

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A STATUTORY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 14TH JUNE 2021

PRESENT: **Councillors:** Thompson (Chair), Chapman, Merryweather, Morgan, Seaman and Standbridge
 The Clerk: A Marabese
 Others: Ward Councillors Brown and Liddiard, and 3 members of the public
The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7:47pm.

646. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- a. Councillor Parsons provided apologies that were accepted.

647. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman requested that the Clerk remind all those present at the meeting of the COVID-safe meeting guidelines. The Clerk then advised meeting attendees of the need to adhere to social distancing, not to share meeting documents, to make use of the hand sanitiser available, to keep masks on at all times, follow signage instructions and to remember to wipe down their table and chair with antibacterial wipes provided prior to leaving.

648. MEMBERS INTERESTS

- a. To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda and requests for dispensation.
None received or requested however the Clerk advised that as Clerk to Gravenhurst Parish Council she had an interest in agenda item 654.a.v.

649. PUBLIC SESSION

At this point (7:50pm) the Chairman suspended Standing Orders to receive reports from Ward Councillors, village organisations 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.

Ward Councillor Liddiard advised the meeting that:

- The Library in Shefford open fully from tomorrow.
- Chapel Road has been marked out for patching works however due to the number of areas requiring patching he will be contacting the Highways team to suggest re-surfacing of the whole road.
- Chapel Road has also had monitoring tubes installed to monitor traffic flows – i.e. how many vehicles pass those points at various times of the day and at what speeds. CBC Highways Officer Lisa Wright will provide results.
- CBC has received £225k in Welcome Back funding from the government. This will be spread across all towns and parishes e.g.: Shefford has received £6k to organise markets in the town centre.
- CBC has received £332k from the Government's Safer Street fund that will go towards CCTV, street lighting, parking areas, video doorbells, asset marking systems in areas of crime etc. Cllr Liddiard is asking whether funds can be allocated to mobile CCTV cameras.
- East West Rail Consultation – CBC are focussing on two areas and are keen that parish councils respond. Their two focus area are:
 - 3000 homes are to be built near Marston Vale therefore a rail bypass is needed around Liddlington.

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- Tempsford is a future strategic site and CBC would support a line south of St. Neots as a strategic growth point.
- Cllr Liddiard wished to confirm with MPC that Shefford Road is the council's safety priority. *This was confirmed by councillors present at the meeting.*

Questions / comments from the public:

- An allotment tenant requested that the Clerk investigate 2 allotment plots that have become overgrown as the tenants have not worked them since March 2021. *Clerk will include in next allotment inspection.*
- There has been flooding outside 55A to 55C High Street. A CBC engineer has told residents that he would keep an eye on the situation however surface water is pooling despite a drain being installed in the path of 55B to help with drainage. *It was requested that photos of the pooling water and additional details be added to CBC's Fix My Street.*
- The Chairman advised that he has received a letter from a resident regarding Old Road Meadow and asking the following questions:
 - Are the goal posts staying? *The Clerk advised that they would as they were well used.*
 - Can saplings be transposed to other areas and can oak saplings be planted in the nature reserve? *Action: Councillors agreed that an Environment and Leisure working group meeting should be held to discuss issues raised and that the resident be asked to join the meeting.*
- The Chairman also noted that the Woodland Trust have opened up applications for delivery of free trees in November 2021.

Standing orders were reinstated at 8.10pm

650. MINUTES

- a. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 10th May 2021.
Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 10th May 2021 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried.

651. CLERKS REPORT AND MATTERS ARISING

- a. To request clarification on matters arising and items within the Clerks report.
 - i. The Clerk provided a brief update on issues and work undertaken since the last meeting including:
 1. CBC road closure 9393 of Shefford Road from the junction of Emery Croft to the roundabout has no end date in September (start date 26th July). *Action: Clerk to request end date for works.*
 2. CBC road closure 9290 of Shefford Road from 19th to 21st July. Councillors asked why this could not be done at the same time as 9393 as in effect it will add another closure to the road for a week. *Action: Cllr Liddiard to investigate.*

652. PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS & LEGAL

- a. **Co-Option** – To consider any councillor co-option requests received.
The Clerk advised that she had received an expression of interest in co-option from Mr Peter Crossley that had been circulated to all councillors for consideration. Cllr Chapman

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reminded those present that Mr Crossley had served as a councillor for Meppershall previously.

