

MELMERBY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Melmerby Parish Council held on Wednesday 21st October 2026 at Melmerby Village Hall.

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

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

2026/062 **Apologies for absence – RESOLVED** that apologies for absence were received from Cllr Gary Fletcher and Cllr Dougie Bell.

2026/063 **Declarations of Interest – RESOLVED** that there were no declarations of interest.

2026/064 **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.

2026/065 **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. There were no items raised from members of the public.

2026/066 **Elections Recharging Policy 2027/28 onwards – RESOLVED** that a response from the Parish Council be sent to WaFC regarding the proposed recharging of election costs to Parish Councils.

The points discussed in relation to the recharging policy were:

The policy had been developed in haste and is due to be in place for the May 2027 elections. It appears that Prish Councils are soft targets to absorb financial shortfalls of the principal authorities.

Parish Councils can increase their precept to cover the costs but this could be seen as rural residents being asked to pay twice as election costs are already built into WaFC's budget.

Given the timescales there are unlikely to be other opportunities to have a broader discussion on the proposals.

The policy will create uncertainty for parish councils who will be setting budgets in November and may increase the precept to cover election costs which ultimately may not be needed.

The issue of fairness as parish councils are also facing financial pressures.

The policy could challenge democracy issues and put pressure on parish councils to avoid contested elections and therefore costs.

2026/067 **Date and time of the next meeting** – The next meeting will take place on 25th November 2026, 7.30 p.m. at Melmerby Village Hall.

Meeting closed 7.59 p.m.