

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

**PRESENT:**      **Councillors:** Thompson (Chair), Chapman, Crossley, Merryweather, Morgan, and Standbridge.

**The Clerk:** A Marabese.

**Others:** Ward Councillors Liddiard, and 3 members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7:05pm.

### 702. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- a. Councillor Parsons and Ward Councillor Brown provided apologies that were received and accepted.

### 703. 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. To resolve to extend the meeting finish time beyond 2 hours.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to extend the meeting finish time beyond 2 hours. Carried.*
- b. A letter of thanks has been received from MAGPAS and an email from Meppershall Wanderbus following the donations given to them by MPC.
- c. Recent reported crime statistic for Meppershall are rather high and we should monitor them going forward.

### 704. MEMBERS INTERESTS

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

### 705. PUBLIC SESSION

At this point (7:10pm) 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:

- CBC success in securing Government funding – CBC have been successful in securing Government funding for:
  - £32.7 million for M1-A6 link road.
  - £28 million from levelling up funds. Although CBC are a tier 3 authority funds have been secured to build a health hub and fitness centre in Houghton Regis. Receipt of this funding will release capital funds that may be used to provide a Shefford based health and fitness facility.
  - £7.5 million for improvements to the Clophill roundabout.
- Work has started on the Transport Interchange in Flitwick.
- Shefford Road – Meeting held with CBC Highways Officer regarding the poor state of Shefford Road and patch re-surfacing required.

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

- CBC consultation on housing allocation – CBC's policy on housing allocation has not been amended since 2013. It contains the list of priorities for residents when applying for social housing. This is important as a change in criteria can determine who can apply for social housing in Meppershall e.g.: people with a local connection to the village can be pushed either up or down the priority list. The consultation closes on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022. *The Clerk was asked to add this to the next meeting agenda.*
- CBC will shortly commence another consultation on community halls for the future.
- Development Management Committee – The Pigling – Although planning application 21/02885 was approved by the Committee anyone who buys the Pigling must request planning permission to enlarge the property beyond planning granted as permitted development right have been removed from the planning permission granted. Cllr Morgan wished it noted that the Clerk has wasted much time searching for minutes and documented agreements regarding the Pigling and more recently the Village Hall development due to previous poor record keeping by MPC. Cllr Morgan requested that it be recorded in minutes that any decisions made by councillors must be minuted to avoid some of the issues we have experienced recently. It was agreed that now and in the future we will have better documented evidence of issues and matters concerning MPC.

The following questions were raised by members of the public:

- No response had been received from CBC regarding VAS installation in the village. *Cllr Liddiard to chase the CBC Highways Officer responsible for responding.*
- No response has been received from CBC Highways or Enforcement regarding the s.278 Highways Improvements at 15 Shillington Road or regarding the non-compliant road signs. *Cllr Liddiard to chase.*
- There is a prominent 'hump' on Campton Road prior to entering Campton in what is actually part of Meppershall. It is potentially dangerous. Can the Clerk please contact CBC concerning this? *Clerk to action.*

Standing orders were reinstated at 7:30pm

### 706. MINUTES

- a. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021.  
*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Standbridge. Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried.*
- b. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Extra-ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried.*

### 707. PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS & LEGAL

- a. **Co-Option** – To consider any councillor co-option requests received.  
An email indicating interest and has been received and the applicant asked to contact the Clerk / Chairman regarding their interest
- b. **Procedures**

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

- i. To consider approval of MPC Sustainability Policy v1.0.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to approve MPC Sustainability Policy v1.0. Carried.*
- ii. To consider approval of MPC Employee Handbook v2.0.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to adopt the MPC Employee Handbook on the proviso that councillors can make comments on changes prior to the next meeting. Carried.*
- iii. To consider approval of revised COVID Safe Meeting Risk Assessment.  
Councillors considered the current CBC weekly COVID-19 snapshot reports received and the necessity to conduct council business in the safest manner possible.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to keep the current COVID Safe Meeting Risk Assessment in place until January 2022 when MPC will review again. Carried.*

### **c. Consultations**

- i. To consider response to DEFRA Consultation on Amendments to the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 as applied to Groundwater Activities and related Surface Water Discharge Activities.  
The Clerk reported that DEFRA wishes to amend regulations around activities that affect groundwater and is therefore holding a consultation on the plans that will affect all current and proposed cemeteries. Proposals include an exemption from the scheme for small cemeteries (those with less than 100 burials a year). However, to qualify burial plots will need to be no less than 5sq mtrs. DEFRA also proposes to prohibit burials within 10mts of a field drain or dry ditch, 30mtr from spring or water course. This may have implications on the cemetery planned for Centenary Field.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that the Clerk seek advice from the ICCM regarding the planned cemetery for Centenary Field. Carried.*

### **d. IT – Website and Email**

- i. Cllr Standbridge to provide an update on gov.uk domain application.  
Cllr Standbridge is chasing our domain hosting supplier regarding the progress of our gov.uk domain application. 1011 people viewed our website last month each staying an average of 5 minutes and 6 seconds on the site. The most visited page was the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 consultation.

