

**MINUTES of the Planning Committee of Melksham Without Parish
Council held on Monday 1st September 2025 at Melksham Without Parish
Council Offices**

**(First Floor), Melksham Community Campus, Market Place, SN12 6ES
at 7:00pm**

Present: Councillors Richard Wood (Committee Chair), Alan Baines (Committee Vice-Chair), John Glover, Mark Harris, David Pafford and Martin Franks.

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Fiona Dey (Parish Officer)

On Zoom: There were four members of the public joining remotely via Zoom. Councillor Chris Griffiths also joined via Zoom as an observer.

208/25 Welcome, Housekeeping and Announcements:

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. As there were no new members of the public present at the meeting, the housekeeping messages were not read out. Everyone present was aware that the meeting was being recorded and would be published on YouTube following the meeting and deleted once the minutes were approved.

The Clerk announced that the planning application for a site adjacent to Melksham Oak Community School for 205 houses had been validated that day and would be considered at the Planning Committee Meeting on 22nd September 2025. Local Plan Site Allocation policy 19 Bath Road refers.

209/25 Apologies:

Apologies were received from Councillor Richardson who was absent due to a family issue.

Resolved: To approve and accept the reason for absence

Apologies were also received from Wiltshire Councillors Alford and Holder.

210/25 Declarations of Interest:

a. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Harris, as a member of the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust, declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6e due to its potential impact on the Melksham Canal Link project.

Councillor Franks also declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6e as he is a neighbour and friend of the applicant.

b. Dispensation Requests for this Meeting:

None requested.

211/25 To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature:

No items to be discussed in closed session.

212/25 Public Participation:

No members of the public wanted to make any comments.

213/25 Planning Applications: The Council considered the following applications and made the following comments:

- a) [PL/2025/06609](#) Beanacre Manor, Beanacre, Melksham, SN12 7PT
Householder planning permission: Domestic swimming pool with surround and ancillary buildings.

Members noted that the location of the proposed swimming pool was on the site of an old tennis court and felt positively about the planned additional planting.

Comments: No objection

- b) [PL/2025/06519](#) Summerleaze Lodge, 10 Beanacre, Melksham, SN12 7PT Full Planning Permission: Change of use to the site from agricultural to domestic. To then develop the site with a bungalow, garage, gardens and drive.

Comments: No objection

Members felt that this application is an in-fill between existing properties and does not constitute development in the open countryside. It was also noted that the opposite side of the road has been fully developed. Members welcomed that the proposed development is a bungalow, which aligns with the Housing Needs Assessment¹ undertaken for the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2.

- c) [PL/2025/06680](#) SLADES FARM, TOP LANE, WHITLEY, MELKSHAM, SN12 8RA Householder Application: Repairs and upgrade of existing windows including slim double glazing. Existing door open reverting to window, and Window returned to door opening

Comments: No objection

- d) [PL/2025/06932](#) SLADES FARM, TOP LANE, WHITLEY, MELKSHAM, SN12 8RA Works to a Listed Building: Repairs and upgrade of existing windows including slim double glazing. Existing door open reverting to window, and Window returned to door opening

Comments: No objection

Members recognise that they are not qualified to judge to merit of the works on a Listed Building and therefore will defer to the Heritage Officer raise any concerns.

¹

https://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/_files/ugd/fcc864_a2d7a2620d174638b9b4898fc4194f4f.pdf

It was noted that there were two further planning applications for Slades Farm (PL/2025/06812 and PL/2025/07032), related to the access gates, which had been recently received and would be considered at the next Planning Committee meeting on 22nd September 2025.

- e) [PL/2025/06704](#) Land North of Boundary Farm, Berryfield Lane, Melksham, SN12 6EF Full Planning Permission: Proposed Creation of Private Lake & Associated Landscaping.

Comments: No objection subject to the following:

- The development does not impinge on the protected route for the Melksham link canal (as per Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 16 and Policy 94 of the emerging Local Plan)
- The comments from Archaeology are addressed

Members welcomed the Biodiversity Net Gain this development would bring (as per Policy 12 Green and Blue Infrastructure and Policy 13 Biodiversity of the Joint Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan 2).

214/25 Amended Plans/Additional Information:

- a) [PL/2025/03212](#) Roundponds Farm, Shurnhold, Melksham, SN12 8DF Full Planning Permission: The removal of existing gas fuelled generators (retrospective) and proposed installation of battery energy storage system (BESS) and associated equipment. Applicant: HC ESS3 LIMITED.

Comments: Object

Members feel that this is a very problematic application. Whilst at first sight the development is of a relatively modest size, members feel that the risks are still significant. It only takes one fire in one container to create a potential catastrophe.

