

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2017

These are the notes from the above meeting held on Monday 24th April 2017 in the Village Hall.

Present: Caroline Carter, Sonia Howell, Graeme Foster, Andrew Pain, Clive Woodward, Wanda Dashwood, Kevin Cadd, Roger Crawford, Mick Trundle, Roger Smith, John Thompson, John Parsons, Sandra Read, Christine Foster, David Foskett, Susan Chappell, Sandra Morgan, Mervyn Morgan, Tracy Challinor, Judith Carter, Sarah Osbourne, Roger Osbourne, Cheryl Parr, Martin Smith, Philip Gilbert, Jenny Gilbert, Linda Primett, Jean Turner

Chairman: Peter Chapman

Matters raised,

1/ Planning – The over development of the village was raised. It was explained that the problem has arisen due to the Local Development Plan (formerly known as the Local Development Framework) of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) being rejected by Government due to Luton Borough Council withdrawing support at the last minute therefore CBC could not prove that it had allocated 5 years' worth of land for building thus making difficult to refuse permission to build. At the meeting Cllr John Thompson had a copy of a letter from CBC stating that for the 3 months from April 1st 2017 CBC could show that they had 5.88 years' worth of land allocated for building therefore any large development received during that period could be rejected on those grounds. Unfortunately, that does not affect planning applications already submitted so the Parish Council (PC) will be objecting on the grounds of sustainability; that is whether the schools, health centres along with other services and utilities could cope with the people and traffic that comes with large developments not only in Meppershall but in Shefford and the surrounding villages.

The development behind the village hall was raised along with the loss of the play equipment and general play areas. The Parish Council has always supported the development as it was accepted as the only realistic way to replace the existing village hall that was showing its age and not really fit for purpose. The loss of the toddlers play area was anticipated from the start of the development but due to staging drawings not being part of the planning process the loss of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) from day one was not expected and the PC were caught out. An area of Old Road Meadow is being prepared for ball games and the PC is hoping to get some play equipment in that area as well.

While on play equipment it was raised that the play area near The Acres was out of use. The PC are not responsible for equipment as it was not consulted on the type or make of the equipment therefore CBC should be approached about any problems in that area.

2/ Speeding/parking – As last year there was a good discussion of the various ways of reducing the traffic travelling through the village. The 20mph limit and revised parking in the vicinity of the school will be implemented during the coming year and the Council will continue to look at ways of installing preferably average speed cameras but if the costs are too prohibitive then the "smiling face" type may be considered.

3/ Grass Cutting – The first cut had just taken place and there were complaints about the standard of work. The Chairman stated that for various reasons the new contract was not signed until the beginning of April and by that time the grass was rather long. The Chairman did say that the contractor would be reminded that Wednesday was refuse collection day and there may be bins on the grass verges.

The meeting closed at 20.55