

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL



MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2022

**PRESENT:**      **Councillors:** Parsons (Chair), Addy, Crossley, Merryweather, Morgan, And Standbridge.  
                  **The Clerk:** A Marabese.  
                  **Others:** Ward Councillor Brown and Liddiard, and 1 member of the public.  
The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7:02pm.

## 766. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- a. Cllrs Thompson and Chapman provided apologies for absence that were accepted by Council.

## 767. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 Parsons/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to extend the meeting finish time beyond 2 hours, if required. Carried.*
- b. Other information.
  - The Chairman noted that details of a planning application for 100 High Street has been received but arrived too late for inclusion in the agenda. The Clerk will be asking for an extension to the comments deadline so that Council can review at the next meeting.
  - It was noted that Cllr Merryweather has been elected Chairman of the NSALG Allotment Committee.

## 768. MEMBERS INTERESTS

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

## 769. PUBLIC SESSION

*At this point (7:04pm) 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 Brown advised the meeting that:

- Highways – A new highways contract will start at the end of March 2023 for a 7-year period. The tender will be issued shortly for a sum of circa £170 million. It is anticipated that the new partner will be identified in the autumn of 2022.
- EV Charging Points – BP Pulse will be providing EV charging points in the CBC area. The CBC area is currently above national average with 3% of the population owning an electric vehicle. A trial of CBC installed charging points will start in Campton and another 10 locations shortly.
- Solar Power Initiative – CBC will be working with iChoosr on a solar power initiative that will be open to all CBC residents from May 2022. The warranty backed scheme with verified installers will allow residents from June 2022 to purchase and have installed solar panels and battery storage systems (also option of EV charging units).

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- Members Highways Surgery – Ward Councillors will be attending a Members Highways Surgery on 21<sup>st</sup> April. MPC encouraged to send any issues to Ward Councillors prior to this date. Brookside and Brookmead footpaths are already on the list of items.
- Steppingley Crematorium – The target date for opening is 2024.
- Community Action Day – This will be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April between 10am and 4pm in Shefford next to Morrisons with all CBC departments represented and also Beds Fire & Rescue, Beds Police and the NHS.
- Schools for the Future – The Shefford and Stotfold cluster changeover to 2 tier is being delayed. CBC's Sue Archer will be meeting with Headteachers shortly to discuss plans.
- Clophill Roundabout – The new design of the Clophill roundabout on the A507 will be consulted upon shortly.
- Community Asset Grants – Applications for grants of up to £25k match funded will close at the start of May 2022

Ward Councillor Liddiard advised the meeting that:

- Highways Infrastructure – A new roundabout on the A507 near Arlesey is planned that is part of the regeneration of Arlesey town centre and a new Country Park.
- S106 contributions – Councillor Liddiard has discussed the recent issue with s106 contributions with CBC's Andrew Davie who has sent his apologies to the Parish via the Clerk for the error.
- CBC Highways Officer Lisa Wright has confirmed that the VAS installation on Shefford Road will cost in the region of £10k. *The Clerk was asked to respond to the Clerk advising that MPC wish to ensure that the £20k received from the OPCC is used.*

The following questions were raised or comments made by members of the public:

- Will Ward Councillors call in the 100 High Street application to DMC? Yes.
- When will water on the allotments be turned on? *Clerk – Currently there is an issue with the meter key not turning on that Anglian Water are dealing with. Once this is fixed, water will be turned on.*
- A resident had requested that the Clerk add to the agenda further highways improvements. The request was not accepted as MPC has already submitted RMF applications to CBC in addition to the VAS installation project for Shefford Road. However, the suggested improvement will be added to a list for future reference.

**Standing orders were reinstated at 7:45pm.**

### 770. MINUTES

- a. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022.  
*Proposed Cllr Standbridge/Seconded Cllr Crossley. Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried.*

### 771. PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS & LEGAL

#### a. Co-Option

- i. To consider any councillor co-option requests received.

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The Clerk had previously circulated the application of Mr M Shephard (not present at the meeting) to all councillors and confirmed having spoken to him at length regarding the role with Cllr Merryweather.

*Proposed Cllr Crossley/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to co-opt Mr Michael Shephard to the role of councillor at Meppershall Parish Council. Carried.*

The Clerk will contact Mr Shephard to complete relevant paperwork.

### **b. IT and Communications**

- i. Update from Cllr Standbridge including website accessibility.