Many of the generic points in the CAWS (Community Action Whitley and Shaw) Brockleaze submission (PL/2025/05552) apply to this application including the renewable and low-carbon credentials, safety risks, environmental and hydrology risks, noise and cumulative impact. Additionally, and specifically for this application:

Secondary A aquifer

The Environment Agency has confirmed there is an aquifer at the site. The risk of contamination from firewater is significant (see below). There have been two appeal cases recently that cite risk to water supplies from a BESS safety incident, and these are highly relevant to this application. They are both in Devon and in the same area: appeal refs APP/U1105/W/23/3319803 dated 16 February 2024 and APP/U1105/W/24/3351691 dated 26 August 2025.

Hydrology

The site is extremely close to Flood Zone 3 exacerbating the risk to the environment from contamination (firewater or other).

Container Spacing

Whilst the augmentation containers appear to be spaced correctly, the original site is not. The original site is not relevant to this application (as that was subject to a previous application) except that a safety incident such as a fire on the augmentation site might mean that it could spread more easily to the original site.

Firewater Requirements

The developer states that they are exceeding NFCC guidance for 1900 litres per minute for 2 hours (which is equivalent to 228,000 litres). The developer's calculation is unclear as they are claiming to deliver 230.4m³ (230,400 litres) also at a rate 1900l/min for 2 hours (page 3 of the Firewater Management Plan). The claim of exceeding the NFCC guidance is potentially misleading as the difference in the total delivered is de minimus.

The NFCC guidance is for 1 MW facilities and above, and there is a strong expectation that water requirements should be scaled up depending on the circumstances including the size of the facility. This augmentation scheme will make the overall BESS a 20 MW/40 MWh facility and CAWS research suggests that firewater requirement should be closer to 4 million litres for a facility of this size.

It is worth noting that the 20MW/10MWh BESS fire at Liverpool used between 1.9 million and 6 million litres of water over a 59-hour period.

The developer is relying on getting the water to the site via a hydrant in Shurnhold. It is unknown whether that hydrant has the necessary capacity or not (NB hydrant capacity issues at the Neston Glove Factory Fire). It is also not clear whether use of water from this hydrant would impact on local residences and the nearby care home, Blenheim House.

Water is not just used to cool a container fire. It is also used to cool adjacent containers to prevent the fire spreading. It is not clear if the developer has accounted for this in his calculations

Firewater Containment

All used firewater needs to be contained, especially given the aquifer that runs under the site. The proposed tanks are judged insufficient to contain that water (as the calcs are based on the 1900 Litres per minute for 2 hours only). The developer says it will use "a" mobile tanker to empty the firewater container tanks, presumably during an incident to provide additional capacity, and after to move the contaminated firewater for treatment. This grossly underestimates the tanker requirement. In one of the above appeals for a similar quantity of water the developer estimated 210 tanker trips would be required, and the Action Group estimated the number at 498. The likelihood of being able to secure vehicles to this extent is, in our opinion, minimal. Even if they did manage to acquire these vehicles, the impact on the highway would be significant (see comments about Transport Plan below).

Type of Battery

The developer proposes LFP batteries for the augmentation site. These are being touted as safer than Li-ion batteries because, inter alia, they have a higher thermal runaway threshold. No substantive independent data have been found to verify this claim.

Fire Suppression System

The developer references fire suppressant systems in the original and augmentation sites, but it is not clear from the documentation what sort of fires these are provided to protect against. Initial reading implies a thermal runaway event, but by reference to the developer's own words that cannot be the case - "...most appropriate extinguishing agent for a battery fire is water..." and ... "when you have run out of water, you've run out of fire suppression power".

Proximity to Residents

The site is approx. 500m from Blenheim Care Home. Lime Down Solar implied that the proximity standard (and the one they are using at Hullavington) is 900m.

Monitoring/Key Holder

Safety monitoring is remote, but the document does not appear to say where it is. This is a significant issue, as in the case on the Liverpool fire the monitoring was in Denmark and there were communication delays. It is not crystal clear who the key holder to the site will be and again, in the case of the Liverpool Fire, the Fire and Rescue Service could not access the fire through the gate for a few hours. It is not 100% clear if the isolation valve in the firewater containment tanks will be closed manually or remotely.

Compliance with NFCC Guidance

In addition to some of the points discussed above, overall compliance with NFCC Guidelines is judged to be weak. It is noted that there are a number of significant comments submitted on the application from Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Construction Management Plan (CMP)

The CMP is brief. The proposed working hours are too long and should be reduced.

