

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL



MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2022

PRESENT: Councillors: Thompson (Chair), Addy, Chapman, Merryweather, Morgan, Seaman, Standbridge and Wright

The Clerk: A Marabese.

Others: Ward Councillors Brown and Liddiard, and 5 members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7:04pm.

831. MINUTES SILENCE

Not relevant as observed in October meeting.

832. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- a. Councillors Crossley and Parsons provided apologies for absence that were accepted by Council.

833. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The Chairman read the Parish Council notice and announcement in relation to meetings in connection to openness and transparency.
- b. To resolve to extend the meeting finish time beyond 2 hours.
Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to extend the meeting finish time beyond 2 hours, if required. Carried.
- c. Other information
- Agenda item 837.g to include discussion regarding request received to pass a gas pipe under the allotment track.
 - An additional Bank Holiday has been announced for the 8th May 2023 in honour of the Kings Coronation. Council may wish to consider Coronation celebrations when reviewing the 2023/2024 budget.
 - The BATPC have provided details of councillor finance training sessions. Anyone interested in attending should contact the Clerk.
 - Crime statistics for Meppershall are up this month.
 - The Public have responded to the planning application currently under consideration by CBC for 7 Shefford Road with a large number of objections.
 - CBC have confirmed that Tree Preservation Order 3/2022 on the Willow tree located at 7 Crackle Hill Road have been confirmed without modification.
 - Councillor Thompson, as Chair of MPC, was invited together with the Chairs of Gravenhurst and Shillington Parish Councils to meet with Mr Blake Stephenson who will be a prospective Ward Councillor candidate in the May 2023 elections.
 - Helen Nellis retired at the end of September as Lord Lieutenant. She has been replaced by Mrs Susan Lousada.

834. MEMBERS INTERESTS

- a. To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda and requests
No dispensations requested or given.

835. PUBLIC SESSION

At this point (7:15pm) 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.

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Ward Councillor Brown advised the meeting that:

- Meppershall Parish Council have received the maximum amount of £25k available under the Community Asset Grant scheme. This is a great achievement and well done.
- Details of the new proposed parking strategy have been issued by CBC and the Parish Council is encouraged to submit a response. For example, one proposal is that when building new homes a single garage space is not included in parking space numbers and a double garage will only count as one space.
- Ward Councillors have requested that planning application 22/02723 at 7 Shefford Road is called in to the CBC Development Management Committee for review. Ward Councillors have raised a number of concerns and issues with the proposal that include items such as: access road adoptable standards, street lighting, block of flats not in keeping with village character, infrastructure issues etc.
- Changes have been made in the CBC planning team with Martin Plummer now covering all major developments in CBC. His replacement is Jon Sheldon.
- CBC currently has 365 Ukrainian guests that include 127 children. 160 household are sponsoring them all.
- Green waste collections will cease at the end of November.

Ward Councillor Liddiard advised the meeting that:

- Ward Councillors have questioned CBC Highways regarding the exclusion of Brookmead and Brookside pavements in the asset management plan for re-surfacing. They have requested information on how it was scored and who went to inspect the areas. To date no response has been received but they will continue to battle for clarity on the justification of the decision made.
- Ward Councillors are working with CBC Highways regarding indiscriminate parking in Fildyke Road where pavements are being mounted to park in front of homes. If the issue persists the installation of bollards will be requested to prevent the actions.
- CBC Highways have suggested the installation of bollards outside Budgens the Village Store and the Clerk has provided a response on behalf of MPC. The Traffic Management Committee may need to review the installation if parking bays opposite need to be removed.
- CBC's Tree Officer, Joanne Baker, would like to see more TPO's in the village. MPC are encouraged to send details to her of any trees we think may need protecting. *VT to action.*
- A Flood Drainage Engineer has spent much time working on the Stocken House development and will be looking at the planning application for 7 Shefford Road.

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

- Building developments in our local villages are being given the go ahead but there never seems to be any thought given to local shopping e.g.: supermarkets. We only have Morisons Shefford nearby. Other supermarkets are more than 8 miles away.
- There seems to be a lot of local traffic works causing road closures, diversions or traffic lights with little work going on. Signage is also often poor with contractors wanting to divert traffic down inappropriate roads e.g.: Hoo road which is a bridle way. What can be done to improve the situation? *Cllr Liddiard – Anglian Water seem to be carrying out a number of works in the area but CBC has little say how they complete the works.*

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- Why when Shillington Road, Meppershall was closed for nearly two weeks were the S278 road improvements and replacement VAS not carried out? The residents of Meppershall had long expensive road detours to take due to road works which should have been carried out at the time of completion of the Shillington Road house building, not nearly two years later. This is another example of CBC and their councillors not acting in a timely manner to resolve issues which affect road safety in and around Meppershall. This continuing issue will be sent as a letter to the editor for next month's Meppershall Messenger in order to bring this to the attention of Meppershall residents. *Cllr Liddiard will raise the matter with CBC Highways.*

Standing orders were reinstated at 7:50pm.

