

Melchbourne and Yelden Parish Council

Chairman: Peter Wilkinson

Clerk: David Brough

MINUTES

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 19th November 2025 at 8pm in Yelden Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Craig Young (Vice Chairman chaired the meeting), Paul Alexander, Jason Gordon, Frank Morgan, Sarah Croft, Mark Fitzsimmons, Simon Paynter, David Brough (Clerk).

- 1 **Apologies for absence accepted:** Peter Wilkinson (Away).
Borough Councillor Martin Towler (Clash of meetings with full council).
- 2 **Declarations of interest in items on the agenda:** None.
- 3 **Requests to grant dispensations for declared interests:** None.
- 4 **Public Open Session:** Two residents attended on behalf of the Stop East Park Energy group and asked the council to object to the proposed East Park Solar Farm. Their reasons for objecting included the scale of the development, loss of productive farmland, construction and HGV impacts, noise, limited local economic benefit, and the overall effect on the landscape and neighbouring communities.
- 5 **Approval of the minutes of the parish council meeting** held on 16th July 2025.
Resolved to approve the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 6 **Clerk's report on the Action List**
 - Allotments hedge: It was noted that the hedge by the allotments had kindly been cut by a resident rather than the council's contractor, Agriplant.
 - Banking: The new Unity Trust bank accounts are in the process of being opened – welcome letters with login details expected imminently.
 - Yelden Village Hall defib: The Clerk is in the process of handing this over to a representative of the Village Hall Committee, who has kindly agreed to take over the checks.
- 7 **Finance**
 - *To approve payments and note receipts.*
Resolved to approve the payments listed in the appendix.
 - *To review the bank balance and the "Spend vs Budget" analysis.*
The council noted the balances and analysis with no concerns.
 - *To receive the 2024/25 audit from Mazars and consider any remedial actions.*
The council received the audit and noted that only one minor issue was noted by Mazars, related to a missing document on the website which had been promptly resolved.
- 8 **Melchbourne and Yelden Litterpicks 2026**
To agree dates for litterpicks of both villages.
It was **resolved** to hold Melchbourne and Yelden litterpicks on Saturday 21st March 2026. **Edit:** Since the meeting, the equipment was not available for the chosen date so 28th March was chosen instead. The events will be run by councillors to enable use of the parish council's insurance again – a Suppliers Agreement will be put in place to use the equipment belonging to the borough council.
- 9 **Melchbourne Residents' Questionnaire**
To receive information from the Melchbourne residents' questionnaire undertaken by Councillors Wilkinson and Croft.
Cllr Croft updated the council that responses were still being collated and analysis will be performed in time for the January 2026 council meeting.

David Brough, Clerk, Melchbourne & Yelden Parish Council
E-mail: clerk@melch Meld-yeld-pc.gov.uk

10 **Speed sign batteries**

To agree the purchase of two replacement batteries for the Speed Indication Devices (SIDs).

Resolved to purchase two replacement batteries and a charger.

11 **Crime report**

Reported crime since the last council meeting – noted by the council:

Offence Start Date	Recorded Date	Offence	Address 1	Address 2
14/09/2025	18/09/2025	OTHER CRIMINAL DAMAGE	Church Lane	Yelden
25/09/2025	04/10/2025	THEFT OR UNAUTH TAKING OF A MOTOR VEH	High Street	Yelden
14/08/2025	16/08/2025	OTHER CRIMINAL DAMAGE	Knotting Road	Melchbourne

12 **Planning applications and enforcement:**

a) New applications received since the last meeting (to include any received after the agenda is issued up to the date of the meeting).

25/01918/LDE Certificate to confirm lawful existing use as a single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) with associated residential curtilage.

Hill Farm Melchbourne Road Riseley Bedford Bedfordshire MK44 1BY

It was agreed that there was no response the parish council could provide for this application.

b) East Park Energy Solar Farm proposal

To consider the East Park Energy Solar Farm proposal and agree any parish council response.

Background: Brockwell Storage and Solar Ltd has submitted a Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the East Park Energy solar farm, a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project spanning c.1,900 acres north-west of St Neots. The project will be determined by the Secretary of State following examination by the Planning Inspectorate. Parish councils are consultees only.

