

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A STATUTORY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021

**PRESENT:**      **Councillors:** Thompson (Chair), Chapman, Crossley, Merryweather, Morgan, Parsons 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 7:00pm.

## **688. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- a. All councillors were present at the meeting

## **689. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reminded all those present at the meeting of the COVID-safe meeting guidelines. The Chairman read the Parish Council notice and announcement in relation to meetings in connection to openness and transparency, and then advised those present of the following:

- a. Addition to the agenda at item 695.c.i regarding attendance at the Development Management Committee meeting on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October in relation to CB/21/02885/FULL - The Pigling, Woodview Nurseries, SG17 5LL - Replace existing mobile home with a single storey two bedroom permanent dwelling.  
Councillors agreed that due to the time limitation this item should be added to the agenda.
- b. Addition to the agenda at item 699.e.i Defibrillator removal and re-installation.  
Councillors agreed that due to the health and safety implications for residents this item should be added to the agenda.

## **690. MEMBERS INTERESTS**

- a. To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda and requests for dispensation.  
None received or requested.

## **691. PUBLIC SESSION**

At this point (7:05pm) 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:

- Garden Waste - The collection of garden waste will take place from 18<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October. During this time there will be no food waste collections (it is suggested that residents either compost their food waste or double bag it and add to their black bin waste).
- Tidy Tips - Residents are no longer required to book slots at the Tidy Tips although some waiting time is required at peak usage hours.
- Adults Carers Survey – A survey will be dropping on the doormats of unpaid carers of adult social care customers in October 2021. CBC, as part of a National Survey, will be sending out the survey to a sample of around 800 carers, who look after a family member, partner or friend in need of support or services. The survey asks for views on whether services received by carers help them in their caring role, their life outside of caring and the Carers' perception of services provided to the cared for person. There are also questions to find out

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what effect the pandemic has had on them since March 2020. Any queries regarding the survey should be forwarded to [insight@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:insight@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

- Free School Meals – The Government has provided more money for Free School Meals and CBC / Schools will be providing eligible families with vouchers up to the February 2022 half term.
- CBC Parking fees and charges consultation is currently under way and residents are encouraged to respond.

The following questions were raised by members of the public:

- The draft Neighbourhood Plan is a good piece of work, however it refers to two pubs in the village. The Airman is not situated in the village but on the A507 far away from village residents and refers to itself as a Hotel, Bar, Restaurant and Wedding Centre. *Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group present at the meeting requested that the comments be submitted online so that they could be recorded with any others received.*
- Documents for planning application CB/21/02885/FULL - The Pigling, Woodview Nurseries, SG17 5LL are not accessible online. *Cllr Liddiard and Brown to investigate.*

Standing orders were reinstated at 7:15pm

## 692. MINUTES

- a. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried.*

## 693. PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS & LEGAL

- a. **Co-Option** – To consider any councillor co-option requests received.

One application for co-option received however the applicant has not contacted either the Clerk or the Chairman regarding their application. They have been asked to do this prior to Council considering the application. Another email indicating interest and has been received. Resident sent Co-option Policy and application form and asked to contact the Clerk / Chairman regarding their application.

b. **Procedures**

- i. To consider creation of a Community Emergency Response Team

Clerk attended training session on 1st October with CBC. In the simplest of terms CBC would like every parish to have a CERT WhatsApp Group to assist and provide information in times of need. There are 80 listed 'emergencies' when they could contact the CERT group from flooding which would not affect Meppershall but does include things like a gas or electricity outage, mains water burst lasting number of days, snow blocking roads, unexploded bomb etc.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to create CERT WhatsApp Group and publicise. Carried.*

- ii. To consider re-approval of MPC Meeting Recording and Filming v1.0

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to re-adopt MPC Meeting Recording and Filming v1.0. Carried.*

c. **Representation on Village Hall Committee**

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- i. To consider proposing a member of MPC be put forward as a representative on the Village Hall Committee.

At the last MPC meeting a resident requested that this item be added to the next agenda. The Chairman explained that the constitution of the Meppershall Village Hall Committee states that MPC (together with four other village organisations) shall appoint a representative member to the MVH Committee. The Committee is the Trustees and as such the MPC representative will be required to become a Trustee. In the past MPC had appointed a representative member to the committee however they resolved in May 2019 not to do so due to a conflict of interests. Councillors agreed that it is very difficult to act in the best interests of both organisations however a central focus of both roles is to act in the best interest of the village and its residents. If MPC is not represented on the committee then it cannot participate in decision making. The Clerk reminded councillors that any representative of MPC appointed the MVH Committee will be appointed from today and that their declarations of interests should be updated with CBC accordingly.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to appoint Cllr Thompson as MPC Representative to MVH Committee. Carried.*