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to co-opt Mr Peter Crossley to Meppershall Parish Council. Carried.

Mr Crossley then signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and undertaking to observe the code of Conduct before the Clerk / Proper Officer.

It was agreed that Cllr Crossley would join the Planning working group.

b. Procedure – To approve MPC Social Media Policy v1.1.

Proposed Cllr Standbridge/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to approve MPC Social Media Policy v1.1. Carried.

c. Website – To approve the addition of a 'Website Directory' to the proposed new website.

The IT working group proposed the addition of a website directory to the new Meppershall.org website. The webpage will be titled 'Supporting Meppershall Organisations - Keeping it local' and would be a directory of Meppershall organisations split into sectors. Where possible a link will be provided to the organisations' website and contact details. There will be a disclaimer advising that inclusion in the directory is not an endorsement by MPC. Organisations wishing to join the directory will be required to fill in an online form checked and approved by Cllr Standbridge before publishing any information. Annually MPC will email all organisations asking them if they wish to remain in the directory. Removing details - as part of GDPR compliance the website will have a right to be forgotten policy with a form that organisations can fill out.

Proposed Cllr Standbridge/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to approve the addition of a website directory to the proposed new MPC Meppershall.org website. Carried.

d. Website – To approve launch of new Meppershall.org website.

The IT working group are proposing the launch of the new website ASAP and prior to the end of June. All information on the old website has been transferred over to the new website and additional new pages are under construction but yet to be launched.

Proposed Cllr Standbridge/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to approve the launch of the proposed new MPC Meppershall.org website. Carried.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Standbridge and the Clerk for the work put into the new website.

Action: Clerk to write article for Messenger on launch of new website.

e. Consultation – To consider response to Gravenhurst Neighbourhood Plan - Submission Consultation (Regulation 16).

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to support the Gravenhurst Neighbourhood Plan. Carried.

f. Consultation – To consider response to Campton & Chicksands Neighbourhood Plan - Submission Consultation (Regulation 16).

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to support the Campton & Chicksands Neighbourhood Plan. Carried.

g. Wry Close Allotment Track – To approve Licence Agreement between MPC and The Sugarloaf PH permitting the anchoring of a gazebo on the track.

The Clerk reported that the Sugarloaf PH have a gazebo / marquee in their carpark that needs anchoring. The only place they can do this is on the allotment track. Whilst they have installed this without MPC approval Cllr Thompson visited them week commenting 24th May to discuss the matter with them. The proposed solution is to approve a 6

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month peppercorn Licence Agreement between MPC and The Sugarloaf PH permitting the anchoring of a gazebo on the track with anchors that sit flush to the brick wall and removes any liability from MPC.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Seaman. Resolved to approve the License Agreement between MPC and The Sugarloaf PH permitting the anchoring of a gazebo on the allotment track and that it be signed by the Chairman, Cllr Chapman and the Clerk as witness. Carried.

Cllr Crossley pointed out that the current anchors and straps are a hazard as they cannot be seen.

Action: Cllr Thompson to fence off current anchors or wrap with hazard tape.

