Paula Harding is our new Internal Auditor and will support the AGAR submission. Paula is very familiar with Scribe and will be accessed as and when to improve the reporting and recording of our present Scribe system.
- f. Cllrs reviewed the Crewkerne Grant Policy and agreed to adopt a similar process. **Action** – DM to write a Grant Policy and circulate in preparation for the May meeting.

26/005 Update from Clerk

In the absence of a Clerk CR gave an update of our current position in relation to the recruitment of a new Clerk. MPC had 21 applicants, with another being submitted post closure of the advert and CR and DM are in the process of shortlisting for interview. Interview dates to be confirmed within the week and candidates informed via email/Indeed.

26/006 Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)

This will be completed by the Open Spaces team, supported by DM. The PSPO will be for the recreation ground and is a required update of the present ban in place of dogs on the whole of the recreation field and surrounding area.

26/007 Merriott Allotment grant request

This was agreed in the Public Open Session and noted in **section 26/001**

26/008 Single quotation agreement for Monkhouse Lane work

All agreed that due to the complication for other contractors offering quotes and challenges due to access to the land, in this instance it is acceptable to go ahead with the quote from Tom Wallis. Highways and Pathways Team to contact Tom and confirm a start date. DM has also asked Rights of Way (RoW at County) for any financial support considering this is an area they cover but not on the list for this year.

All working party reports can be found in the appendices and therefore the minutes will give an outline of the discussions held in addition within the Council.

26/009 Finance

Finance Reports and Budgets

(Appx 5, 6, 7)

- a. Year end report was submitted as an appendix prior to the meeting and DS gave a verbal explanation of the financial position of the Council. The position is positive and work is being undertaken to ensure Scribe is accurate, supported by our Internal Auditor, with CR continuing to 'tidy up' the recording on Scribe and to accurately record payments and receipts etc. in the correct lines. **All agreed**
- b. Payments – **All agreed**
- c. Receipts – some line alterations to be actioned on Scribe with thanks to CR for the continued undertaking of this work – **All agreed**
- d. Bank reconciliation is being actioned but due to the work being undertaken on Scribe this will be delayed. A report was not tabled but a verbal report was given by DS based on the bank statements and Scribe. An extraordinary meeting will be scheduled for all to review prior to the start of the AGAR submission. **All agreed**
- e. Monthly Bank Monitor – Verbal report given and evidenced in Yearly Report – All Agreed

26/010 Planning

- a. Report can be viewed in appendixes submitted for the meeting **(Appx 10)**
Responses to the Planning Officers relating to all applications on Appx' 10 will be written and submitted.
- b. JG requested all Cllrs considered road names for the Church Street development and submitted any ideas to the Clerk. Merriott Heritage will also be asked for their thoughts.

26/011 Highways and Pathways Appx' 122) 9

Appendix went to Cllrs before the meeting and no further information to report. All confirmed they had read the report and no questions submitted.

26/012 Items for next meeting

Nothing requested at the meeting

Meeting closed at 21.02

26/013 Next meeting Monday 11th May 2026 at 19.00 in Community Pavilion

Signed as accurate recording by Chair..... Printed Name

Date