### **d. Meeting invitations**

- i. To consider attendance at the 2021 BATPC AGM, taking place at Henlow Park Pavilion, Wednesday 27th October at 7:30pm (with refreshments from 7pm).  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Clerk and Cllr Thompson attend the BATPC AGM on behalf of MPC. Carried.*
- ii. To consider attendance at the Town and Parish Council Conference on 10 November, starting at 6pm (decision not made whether remote or via MS Teams).  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that Cllr Thompson attend the Town and Parish Conference on behalf of MPC. Carried.*

### **e. IT – Website and Email**

- i. Cllr Standbridge to provide an update on domain hosting  
Cllr Standbridge reported that the website and all emails have been moved to the new hosting supplier and that an application has been submitted and paid for the Meppershall-pc.gov.uk domain. There have been 517 total individual website users and the top page is the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 consultation. The Clerk and Cllr Standbridge will work on the new MPC logo in early 2022.  
The Chairman wished to repeat the councils thanks to Cllr Standbridge for the work required to change over hosting supplier.

### **f. Centenary Field Parish Facilities**

- i. Update from Clerk and Centenary Field Working Group on handover of Centenary Field to the Parish Council based upon negotiated terms.  
The Chairman was pleased to report that the Settlement Agreement between MPC, MVHT and Croudace is acceptable to all parties (save some minor wording issues) and that the Settlement Agreement and Land Transfers involving MPC, MVHT, Polehanger Farms and Croudace can now be prepared ready for signing. Once signed the Clerk initiate remedial works however the timing of those works will now need to be clarified with the contractor. Huge sincere thanks were expressed to the Clerk for the considerable amount of work put into getting all parties to reach an agreement and for the work ahead.

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*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Clerk and Cllr Morgan engage with contractors to organise work required to Centenary Field and installation of gym equipment. Carried.*

- ii. To consider request from a reporter at the Comet newspaper to provide “words, quotes or extra background information” ... “for a story” ... “regarding the current state of the fields, and when people in the community can expect to be able to use their park again”.

The Clerk received an email on 30/09 from a reporter at the COMET newspaper, requesting a statement on the transfer of land to the Parish Council for a story to be published by them. After discussion with the Chairman it was agreed the Clerk should respond confirming that due to the nature of the request and the sensitivity of the situation, at present the Clerk was not personally able to provide any sort of statement or “words, quotes or extra background information” on behalf of the Parish Council “for a story”. MVHT and Polehanger were not contacted for a statement. Croudace declined to provide a statement.

*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved that the Council decline to comment or provide a statement to the Comet but that the Clerk prepare an announcement to the village on the handover to be issued via Facebook, website, Messenger (Cllr standbridge to assist with video). Carried.*

## **g. Stocken House Green Space**

- i. Update from Clerk and Cllr Thompson and review of decision to adopt Stocken House Green Space.

The Clerk and Cllr Thompson met on 11<sup>th</sup> October to review an email from Davidsons regarding handover and to revise the Management Agreement they had sent over. *Councillors asked the Clerk and Cllr Thompson to agree the specification of the land at handover e.g.: stone picking, seeding etc. and to check that the CBC defects period on landscaping is.*

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the Council appoint an Arborist to assist in monitoring works at Stocken House. Carried.*

- ii. To approve name of green space.

*Cllr Parsons was asked to present options for consideration at the next meeting.*

## **694. FINANCE**

### **a. Purchase Orders**

- i. To approve any purchase order requests.  
None received

### **b. Budget Review**

- i. To review Budget v Actual to end of September 2021.

The Clerk provided councillors with reports with data from Rialtas. No issues were identified although some expenditure is higher than budgeted for but was approved at time of purchase.

### **c. Reserves**

- i. To review current reserves.

The Clerk provided a breakdown of current Earmarked Reserves including details of any movement in or out in this financial year. Councillors were satisfied with current Earmarked Reserves.

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### d. Document approval

- i. To approve journal entries, bank reconciliations and bank statements.

The Clerk presented Journal 69, Bank Statements and Reconciliation reports 147 and 148 for the Current Account and 023 for the Savings Account.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Standbridge. Resolved that Journal 69 be approved and signed. Carried.*

Reconciliation reports and statements were checked by Cllrs Standbridge and Chapman.

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that Bank Statements and Reconciliation reports 147 and 148 Current Account and 023 Savings Account be approved and signed. Carried.*

### e. Orders for the payment of money

- i. A schedule of payments was distributed at the meeting for approval and authorisation.

Payments presented for payment were checked by Cllrs Crossley and Morgan.