- h. Centenary Field Parish Facilities** – Update from Clerk and Centenary Field Working Group on handover of Centenary Field to the Parish Council based upon negotiated terms. On behalf of the Centenary Field working group the Clerk reported that a letter from Croudace was received on 27th May with a draft Settlement Agreement. The working group amended the Settlement Agreement as Croudace want it to be a full and final settlement of any future claims that may arise. As Meppershall Village Hall was designed and constructed by Croudace, we have no way of knowing whether there may be any fundamental structural issues that may arise in the future. MVHT and MPC are happy to confirm that we are not currently aware of any such potential claims. We have included a mutual obligation for Croudace to progress the transfer without delay. On 7th June Croudace responded saying that the settlement sums offered were on the basis that this is a final settlement for all matters. Regarding on-going responsibility or liability for future claims if fundamental structural issues arise in the future they have referred MVHT to consider the provisions of the Fifth Schedule (which is broadly identical for both the Parish Council Contract and the Meppershall Village Hall Contract). Croudace cannot accept a settlement that implies in some way that, notwithstanding the contractual position, there continues to be contractual liability for Croudace. On 8th June our solicitor at Machins was asked on behalf of MVHT and MPC to review the draft settlement agreement and consider/advise as to the appropriate amendments required to safeguard our positions. Update from him is pending.
- i. Stocken House Green Open Space** – To consider action required subsequent to receipt of draft land management transfer documents from Davidsons including consideration of legal representation and identification of post-handover MPC obligations. The Clerk reported that Davidsons have forwarded a draft management agreement, transfer and other documents concerning the open green space. A detailed review of the management agreement is required to ensure that MPC understand the implications of the handover, in particular any ongoing post-handover obligations which seem to be wrapped up in CBC planning consent. In the event that MPC proceed with handover MPC will need to provide Davidsons with the details of a solicitor acting on our behalf. The Clerk and Cllr Thompson propose approaching Nick Ginger of Machins who is currently dealing with the Croudace handover and to this end have requested to speak to him. It was suggest that the Clerk Contact CBC for assistance in explaining obligations of the planning permission granted.
- Action: Legal & Procedures working group to contact CBC and review all documentation and present findings and proposals to MPC at the next meeting.*

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Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to request quotation for assistance in legal matters concerning Stocken House Green Space from Nick Ginger of Machins Solicitors. Carried

653. FINANCE

- a. Update of Parish Facilities purchases** - To review and approve income, expenditure and purchase orders for parish facilities.
The report was noted by councillors.
- b. Councillor Training** – To approve cost of councillor training.
Cllr Thompson would like to attend training sessions organised by BATPC on Introduction to VAT for local councils, Finance for Councillors and Internal Controls. Cost is £30 per session however as we have a £10 credit with BATPC the cost will only be £80. Cllr Thompson would also like to attend specific Chairmanship training. No local courses have been identified but LRAPC are running a course at a cost of £115. Cllr Thompson is willing to wait for BATPC to announce their Chairmanship training courses. There is £1,000 allocated to training in the budget.
Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Seaman. Resolved to approve BATPC training requested by Cllr Thompson at a cost of £80 (LGA 1972 s175). Carried
- c. Pitch chains and locks** – To approve cost of £11.99 x 4 to purchase chains and locks for pitch that will need to be closed for maintenance works.
Stondon Parish Council have loaned the Clerk 4 chains and locks for use on the pitch gates of Centenary Field however councillors felt it prudent to purchase our own.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to approve purchase of 4 chains and locks (LG Misc. Prov. A 1976 s19(1.b)). Carried.
- d. Document approval** – To approve journal entries, bank reconciliations and bank statements.
The Clerk presented journals 66, 67 and 68 for approval and Bank Statements and Reconciliation reports 141, 142 and 143 for the Current Account and 018 and 019 for the Savings Account.
Reconciliation reports and statements were checked by Cllrs Chapman and Morgan.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that Journals 66, 67 and 68, Bank Statements and Reconciliation reports 141, 142 and 143 Current Account and 018 and 019 Savings Account be approved and signed. Carried.
- e. Orders for the payment of money** - A schedule of payments was distributed at the meeting for approval and authorisation.
Payments presented for payment were checked by Cllrs Chapman and Morgan.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Standbridge. Resolved that the schedule of payments as presented be approved and authorised for payment by Cllrs Thompson or Parsons. Carried.