Cllr Standbridge advised that she and the Clerk had attended the CBC Digital Accessibility online session and that a declaration would need signing at some point when providing documents to CBC that would be available on their website. The Facebook video post updating residents on Centenary Field has received 937 partial views of which 600+ were complete view. No negative comments have been received. The Gnomes have requested an update to their webpage which the Clerk and Cllr Standbridge will action when details are received.

### **c. Stocken House Green Space**

- i. Update from Clerk and Cllr Thompson on Agreement including formal request made to CBC regarding adoption

Davidsons are pending confirmation from previous landowners regarding changes to entrance fence on retained land to prevent unauthorised access with vehicles. CBC Planning have advised Davidson's that they have not had a formal request from the Parish regarding the detail of the request to adopt the green space for the CBC to review. The Clerk has responded to CBC and their solicitors providing information they may require to complete a revised Unilateral Undertaking etc. Update from CBC pending.

### **d. Electrical Connection from Old Road Meadow**

- i. Update from Clerk on negotiations regarding electricity connection from Old Road Meadow to The Mow site and to consider proposal made by Blakeney Estates. Draft Heads of Terms are completed and our solicitor is currently drawing up the contract with input from Blakeney Estates.

### **e. Wry close Allotment Track**

- i. To consider action to be taken subsequent to Licence Agreement between MPC and The Sugarloaf PH permitting the anchoring of a gazebo on the track not being signed and returned to MPC.

The Clerk reported that at the time of setting the meeting agenda the Sugarloaf PH were yet to provide a copy of the signed contract for use of the track despite numerous call and emails. Today the Clerk received via Messenger a copy of the signed page of the Agreement. Councillors acknowledged that the current agreement expires on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and agreed that The Sugarloaf PH Landlord must find an alternative method of securing the marquee that does not involve anchoring the marquee on the allotment track.

*The Clerk was asked to write to and meet with the Landlord of the Sugarloaf PH to confirm that the Parish Council is not proposing to extend the Licence Agreement and that they must find an alternative method of anchoring the marquee that does not involve use of the allotment track.*

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### 772. FINANCE

#### a. Purchase Orders

- i. To approve attendance at CPRE workshop on establishing wildflower areas in June 2022. Cost is £45 per delegate.  
*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to approve attendance at CPRE workshop on establishing wildflower areas in June 2022. Carried.*
- ii. To approve cost of requested BATPC Finance and New Councillor training.  
*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Addy. Resolved to approve cost of BATPC Finance and New Councillor training. Carried.*
- iii. To approve hosting of Play Inspection Training at Meppershall.  
MPC previously authorised in Dec 2021 cost of play inspection training at £405, however bookings on this course locally are not available until the autumn. The Clerk investigated other suppliers for training for both but no local courses are available. The Play Inspection Company has suggested that both MPC and GPC could host the training on site (proposed date is 6th September 2022) for:
  - Training and Examiners Fee - £825.00excl.VAT (total price)
  - RPII Routine Examination - £110.00excl.VAT (per candidate)We would need to organise a training room and three play areas which can be used for the practical side of the training – the third site being used for the examination. Two sites are available in Meppershall with a third accessible in either Gravenhurst or Shefford. Clerk has contacted local councils and we already have 5 confirmed attendees for the event and 3 space left if GPC and MPC train 2 people each. Proposal is to host the event at Meppershall Village Hall, offering lunch to attendees.  
*Proposed Cllr Addy/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that the Clerk organise on site Play Inspection training with the Play Inspection Company. Carried.*

#### b. Grant Requests

- i. To consider grant request from Meppershall Wanderbus.  
Councillors considered a Wanderbus grant application circulated to them requesting a £1000 contribution. CBC have provided £500. The Clerk confirmed that MPC had allocated £1000 in the budget for a potential Wanderbus grant request.  
*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Addy. Resolved to approve a £1000 grant request to Meppershall Wanderbus. Carried. (Transport Act 1985, s.106A)*

#### c. Document approval

- i. To approve Internal Auditor Governance Questionnaire  
Cllr Thompson has completed the questionnaire as required by the Internal Auditor and this was circulated with meeting papers.  
*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Standbridge. Resolved to approve the completed Governance Questionnaire, that it should be signed by Cllr Parsons and submit it to the Internal Auditor. Carried.*
- ii. To approve journal entries, bank reconciliations and bank statements.  
The Clerk presented Bank Statements and Reconciliation reports 156 for the Current Account and 029 for the Savings Account. Reconciliation reports and statements were checked by Cllrs Morgan and Crossley.  
*Proposed Cllr Crossley/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that Bank Statements and Reconciliation reports 156 Current Account and 029 Savings Account be approved and signed. Carried.*

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### d. 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 Addy and Standbridge.

