Marston Parish Council Parish Council
Meeting Minutes
17th November 2026, 7pm Marston Chapel

Present: Cllr Philip Bellew (Chair),
Cllr Jonathan Nickell, Cllr Jon Robbins, Cllr Mark Cherrington
Steve Bennett (Clerk)
Also Present :
Tamara Reay (Cllr Wiltshire Council)
2 Members of the public attended the meeting

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Item no.	Agenda item	Notes	Action
1	Apologies for absence	Cllr Charlie Milton	
	Apologies	MPC apologised for a late revision to the meeting date which was unavoidable due to members work commitments elsewhere. The revision was posted on Mail Chimp, Website and on the public notice boards on 3rd November.	
2	Declarations of interest	Cllr Mark Cherrington has submitted a planning application and will not be involved in any comments for planning application PL/2026/06897.	
3	Approval of previous minutes	Meeting dated 8th September were signed off as a true and accurate record. *Proposed JR Seconded MC*	
4	Matters arising from previous minutes	I D Verde completed the cutting of the green/common land for 2026.	
		Marston Village Green working group will be submitting an application to the Solar Fund once details and designs are finalised.	
		Village walk -Tuesday 22nd September	
		Working party - Saturday 10th October	
		Parish Steward - Visited 21st September	
5	Councillors report	Items covered: 1.Wiltshire Councils mismanagement has resulted in a £4.5m predicted overspend. 2. Reserves have also fallen from £52m to £12m which will also have serious implications to the future budgeting and services operated by the Council. 3. TR is involved with the Areas Board in connection with the increasing anti social behaviour in central Devizes and is liaising with the Police and the new	

		Chief of Police in addressing the inaction of the authorities following the instigation of the Public Spaces Protection Order from November 2024. Councillor Reay was thanked for her input and assistance.	
6	Items for discussion		
6a	Common Land + Public Right Of Ways		
6a i)	Cutting of the Green	The Common Land was given its final cut by I D Verde on 29th October. MPC managed to negotiate a reduction in the cutting costs due to previously reported operational/performance issues.	
6a ii)	Common Land Working Group update	Proposals for benches and a pedestrian walkover bridge by the pond along with an application for funding may be sought from the Solar Fund once designs and details are finalised. This is proposed for some time in 2027.	MVGWG
6a iii)	Footpath, signage and stiles audit	The annual village walk happened on Tuesday 22nd September with 5 people attending. Cllr Milton organised a circular route round the village with refreshments being hosted afterwards by Steven Bennett. It did highlight a number of issues with the poor condition and state of the access paths and stiles which will be followed up as part of the full audit being undertaken of all the public rights of way within the Parish. Alison Rasey (Access Officer at WC) to be copied in on the final audit findings.	CM
6a iv)	Working Party	The re-staining/repairing of the bus shelter on Saturday 10th October. MPC thanks all involved and Cllr Robbins for organising it. MPC welcomes suggestions on any other potential projects of a similar nature that could be undertaken in the future.	JR
		MPC have purchased a quantity of daffodil bulbs to be planted around the common land areas as has previously been undertaken to good effect. The date for the Communal planting session is 21st November. Meet at the bus stop at 10am armed with a suitable planting tool. There has been some residents concern as to the location of the planting given their own mowing regimes to the common land grass outside of their	CM

