

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL



MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023

**PRESENT:**      **Councillors:** Thompson (Chair), Chapman, Crossley, Morgan, Parsons and Seaman  
                  **The Clerk:** A Marabese.  
                  **Others:** Ward Councillors Brown and Liddiard, and 4 members of the public.  
The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7:03pm.

## 863. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- a. Councillors Addy, Merryweather, Standbridge and Wright provided apologies for absence that were accepted by Council.

## 864. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The Chairman read the Parish Council notice and announcement in relation to meetings in connection to openness, transparency and respect.
- b. To resolve to extend the meeting finish time beyond 2 hours.  
Councillors agreed that this would not be required.
- c. Other information
  - The crime statistic for Meppershall show 10 reported crimes which is an increase from the previous month. This is mainly due to theft and is disappointing.
  - There is a Neighbourhood Watch seminar on 14<sup>th</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup> February. Councillor Seaman will attend.
  - Residents are urged to be 'Vote Ready' for the local elections in May as photo ID will be required for those voting in person. Information has been published by the Clerk and has been sent to the Messenger.
  - Councillor Thompson attended a Bedfordshire Employment and Skills Academy (BESA) online seminar which focussed on Maths skills. MVH have engaged with BESA to bring a session to Meppershall that will be free to attend.
  - Blakeney Estates have advised the Clerk that they have replaced fencing adjacent to the new electricity pole, but that the post and rail fence with stock netting and planting of like for like hedging trees in the gap they have created will take place as part of the landscaping scheme later in the year. They have offered to give us their gate as and when we need it to replace the one at Old Road Meadow. They are also chasing UKPN to see how they propose fixing damage created at Old Road Meadow.
  - The Clerk has been liaising with CBC officers regarding potential removal of trees and landscaping on the 100 High Street site.
  - There has been an attempted break in of the HATS container adjacent to the PC Stores prior to 13<sup>th</sup> February however there was no damage to the PC stores. This has been reported to the Police. The surveillance camera on the PC stores was turned around to avoid filming. The Clerk has been asked to add CCTV signage added to PC Stores as it is also visible from other surveillance cameras elsewhere.

## 865. MEMBERS INTERESTS

- a. To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda and requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests.  
Councillor Thompson declared an interest in agenda item 869.a.i. Councillor Parsons will chair this agenda item.  
No requests for dispensation received.

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### 866. PUBLIC SESSION

At this point (7:18pm) 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:

- Pot holes – CBC now have four jet patchers carrying out emergency temporary repairs knowing that they will be returning in five to six weeks to complete full repairs.
- The CBC budget consultation received six hundred responses. 450 of these agreed that there should be no increase in council tax. 40 respondents said that there should be increases. The Executive of CBC met on 8<sup>th</sup> February and approved the budget as advertised. Obviously if Beds Police, The Fire Service or Parish Councils increase their portion of the precept then council tax will still go up.
- Photo ID will now be required for in person voting and Central Government has started advertising on this.
- Street parties organised to celebrate the King coronation that require a road closure must submit an application to CBC. Blanket approval will be given with no charge levied.
- There is a cycle repair base in the car park behind the High street in Shefford.

Ward Councillor Liddiard advised the meeting that:

- Refurbishment of glass bottle banks is underway. Where possible they will be made less noisy and the waste team are reviewing collection patterns.
- CBC have appointed Everyone Active as the new leisure centre operator at all CBC leisure centres for a period of ten years.
- 100 High Street – Works have been conducted on site to cut down trees since the weekend. Clearing of the land is not necessarily a breach of planning. CBC officers will take action if the hedgerows and any trees with a tree preservation order are taken down. Planning applications for this site have already been refused and any future planning application submitted for this site will still be outside of the village settlement envelope and may not resolve issues highlighted in previous planning inspectorate appeals.
- A CBC Highways Asset Plan is pending. Ward Councillors have made strong representation regarding the repair of footpaths in Brookside and Brookmead, and also Shefford Road. Some potholes on Shefford Road have been filled however Ward Councillors have requested a strategy for the repair of roads and have suggested that a phased approach could see Hoo Road to 32 Shefford Road resurfaced.
- Four bollard outside the village stores / Budgens are pending installation after works have been ordered and booked. If the bollards present a challenge to parking then any resulting actions will require a public consultation.
- 2021 census figures show how Central Bedfordshire has changed in the last 10 years against national average and CBC will be reviewing the data in terms of service revision and plans for the future.
  - 35% of residents are working from home (was 5% in 2011).
  - 5 biggest industries have stayed the same.
  - 71% own their own home (nation average is 68%).

