

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> JULY 2018

**PRESENT:**      **Councillors:** Parsons (in the Chair), Bulley, Foskett, Merryweather,  
Smith P, Smith R and Thomason  
                  **The Clerk:** A Marabese  
                  **Others:** Ward Councillors Brown. 20 members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7:50pm.

### 192. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Chapman, Read and Thompson

### 193. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

### 194. MEMBERS INTERESTS

- a. To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda
  - b. To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests (if any)
  - c. To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate
- No declarations of interest or requests for dispensation received.

At this point (7:52pm) the Chairman suspended Standing Orders to receive comments from our Ward Councillors and to allow members of the public to address the Council in relation to items on the agenda or request matters to be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

Parishioners made the following comments and asked the following questions:

- Polehanger Farms are chasing CBC regarding the cutting of the footpath from Meppershall to Campton that runs along the river.
- How does engagement with developers assist in securing section 106 monies?  
*Cllr Parsons – Decisions made on section 106 allocations can be made during the pre-planning application stage. Talking to developers at an early stage would permit us to have a say in those decisions.*

Standing orders were reinstated at 7:56pm

### REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

#### 195. ENGAGEMENT WITH DEVELOPERS

Proposed amendment to previous resolution 43.a.ix. that states that Meppershall Parish council will not engage with developers prior to the submission of a planning application to CBC. A draft policy was distributed with the agenda for discussion.

Summary of the ensuing discussion and councillor comments:

- Cllr Smith P - 'Why change our policy?'
- Cllr Thomason - The recent planning training attended by some councillors and residents had suggested that engagement with developers was necessary during the pre-planning process to secure section 106 monies. However, he suggested that MPC should meet with CBC first as they are the 'experts' and that going forward it would be preferable if developers met only with CBC who could act on our behalf. We do not have the knowledge to deal with developers.

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- Cllr Smith R - Engagement with a developer can make a difference as many decisions are made at pre-planning application stage.
- Cllr Smith P – Section 106 agreement are made between CBC and the developer. MPC should make representations to CBC to act on our behalf. What is the purpose of engaging with developers?
- Cllr Smith R – Engagement with developers can provide information and can influence decisions that they may make. A ‘wish list’ of potential section 106 projects could include enhancement to public transport.
- Cllr Foskett – At present we have no Neighbourhood Plan and we have nothing written down about what the village need. We are therefore missing our ‘wish list’ from getting to the developer. The village may not need play areas designed into an application but could perhaps benefit from measures to reduce speeding, improvements to footpaths, extension to the school, a roundabout etc. We need to influence at pre-planning application stage as after this variances and alterations are costly. If we engage early the developer can build requests into their costs at an early stage.
- Cllr Smith P – Engagement with developers implies support.

Cllr Brown was asked by the Clerk what do Shefford Town Council do?

- Shefford TC talk to developers. They are working on their Neighbourhood Plan within which all requirements should be included so that CBC can use it to work out requirements for a future development. A lot of larger developers will put forward a consultation prior to application to understand more from local residents. The section 106 value is dependant upon the number of houses proposed in a development.
- Regarding the Shefford Road development, the site is allocated in the submitted Local Plan and will go ahead, therefore we are at a stage when we can influence the section 106 projects and the development detail. This developer is new to CBC and it has been suggested to them that they create an example estate.
- Cllr Thomason – Would like CBC to be part of our process.
- Cllr Bulley – Has vivid memories of the misunderstanding of the village hall project. Welcomes the policy as it lays out what we can do and what we can’t do and sets out expectations for the Parish Council, developers and residents. Any dialogue with developers does not imply agreement especially if we have that stated in a policy document (this is the position of the Parish Council). In the past we have experienced issues of ‘commercial sensitivity’ and our policy needs to clarify this situation. A policy on engagement is protection for councillors.
- Cllr Merryweather – Recalls the construction of the Bovis estate where the Parish Council was opposed to the development and had no engagement with the developer. As a result, the village got nothing out of it and the 3 storey houses were built at the front of the development (as it was too late to change the layout). It is important that we have a policy statement so that developers understand our position. We cannot bury our heads in the sand
- Cllr Smith P – Still have concerns regarding the policy, there are modifications required.

Cllr Brown was asked if an Engagement with Developers Policy would be referred to by CBC

- Yes it would be on file.

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- Cllr Parsons – As fair summation of the discussion so far suggests that whether we accept the policy as presented to Council or not, we need to make changes to it.
- Cllr Thomason – reiterated the need for CBC involvement.
- Cllr Bulley – The policy is not for CBC. We would like to involve CBC however if we change our policy we need to have a framework for the Council to work to. The policy will be there to regulate the conduct of our own business in this regard.

*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Smith P that the current resolution of no engagement with developers prior to the submission of a planning application to CBC stands. 3 in favour, 4 against – Not carried*

As a result of the vote and previous discussion, the Clerk and Cllr Bulley were asked to further refine the Engagement with Developers draft policy so that it could be included as an agenda item at the next Council meeting.

### **196. CLOSE OF THE MEETING**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9:00pm

Where no signature exists in this electronic version, a hard copy version is available for inspection from the Clerk.

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