

MILTON ERNEST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes- 12th March 2026

1	Meeting started 8pm Present Cllr Ross (Chair), Cllr Dipple, Cllr Lane and Cllr Sizer Cllr Goldwin (Vice Chair) absence was noted and accepted- Cllr Towler (Borough Cllr) was not present
2	No declarations of interest in items on the agenda
3	-
4	Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th February 2026 were accepted
5	Clerk's report on actions <i>For items not included on the agenda.</i> • The grass cutting tender document had been received from three suppliers- one was the incumbent- four were approached - one declined- An update was given re Warners, Lloyds, Brown's and Madisson's- See Item 15 for tender selected • Glass Recycling invoice has been submitted to BBC for £528 for 2025/2026 Financial Year • The damaged brick pillar to Radwell Rd entry to playing fields was repaired 7th March- Cllr Dipple attended- however after an unsatisfactory repair- was redone 12th March- now satisfactory- 1 side has 1 row of bricks (more than the other- 13 versus 12 courses) as initially the case- reinstated same as before.
6	Correspondence received since submitted the last meeting (requiring council attention) • Road Safety Letter received at the meeting highlighting issues on Radwell Rd regarding speeding vehicles.
7	Finance • Payments approved ○ Donation for Every Voice's Charity- had attended the Xmas Tree switch on - £100- already paid ○ Clerk March salary ○ Litter picker payment Finance report to be added to minutes Internal Auditor has been approached and ready to receive 25/26 Accounts once prepared. AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return) to be presented in May, to be submitted by 30th June to Mazars Forvis. Will be full Audit as over £25k income in 25/26
8	Village welfare Playground update- Cllr Ross, Cllr Dipple and Cllr Sizer met with candidate supplier- they offer a 20 year warranty. Other suppliers approached only offer 15 years. Preferred supplier will also support and signpost grant applications. Will approach residents and school for design input and feedback

MILTON ERNEST PARISH COUNCIL

	A resident had previously suggested we approach Bedfordia to confirm they own the land and on what terms it is leased- also commented at last Surgery. Cllr Ross confirmed this communication was already in-hand.
10	Police Matters Data shared showing 8 x recorded incidences in February.
9	No item 9
11	Reports by Representatives - To receive feedback from the working groups - Update from the Finance Working Group- have not met since December- need to complete annual review of any standing orders or direct debits - Update on the Biodiversity Plan- reviewed and all present agreed to adopt- Minor amend suggested to review periodically- quarterly instead of annually. Thanks to former Cllr Atkinson and Cllr Sizer. - Update from the Environmental Volunteer Group (EVG)- Thanks to EVG for making WI garden look great with the new plant growth now becoming well established. - Also noted and not related to the EVG, a separate action from Volunteer Mr Hilliard to remove litter along the A6 has made it look much better - Update from the NDP Working Group- update post Chapman Planning meeting. A free initial meeting to be held on 27th March. A quote has been received of £3,950 plus VAT to proceed with the NDP update to ensure it remains valid following its 5th Anniversary in November. Recommendation by Cllr Ross that we should proceed with the update - all in attendance agreed. The focus is to be, to minimise additional housing and consider flooding risks. Will be added to April Agenda to share overall plan to update after kick-off discussion with Chapman Planning. Clerk and Cllr Ross to approach Beds RCC/ Cllr Towler to seek any possible funding towards revising NDP. - Update from the Events Committee- post quiz- £900 was raised after costs. Thanks to Anita, Cllr Lane and Cllr Sizer for manning the bar
12	Parish Events No future events discussed
13	Planning matters - APPLICATION NO: 26/00331/FUL Full Planning Application PROPOSAL: Erection of a car parking area consisting of up to 148 spaces, along with column lighting and boundary fencing. LOCATION : Yarls Wood Immigration Removal Centre Twinwood Road Clapham Bedford Bedfordshire MK41 6AE No objection - Builders Yard B2- no objection

MILTON ERNEST PARISH COUNCIL

	Update re Maltings, or that of the neighbouring property- Cllr Dipple. Bin store still there, to follow up with Enforcement Officer.
14	Borough Councillor Report - Report from Borough Councillor Martin Towler circulated - Budget £55m shortfall- £80m to be received from Central Government for 2025-2027 - Green bins started again for Spring - Food Waste collection to start from end March - Unanimous BBC Cllr objection to East Park Energy- proposed solar farm
15	Parish Council Updates - Highway Issue - A willow tree with roots blocking drains has now been removed in Marsh Lane- Bedfordia funded as the tree was located on their property - Various pot holes identified and to be fixed - Speeding- Clerk to write to Sharnbrook School asking if bus can avoid going through village and use New Rd instead. - Seek funding for replacement SID in Radwell Road near Huntsmans Way- costs TBC but understood to be circa. £5k - Revised Litter Picker contract- route updated- intention is for the whole village to be covered in rotation over a month in the future - Update on Parish Councillor Recruitment- one enquiry form sent (post meeting co-option form received back from resident) - Discussion of Tender for grass cutting and selection- Three quotes received £9,500- £5,500, two similar in value- after much discussion and debate Cllrs agreed to stay with Warners as a known supplier and known quality, with cost remaining competitive - Proposal for Harry Robson memorial- plaque and possible sites were shown- location to be agreed with his widow- delegated to Cllr Ross. - PC Surgery update held 25/2/26- Topics covered Site 518 opposition and possible replacement sites, NDP renewal and question as to who owns the Playing Field – notes attached
16	To adopt Model NALC 2025 Standing Orders and Financial regulations-circulated. To be considered in April after detailed review by Cllrs, Financial regs to be reviewed by Finance Working Group with Standing Orders to be compared to current ones.
	Public Open Session- Speeding in Radwell Road was raised- 20 mph limits was raised as an option. Cllrs discuss potential to initiate a local Speed Watch group. A resident indicated an appetite to support such a venture. Clerk to enquire Meeting closed 9.45pm
	Closed Session- HR matters