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- There are no issues with overcrowding households.
- There is an under usage of larger homes.
- 50% have more than one car.
- In terms of education we are classified as level 4 – degree level. Previously we were are level 3 – technical level.
- 14% of adults have no qualification (national average is 18%).
- 50% of residents are in good health (national average is 49%).
- 8% of residents provide unpaid care on a weekly basis.

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

- Will Shefford Road be repaired if 7 Shefford Road and 100 High Street planning applications are granted permission? *Resurfacing Shefford Road will cost circa £300k therefore CBC must use the funds carefully. These two planning applications are not in the Local Plan and CBC must adhere to the Plan. These are not sustainable developments.*
- The Shefford Road footway from Orchard Close to the Sugar Loaf PH requires repair as it is now stopping some residents from walking to the village centre. *Ward Councillors to raise this as an issue.*
- Signage for Hoo Road at the junction with Shefford Road and at the opposite end of the Bridleway at the junction with Chapel Road is not sufficient to stop vehicles driving all the way down the bridleway. What is being done about this? *The CBC Rights of Way Officer is organising the installation of a horse gate at the Chapel Road end. MPC is organising additional signage.*
- Mr Blake Stephenson introduced himself to the meeting attendees as a candidate for ward councillors in the May local elections.

Standing orders were reinstated at 7:52pm.

### 867. MINUTES

- a. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and the Extra-Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023.  
*Proposed Cllr Morgan/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried.*  
*Proposed Cllr Morgan/Seconded Cllr Seaman. Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried.*

### 868. PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS & LEGAL

#### a. Beds Police

- i. To consider village priority for discussion with other Parishes.  
Councillors agreed that Meppershall priorities would be vehicle theft/burglary and anti-social behaviour and that MPC would be represented by Councillor Parsons and another councillor if free. *The Clerk was asked to prepare an article for the Messenger on reporting issues to the Police via 101.*

#### b. Consultations.

- i. To consider response to CBC Design Guide SPD and Housing Policy Technical Guidance SPD (Consultation) January 2023.

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Councillors agreed that they would all respond as individuals.

### **c. IT and Communications.**

#### **i. Update from the Clerk.**

A report on website usage was circulated to councillors at the beginning of the month. The Clerk is now using electronic signature software for the signing of allotment tenancy agreements and documents.

The Clerk has received training from Councillor Standbridge regarding the use of Mailchimp for sending out bulk emails.

An MPC allotment logo has been created. *Councillors requested a change to the logo so that wording reads as Meppershall Parish Council Allotments.*

### **d. Stocken House Green Space.**

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

The Clerk has not received and update on the agreement. *Clerk to chase.*

## **869. FINANCE**

### **a. Purchase Orders.**

#### **i. To approve either grant request of £200 or purchase and gifting of mobile container truck for Meppershall Social Club (Cost circa £134.00+ delivery and VAT).**

As the MPC appointed Trustee to MVH Councillor Thompson did not participate in this agenda item discussion. Councillor Parsons took over as meeting chair.

*Proposed Cllr Morgan/Seconded Cllr Seaman. Resolved to purchase and gift mobile container truck and handle to Meppershall Social Club for MVH use (Local Government Act 1972 s.145). Carried.*

#### **ii. To approve cost for providing refreshments to defib seminar participants.**

The Clerk advised that the defibrillator seminar will be on 9<sup>th</sup> March and that Social Club staff have offered to assist with providing refreshments if MPC can provide milk, tea, coffee etc.

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Crossley. Resolved that the Clerk purchase refreshments for defib seminar participants (Public health Act 1936, s.234). Carried.*

#### **iii. To approve other purchase order requests.**

None required.

### **b. Document approval.**

#### **i. To approve journal entries, bank reconciliations and bank statements.**

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to approve Bank Statements & Reconciliations Current Account 169, Bank Statements and Reconciliations Savings Account 039 and MultiPay Card Statements and Reconciliations January 2023. 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 a number councillors present at the meeting.