836. MINUTES

- a. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 10th October 2022.

Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 10th October 2022 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried.

837. PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS & LEGAL

a. Councillor Co-option.

- i. To consider councillor co-option request received and new councillor delegation. The Clerk had previously circulated the application of Mr A Seaman (present at the meeting) to all councillors and confirmed that the Chairman had spoken to him at length regarding the role.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to co-opt Mr Anthony Seaman to the role of Councillor for Meppershall Parish Council and that he be delegated to the role of Highways Spokesman. Carried.

Cllr Seaman signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office before the Clerk and Proper Officer and was then asked to join councillors in deliberating the business of the meeting by the Chairman.

b. Procedures - Review and adoption of:

- i. Investment Policy v2.0 (no change)
Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that MPC re-adopts the Investment Policy v2.0. Carried.

- ii. Reserves Policy v1.0 (no change)
Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Addy. Resolved that MPC re-adopts the Reserves Policy v1.0. Carried.

- iii. Press and Media Relations Policy v1.0 (no change)
Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that MPC re-adopts the Press and Media Relations Policy v1.0. Carried.

- iv. Freedom of Information Policy v1.0 (no change)
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that MPC re-adopts the Freedom of Information Policy v1.0. Carried.

c. Consultations.

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- i. To consider response to CBC Consultation – Draft Parking Standards for New Developments Supplementary Planning Document.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that the Clerk and Councillor Thompson submit a response on behalf of MPC. Carried.

d. Invitations.

- i. To provide update on Army Event attended.

Councillor Wright reported that this was more of a recruiting event therefore not really relevant to the work of MPC.

- ii. To provide update on PCC Annual Parish Council Conference.

Councillor Thompson reported that the main focus of the evening was on Beds Police funding a sufficient policing presence. Community policing suffers due to the focus on criminality in Bedford and Luton. Priority setting meetings have been cancelled for the moment.

- iii. To consider MPC representation at St. Mary's Church for Carols by Candlelight on Sunday 18th December at 6:30pm and read one of the readings.

Councillor Chapman agreed to represent MPC at this event.

e. IT and Communications.

- i. Update from Councillor Standbridge.

Councillor Standbridge reported that website usage for November compared to previous months has risen again with 500+ website views. The MPC page, followed by the Messenger and Gnome have been the most viewed this month. Councillors wished to thank Councillor Standbridge for her continued hard work.

f. Stocken House Green Space.

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

Contact made with Paul Waterfield of Davidsons, update as follows:

- Previous land owners have a 5 year period to request hatched area access. Davidson's legal team to confirm to MPC solicitor what happens to that right once the 5 year period has elapsed.
- Revised drawings provided that show additional access points to land other than via main hatched area.
- CBC Planning have provided no update on a revised Unilateral Undertaking that show lands handed over to MPC.

g. Wry Close Allotment Track.

- i. To receive update on Sugar Loaf PH use of allotment track for anchoring gazebo (stretch tent).

The Clerk advised that on 19th October the Sugarloaf PH removed all anchorings from the allotment track. However, prior to this evening the Clerk has received a request from the Landlord of the Sugarloaf PH regarding the installation of a gas pipe into the pub via allotment track programmed for early December 2022 which would result in loss of access to the allotments for a limited period. The Clerk has advised that Landlord that this installation has not been approved by the Parish Council and that contractors should be advised accordingly. Furthermore any such installation would normally only be permitted once a formal written agreement was reached between MPC and the freeholder of the Sugarloaf PH.

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Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that the Clerk be delegated to reach a formal written agreement to include any financial settlement with the freeholder of the Sugarloaf PH should they wish to pursue installation of a gas pipe across the allotment track. Carried.

838. FINANCE

a. Purchase Orders.

- i. To approve clearance of copse in cemetery area of Centenary Field at cost of £850+VAT.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to approve clearance of copse in cemetery area of Centenary Field by Village Trees at a cost of £850+VAT (Opens Spaces Act 1906 s.10). Carried.

- ii. To approve other purchase order requests.

1. To approve cost of Community Defibrillator Seminar.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that the Clerk organise a Community Defibrillator Seminar (preferably a Saturday in March) (Public health Act 1936, s.234). Carried.

2. To approve purchase of spray backpack with electric battery.

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to purchase spray backpack as required for use by Environment Officer (Opens Spaces Act 1906 s.9). Carried.

3. To approve purchase of 250 wooden posts for use at allotments costing £1012.50+VAT.

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to purchase 250 wooden posts for use at the allotments (Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s.26). Carried.