### **e. 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 and Clerk reported that the Settlement Agreement was signed by MPC and MVHT on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October and delivered by hand to the Croudace Offices on 1<sup>st</sup> November. Croudace are yet to confirm receipt and send us a signed copy of the documentation. The Clerk and our Solicitor are actively chasing this, the land transfers that require signing and an update on money to be received by MPC upon signing of the settlement agreement.
- ii. To approve signing of land transfers.  
The Clerk confirmed that wording of the land transfers has been confirmed by our Solicitor.

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Standbridge. Resolved that Cllrs Thompson and Chapman, together with the Clerk sign the Crackle Hill Extension and Centenary Field land transfer as confirmed by the MPC Solicitor. Carried.*

- iii. Update from the Clerk and Cllr Morgan on plans for works to Centenary Field.

The Clerk reported that she is chasing the contractor for a meeting to put together plans for works.

### **f. 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 reported that Davidsons have responded to all the queries raised and have made changes to the Management Agreement as requested. *Councillors asked the Clerk and Cllr Thompson to liaise with Davidsons to ensure that the other Management Company (responsible for all areas other than the green space) is not able to levy a charge on residents for the green space, and whether in the future MPC might be able to do so.*

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

- ii. To appoint MPC Solicitor to deal with Stocken House land transfer and agreement.

The Clerk reported that Emma Halpin of Ross Williams Solicitors in Hitchin (who also act on behalf of Stondon PC) have quoted £1500 plus vat plus disbursements:

- Land registry search £3.90
- Land registry submission fee £4.80
- Land Registry registration fee £40

Our current solicitor is yet to provide a quotation.

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the Clerk and Cllr Thompson select the appointment of a Solicitor to deal with Stocken House land transfer and agreement. Carried.*

- iii. To approve acceptance of Stocken House Management / Transfer Agreement and authorise signing.

The Clerk had previously circulated to councillors copies of the proposed Management / Transfer Agreement and land transfer.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Crossley. Resolved that the Council approves the proposed Management / Transfer Agreement and land transfer subject to approval of an MPC appointed Solicitor. Carried.*

- iv. To consider name of green space as proposed by Cllr Parsons.

Cllr Parsons had provided the Clerk with 4 suggestions. They were:

- Leofwin Green - Saxon Thane holding the manor of Malpertesselle prior to 1066
- Leventhorpe Green - First owners of Polehanger Estate, granted by Henry VIII following suppression of the Knights Hospitallars of St John of Jerusalem, holders since before 1244.
- The Glebe (1506 – Church lands in area near Nunswood)
- Doxhall Field (1645) - Old Norse dokk Part of one of medieval great fields near to the location

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the Council name the Stocken House green space as 'The Glebe' and the Clerk advise Davidsons of our decision. Carried.*

### 708. FINANCE

#### a. Purchase Orders

- i. To approve any purchase order requests.

The Clerk advised of the need to place a stationery order for a number of items.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the Clerk place orders for all stationery and ancillary items require. Carried.*

#### b. Document approval

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

The Clerk presented Bank Statements and Reconciliation reports 149 for the Current Account and 024 for the Savings Account. Reconciliation reports and statements were checked by Cllrs Standbridge and Chapman.

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Standbridge. Resolved that Bank Statements and Reconciliation reports 149 Current Account and 024 Savings Account be approved and signed. Carried.*

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

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Clerk arranges to make salary payments to the Community & Environment Officer monthly after timesheet submissions. Carried.*

Payment No:	Payee	Purpose	Amount
<b>Payments made prior to meeting date including direct debits, standing orders, salaries etc</b>			
DD02-2111	Everflow Water	Allotment water to 7/12/21	£146.36
DD01-2110	Standard Life	Clerk Pension (15/10/21)	£98.71
<b>Payment requests received before agenda published</b>			
BACS590	Mr P Carne	Expenses	£155.96
<b>Payment requests received after agenda published</b>			
DD02-2112	Everflow Water	Allotment Water to 7/01/2022	£150.64
BACS591	Meppershall Village Hall	NP Drop in Sessions	£40.00
FA01-2111	Mr P Carne	Salary (15/11/2021)	£62.85
SO02-2111	Miss A Marabese	Salary (15/11/2021)	£1,121.49

### 709. PLANNING AND HOUSING

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

- i. CB/21/04658/FULL - 114 Shefford Road, SG17 5LL - Single storey rear and side extension.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Crossley. Resolved that the Council has no objections to planning application 21/04658. Carried.*

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

*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.*

### **710. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

#### **a. Report from the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Mr A Pain**

The Draft Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 consultation is now completed. There were 4 attendees to the drop-in session and 7 resident, 2 non-resident and 6 statutory responses to the consultation. The responses received, especially that from CBC, were very helpful. Unfortunately not all responses were relevant to the development of the Plan going forward e.g.: references to the Village Hall. Many responses made reference to traffic and the Steering Group will look to see how to incorporate traffic calming in to the Plan if possible. Comments were also received concerning the size of future developments and what is required from those developments. The two non-resident responses were received from land developers promoting land at both 40 Shefford Road and between Old Road Meadow and Coneygate. The Steering Group received these responses positively as they identify potential areas for improvement in the Plan also. The Steering Group will review the comments and where appropriate make changes to the Plan.