MILTON ERNEST PARISH COUNCIL

	• Clerk Pension & Probation period -post review update shared with Cllrs by HR Working Group- Clerk not present.
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PC Surgery Feedback – 25/2/26

1 x Councillors in attendance – Cllr P. Lane plus Clerk

5 x Villagers in attendance

The following topics raised for attention of the Parish Council:

- NDP- how to protect against Site 518 and propose new plots
- Site 518 and emails sent to Clerk from group of residents
- Who owns land- Playing field- permission from Bedfordia before spending £85k

16th February 2026	Church grant	Milton Ernest PCC	Grant	Payment			£ 1,250.00	£ -	£ 1,250.00	£24,629.66		
26th February 2026	Cllr Goldwin- Quiz Bar Licence	Cristina Goldwin	Expenses	Payment			£ 21.00	£ -	£ 21.00	£24,608.66		
28th February 2026	Litter picking	Lily Tolley	Litter picker	Payment			£ 50.00	£ -	£ 50.00	£24,558.66		
28th February 2026	Staff Costs- Clerk	Saghib Ali	Salary	Payment			£ 234.61	£ -	£ 234.61	£24,324.05		
2nd March 2026	Community Initiatives	L Backhurst	Donation	Payment			£ 100.00	£ -	£ 100.00	£24,224.05		
2nd March 2026	Village Hall	Village Hall	Room hire	Payment			£ 60.00	£ -	£ 60.00	£24,164.05		
4th March 2026	Information Technology	Ionos Cloud	Ionos - Internet	Payment			£ 4.20	£ 0.70	£ 3.50	£24,159.85	£24,094.85	variance £65.00
											balance 4th March 2026	

MILTON ERNEST PARISH COUNCIL

Balances -March 2026

HSBC Current (Forecast)

Total funds held

£

24,095

24,095

Allocation of Balance Sheet

Community Initiatives

Precept Reserve (3 months)

Riverside Meadow Plan Reserve

Tree Maintenance Reserve

Village Entry Gates Reserve

Defib reserve

Village Celebrations Reserve

General reserve

Total allocation

8,000

4,222

2,000

1,000

1,000

500

1,000

6,373

24,095

Balancing figure

Playground

MILTON ERNEST PARISH COUNCIL

Financial Year 2025/26

Balances - March 2026

<u>Income</u>		YTD (Actual) Gross	YTD (Actual) Net	Annual Budget 2025/26	YTD plus Mar	As at March 2026 Budget Variance
Precept		17,156	17,156	17,156	17,156	
VAT reclaim		1,896	1,896			
CIL Income		0	0	0	0	
Community Initiatives						
Bank Interest		0	0	0	0	
Other income						
Grass cutting grant		891	891	849	849	-42
Other grants		10,030	10,030	0	0	-10,030
Bank compensation		300	300	0	0	-300
Book sales		0	0	0	0	0
Summer fete		1,625	1,625	0	0	-1,625
Events		0	0	0	0	0
Ward fund		0	0		0	0
Play equipment donations		10	10	0	0	-10
Glass recycling		1,108	1,108	1,625	1,625	517
		13,964	13,964	2,474	2,474	
Total Income		33,016	33,016	19,630	19,630	
				19,672	19,672	
<u>Outgoings</u>						
Staff Costs - Clerk		4,304	4,304	4,000	4,772	-304
Clerks Office Allowance		0	0	312	39	312
Staff Costs - Litter Picking & Playing Field Checks		550	550	1,200	600	650
Staff costs		4,854	4,854	5,512	5,411	1,165
Grass Cutting and hedge Riverside Meadow		6,528	5,440	5,225	5,440	-215
Annual Cut (Riverside Meadow)		600	500	499	500	-1
Clock and churchyard maintenance		0	0	1,000	0	1,000
Playing field inspections		224	203	600	203	397
Playground maintenance		0	0	0	0	0
General Maintenance		1,797	1,497	200	1,497	-1,297
Tree works		0	0	800	0	800
pen spaces & community facilities		9,149	7,640	8,324	7,640	
Internal Audit		160	160	150	160	-10
External Audit		0	0	210	0	210
ICO Annual Fee		0	0	35	0	35
Insurance		955	955	700	955	-255
Playing field rent and insurance		0	0	650	0	650
Payroll fees		0	0	380	60	380
Hall hire		368	368	120	368	-248
Bank Charges		33	33	0	33	-33
Information Technology		277	237	351	241	114
Stationery/expenses		0	0	144	0	144
Memorial wreath		0	0	20	0	20
Membership/Affiliations		186	186	186	186	0
Training		45	45	200	45	155
Admin		2,024	1,984	3,146	2,048	1,162
Neighbourhood Watch		135	135	250	135	115
Volunteer Group		0	0	200	0	200
Village Xmas Tree		3,609	3,033	1,440	3,033	-1,593
Events		65	65	250	65	185
Ecology study		0	0	0	0	0
Contingency (VAT)		0	0	0	0	0
Other		3,809	3,233	2,140	3,233	-1,093
The Villager		0	0	250	0	250
Community Initiatives		2,452	2,356	300	2,356	-2,056
Grants						
Bedford BC Rural Grant		10,000	10,000	0	10,000	-10,000
Donations transfer		30	30	0	30	-30
		12,482	12,386	550	12,386	-11,836
Total Outgoings		32,318	30,097	19,672	30,718	-10,602

2,874

2,395
32,492

Defib

asset not spend