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Crossley. Resolved that the schedule of payments as presented be approved and authorised for payment by Cllrs Thompson or Parsons. Carried.*

Payment No:	Payee	Purpose	Amount
<b>Payments made prior to meeting date including direct debits, standing orders, salaries etc</b>			
BACS578	Krystal Hosting Ltd	3 year hosting package	£359.99
BACS579	Qbic Internet Solutions	1 month hosting to 27/10/2021	£14.39
BACS581	Krystal Hosting Ltd	2 year meppershall-pc.gov.uk domain	£120.00
BACS582	Zurich Municipal	MPC Annual Insurance	£1,350.58
DD01-2109	Standard Life	Clerks Pension	£98.71
SVCHRG	Unity Trust	Quarterly Charge	£18.00
SO01-2110	Mr K Crofts	Final Salary payment	
<b>Payment requests received before agenda published</b>			
BACS580	The Play Inspection Company	Annual Play Inspections	£110.28
BACS583	MAGPAS	Donation	£800.00
BACS584	Meppershall Wanderbus	Grant	£721.70
BACS585	JR Countryside Services	ORM Fence and gate around drainage ditch	£1,100.00
BACS586	A&B Gardening Limited	September Grass Cuts	£1,135.62
BACS587	Meppershall Village Hall	NP Meeting - 6/9/21	£36.00
BACS588	HMRC	Q3 PAYE & NI	£734.80
FA01-2110	Mr P Carne	Salary - no hours worked	
SO02-2110	Miss A Marabese	Salary	
<b>Payment requests received after agenda published</b>			
BACS589	Mr J Thompson	Lock for ORM ditch fence	£21.99

## 695. PLANNING AND HOUSING

### a. Applications since last Council meeting for consideration

- i. CB/21/04236/FULL - Vimyridge, SG17 5LN - Proposed garage conversion to habitable space.

*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Council has no objections to planning application 21/04236. Carried.*

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*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. Ox-Cam Arc Spatial Framework Consultation**

- i. To consider response to the Ox-Cam Arc Spatial Consultation and communication from We are the Stop the Arc Group.

Councillors discussed the Ox-Cam Arc and the Clerk noted that Meppershall will be one of the villages within the Ox-Cam Arc.

*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Clerk register MC for receipt of correspondence from the Stop the Arc Group. Carried.*

### **c. Development Management Committee meeting on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October**

- i. To consider attendance at the DMC meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> October in relation to CB/21/02885/FULL - The Pigling, Woodview Nurseries, SG17 5LL - Replace existing mobile home with a single storey two bedroom permanent dwelling.

Councillors discussed their understanding of previous negotiations between the residents of The Pigling, CBC and MPC that dated back to 2008. It is the understanding of Ward Councillors and MPC that CBC would take ownership of the site whilst a farm tenancy was in place. Once the farm tenancy was no longer in place the land would be transferred to MPC for the benefit of the village. Whilst councillors accept that every planning application is to be judged on its' own merits and material planning considerations they also consider that a decision on the granting of planning permission for this site should be delayed until the current and future ownership of the site is confirmed. MPC currently consider themselves to be the future beneficial owner of the site and CBC will be required to list the mechanism of transfer to MPC

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved that Cllr Crossley attend the DMC meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> October and make MPC representation, and that the Clerk write to CBC Estates Team, CBC CEO, CBC Leader and CBC Chair of DMC asking for a response to our previous correspondence requesting clarity of ownership of The Pigling and that consideration of the application at DMC is deferred. Carried.*

## **696. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

### **a. Report from the Clerk**

The Chair to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group reported that the consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 14) has started and that 2 drop in sessions have been held at the village Hall for those individuals who wished to view the plan in paper format. There were only 4 visitors to the drop in sessions and currently only one submission has been received. Advertising of the Draft Plan consultation has taken place with banners erected in locations around the village, via Facebook (both via MPC and the Village Noticeboard), an email has been sent to previous subscribers and a leaflet will be distributed to all homes in the village with the Messenger. After the consultation ends on 31<sup>st</sup> October the Steering Group will need to consider the responses received, update the plan and then request its' examination by CBC.

## **697. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

### **a. Update from Clerk**

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The Clerk advised that the grant of £20k from the OPCC for highways improvements has been received into the MPC bank account and moved to Earmarked Reserves.