The Clerk the explained the next steps to follow in the Neighbourhood Plan process.

These are:

- Review of responses and changes made to the Plan in consultation with MPC NP consultant.
- Regulation 16 Independent Examination (organised by CBC) and changes made as required.
- MPC to agree final Plan for referendum.
- Preparation for referendum.

### **711. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

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

The Clerk advised that:

- OPCC Funding – Clerk has not had a response from CBC Highways with regards to the proposed monitoring of Meppershall roads to identify best locations for VAS installation. *Cllr Liddiard agreed to chase CBC Officers for an update*
- Hoo Road Bridleway Bollards – After discussions with CBC ROW Officer regarding use of signage poles to be installed by MPC to narrow the route and therefore block vehicular traffic from using the ROW, ROW Officer confirmed that CBC will erect another bollard instead at their cost.
- Walnut Tree Way – Management company have been contacted by a resident of The Orchard, with concerns about the increasing volume of cars parking very close to the junction of Walnut Tree Way and the High Street. They have also seen double parking in the bay. This is causing it to become single lane and very dangerous for vehicles entering and leaving the estate. Clerk advised that this is not something within the MPC control.
- 15 Shillington Road - Traffic calming measure and installation of footway - Clerk has continually chased CBC Highways for an update on the s.278 agreement with



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no response forthcoming. *Cllr Liddiard agreed to chase CBC Officers for an update.*

- 15 Shillington Road - Street signage not as per CBC specification - CBC Enforcement will contact the developer to get the signs installed as per the approved plans.

### 712. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

#### a. Tree planting plans

- To consider proposals.

The Clerk reported that grants available from CBC. Applications are now being accepted for the second round, which will run from 1 May 2021 to 28 February 2022. CBC plan to provide funding (or match funding) to increase tree, shrub and hedge planting in our area. Projects can vary in size from at least 5 trees, up to larger areas of new woodland.

[https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/42/stronger\\_communities/678/community\\_grants/4](https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/42/stronger_communities/678/community_grants/4)

The Clerk, Cllr Thompson and Mrs R Keeble-Cooper (volunteer resident) will be meeting with Cllr Steve Dixon to discuss how CBC can assist us.

#### b. ORM Community Orchard

- To approve cost of pruning trees (removing height).

The Clerk declared an interest in this item. Mr Marabese has quoted £100 for completing work to prune the height of the trees as per last year.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that Mr Marabese be asked to assist in pruning the height of the Community Orchard trees at a cost of £100. Carried.*

#### c. Fowlers Drive Acacia Tree

- To consider quotations for the removal of the Acacia Tree on the corner of Fowlers Drive.

Village Trees have quoted £350 for the removal of the Acacia Tree on the corner of Fowlers Drive. Any contractor will be required to co-ordinate with the Clerk so that residents can park cars in safe locations and deliveries can still be made.

*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that Village Trees be appointed to remove the Acacia Tree on the corner of Fowlers Drive at a cost of £350. Carried.*

### 713. HEALTH & SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

#### a. Old Road Meadow Risk Assessment

- 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.*

#### b. Play area remedial work

- To consider quotation for remedial works required to play areas.

Greyhound Leisure Limited have quoted £350 to carry out remedial work required to play areas.

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that Greyhound Leisure Limited be appointed to carry out remedial works to play areas at a cost of £350. Carried.*

### 714. PERSONNEL

#### a. Community and Environment Officer role

- i. To receive update on employment of new Community and Environment Officer.  
The Clerk confirmed that subsequent to the Extra-ordinary meeting of MPC held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October, Mrs V. Thorne was offered and has accepted the role of MPC Community and Environment Officer effective from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021. The Chairman and all members of the Council welcomed Mrs Thorne into the MPC team.

- ii. To consider proposal to provide a mobile phone to Community and Environment Officer.

As the Community and Environment Officer will be lone working the Clerk suggested purchasing a Tesco mobile for up to £15pcm or less with the capability to take photos, receive emails and make calls.

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Standbridge. Resolved that the Clerk purchase a mobile phone from Tesco up to £15pcm. Carried.*

- iii. To consider purchase of appropriate PPE for Community and Environment Officer, to include equipment required for role.

The Clerk advised that the Community and Environment Officer will require PPE to carry out her role.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Clerk and Mrs Thorne arrange to purchase PPE as required. Carried.*

- iv. To consider training in pesticide application for Community and Environment Officer.  
In order to carry out her role Mrs Thorne will be required to obtain the Pesticide Application (PA6A): Hand Held Applicators NPTC Level 2 Award and Principles of Safe Handling and Application of Pesticides (PA1) Level 2. Courses are run at Shuttleworth College once a month on a Tuesday – Cost circa £228 each.

*Proposed Cllr Morgan/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Clerk enrol Mrs Thorne on an appropriate Pesticide courses. Carried.*

### 715. 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 13<sup>th</sup> December in the Village Hall. He declared the meeting closed at 9:32pm.

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