

MELMERBY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Melmerby Parish Council held on Wednesday 28th January 2026 at Melmerby Village Hall.

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

Five members of the public were present.

Cllr Michael Hanley, Westmorland and Furness Council was also present.

2025/073 **Apologies for absence – RESOLVED** that apologies were received from Cllr Gary Fletcher.

2025/074 **Declarations of Interest – RESOLVED** that there were no declarations of interest.

2025/074 **Minutes – RESOLVED** that the minutes from the Ordinary Parish Council meeting on 26th November 2025 were signed as a correct record.

2025/075 **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.

2025/076 **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 reported ongoing issues with water running down the Hartside road towards the Gamblesby road junction. Cllr Bardsley agreed to check the gullies and any issues to be reported to Highways.

A member of the public also asked for clarification regarding the emptying of waste bins in the village. Cllr Michael Hanley agreed to raise the issue with WaFC.

An observation was raised that an area of woodland had been opened up to experience wildlife with a circular trail by the Rowley Estates (in the former “paintball” woods). It was agreed that contact would be made with Rowley Estates to obtain more information.

2025/076 **Westmorland and Furness Council report – RESOLVED** that the update from Cllr Michael Hanley, Westmorland and Furness Council, be noted.

Clarification was sought from Cllr Hanley regarding the reinstatement of footway and street lighting in the village. Cllr Hanley confirmed that the lighting policy had changed at WaFC to repair and reinstate existing lighting assets. Cllr Hanley agreed to find out the detail of the roll out in Melmerby.

It was reported that the Health and Well-Being Board was focusing on the widening gap in health outcomes across the area. There are now two Family Hubs established through the Best Start programme, one based in Penrith and one in Alston.

The January meeting of the Alston and East Fellside Place Action Group focused on the outcomes of the housing needs survey which showed a need for 2/3 bedroom houses and affordable houses to rent or buy. The detail for individual parishes is not yet available.

The recent full council meeting debated the reduction in the government settlement grant which will result in a £40 million reduction for Westmorland and Furness over the next 3 years.

The first consultation round of the Community Governance Review for Town and Parish Councils saw 61% of councils not responding. It was reported that Melmerby Parish Council had made a response.

2025/077 Playground Project – RESOLVED that the information be noted. Also that the Biodiversity Net Gain report be accepted and the planning application for the playground project be submitted in consultation with the landowner.

It was reported that the Biodiversity Net Gain report had been produced by EnviroTech. The main findings of the report were discussed. These findings have been shared with the landowner who has given consent for the project to go ahead on the basis that the Parish Council will carry out the seeding and maintenance work needed. It was noted that two residents had submitted correspondence to the Parish Council raising queries regarding the BNG report and the playground project. Cllr Bardsley proposed that the BNG report and the findings be approved. The motion was seconded by Cllr Jones and all those present were in favour.

An update was provided on the latest position with the project. So far over £8000 has been raised through local fundraising for the project. There is a display in the Village Hall which is accessible from both inside and outside the hall with information about the local fundraising, playground design and the Biodiversity Net Gain report. A note in the Memo has been delivered to every household to publicise the playground information display and a notice has been placed on the village noticeboard and Facebook page.

It was also agreed that the planning application would be submitted in consultation with the landowner.

2025/078 Parish Precept – RESOLVED that the precept request for £6200 for 2026/27 be submitted to WaFC.

Following the November meeting, information regarding the council tax base for 2026/27 had been received from WaFC. The submission of the Parish Precept for 2026/27 of £6200 was proposed by Cllr Burford, seconded by Cllr Bell and all those present were in favour.

2025/079 North Pennine National Landscape – RESOLVED that the management plan consultation be noted and that the erection of new North Pennines National Landscape sign be welcomed. All those present were in favour of supporting the new sign. Individuals are welcome to submit comments on the management plan. The link for the consultation is https://northpennines.org.uk/what_we_do/about-us/management-plan/

2025/080 Assertion 10 – RESOLVED that Vision ICT be commissioned to carry out an “MOT” of the existing Parish Council website, establish email addresses for the clerk and all parish councillors linked to the website and migrate the existing email addresses in order to comply with the Assertion 10 requirements. The motion was proposed by Cllr Bardsley and seconded by Cllr Jones. All those present were in favour.

2025/081 **Housing Needs Survey – RESOLVED** that the update be noted including the initial findings outlined in the report from Cllr Michael Hanley (see minute 2025/076 above). The Parish Council will await findings for individual parishes.

2025/082 **Highways – RESOLVED** that the footpath sign between The School House and Spring Cottage be reported to Highways as it has blown over in the recent winds.

2025/083 **Progress List – RESOLVED** that the update on the progress list be noted.

2025/084 **Finance – RESOLVED** that the payments outlined in the finance report be actioned. This motion was proposed by Cllr Bardsley and seconded by Cllr Bell. All those present were in favour.

2025/085 **Correspondence - RESOLVED** that the correspondence register be noted.

2025/086 **Date and time of next meeting –** The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Wednesday 25th March 2026, 7.30 p.m. at Melmerby Village Hall. The Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council will follow the Annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.