

Melchbourne and Yelden Parish Council

Chairman: Peter Wilkinson

Clerk: David Brough

MINUTES

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 22nd January 2026 at 8pm in Melchbourne Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Craig Young (Vice Chairman chaired the meeting), Paul Alexander, Jason Gordon, Frank Morgan, Sarah Croft, Mark Fitzsimmons, Peter Wilkinson, David Brough (Clerk), Borough Councillor Martin Towler.

- 1 **Apologies for absence accepted:** Cllrs Craig Young (Work commitment), Simon Paynter (Family commitment).
- 2 **Declarations of interest in items on the agenda:** None.
- 3 **Requests to grant dispensations for declared interests:** None.
- 4 **Public Open Session:** No members of the public were present.
- 5 **Approval of the minutes of the parish council meeting** held on 19th November 2025.
Resolved to approve the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 6 **Clerk's report on the Action List**
The Clerk reported that he had trained a member of the Yelden Village Hall Committee in how to check and maintain the defibrillator on the front of the hall.
- 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 set the budget and precept for 2026/27.*
Councillors considered the draft budget prepared by the Clerk, which had a minor increase for inflation on maintenance costs. **Resolved** to set the precept at £9,032, which is a 1.4% increase in the parish-council portion of council tax, which equates to an extra 59 pence a year for a Band D property. Full budget is available upon request.
- 8 **Melchbourne Residents' Questionnaire**
To receive information from the Melchbourne residents' questionnaire undertaken by Councillors Wilkinson and Croft.
It was noted that the report was being finalised and will be shared with the council once complete.
- 9 **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Initial Consideration of Spending Priorities**
The parish council recently received a CIL payment of £9,820; this funding must be spent within five years in accordance with the CIL Regulations.
To consider proposals for the use of these funds, noting that expenditure must be directed towards projects or items that support the development of the area by:
 - a) *funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or*
 - b) *addressing the demands that development places on the area.*No proposals came forward for spending of this funding. Agenda item to be repeated periodically.
- 10 **Crime report**
Crime statistics were noted.

Crime Category	Offence Start Date	Recorded Date	Offence	Address 2
VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON	11/09/2025	09/01/2026	STALKING	Melchbourne

David Brough, Clerk, Melchbourne & Yelden Parish Council
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11 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).

None.

b) Monitoring of applications and enforcement (for information)

The following is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project that the parish council has objected to:

- East Park Energy Solar Farm proposal: 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.
Status: Representation period closed and progressing towards examination ahead of a final decision by the Secretary of State.

The following is a long-standing item of enforcement:

- Location: Hill Farm, Melchbourne Road, Riseley.
Details: Investigation regarding the right to live on the land.
History: Enforcement notice issued in 2017 in respect of unauthorised residential use. Enforcement notice upheld on appeal in 2018. Planning applications refused: 22/01571/MAF, 23/01212/FUL, 23/02188/OUT, 24/00466/FUL. Government Appeal for 23/02188/OUT dismissed, and 25/01918/LDE refused in 2025.
It was noted that Bedford Borough Council has obtained a High Court injunction against the occupants of Hill Farm, Riseley for non-compliance with a Planning Enforcement Notice. The injunction prevents any further unauthorised development with immediate effect and requires the cessation of residential use and removal of caravans and mobile homes from the land within nine months. It was noted that the Court considered the borough council's action to be justified in response to a longstanding breach of planning control.

12 Councillors' Reports and Updates:

- Ward Councillor – Cllr Martin Towler
Cllr Towler was available for questions and gave a verbal report on topics including the borough council finances, Project Universal, East West Rail, and the condition of the roads.
- Chelveston Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund Trust
Cllr Gordon reported on the December meeting of the trust. Minutes are available on the trust website. It was noted that the trust was still receiving more funding than applications were requesting.
- Highways, drains and streetlights
It was reported that gullies required cleaning by the borough council. Councillors to inform the Clerk of those gullies with issues.
- Report on Speeding (SIDs – Speed Indication Devices) – Cllr Morgan
Cllr Morgan reported that he was using the recently-purchased batteries and charger for the SIDs. Clerk will obtain speed data from the signs for the next meeting.
- Report on River Til/Yelden Flood group – Cllr Alexander
Cllr Alexander reported that there were blockages in the River Til that he was attempting to have the borough council assist with getting cleared. It was agreed to support the flood group by purchasing flood equipment using funding through the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) government grant, with costs fully reimbursed and no net cost to the parish council.

