

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 12th JANUARY 2026**

Present

Councillor	Mr M Simpson	Vice Chairman
Councillor	Mr A Medcalf	
Councillor	Mr D Fellows	
Councillor	Revd P Hughes	
Councillor	Mrs M Newport	
Councillor	Mrs A Johnson	
	Mrs G Hollick	Clerk

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Huskinson

2. Public Question and Answer

There were no members of the public present

3. Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interest

Prior to the meeting, Parish Councillors were reminded that, as required by the Parish Council Code of Conduct Order 2001, as revised, they should notify the MHDC Monitoring Officer of any changes to their Register of Interests or the receipt of any unrecorded gifts or hospitality. They should also declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any of the items of this meeting.

There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest.

However, for clarity, Councillor Ann Johnson declared that the Chair of Madresfield Parish Council, Councillor Mike Johnson, is her husband.

4. The Race Relations and Crime and Disorder Acts

Prior to the meeting, Parish Councillors were reminded that all the business carried out and decisions made at this meeting must observe the requirements of the above Acts.

5. To consider the proposal from Madresfield Parish Council chairman, Mike Johnson, that Guarlford Parish Council should merge with Madresfield Parish Council

Councillor Simpson opened the meeting by asking each councillor in turn to express their thoughts on the proposal.

Councillor Medcalf stated that he was not in favour but would need a guarantee that Guarlford could withdraw at a future point if the desired. The Clerk told the meeting that during the process of consideration, Guarlford and Madresfield could withdraw from the process but once a new joint council had been formed this would not be possible.

Councillor Hughes referred the meeting to comments made by Councillor Tom Wells at the previous meeting of GPC, in respect of forthcoming changes to local government. He added that the loss of the District Council will bring about massive changes and planning matters in particular will become less local. Councillor Hughes continued that a slightly larger parish council would be in a better position to challenge and creatively steer planning issues into the future. In a rapidly changing environment Guarlford Parish Council needed to move forward and previous ways of working need to be reconsidered in order to meet the needs and wishes of the electorate. Councillor Hughes said that whatever decision was reached he felt that the parish council should consider producing a neighbourhood development plan acknowledging that future development in areas adjoining Guarlford would have a major impact on the community.

Councillor Fellows told the meeting that he felt there was merit in joining with Madresfield Parish Council as this could give more strength to both parties. Although he had some reservations, he felt that he was in favour of finding out what local residents thought about this proposal.

Councillor Johnson confirmed that she thought this was a good idea. Madresfield was very vulnerable and being so close to Guarlford anything which impacted Madresfield would also have an impact on Guarlford. There was also the possibility of further planning applications along the Guarlford straight, (B4211) and with a slightly larger parish council there would be a stronger voice in consultations around any future development.

Councillor Newport reminded the meeting that Councillor Tom Wells had spoken about the void which would be left without Madresfield Parish Council. The clerk confirmed that without a merger, Madresfield Parish Council would cease to exist. Councillor Newport said that she thought that working with Madresfield Court could be very helpful. The Court have shown in the past that they have been very supportive to the local community, including financially. She underlined her concerns that any development in Madresfield would have a big impact on Guarlford.

Councillor Simpson told the meeting that he was against the proposal in general. He added that Madresfield Court was very well connected and able to look after the village surrounding it. Guarlford has a cohesive council which has always worked well and been able to look after its own area.

Councillor Hughes said that even though Madresfield Court is very well connected, a parish council is an important body to provide an extra layer of checks.

Councillor Simpson asked councillors to consider the possibility of being unable to recruit new councillors from Madresfield, Guarlford councillors would then be responsible for another village as well as their own.

Councillor Johnson told the meeting that she understood that two of the three existing Madresfield councillors would like to remain in post if elected. The third councillor, District Councillor Kathy Wells had joined Madresfield Parish Council to

enable it to continue to function and it was thought possible that she may wish to stand down if she felt Madresfield was secure.

A) Potential benefits

- A stronger voice on local issues
- Increased resources
- Shared costs across both parishes
- Support from Madresfield Court

B) Potential challenges

- Loss of existing small cohesive group
- Possible difficulties in recruiting new parish councillors
- Having to be concerned with Madresfield issues as well as those of Guarlford

Councillor Hughes made the following proposal;-

To investigate the process for Guarlford Parish Council and Madresfield Parish Council to amalgamate, with a view to forming a new joint parish council subject to the response from consultation with parishioners.

This was seconded by Councillor Fellows

Cllr Simpson	against
Cllr Medcalf	in favour
Cllr Hughes	in favour
Cllr Fellows	in favour
Cllr Johnson	in favour
Cllr Newport	in favour

The motion was carried 5 to 1.

Councillors asked the Clerk to consult with CALC and pursue a consultation process.

Signed

Cllr Michael Simpson
Vice Chairman

Date.....