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		properties.	
6b	Highways		
6b i)	Parish Steward	Last visit 21st September. Work undertaken- Strimming around highways signage/drainage rodding work to open roadside gullies. MPC welcomes any suggestion for works (along with a 'What 3 Words' reference to assist with pinpointing the issue) that could be carried out on his next visit 21st November. Pot hole filling to Plough Lane and Long Street has been suggested, but as a very temporary fix to an ongoing bigger issue to these roads.	JR
6b ii)	Wiltshire App	The white lining at the junction of Long Street has now been carried out. Some initial work was carried out on the verge erosion in Goose Street by Breach Farm with hopefully more to follow at some point. Potholes are still being reported in Plough Lane, which have got worse in the last month.	
6b iii)	Norney Bridge collapse	Wiltshire Council started work on the road 14th September and should have completed it by 7th October (3 weeks). They also commenced with some of the enabling works ahead of their planned start date. Due to some complications with both the Environment Agency and the varying water levels (requiring extra pumping equipment to be installed) the project was completed by the end of Monday 10th of October. The contact details of the businesses directly affected by this closure (due to the physical constraints of the highway diversion put in place) were passed onto Wiltshire Council by MPC. It became evident some businesses felt left out and some individuals considered they had been given insufficient information about the closures as it affected their timings of visitor and medical health support services. The closure of Long Street, for the public's safety, and the method by which the closure was carried out received aggressive and sometimes abusive condemnation (aimed at Wilts Council, Howard + Sons and Marston Parish Council) from a minority of people who considered they were unfairly affected by this closure.	

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		Cyclists and horse riders either ignored or ripped down the Heres fencing on Long Street and at Norney Bridge on more than one occasion. It was decided to remove the Heres fencing but leave the closure notice in place. Once this had been discovered it was used by those who considered the official diversion inconvenient and by delivery drivers who simply used it as a rat run to the village. If ever a significant planned road closure was to occur within the village again some better future planning should be done, involving all affected parties, along with some formal public engagement so that the fall out from this recent one can be fed back into the system to improve future disruption. Waste collections were generally not affected. Buses for schools were not affected. No public bus service served the village and the Bus Company offered no alternative solutions. Emergency services were automatically informed as part of the process of this road closure. This was tested and found to be seriously flawed with very consequences with potentially loss of life. During the closure period Marston experienced two 999 emergency situations both with a potential of loss of life. The failure of the ambulance service to get to the village because of the road closures has highlighted a significant failure in the system, which needs to be addressed by those parties responsible. Lessons should be learnt and systems should be revised to ensure this never happens again. MPC are all ready actively pushing to find out why the system failed through various freedom of information enquires and would like to know what is being done to correct this for future situations. One of the emergencies happened on the Saturday (after the published road closure date had expired) and involved the Village defibrillator and ultimately a visit from the air ambulance helicopter. This could be attributed to computer systems not being informed or updated on the overrun of the contract with the road remaining closed after the published date. The other emergency involved an ambulance call out which happened during the official road closure period and showed that these automated or have computerised system fall way short of expectation and could directly resulted in a loss of life which is unacceptable.	MPC

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		Wiltshire Council and Marston Parish Council would like to thank the 99.9% of the residents who accepted the situation and dealt with it in a civilised manner. We also remind people that social media postings are not the official route to communicate with the Parish Council on this or any other matter. It was reassuring to see that when the village defibrillator was required in an emergency situation it both worked and potentially saved a person's life. There were some issues of where it disappeared to after the event but that has now been resolved and new pads for it have been purchased. Marston Parish Council thanks the team of volunteers who check and report back on the defibrillator weekly. Given the recent events it is proposed sometime in 2027 to hold another defibrillator training event to ensure more villagers are familiar with its use and would feel confident on using it in an emergency situation.	
6b iv)	Upcoming highways/ planned works	Causeway One network website: Lower Road by the railway bridge is shut for the w/c 16th November for drainage works.	
6b v)	Horse Signage	MPC submitted a highways improvement request form in January at the request of the owner of Digby Fields riding stables. This was for a 550.1 sign to be installed at both ends of Marston village to warn motorists of Horse riders. Wiltshire council have approved these signs (but not bothered to inform MPC) but have also requested MPC pay for them, at a cost of between £300-£800 each. TR stated that Parish Councils are only normally expected to cover only 25% of the full costs. On that basis MPC agreed it will proceed with the most important location, on Goose Street by the stable entrance.	
6c	Solar Community fund	No applications received.	
6d	Planning		
6d i)	PL/2026/0649 – End Farm Marston	An application has been submitted for some minor changes to the already approved class Q conversion of a barn into two residences. The proposed work, which would have not have been acceptable under the class Q requirements, is for a porch, some wood	