The parish council **resolved** to register as an Interested Party with the Government's Planning Inspectorate and submit an objection to the East Park Energy proposal, which comprises a nationally significant infrastructure project for a 400 MW solar photovoltaic farm with a 100 MW battery energy storage system, covering approximately 1,900 acres of land. The objection raises concerns including the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, the excessive scale and industrialisation of the rural landscape, cumulative landscape and visual impacts with other schemes, environmental, heritage and biodiversity harm, construction impacts on local communities and highways, and safety concerns relating to the battery energy storage system. The council considers the proposal to conflict with national planning policy and has requested refusal unless the scheme is fundamentally redesigned and reduced. The full objection can be found in the appendix.

c) Monitoring of applications and enforcement (for information)

The following is a long-standing item of enforcement:

Reference: 14/00392/UNAUTU. Location: Hill Farm, Melchbourne Road, Riseley. Details: Investigation regarding the right to live on the land. History: Planning application 22/01571/MAF was refused by BBC Planning in November 2022, 23/01212/FUL was refused in August 2023, 23/02188/OUT in December 2023, and 24/00466/FUL in September 2024. Government Appeal for 23/02188/OUT dismissed in February 2025.

13 **Councillors' Reports and Updates:**

- Ward Councillor – Cllr Martin Towler
Cllr Towler was not present due to a clash with a borough council meeting. His report was circulated to councillors.
- Chelveston Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund Trust
No meeting to be reported, but there is one in the coming week.
- Highways, drains and streetlights
Councillors raised that there were potholes requiring repair – pictures to be sent to the Clerk to be logged with the borough council.
- Report on Speeding (SIDs – Speed Indication Devices) – Cllr Morgan
No further report following the item on the agenda to purchase replacement batteries.
- Report on River Til/Yelden Flood group – Cllr Alexander
It was reported that there was no flooding following the recent heavy rainfall, but the increased flow did help clear debris from the River Til.

David Brough, Clerk, Melchbourne & Yelden Parish Council

E-mail: clerk@melchyd-pc.gov.uk

14 **Business for future agendas**

- Request from Cllr Young for an item to consider uses for the CIL monies recently received

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday, 21st January 2026 at 8pm – Melchbourne Village Hall.

Melchbourne and Yelden Parish Council
Payments & Receipts - November 2025

Date Paid	Category	Payee/Payer	Desc	Transfers	Receipts	Payments Gross	VAT	Cashbook Balance	Bank balance
Lloyds Bank								£ 31,599.84	£ 31,599.84
17/07/2025	Village Hall Hire	Yelden VH				£ 20.00			
17/07/2025	Village Hall Hire	Melchbourne VH				£ 20.00			
21/07/2025	Bank Charges	LBG				£ 4.25			
19/08/2025	Bank Charges	LBG				£ 4.25			
08/09/2025	Streetlights: Elect	NPower	NPower Streetlight			£ 157.71	£ 7.51		
11/09/2025	Payroll fees	Red Shoes	Qtrly payroll fees			£ 34.80	£ 5.80		
15/09/2025	Precept Income	BBC	Precept Part 2		£ 4,455.00				
19/09/2025	Bank Charges	LBG				£ 4.25			
45922	Streetlights: Elect	NPower	NPower Streetlight			£ 32.41	£ 1.54		
24/09/2025	Staff Costs	Multiple				£ 1,474.16			
20/10/2025	Bank Charges	LBG				£ 4.25			