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Payment No:	Payee	Purpose	Amount
Payments made prior to meeting date including direct debits, standing orders, salaries etc			
BACS567	Mr A Neave	Allotment Deposit retrun	£20.00
SO01-2106	Mr K Crofts	9/6/21 - Salary	
Everflow Water Bill Summary Credit Notes and Invoices			
CRN1-DD02	Everflow Water	Allotment Water to 7/4/21 - Credit Note	-£260.73
CRN2-DD02	Everflow Water	Allotment Water to 7/4/21 - Credit Note	-£133.01
DD02-2102	Everflow Water	Alloment Water to 07/04/21	£26.16
DD02-2104	Everflow Water	Alloment Water to 07/05/21	£13.30
DD02-2105	Everflow Water	Alloment Water to 07/06/21	£13.95
DD02-2106	Everflow Water	Alloment Water to 07/07/21	£13.49
DD02-2107	Everflow Water	Alloment Water to 07/08/21 (A/c £23.59 in credit)	£303.25
Payment requests received before agenda published			
BACS560	Auditing Solutions Ltd	Internal Audit Fee	£444.00
BACS561	Sustainable Furniture (UK) Ltd	Picnic Benches	£850.00
BACS562	A Marabese	Expenses - new printer	£330.68
BACS563	BATPC	Training	£80.00
BACS564	Vision Blinds	Parish Facilities - VH Blinds	£1,740.00
BACS565	Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd	Alpha Software Support and Maintenance	£148.80
BACS566	Groundworks UK	NP Unspent grant return	£3,290.50
FA01-2106	Mr P Carne	Salary payable 15/06/21	
SO02-2106	Miss A Marabese	Salary payable 15/06/21	
BACS568	HMRC	Q1 ER NI & PAY	£690.80
Payment requests received after agenda published			
BACS569	A&B Gardening	May Grass Cuts	£1,719.00

654. PLANNING AND HOUSING

a. Applications since last Council meeting for consideration

- i. CB/21/02080/LB - Fowlers Farm, 28 High Street, SG17 5LX - Listed Building: Variation of the design to the garage so that it no longer shares a party wall with the neighbouring garage.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that the Council has no objections to planning application 21/02080. Carried.
- ii. CB/21/01596/FULL - 40 Fildyke Road, SG17 5LT - Front porch, rear loft conversion and rear conservatory conversion. Insertion of first floor side window & other external alterations.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Council has no objections to planning application 21/01596. Carried.
- iii. CB/21/02290/FULL - 113 High Street, SG17 5LZ - Single storey front, side and rear extensions, part two storey rear extension, loft extension and conversion.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Council has no objections to planning application 21/02290. Carried.
- iv. CB/21/02334/VOC - 84 Fildyke Road, SG17 5LU - Variation (or removal) of condition numbers 17 of planning permission CB/20/03505/VOC - (Demolition of 84 Fildyke Road and Erection of 5 detached dwellings) - Variation of condition to reflect new plans being 12649-110C House Type A Plots 1 2 GA Plans Elevations 27.04.2021, WD-01A plot 5 Elevations 27.04.2021, WD-02B plot 5 Floor Plans 27.04.2021.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Council has no objections to planning application 21/02334. Carried.

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- v. To endorse Gravenhurst Parish Council objection to planning application CB/21/02011/OUT - Greenwoods, Land North of Higham Road and East of the A6 Bedford Road, Barton Le Clay – 3850 new dwellings and associated development, and consider MPC individual response.
Proposed Cllr Seaman/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that the Council endorses Gravenhurst Parish Council's objection to planning application 21/02011/OUT and that MPC submit its' own objection letter. Carried.

Note: For planning applications that are submitted between meetings and for which an extension to the comment's deadline date is not given, powers have been delegated to the Clerk (with a proposed response circulated to the Council) to submit comments to CBC Planning.

b. To consider updating MPC 'capital projects'

Councillors requested that the Clerk add to the MC 'capital projects' list the following:

- Vehicle Activated Signs;
- Footpath of Shefford; and
- MPC Cemetery planning and set up.

655. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

a. Report from the Clerk

The Clerk reported that a meeting was held with Mark Thomason and Cllr Thompson on 27th May to carry out the Neighbourhood Plan handover. During the meeting items covered included the end of grant report, new grant application, Draft NP and consultation document. The end of grant report was submitted to Groundworks on 1st June and a reimbursement of £3290.50 to Groundworks is required (see BACS566 above). A New grant submission is to be made by the Clerk but we are waiting for a quotation from our consultant for inclusion. Regarding the Regulation 14 consultation we are waiting for advice from our consultant as to how to proceed. The Chairman advised that he has received an offer to assist with Regulation 14 feedback from Mrs A Lester. The Clerk will contact her.

656. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

a. Update from Clerk and Cllr Seaman

Cllr Seaman thanked Cllrs Brown, Liddiard and Morgan for their assisting with the village walk about with CBC's Lisa Wright. He brought to the attention of council that the s278 agreement as part of the 15 Shillington Road development has still not been completed. It is also 6 months since presentation of the highways petition to CBC. During the Traffic Management Meeting CBC Ward Councillor and Portfolio Holder Cllr Dalgarno called for a holistic approach, which now seemingly means that Meppershall residents may have to wait up to two or three years for any major road improvements such as road resurfacing (chicanes, pedestrian crossing etc.) will not take place until all speed measurement readings are taken and/or major house building sites are completed.

The Clerk was asked to contact Lisa Wright, Jill Dickinson, Tracey Harris, Lisa Swanall and Rob Page for updates on issues raised.

It was also noted that the proposed reduction to 40mph on the A507 was still awaiting a response from Beds Police.

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657. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

a. Centenary Field Parish Facilities – Update from Clerk on works required to site.

The Clerk reported that:

- The installation of a wooden gate and kissing gate on the Crackle Hill track is pending handover.
- The Clerk and Cllr Thompson meet with AA Sherriffs to discuss planned works on Monday 24th May. Sherriffs will be sending over revised quotations with start dates for work and will arrange to dig test pits to ensure nothing untoward is buried beneath the Centenary Field grass.
- The pitch was cut 27th May by Sherriffs with grass deposited to rear of field as agreed with the Clerk and Chair. Pitch fertilised following day.
- A&B Gardening were asked by the Clerk and Chair to cut the grass on Centenary Field as it was nearing 2ft high and not doing so would only exacerbate problems of grass growth on the field.

b. Identification of important trees in the village for potential protection – Update from Cllr Parsons.

Deferred to next meeting.

658. HEALTH & SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

a. Community Safety – To receive report from Cllr Seaman and the Clerk

The Clerk reported that subsequent to meeting with Beds Police and CBC community Safety Officers on 21st April:

- Combatting ASB - MVHT have asked HATS to paint the storage containers so that youths cannot climb up them and to remove the items under the tarpaulin. P Carne asked to move bench behind containers. Village Hall benches have been secured to the ground.
- Speeding - PCSO Lee and a Special Constable to carry out some speed enforcement work on Shefford Road. PCSO Lee to contact the Clerk directly. No contact yet but Cllr Seaman raised this issue with the PCC on 7th June.
- Dog Fouling - Clerk has provided CBC with list of hotspot areas so that they can be added to the patrol list.
- Youth Activities – Grand Union housing Group (GUHG) are looking at the youth activities they are able to offer the village and will be open to looking at a project for Meppershall. They have emailed the village hall regarding booking something for the summer however would also like to look at something before that too. Clerk has suggested that GUHG link up with CBC Youth Engagement Teams to offer a Youth Club in the village.
- Community Safety Group - CBC Safer Communities Officers to contact the Clerk to assist in setting up.

b. Old Road Meadow – To receive and approve risk assessment.

Clerk to prepare risk assessment for review at next meeting.

659. CLOSE OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

The Chairman reminded everyone to clean their table and chair with the antibacterial wipes provided and that the next meeting would be the 12th June in the Village Hall and declared the meeting closed at 9:55pm.

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

Glossary

- CBC = Central Bedfordshire Council
- MPC = Meppershall Parish Council
- MVH = Meppershall Village Hall & MVHT = Meppershall Village Hall Trustees
- ORM = Old Read Meadow Nature Reserve
- VAS = Vehicle activated sign