Transport/Traffic Management Plan (TMP)

A TMP has not been provided despite the need to deliver heavy/wide loads during construction, and the logistical challenges to be overcome in the event of a safety incident.

215/25 Current planning applications: Standing item for issues/queries arising during period of applications awaiting decision.

- a) [PL/2024/10345](#): **Land north of the A3102, Melksham (New Road Farm)** The construction of 295 homes; public open space, including formal play space and allotments; sustainable drainage systems; and associated infrastructure; with 0.4ha of land safeguarded for a nursery. The principal point of access is to be provided from a new northern arm on the existing Eastern Way/A3102 roundabout junction, with a secondary access onto the A3102. Additional access points are proposed for pedestrians and cyclists. Applicant: Bloor Homes South West

The new comments from Education were noted.

The Clerk highlighted that the Developer had agreed to the NHS contributions and noted the parish council's comments on wording around the recipient project.

The Developer had also stated that as Melksham Without Parish Council (MWPC) are not a signatory on the S106 they do not have the right to be involved in S106 negotiations, but the Developers are willing to potentially share the draft agreement/or summary of terms as they develop and to receive comments. The Clerk has reverted, sharing the positive experience of being involved in discussions for the Blackmore Farm application and is awaiting a further response.

The Clerk also plans to contact the Planning Officer to discuss being involved in the S106 and also to express disgruntlement that WC are negotiating the S106 contribution for a community centre without input from MWPC who will be taking on the asset.

- b) [PL/2024/11665](#) **Land at, Semington Road, Melksham, SN12 6DP** (Rear of Townsend Farm, Phase 2) Application for reserved matters pursuant to application ref: PL/2022/08155 for appearance, scale, layout and landscaping Applicant: Living Space Housing

The new documents were noted.

- c) [PL/2024/09725](#) Land off Corsham Road, Whitley, Melksham (Middle Farm) Outline planning application (with access, layout and landscaping to be approved) for up to 22 dwellings, new access off Corsham Road, public open space, drainage and associated works.

Comments:

In December 2024, the parish council had no objection to this development with a number of provisos, including that the proposal should secure the means of access to enable further development on adjoining land. For example, by inclusion of a road access point provided from this proposal site into land to the east of the site. At that time the site was allocated in the emerging Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan 2.

The Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan 2 was 'made' on 4th August 2025. Policy 7.5 within the Plan (Land at Middle Farm, Corsham Road, Whitley) requires "a single comprehensive masterplan, phasing and delivery strategy for the development must be prepared and then approved by the local Planning Authority, as part of, or in advance of any planning application being submitted for the whole or part of the allocated site. This must take account of this policy and the principles shown within the concept plan. Detailed Planning applications must be in accordance with the approved masterplan."

As the developers have not provided a masterplan for the site and have made no amendments to their plans to reflect the comments made by the parish Council in December 2024 or to conform to the requirements of Policy 7.5 of

the adopted Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan 2, Melksham Without Parish Council are now changing their stance on this application to OBJECT as the application conflicts with the made Neighbourhood Plan.

When the parish council met with the applicant and agent in June 2024, they advised that if the wider “Plot B” site was carried forward in the revised Neighbourhood Plan 2 and was allocated and supported through the next round of consultation then they would submit a scheme for the wider area, for some 58 dwellings. This has not been done which is disappointing as it’s not been done further to the conversation with the applicant in March 2025 to ask for additional evidence that this would happen, to present to the Neighbourhood Plan Examiner.; and since the Neighbourhood Plan 2 Referendum on 31st July and the Plan being made on 4th August, which has been communicated to the applicant and agent.

- d) [PL/2025/00626](#) Land North of Berryfield Lane, Melksham, SN12 6DT: Outline planning application for up to 68 dwellings and formation of new access and associated works (All matters reserved other than access).

The new comments from Education were noted.

- e) [PL/2024/11426](#): Land to the South of A365 Bath Road and West of Turnpike Garage, Melksham, Wilts (Gompels): Construction of warehouse with office space, parking and associated landscaping including site access.

The new comment from Archaeology was noted.

The Clerk confirmed that she had not yet received any direct response from the Director of Planning but noted that he had been on holiday and was due to return to the office on 1st September 2025.

The Clerk had circulated, as a late paper, correspondence sent from the Director of Planning Nic Thomas to Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford.

Members considered the correspondence and recognised that the merger of the economy and regeneration service with the planning service, and the new stance of the economy and regeneration team not expressing views on individual planning applications had only occurred this year and could explain the difference in the approach on the Octavian application and the Gompels application.

However, members remain frustrated that the employment numbers provided by the applicant had not been verified.