Melchbourne and Yelden Parish Council
Spend vs Budget report

2025/26 P&L (Net of VAT) - As at November 2025

<u>Income</u>		YTD (Actual) Net	Annual Budget	Full year (Est)	Variance
Precept Income		8,910	8,910	8,910	0
Other Income	CIL Income	9,820	0	9,820	
		9,820	0	9,820	9,820
VAT Refund			0		0
Allotment Income		15	13	15	2
CIL Receipts (Section 106)		0	0	0	0
Bank Interest		0	16	400	384
Total Income		18,745	8,939	19,145	10,206
<u>Outgoings</u>					
Employment Costs	Staff Costs	3,953	5,483	5,483	
		3,953	5,483	5,483	0
	Village Hall Hire	60	90		
	Payroll fees	44	80		
	ICO - Annual Data Protection	47	35		
	Membership BATPC	0	110		
	Training: Councillors	0	15		
	Clerk Expenses	0	16		
	Bank Charges	30	0		
	Internal Audit	160	160		
	External Audit	0	0		
	Website running cost	150	270		
	Election costs	0	30		
Admin		490	806	806	0
Insurance	Insurance	446	450	446	4
	Maintenance	0	1,200	0	
	Streetlights: Elect	219	500	500	
Parks and open spaces		219	1,700	500	1,200
Grants out	Grant Honeycomb	0			
		0	200	200	0
Miscellaneous	Defib Maintenance & Speed sign accrual	0	300	150	
		0	300	150	150
Total Outgoings		5,108	8,939	7,585	1,354
Year To Date Net P&L		13,637	0		11,560

Melchbourne and Yelden Parish Council

2025/26 - Balance - November 2025

		£
Lloyds Current Account	Current Balance (Forecast)	33,086

Allocation of Balance Sheet

Remainder of budgeted expenditure	2,500	
CIL	9,820	
River Til Reserve	9,956	
Allotments Reserve	1,422	
General reserve	9,388	Balancing figure

Date: 29th November 2025

Project: East Park Energy – 400 MW Solar PV and 100 MW BESS

Planning Inspectorate Ref: ENO10141

Status: Interested Party Registration

Body: Melchbourne and Yelden Parish Council

Representation Summary

Melchbourne and Yelden Parish Council **objects** to the proposed development on the following material grounds.

1. Loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land

The scheme would develop approximately 1,900 acres, with 74% classified as Grade 2 and 3a BMV land. This represents an unjustified loss of high-quality agricultural land and conflicts with national policy requiring BMV to be avoided.

2. Excessive scale and inappropriate industrialisation of a rural landscape

The proposal is of a scale equivalent to a major industrial complex, significantly exceeding what is appropriate in this rural location. The development would permanently alter landscape character, tranquillity and the rural setting of nearby settlements.

3. Cumulative landscape and visual effects

Existing and consented schemes in the immediate area would combine with this proposal to create an industrialised zone of approximately 2,800 acres, resulting in unacceptable cumulative harm.

4. Inefficient and unsuitable siting for a transmission-scale solar facility

Estimated average output from the proposed 400 MW installation is around 40 MW, reflecting the low efficiency of large-scale solar generation in this location. There remains significant untapped potential on rooftops, brownfield land and car-park canopies. The proposal does not demonstrate that use of productive farmland is necessary.

5. Environmental, heritage and biodiversity impacts

The development would introduce substantial impacts on heritage settings, landscape, wildlife, soil condition and local environmental quality. These impacts arise directly from the scale and siting of the scheme.

6. Construction impacts on local communities

The multi-year construction phase, heavy goods vehicle movements, piling noise and overall disruption would materially harm residential amenity and affect the capacity of the rural road network.

7. Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) safety concerns

The proposed large-scale lithium-ion BESS carries known risks relating to fire and explosion, with current UK regulation and national emergency-response guidance still evolving. The proximity of the installation to residential areas raises safety concerns that have not been adequately addressed.

8. Failure to meet NPPF requirements for appropriate siting

The combination of BMV land loss, landscape harm, cumulative impact, construction disruption and BESS safety issues demonstrates that the proposal does not represent an appropriately sited

renewable-energy scheme. The development does not comply with national policy tests requiring minimisation of environmental harm and proper regard for local character.

Overall Position

Melchbourne and Yelden Parish Council objects to the East Park Energy NSIP.

The council considers that the proposal, as submitted, would cause significant and long-lasting harm to agricultural land, rural landscape character, heritage settings, biodiversity, local amenity and community safety.

The council requests that the Examining Authority give substantial weight to these impacts and seeks refusal unless the scheme is fundamentally redesigned and reduced.

Kind regards,

David Brough

Clerk to Melchbourne and Yelden Parish Council