*The Clerk was asked to write to the CBC Highways Officer requesting an update on traffic monitoring to assist in deciding on possible positioning of the VAS's as previously requested prior to the school summer holidays.*

The Clerk reported that CBC had carried out a speed survey on Chapel Road. Results of the speed survey and assessment were issued in August 2021:

- The traffic count was conducted over a period of 7 days from 23 – 29 June 2021 and the location was selected as an appropriate position by an experienced Highways Engineer.
- The results indicate that the majority of vehicles are travelling well within the 60mph limit, with mean speeds of around 41-42mph and 85% of vehicles travelling at or below 48 mph, see summary results below:

Report ID	Site	Direction	Start Date	End Date	Posted Speed Limit (PSL)	Total Vehicles	Mean Speed	85%ile Speed	(24 Hour) 5 Day Ave	(12 Hour) 7 Day Ave	(24 Hour) 7 Day Ave	%age HGVs
Site	Site 35 - Chapel Road (10m south of waterworks cottages), Meppershall	Northbound	Wed 23 Jun 2021	Tue 29 Jun 2021	60mph	6855	42.0	48.9	1093	853	979	0.39%
Site	Site 35 - Chapel Road (10m south of waterworks cottages), Meppershall	Southbound	Wed 23 Jun 2021	Tue 29 Jun 2021	60mph	7322	40.9	47.5	1165	901	1046	0.27%

- Two minor incidents have occurred at the A507 end of Chapel End over the past 3 years and a serious accident took place in the evening, close to Fildyke Road. These incidents are not considered to be related to the existing speed limits and signage.
- CBC have also looked at signage and road markings along the road and do not consider that further signage is required. There are warning markings and signs present on the bends in the road to the north of the waterworks cottages.
- CBC recommend that when walking along rural lanes, pedestrians should stay on the right-hand side of the road to see oncoming traffic and wear bright clothing to ensure maximum visibility.

CBC will not be progressing any further action with regards to speed limits or warning signs along Chapel Road at this time. A resident is disputing the location of the assessment equipment however CBC Highways have responded to say that the location of the automatic traffic count was assessed and selected by an experienced highways engineer and that adjustments to speed limits must be justified with fact-based information, including speed data and a documented collision history. Where there is neither a demonstrated speeding issue nor collision history, such locations are not progressed. CBC have confirmed that the traffic count results provided do not support the need for any further assessment and do not consider that a speed limit reduction is required for Chapel Road in Meppershall.

It was also noted that the footpath adjacent to the 15 Shillington Road development has been completed but the replacement VAS, village entrance sign and road markings have not been installed, the bell mouth entrance to the site is missing its final surface and street signage is still not compliant with CBC specifications.

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*The Clerk was asked to contact CBC enforcement again regarding the above matter.*

## 698. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

### a. Tree planting plans

- i. To consider proposals.  
Item deferred to next meeting.

### b. Village entrance planters

- i. To consider purchase of planters and flowers to be installed under village signage at village entrances.  
Councillors discussed this request that had been made by a resident who currently maintains the planter at the Shefford Road village entrance. Councillors believe that the village entrance signs are installed on highways land and therefore planters should not be placed under them. There is also a potential health and safety issue in maintenance and watering of planters.

*The Clerk was asked to arrange the removal of the old planter in disrepair at the Shefford Road village entrance.*

### c. Fowlers Drive Acacia Tree

- i. To consider removal of Acacia Tree on corner of Fowlers Drive.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the Clerk obtain quotations for the removal of the Acacia tree as it poses a health and safety issue in its current state. Carried.*

## 699. HEALTH & SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

### a. Play Areas Inspection Reports

- i. To review Centenary Field and Old Road Meadow Annual Play Areas Inspection reports and agree on any necessary actions.  
Councillors had previously received copies of the reports and noted that there were no issues of high importance requiring action.  
*The Clerk was asked to obtain a quotation for the remedial work suggested in the reports.*

### b. Old Road Meadow Risk Assessment

- i. To receive and approve ORM Risk Assessment.  
*The Clerk was asked to complete a new risk assessment of Old Road Meadow with the new Community and Environment Officer once in post.*

### c. COVID Safe Meeting Risk Assessment

- i. To review COVID Safe Meeting Risk Assessment.  
*The Clerk and Cllr Thompson were asked to review the COVID Safe Meeting Risk Assessment and make appropriate changes for presentation to Council at the next meeting.*

## 700. PERSONNEL

### a. Community and Environment Officer role

- i. To receive update on interviews  
The Clerk advised that an interview for the role was planned for tomorrow morning at 11am with the Clerk and Cllr Merryweather. Interview questions have been prepared. Councillors agreed that if the Clerk and Cllr Merryweather were not happy

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with the candidate then the Clerk should arrange to re-advertise the role. If the Clerk and Cllr Merryweather are happy with the candidate then the Clerk was asked to call an extra-ordinary meeting of the Council to consider the appointment, terms and conditions of employment and all other relevant matters. As this extra-ordinary meeting will require discussion on the suitability of the candidate and particulars of their employment it was suggested that members of the public and press be excluded.

## **701. CLOSE OF THE MEETING**

The Chairman reminded everyone to clean their table and chair with the antibacterial wipes provided and that the next meeting would be the 8<sup>th</sup> November in the Village Hall and declared the meeting closed at 9:28pm.

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

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### Glossary

- ACV = Asset of Community Value
- 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