

MELMERBY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Melmerby Parish Council held on Wednesday 26th November 2025 at Melmerby Village Hall.

Present: Cllr David Bardsley, Cllr Chris Jones, Cllr Bill Burford and Claire Rankin, Parish Clerk.

Four members of the public were present.

Cllr Mary Robinson, Westmorland and Furness Council was also present.

2025/054 **Apologies for absence – RESOLVED** that apologies were received from Cllr Gary Fletcher and Cllr Dougie Bell.

2025/055 **Declarations of Interest – RESOLVED** that there were no declarations of interest.

2025/056 **Minutes – RESOLVED** that the minutes from the Ordinary Parish Council meeting on 24th September 2025 were signed as a correct record.

2025/057 **Exclusion of Press and Public (Public bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960) - RESOLVED** that there were no items on the agenda that required this exclusion.

2025/058 **Public Participation - RESOLVED** that the Chairman of the Parish Council opened the meeting for members of the public to speak and also asked members of the public to speak at the start of the relevant agenda item.

A member of the public asked for an update regarding the deteriorating state of the footbridge over the beck near the sheep dip. It was confirmed that the landowner had been contacted but that further contact would be made. In addition, the ownership of the bridge over the beck down the bank from Elm Bank (known as Dixie's bridge) was queried. Again, the landowner of the village green will be contacted to try to establish ownership.

2025/059 **Westmorland and Furness Council report – RESOLVED** that the update from Cllr Mary Robinson, Westmorland and Furness Council be noted.

Cllr Robinson reminded members about the upcoming Place Action Group taking place on Thursday 11th December, 7-9 p.m. at Melmerby Village Hall. An update on the housing needs survey will be given at the meeting.

Cllr Robinson confirmed that grant applications will be considered in January/February 2026 for projects due to start in the 2026/27 financial year. This may be a good opportunity for the playground project.

2025/060 **Playground project – RESOLVED** that the update be noted. Cllr Bardsley updated the meeting on the latest situation regarding the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement for the planning application for the playground project.

The playground working party recommended that EnviroTech be commissioned to carry out the BNG survey. The recommendation was proposed by Cllr Bardsley and seconded by Cllr Burford. All those present were in favour.

2025/061 **Budget and Precept 2026/27 – RESOLVED** that the draft budget for 2026/27 be approved. The draft budget was proposed by Cllr Bardsley and seconded by Cllr Jones. All those present were in favour.

In addition, the draft precept for 2026/27 was presented. This time last year WaFC distributed the council tax base information and costs per Band D property to each parish. At the time of the meeting this information had not been received by Melmerby Parish Council. The draft precept of £6200 was proposed by Cllr Bardsley and seconded by Cllr Jones. All those present were in favour. The precept requirement needs to be submitted to WaFC by the end of January. If there are significant changes to the tax base for Melmerby (when the figures are supplied by WaFC), the precept level will be reviewed at the January meeting of Melmerby Parish Council prior to submission to WaFC.

2025/062 **Empty property within grounds of Ravenstone Manor – RESOLVED** that an agreement has been reached between the owners of Ravenstone Manor and the empty property. The Parish Council agreed to monitor the situation to ensure the property is occupied as part of the housing stock of the village.

2025/063 **Community Governance Review – RESOLVED** that a general response from Melmerby Parish Council be submitted to WaFC to state that the parish council is content with the parish name, boundaries and number of councillors. Cllr Bardsley also agreed to post the information on the village facebook page if individuals wish to respond directly.

2025/064 **Police Community Priority Survey – RESOLVED** that the information be noted. The Police Community Priority survey was live for approximately 2 weeks but consultation closed on 18th November 2025. A community meeting is due to be held locally within 6 weeks of the survey closing. No details of the proposed meeting have been received to date.

2025/065 **CALC Internal Audit proposal – RESOLVED** that the parish council expression of interest be noted. CALC is gathering interest from parish councils regarding an internal audit service delivered through CALC. An expression of interest has been submitted and when further details are available, a proposal will be brought to a future parish council meeting.

2025/066 **Assertion 10 regulations -RESOLVED** that a proposal will be brought to the January parish council meeting outlining the most cost effective and efficient way to meet the requirements of the Assertion 10 regulations.

As part of the AGAR return, parish councils will be required to demonstrate full compliance with digital communication including email management, website accessibility and data handling. Email addresses for all councillors and the clerk will be required from an owned domain. The current Melmerby Parish Council website is compliant but may be outdated in some areas. Cllr Robinson suggested speaking to John Fleming, Langwathby and Culgaith parish clerk who is conducting a similar exercise.

2025/067 **Police report – RESOLVED** that the police report be noted.

2025/068 **Highways – RESOLVED** that the updates be noted.

A query was raised regarding the traffic lights at the “narrows” in the village. An email had been received from Christine Rowley about the deterioration of the retaining wall near the Low Bridge on the approach to Melmerby from Penrith. It is unclear whether this is the reason for the traffic lights.

There still remains an issue of flooding on Bridge Terrace due to blocked gulleys leading from the drains. Cllr Robinson agreed to follow this up with Shaun Mitchell, WaFC Highways.

The issue of a mirror at the Gamblesby Road junction was raised again at the meeting. This has previously been raised with Highways who do not routinely install mirrors. Cllr Robinson agreed to follow this up.

Cllr Bardsley reported on the meeting held with Laura McClellan regarding speeding and crossing issues in Melmerby. Issues which Laura agreed to follow up were:

- 30 mph circles painted on the road;
- Police speed camera vans on the Hartside Road;
- Police trial of noise monitoring cameras;
- Safe crossing path linked to the island near New Inn.

In addition, Laura mentioned that a small number of speed indicator signs were due to be purchased to assist small parishes and agreed to give an update on whether these are still available.

2025/069 Progress list – RESOLVED that the list be noted. There still remains an issue with water runoff onto the A686. It was agreed that the source of the run off would be investigated.

2025/070 Finance – RESOLVED that the payments outlined in the RFO be approved. This was proposed by Cllr Bardsley and seconded by Cllr Jones. All those present were in favour.

The playground fund now stands at £7283. Cllr Bardsley proposed that £500 be transferred from the parish council reserves to the playground fund in 2025/26. Cllr Jones seconded the proposal and all those present were in favour.

Cllr Bardsley also proposed setting up a direct debit to Cumbria Payroll to pay the monthly fee for payroll production. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Jones and all those present were in favour.

2025/071 Correspondence – RESOLVED that the correspondence register be noted.

Items to note were that John Fleming is due to get back in touch regarding the defibrillator signs, the invitation from The Shepherd's Inn, Melmerby to the first "Talkin' Tables" coffee afternoon on Thursday 4th December and the campaign to save the bus chaperone on the Langwathby school bus.

2025/072 Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of Melmerby Parish Council will be held on 28th January 2026, 7.30 p.m. at Melmerby Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.