4. To approve cost of plumber to resolve water leak at Centenary Field.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the Clerk instruct the MPC plumber to investigate and resolve the water leak on Centenary Field of copse in cemetery area of Centenary Field by Village Trees at a cost of £850+VAT (Opens Spaces Act 1906 s.10). Carried.

b. Document approval.

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

Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Wright. Resolved to approve Bank Statements & Reconciliations Current Account 163, 164 & 165, Bank Statements and Reconciliations Savings Account 035 & 036 and MultiPay Card Statements and Reconciliations August to October 2022. Carried.

- ii. To approve Clerk salary and pension payments subsequent to National Salary Award.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to approve amendments to Clerk Salary, pension and holiday entitlement subsequent to National Joint Council confirmation of 2022/23 pay awards. Carried.

- iii. To approve revised standing orders and direct debit payments list.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to approve updated monthly standing order, direct debit and Finance approved payment list. Carried.

c. Orders for the payment of money.

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

Payments presented for payment were checked by a mixture of councillors present at the meeting.

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Standbridge. Resolved that the schedule of payments as presented be approved and authorised for payment by Councillor Thompson. Carried.

Payment No:	Payee	Purpose	Amount
Payments made prior to meeting date including direct debits, standing orders, salaries etc			
DD01-2210	Standard Life	Clerks Pension	£122.85
UT-CHARGE	Unity Trust Bank	Q2 Bank Charges (30/09/222)	£18.00
DD02-2210	Everflow	Charges 8/11/22 - 7/12/22 (in credit £462.39)	See details
DD02-2211	Everflow	Charges 8/12/22 - 7/01/23 (in credit £570.34)	See details
FA01-2211	Mrs V Thorne	Salary (Paid 11/11/22)	
FA02-2211	NEST	EE Pension Payment	
FA03-2211	NEST	ER Pension Payment	£44.20
SO01-2211	A Marabese	Salary (Payable 15/11/22)	
DD01-2211	Standard Life	Clerks Pension	£122.85
MultiPay Card Payments - 26/08/2022 Statement - £11 paid 09/09/2022			
DD04-2208	Smarty Mobile	Clerk Monthly Mobile Plan	£8.00
DD06-2208	Lloyds Bank	Monthly Card Charge	£3.00
MultiPay Card Payments - 26/09/2022 Statement - £11 paid 10/10/2022			
DD04-2209	Smarty Mobile	Clerk Monthly Mobile Plan	£8.00
DD06-2209	Lloyds Bank	Monthly Card Charge	£3.00
MultiPay Card Payments - 26/10/2022 Statement - £16.20 paid 09/11/2022			
DD07-2209	Smarty Mobile	Env Officer Monthly Mobile Plan	£6.00
DD04-2210	Smarty Mobile	Clerk Monthly Mobile Plan	£7.20
DD06-2210	Lloyds Bank	Monthly Card Charge	£3.00
Payment requests received before agenda published			
BACS659	AA Sherriff & Son	Amenity Grass Works	£18,877.68
BACS677	Pirin Projects Limited	Works to Changing Rooms	£7,159.36
BACS682	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	Clerk Training - New Code of conduct	£18.00
BACS683	The Play Inspection Company Ltd	Outdoor Annual inspections	£110.28
BACS684	Royal British Legion Henlow EAB12	Poppy wreath	£50.00
BACS685	CPRE Bedfordshire	Planning Workshop Training	£30.00
BACS686	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire 10/10/22	£36.00
BACS687	Standard Life	Clerk Pension Backpay	£45.70
BACS688	A Marabese	Expenses - various	£186.71
Payment requests received after agenda published			
BACS689	A & B Gardening	October grass cutting	£1,381.02

- ii. To delegate invoices requiring payment prior to next meeting to Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair.

Proposed Cllr Morgan/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair given delegated powers to authorise the payment of invoices prior to the next meeting in January. Carried.

d. 2022-2023 Budget v Actuals review.

The Clerk provided councillors with a report on the current financial year actual v budgeted spend and a prediction of year-end figures. No issues were raised or identified.

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e. Draft 2023-2024 budget

The Clerk provided Councillors with a draft budget for review and comment prior to the next meeting in January when a final draft budget will be presented for approval.

839. PLANNING AND HOUSING

a. Applications since last Council meeting for consideration.

- i. CB/22/02723/FULL - Land at and to the rear of 7 Shefford Road, SG17 5LJ - Demolition of no.7 Shefford Road and associated outbuildings. Erection of 39 dwellings (including 30% affordable housing) with access, parking, open space, landscaping, drainage and associated infrastructure and 5 no serviced self-build plots.

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Seaman. Resolved that the Council objects to planning application 22/02723. Carried.