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		burning stove flues and some solar panels on the roof. No objections.	
6d ii)	PL/2026/06737 – Mansion Farm House	Tree works	
6d iii)	PL/2026/06737 – Pound Cottage Marston	Tree works	
6d iv)	Homestead – Plough Lane	Three applications on the same site submitted for a Tennis court, Car Port and extension to the annex. This item was submitted after the cut off deadline for this meetings agenda and will not be discussed now but the submission has been highlighted.	MPC
6e	Website	MPC updated its website regularly keeping people informed on the official news in respect to the Norney Bridge works. This was done in conjunction with the Mail Chimp newsletter that also circulated the information by e-mail to the individual people had signed up for this service. The website has a link to the Mail Chimp service so that you can sign up for further updates as and when they occur. The website also has the agreed policies of the Parish Council along with their official contact details. Also MPC have undertaken risk assessments for the various aspects of the village and work parties which are available to view on the Website. Marston Village Green working group will also have a presence on the website in due course.	MPC
6f	Resilience of the Village to various outside situations	Due to the low number of Parishioners attending this discussion to be moved to the next meeting. Given the number of properties that are currently for sale within the village it is intended to produce an information pack for new residents of the village. It will contain information that residents here will already be fully aware of. MPC welcomes input on what further information should go onto this.	MPC
7	Finance		
7a	Cheques and payments	A summary of payments and receipts was provided.	
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7b	Statement of Accounts	Total Payments £288.00 (Acountants) Total Receipts £223.69 (Wayleave payment) Marston Parish Account £17,151.19 Solar Community fund £53,682.77	

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7c		It was proposed to make a contribution to the owners of the Chapel in recognition of next years use by allowing MPC to hold public meetings here (within the village). MPC agreed a payment of £250. *Proposed MC Seconded JR*	
		The precept for MPC at present is £3,620 which, when all the known fixed costs and outgoings have been deducted, leaves just £200 for the whole years expenditure. The precept increase was briefly discussed but will be formally discussed at the next MPC public meeting.	
8	Correspondence	E-mail from D. Hansford in relation to the state of the footpaths, the potholes and the potential siting for the Daffodil bulb plant out. E-mail from Val Elliot (Worton + Marston Village hall Chair) update on the commencement of the works to the store roof, improvements to the parking area and future events being held in the hall.	
9	Closure of meeting	The meeting was closed at 8.30pm The date for the meeting minutes publication (in draft form) is 1st December An informal summary of this meeting is intended to be posted into the Bridge magazine for December.	PB
10	Any Other Business	A Christmas Tree will be organised as previously and sited in the same location. Cllr Cherrington has kindly offered the use of his outbuilding electrics to power the lighting.	MPC
		A discussion was had concerning the situation of Long Street in relation to potholes and reducing the speed limit from 60mph to 20mph. The condition of Long Street and Wiltshire Councils future highway improvement priority plans has already been lodged by MPC and, due to the lack of recorded incidents and the costs involved with trying to get an adjustment of the speed limit, it is unlikely to progress further.	
		Consideration/investigation to be made on MPC purchasing and operating its own equipment for grass cutting operations in the future. A balance between capital investment and operating	MPC

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		costs against employing outside contractors to be reported back at a future meeting. MPC biggest financial burden on the precept is the cutting and maintaining the Common Land. This cost can only be covered at present because our Clerk, which is a paid position normally (of around £1,500 - £2k), currently takes no salary for their services. Common Land management costs: 2025 costs – £614 2026 costs - £1,800 (negotiated back to £1,500)	
		It is proposed to walk the ditches some time soon to check in advance of future flooding during the Winter period. The ditching works undertaken previously and the relatively drier Winter weather resulted in a significant reduction in serious flooding. The current ground water, following this very dry Summer, has yet to recover and contribute to the flooding potential within the Village.	MPC
		Date of next meeting: 12th January 2027 9th March 2027 11th May 2027 (Annual PC meeting and village meeting) 6th July 2027	

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