13 Business for future agendas – no actions or decisions can be taken on items not on the agenda.

- Melchbourne Residents' Questionnaire
- Proposal from Cllr Alexander: To approve the use of some of the Allotment Reserve to pay for the clearance of waste material.

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday, 18th March 2026 at 8pm – Yelden Village Hall.

Melchbourne and Yelden Parish Council
Payments & Receipts - January 2026

Date Paid	Category	Payee/Payer	Desc	Transfers	Receipts	Payments Gross	VAT	Cashbook Balance	Bank balance
Lloyds Bank								£ 33,086.08	£ 33,086.08
18/11/2025	Bank Charges	LBG				£ 4.25			
19/11/2025	Streetlights: Elect	NPower	NPower Streetlight			£ 50.48	£ 2.40		
15/12/2025	Streetlights: Elect	NPower	NPower Streetlight			£ 57.28	£ 2.73		
16/12/2025	Internal Transfer	MYPC UT		-£ 32,500.00					
16/12/2025	Defib Maintenance & Speed sign	Battery Store	Expenses Clerk: SID Batteries			£ 146.26	£ 24.38		
16/12/2025	Defib Maintenance & Speed sign	J Motorcycles	Expenses Clerk: SID Battery Charger			£ 71.49	£ 11.92		
19/12/2025	Bank Charges	LBG				£ 4.25			
19/01/2026	Bank Charges	LBG				£ 4.25			
19/01/2026	Streetlights: Elect	NPower	NPower Streetlight			£ 63.71	£ 3.03		
								£ 184.11	£ 184.11
Unity Trust Current								£ -	£ -
08/01/2026	Internal Transfer	MYPC UT Savings		£ 500.00					
31/12/2025	Bank Charges	Unity Trust				£ 2.20			
Not Yet Paid	Internal Transfer	MYPC UT Savings		£ 400.00					
Not Yet Paid	Staff Costs	N/A				£ 502.52			
Not Yet Paid	Village Hall Hire	Melchbourne VH				£ 20.00			
								£ 375.28	£ 375.28
Unity Trust Savings								£ -	£ -
16/12/2025	Internal Transfer	MYPC LBG		£ 32,500.00					
08/01/2026	Internal Transfer	MYPC UT Current		-£ 500.00					
Not Yet Paid	Internal Transfer	MYPC UT Current		-£ 400.00					
								£ 31,600.00	£ 31,600.00

Melchbourne and Yelden Parish Council
Spend vs Budget report

2025/26 P&L (Net of VAT) - As at January 2026

<u>Income</u>		YTD (Actual) Gross	YTD (Actual) Net	Annual Budget	Full year (Est)	Variance
Precept Income		8,910	8,910	8,910	8,910	0
Other Income	CIL Income	9,820	9,820	0	9,820	
		9,820	9,820	0	9,820	9,820
VAT Refund		0		0		0
Allotment Income		15	15	13	15	2
CIL Receipts (Section 106)		0	0	0	0	0
Bank Interest		0	0	16	300	284
Total Income		18,745	18,745	8,939	19,045	10,106
<u>Outgoings</u>						
Employment Costs	Staff Costs	4,456	3,953	5,483	5,483	
		4,456	3,953	5,483	5,483	0
	Village Hall Hire	80	60	90		
	Payroll fees	52	44	80		
	ICO - Annual Data Protection	47	47	35		
	Membership BATPC	0	0	110		
	Training: Councillors	0	0	15		
	Clerk Expenses	0	0	16		
	Bank Charges	45	45	0		
	Internal Audit	160	160	160		
	External Audit	0	0	0		
	Website running cost	180	150	270		
	Election costs	0	0	30		
Admin		564	505	806	696	110
Insurance	Insurance	446	446	450	446	4
	Maintenance	0	0	1,200	0	
	Streetlights: Elect	401	382	500	500	
Parks and open spaces		401	382	1,700	500	1,200
	Grant Honeycomb	0	0			
Grants out		0	0	200	200	0
	Defib Maintenance & Speed sign	218	181	300	181	
Miscellaneous		218	181	300	181	119
Total Outgoings		6,085	5,468	8,939	7,506	1,433
Year To Date Net P&L		12,661	13,277	0		11,539

Melchbourne and Yelden Parish Council

2025/26 - Balance - January 2026

	£
Lloyds Current	£ 184
Unity Trust Current	£ 375
Unity Trust Savings	£ 31,600
Total Balance	32,159
Current Balance (Forecast)	

Allocation of Balance Sheet

Remainder of budgeted expenditure	1,100	
CIL	9,820	
River Til Reserve	9,956	
Allotments Reserve	1,422	
General reserve	9,861	Balancing figure