- ii. CB/22/04138/FULL - Woodview Nurseries, Shefford Road, SG17 5LL - Conversion from plant nursery land to create one dwelling with parking and ancillary works. .

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Addy. Resolved that the Council objects to planning application 22/04138. Carried.

b. Update on street naming complaint raised by MPC.

Still waiting for a response.

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.

840. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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

The draft NP Plan has been updated and requires a clarification on a number of points before we can proceed to the next stage.

841. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

a. OPCC and RMF grant funding update including response to complaint made by MPC on lack of communication.

A response to Councillor Thompson's letter to the CEO of CBC was received on 31st October. In summary:

- The proposed timeline of works is as follows:
 - (1) LA Order at Selected Stage - Done
 - (2) Coordinate and finalise Street permits – Done
 - (3) 14/10/22 - Order LA – LW
 - (4) 07/11- 02/12: Refine CPP including SCP(s) RAMS, STATS plans, design drawings etc.
 - (5) 21/11- 02/12: Production of Site File
 - (6) 21/11: Letter drop 2 weeks advance of works start
 - (7) 21/11: Notification Signs 2 weeks in advance of works
 - (8) 02/12: Pre-start meeting with SCP
 - (9) 05/12 - 06/12: Construction on site
- CBC Confirm that all actions have been programmed in to ensure the £20k funding will be spent on projects by 31st December 2022.

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- CBC have planned for the construction of works to start on 5th December 2022. They are confident that these works will go ahead, and the scheme will be completed by 31st December. However, it is worth noting that due to the current time of year, there is the potential for extreme weather to impact the scheme of works and as a result of this, CBC cannot provide us with a guarantee that the works will be completed by this date, nor are they in a position to commit to replacing this money if it is not spent.

842. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

a. Centenary Field

- i. Update on drainage and landscaping works and any actions required.

The Clerk and Councillor Thompson completed a site inspection on 15th October. Key findings:

- Main outfield, pitch and cemetery weed spraying has been successful with most weed now dead.
- Main outfield area works are completed and new grass is starting to grow on drain channels. We recommend leaving the Heras fencing in situ to allow for the grass to grown back before removing.
- New built up area to rear near pitch has been reseeded and grass growing.
- Track has been redressed and weeds sprayed.
- Amenity area paths all sprayed to kill off weeds and re-seeded.
- Bunds removed and drain cover areas of concern near village hall addressed.
- Post and rail fence installed in front of PC stores 19/10.

To do:

- Grass cutters to cut the grass by at the far end of the field (wildflower area) and cut back hedge.
- Removal of dying trees and other wooden stakes from outfield area.
- Organise install of bollard near PC stores.

- ii. Update on gym installation and any actions required.

Fitting of metal labels to replace plastic labels expected w/c 10th October 2022 but delayed to after w/c 26th October. Remedial team now visiting 19th November. Most labels are fitted, just some missing that need to be dealt with.

b. To receive and review play area inspection reports for both Centenary Field and Old Road Meadow.

The Clerk provided councillors with play area inspection reports for both Centenary Field and Old Road Meadow. Whilst there are minor improvements that will be actioned by the clerk there were no major issues identified. Councillors did however discuss the issue of the entry gate to Old Road Meadow that had been damaged again by vehicles and how to prevent this happening in the future. It was suggested that the council could install 2 removable steel bollard painted red and white to protect the gate. *Clerk to provide quotations.*

c. Update on Dog Fouling campaign

The advised that:

- The CBC Dog Warden has been contacted for focussed visits to Meppershall with list of hotspots provided. Please not however this will not be a daily task but they will pay as much attention to the area as they can.

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- Messenger Article completed for 1st November publication. Resident has since emailed to say brilliant article!
- Facebook posts are currently being prepared by Councillor Standbridge. A post will be issued every Wednesday for 12 weeks.
- Request for more dog bins in progress.
- Signage to be implemented.
- Spray painting of offending dog mess ongoing. Received campaign ideas and advice from CBC that we hope to follow.

d. To consider participation in Great British Spring Clean 2023 between 17th March and 2nd April 2023.

Councillors agreed to continue participation in the Great Spring Clean and set a date of 18th March for the event in Meppershall. The Clerk was asked to advertise for volunteers in both the January and February Messengers.

843. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:50pm and reminded everyone that the next meeting would be the 9th January 2023, starting at 7pm in the Village Hall.

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

Glossary

- CBC = Central Bedfordshire Council
- DMC = Development Management Committee
- GPC = Gravenhurst Parish Council
- MPC = Meppershall Parish Council
- MVH = Meppershall Village Hall & MVHT = Meppershall Village Hall Trustees
- NP = Neighbourhood Plan
- ORM = Old Read Meadow Nature Reserve
- VAS = Vehicle Activated Sign