Comments: Members feel that the response from the Director of Planning is unsatisfactory and feel that input from the economy and regeneration team, especially verification of the employment numbers provided by the applicant, should be visible in the planning balance assessment. Members are frustrated that this important element of the planning balance is not visible or is being ignored.

- f) [PL/2025/03513](#) Land North of Top Lane, Whitley, Melksham (E388633, N166527) Permission in principle: Permission in principle for up to 6 dwellings Applicant: Ms Patricia Eaton

No new comments or documents.

- g) [PL/2025/04158](#) Melksham Football And Rugby Club, Eastern Way, Melksham, SN12 7GU. Full Planning Application: To enable the area of land known as Melksham Rugby and Football club, to hold a temporary music event only for the 20th and 21st June 2025 with associated temporary structures built for the event.

It was noted that the planning application was refused based on nature conservation and that this potentially could be put right in future applications. Members considered the concerns raised by the Wiltshire Throwback Festival (WTF) organisers regarding how other events within Melksham are being licensed, monitored, and assessed for risk, and whether future measures will be implemented to ensure they meet the required standards for public safety, nuisance prevention, and protection of children. WTF organisers made specific reference to an open-air Reggae music event held on the evening of the 15th August 2025, in King George V Park, hosted by and from Evie's Kitchen.

Councillor Glover also raised concerns about the volume of the event as the music had disturbed the VJ Day event held in Canon Square and later in the evening could be heard in Bowerhill and Berryfield.

Members noted that the Evie's Kitchen event was not held in the parish but was on land owned by Melksham Town Council and that Evie's Kitchen was a Melksham Town Council tenant.

However, as the WTF is held within the parish, members felt it appropriate to respond to concerns raised.

Standing orders were suspended to allow one of the WTF organisers to speak.

The WTF organiser clarified that they had already received a response from Wiltshire Council. The concerns raised had been investigated, including a visit to Evie's Kitchen, and had concluded that the event had not breached Evie's Kitchen premises license conditions.

The WTF organiser also reiterated that he wants all events to be held to the same standards and that a free event doesn't negate the need for public safety controls.

Councillor Glover reiterate his concerns about the noise levels. The WTF organiser also commented that the noise levels should have considered the nearby care home on Lowbourne.

The meeting reconvened.

Resolved: The Clerk to respond to all parties on the correspondence from the WTF organisers:

- clarifying that MWPC were not responsible for the Evie's Kitchen event,
- supporting the concerns raised by the WTF organisers
- noting that parish councillors could hear the Evie's Kitchen event in Bowerhill and Berryfield, and that it interrupted the commemoration of VJ Day including the minute's silence.
- asking that a thorough investigation is conducted by Melksham Town Council and Wiltshire Council into what happened at the Evie's Kitchen event, the controls that were in place and any additional requirements for future events. The investigation should be reported back to all parties.

- h) [PL/2024/07097](#): Land south of Snarlton Farm, Snarlton Lane, Melksham, SN12 7QP: Erection of up to 300 dwellings (Class C3); land for local community use or building (incorporating Classes E(b), E(g) and F2(b) and (c)); open space and dedicated play space and service infrastructure and associated works on and South of Snarlton Farm (Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for two pedestrian and vehicle accesses (excluding internal estates roads) from Eastern Way) - Resubmission of PL/2023/07107). Applicant: Catesby Estates Promotions Limited.

The minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee on 5th August 2025 were noted.

Members agreed that representatives from Melksham Without Parish Council would attend the appeal hearing as it is expected that the applicant will lodge an appeal.

216/25 Premises Licences applications and decisions:

No new applications to discuss.

217/25 Proposed Energy Installations

a) National Grid related to the substation upgrade

Members felt disappointed with the response that had been received from National Grid.

The Clerk summarised that National Grid have stated that the area where they are working has a low risk of flooding (flood zone 1) and therefore no mitigation or contributions to wider catchment projects (as per Policy 3 of Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan 2) are needed.

They also are unable to contribute to a new Speed Indicator Device (SID) as their traffic is following the 20-mph speed limit on Westlands Lane and

therefore, they cannot justify the cost. They have suggested that MWPC could apply for a grant for a SID through their Community Grant Programme.

Resolved: The Clerk to propose dates to National Grid for a site visit, following consultation with the Councillors attending. (Councillors Richarson, Glover, Franks, Hemmings and Baines with Councillor Harris as a substitute – MIN204/25b)

b) Land South of Brockleaze (PL/2025/05552)

The Clerk explained that in the previous planning meeting (11th August 2025) members had supported a draft version of the CAWS (Community Action Whitley and Shaw) response to the application. The final version has been circulated to members as a late paper and is appended to these minutes.