*Proposed Cllr Standbridge/Seconded Cllr Addy. 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>			
FA01-2204	Mrs V Thorne	Salary (Paid 11/04/22)	
<b>Payment requests received before agenda published</b>			
BACS629	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire 14/03/22	£32.00
BACS630	A&B Gardening Ltd	March Grass Cutting	£313.62
BACS631	BATPC	Annual Affiliation Fees	£422.00
BACS632	CPRE	Annual membership Fees	£36.00
BACS633	BATPC	Finance Training - Cllr Wright	£30.00
BACS634	BATPC	New Councillor Training - Cllr Wright	£30.00
BACS635	RBLI	Lamp post signs	£222.98
SO01-2204	Miss A Marabese	Salary	

## 773. PLANNING AND HOUSING

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

- i. CB/22/01070/FULL - The Mow, Hoo Road, SG17 5LP - Demolition of existing dwelling. Construction of detached house, garage and all ancillary works.  
*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the Council objects to planning application 22/01070 and that the Clerk circulate the objection letter to councillors once completed. Carried.*
- ii. CB/22/01067/FULL - 10 Brookside, SG17 5SB - First floor side extension. Comments  
*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Addy. Resolved that the Council has no comment on planning application 22/01067. Carried.*
- iii. CB/TRE/22/00146 - 84 Shefford Road, SG17 5LL - Works to a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order: Possible root severance to T1 Oak for installation of Lime soil improvement channel.  
*Proposed Cllr Crossley/Seconded Cllr Addy. Resolved that the Council reserve the right to object to application TRE/22/00146 pending information provided on the CBC website. 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.*

## 774. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### a. Report from the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Clerk

The plan is under review by the Clerk and Mrs Chapman.

## 775. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

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### a. OPCC and RMF grant funding updates for the Clerk

The Clerk received an update from CBC Highways Officer Lisa Wright on 23<sup>rd</sup> March stating that they have received initial quotes back and these will need to be combined with a detailed design to ensure the proposed location will pass a Road Safety Audit due to the location/size of the sign. A road closure with associated Traffic Management will be required to install the sign. CBC are currently looking to install a solar powered sign so this has reduced the cost as the sign will not require an electrical connection. The estimate is £10,000. CBC will also need to go through procurement due to the value of the sign.

## 776. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

### a. Centenary Field - Update from the Clerk and Cllr Morgan

The Clerk and Cllr Morgan reported that:

- Sherriffs to begin cordoning off and spraying off grass areas imminently when weather permits.
- Cllrs Standbridge and Morgan prepared a video explaining works that will be carried out on Centenary Field and this has been published on Facebook.
- New gym equipment installation. S106 request submitted to CBC and accepted. PO placed with Fresh Air Fitness and pending installation confirmation date.

### b. Litter Pick – Update from Clerk

The litter pick was held on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March with the Clerk and Mrs Thorne as organisers. We had in excess of 20 volunteers who turned up for the event and circa 30 bags of rubbish were assembled for collection by CBC. Items found included the usual litter but also some commercial waste, a knife and evidence of drug taking. The Clerk noted that ideas from the volunteers on how to keep our village litter free are actively being pursued. The Clerk will create an article on the litter pick for submission to CBC, The Messenger and for use on our own website.

**On behalf of the village Councillors wished to thank those who spared time to come and help and also Budgens (for providing biscuits to our volunteers), The Walnut Tree Café (for the lovely chocolate cake) and the Social Club (for opening the bar early for refreshments).**

### c. Signage – To approve signage designs

Signage designs have been created by Cllr Standbridge with assistance of Clerk and the Clerk had provided access to view them to all councillors. Once designs are approved, the Clerk will obtain quotes for manufacture and installation.

*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Addy. Resolved that the Council approves the sign designs as presented by the Clerk and Cllr Standbridge. Carried.*

## 777. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:00pm and reminded everyone that the next meeting would be the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022 in the Village Hall.

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

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### Glossary

- CBC = Central Bedfordshire Council
- GPC = Gravenhurst Parish Council

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- MPC = Meppershall Parish Council
- MVH = Meppershall Village Hall & MVHT = Meppershall Village Hall Trustees
- NP = Neighbourhood Plan
- ORM = Old Read Meadow Nature Reserve
- QC = Queen's Council
- VAS = Vehicle activated sign