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

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Payment No:	Payee	Purpose	Amount
<b>Payments made prior to meeting date including direct debits, standing orders, salaries etc</b>			
DD01-2301	Standard Life	Clerk ER Pension Contribution (16/01/2023)	
BACS707	Mrs R Webb	Return of allotment deposit	£50.00
BACS708	Mrs L Dempsey	Return of allotment deposit	£50.00
DD02-2302	Everflow	Allotment Water 8/3/23-7/4/23 (16/2/23)	£14.29
FA01-2302	Mrs V Thorne	Salary (10/02/23)	
FA02-2302	NEST	EE Pension Contribution	
FA03-2302	NEST	ER Pension Contribution	
SO01-2302	A Marabese	Monthly Salary (15/02/23)	
DD01-2302	Standard Life	Clerk ER Pension Contribution (13/02/2023)	
<b>Payment requests received before agenda published</b>			
BACS705	The Community Heartbeat Trust	Defib Seminar	£210.00
BACS706	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire - Defib seminar	£36.00
BACS709	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire - Jan MPC meetings	£72.00
<b>MultiPay Card Payments - 26/01/2023 Statement - £15.60 Paid 09/02/2023</b>			
DD07-2212	Smarty Mobile	Env Officer Monthly Mobile Plan	£5.40
DD04-2301	Smarty Mobile	Clerk Monthly Mobile Plan	£7.20
DD06-2301	Lloyds Bank	Monthly Card Charge	£3.00
<b>MultiPay Card Payments - Statement pending -</b>			
DD07-2301	Smarty Mobile	Env Officer Monthly Mobile Plan	£5.40
BACS710	Amazon (Flintoft Ironmongers Limited)	Outdoor Broom	£9.99
BACS711	Amazon EU Sarl UK Branch	Env Officer Face guard	£12.49
BACS712	Amazon Services Europe SARL(Shenzhen)	Dog Poop bags	£33.98
BACS712CR	Amazon Services Europe SARL(Shenzhen)	Dog Poop bags	-£33.98
BACS713	Amazon Services Europe SARL(Shenzhen)	Dog Poop bags	£33.98
BACS714	CBS (Power Tools) Ltd	VT Backpack Sprayer Kit	£277.94

### 870. PLANNING AND HOUSING

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

- i. CB/23/00247/FULL - Bury Farm, Campton Road, SG17 5NN - Construction of two extensions to existing agricultural buildings to update grain drying facilities.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Crossley. Resolved that the Council has no comment on planning application 23/00247. Carried.*

### 871. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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

Mr Pain and the Clerk will be meeting prior to the next parish council meeting to review changes made to the plan by our consultant and to create a timeline of what we need to do now.

### 872. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

#### a. OPCC and RMF grant funding update.

The Clerk advised that no further work has been completed since work in January. The VAS is still not installed.

*The Clerk was asked to chase Highways on the installation of the VAS.*

#### b. Update on road safety improvements on new developments – Cllr Seaman

Councillor Seaman has approached proposed Bovis/Vistry and Davidsons Homes to see if they would be willing to erect 20mph signage within their sites to assist with road safety

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as Croudace Homes have done in Walnut tree Way. Bovis/Vistry have agreed to put in the 20mph signage on their site as they say it has been designed for this speed.

Davidsons have responded but have requested approval from CBC for this.

Councillor Seaman will also be submitting articles to the Messenger on Neighbourhood Watch that may assist with vehicles theft in the village.

### 873. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

#### a. Centenary Field

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

The Clerk reported that the heras fencing was removed on 4th February by a group of volunteers. Damaged fencing is to be collected by Steptoe's on 14<sup>th</sup> February and they will provide the Clerk with their waste license prior to collection. Councillors noted that the field was being used today. The clearance of brambles etc., in 'Carne's copse' started today and the Clerk will be visiting site tomorrow. Mrs Thorne is also visiting site regularly.

- ii. To discuss potential hire of sports pitch with MVH changing rooms prior to meeting with MVHT.

The Clerk has been approached by MVH with regards to discussions between MPC & MVH regarding use of the changing rooms with sports pitch hire and costs of this.

There is concern by both organisations that the cost to provide the facilities may hamper pitch hire. Councillors agreed that the Clerk should attend the meeting.

Cllr Morgan has been investigating costs to hire pitches and similar facilities to ensure we remain competitive.

Councillors also suggested that the Clerk pursue options to hire the pitches during half term / the summer holidays to organisations running summer camps.

#### b. Update on allotment renewals.

The Clerk advised that all allotment rent has now been received. We have a number of new plot holders and also some who have given up plots due to ill health etc.

#### c. Update on Dog Fouling campaign

The Clerk advised that the dog fouling campaign continues to receive positive feedback and that there are still a number of weeks to go with social media ads. Our request for more dog bins is pending as is signage. The Dog Wardens are visiting the village more frequently. Mrs Thorne has now been provided with poo bags to use attach to the pitch fencing. Councillors suggested that with the onset of warmer longer that the Clerk and Cllr Standbridge look to create a campaign on dog barking.

### 874. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:00pm and reminded everyone that the next meeting would be the 13<sup>th</sup> March 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.

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#### Glossary

- CBC = Central Bedfordshire Council
- DMC = Development Management Committee
- GPC = Gravenhurst Parish Council
- MPC = Meppershall Parish Council



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- MVH = Meppershall Village Hall & MVHT = Meppershall Village Hall Trustees
- NP = Neighbourhood Plan
- ORM = Old Read Meadow Nature Reserve
- VAS = Vehicle Activated Sign