Members also noted that the application has been called-in by the Wiltshire Councillor for Corsham Without.

218/25 Planning Enforcement:

A planning enforcement request was submitted for construction traffic going to Wick Solar Farm on Westlands Lane. The Clerk withdrew this following a positive and robust response from Wick Solar where they banned the two offending drivers from attending the site.

The Clerk explained that the challenge remains of identifying which site any offending drivers are attending in order for feedback to the relevant company.

The Clerk also noted that a number of site access signs have been erected across the parish by Balfour Beatty associated with upgrades to the overhead power lines. At the request of MWPC the signs on the A350 directing site traffic to Westlands Lane and Chapel Lane in Beanacre have been removed to avoid confusion with the restrictions on traffic accessing the other construction sites.

219/25 Planning Policy:

a) Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan:

The Clerk reminded the committee that they had previously had a standing item on the agenda to reflect on responses to planning applications and to consider any items for inclusion in a future review of the Neighbourhood Plan. Members were in agreement that this should be reinstated.

The Delivery Framework Proposal from Place Studios was considered. Members were keen to continue to work with Place Studios both to support delivery of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan jointly with Melksham Town Council, but also for them to provide support to directly to Melksham Without Parish Council on relevant applications.

Recommendation: to continue to work with Place Studios as described in their Delivery Framework Proposal

Members were very positive about both Melksham Without Parish Councillors and Melksham Town Councillors jointly receiving training from Place Studios on familiarisation with the Neighbourhood Plan.

Recommendation: for Place Studios to deliver training on the Neighbourhood Plan at a cost of £1100 (to be split 70/30 with Melksham Council Town subject to their agreement)

The Clerk explained that the Neighbourhood Plan Website needed a major overhaul now that the plan had been made. Place Studios had estimated that it would take 1-1.5 days of work at a cost of £500-£720.

Recommendation: for Place Studios to overhaul the Neighbourhood Plan website at a cost of £500-£720 (to be split 70/30 with Melksham Council Town subject to their agreement)

Wiltshire Council had asked the parish council for feedback on the Neighbourhood Plan process. Members considered the draft response prepared by the Clerk and were happy for her to submit it to Wiltshire Council.

Resolved: The Clerk to submit the response to Wiltshire Council's questions on the Neighbourhood Plan process.

- b) There have been no updates to the Wiltshire Local Plan examination since the last meeting.

220/25 S106 Agreements and Developer meetings: (*Standing Item*)

- a) Updates on ongoing and new S106 Agreements
 - i. Land at Blackmore Farm, Sandridge Common, Melksham, SN12 7QS [PL/2023/11188](#): Demolition of agricultural buildings and development of up to 500 dwellings, up to 5,000 square metres of employment, land for a primary school, land for mixed use hub, open space. Applicant: Tor & Co for Gleasons

It was agreed that this item can be removed from future agendas until the land has been bought and contact has been made with the new owners before they submit a Reserved Matters application.

- ii. Pathfinder Place:

There were no updates on the transfer of the Public Open Space, but it was noted that the footpath is already cracking. Wiltshire Councillor Holder is following up.

No response had been received on the request for an update on the footpath from Western Way to Burnet Close. Wiltshire Councillor Holder has raised the issue with the Director of Highways. It was agreed that the Clerk should ask Melksham Town Council to help apply pressure by also asking for an update.

It was noted that Highways have not yet adopted the roads due to waiting for Taylor Wimpey needing to complete work. It was noted that the bus shelters

are rusting and road markings needed to be refreshed but work cannot be completed until the roads are adopted.

Councillor Glover raised concerns about traffic turning right out of Maitland Place. The Clerk stated that the request for no right-turn into or out of Maitland Place onto Pathfinder Way had been discussed with the developer and would be included when MWPC commented on the Reserved Matters application (not yet submitted/validated)

- iii. Buckley Gardens, Semington Road (PL/2022/02749: 144 dwellings)

Councillor Wood reported that a resident of Buckley Gardens had raised concerns that the streetlights stay on all night. The Clerk to raise with David Wilson Homes (the developer).

The Clerk provided an update from the developer that the gym had been installed, and details were shared of the planned play area. No updates had been received on the contribution towards the bridge or the progress of the changes needed to the S106. The Clerk is also waiting for a meeting with highways officer to discuss walking routes to the school and into town.

- iv. To note any S106 decisions made under delegated powers
None

b) Contact with developers:

- i. **Land at Old Melksham Library Site**

Wiltshire Council, as developers of the site, have communicated that they will not be ready to bring forward proposals at the Melksham Town Council meeting on 23rd September and so the discussion will move to a later meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.18pm

Chairman, 8th September 2025