

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL



MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 17TH APRIL 2023

PRESENT: **Councillors:** Thompson (Chair), Chapman, Morgan, Merryweather and Parsons.
 The Clerk: A Marabese.
 Others: Ward Councillors Brown and Liddiard, and 3 members of the public.
The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7:05pm.

887. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- a. Councillor Seaman provided apologies that were received and accepted.
- b. Councillors Addy, Crossley, Standbridge and Wright did not provide apologies.

888. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The Chairman read the Parish Council notice and announcement in relation to openness, transparency and respect during meetings.
- 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 6 reported crimes for last month, one of them a burglary.
 - Beds Police were patrolling in Meppershall yesterday.
 - On behalf of the Parish Council, the Chairman noted that this is the last time that Ward Councillors Brown and Liddiard will be at the Parish Council meeting as our elected representatives. We will miss them and wish them well for the future, hopefully working within a new ward. The Chairman expressed sincere thanks for all their help and assistance over the past years and we are deeply grateful for all they have done for us. The Parish Council looks forward to meeting our new Ward Councillor in May who will have difficulty in filling their shoes.
 - On behalf of Councillors, the Clerk and Mrs Thorne, the Chairman wished to thank councillors who have chosen to stand down from their seats in May, namely Councillors Crossley and Chapman. In particular, a huge thank you and our heartfelt best wishes go to Councillor Peter Chapman who leaves the Council after 32 years of service, many of which were as Chairman of the Parish Council. All present gave a round of applause.

889. MEMBERS INTERESTS

- a. To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda and requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests.
Parsons to chair these agenda items.
No requests for dispensation received.

890. 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:

- Shefford Road VAS – Despite assurances that the missing VAS would finally be installed on 14th April, it is still not in situ. Councillor Brown will chase CBC for installation details and

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will follow through on this matter until resolved even if not representing Meppershall after the May elections.

- CBC Highways - Two new Highways Officers have been employed. Adam Shortland is our Highways Technician / Inspector and Scott Terry is our new Principle Highways Officer who reports to Nick Carofalo. Scott Terry has visited Meppershall with our Ward Councillors to see first-hand highways issues.
- Potholes - CBC now have six teams repairing potholes. A team has been allocated to Meppershall, Shefford and Stotfold and they should be in the village at some point this week. Repairs are now permanent repairs.
- Voting – A reminder that photo ID is required when voting in person for the upcoming May elections. Voters who wish to vote but do not have photo ID will be turned away.

Ward Councillor Liddiard advised the meeting that:

- Leisure Centres – A new leisure operator covering all CBC leisure centres and theatres started on 1st April. Councillor Liddiard has been in contact with two Meppershall residents with regards to the booking system for swimming at Flitwick Leisure Centre. Pool users must now reserve swimming slots in advance.
- Supplementary Planning Guidance – The consultation has now finished and CBC will be looking to adopt the new guidance shortly.
- Finally, Cllr Liddiard thanked the Parish Council. Working with a parish council that supports village infrastructure and aspirations, and also works in partnership with other councils has been both enjoyable and a pleasure.

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

- Where will the Meppershall polling station be located? *It was assumed this would be the Village Hall.*
- The horse gate has been installed at the Chapel Road end of the Hoo Road bridleway, is MPC organising signage to stop vehicular access at the High Street end? *Yes, this is in progress.*
- Family swimming at CBC leisure centres is restricted for school age children and capacity is limited. This is not conducive to learning. What can be done to reduce restrictions? *ML is discussing this with CBC Leisure Officers. There is also discussions concerning a completely digitised system that excludes some members of society.*

Standing Orders were reinstated at 7:45pm.

891. MINUTES

- a. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 13th March 2023.
Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 13th March 2023 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried.

892. PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS & LEGAL

a. Procedures

- i. To approve MPC Protocol for Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure or Local Holder of High Office v2.0.

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Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to approve MPC Protocol for Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure or Local Holder of High Office v2.0. Carried.

b. IT and Communications

i. Update from the Clerk.

A report on website usage was circulated to councillors at the beginning of the month. Amendments will be made to the MPC website after the May 2023 elections.

c. Stocken House Green Space

i. Update from Clerk and Cllr Thompson on Agreement including formal request made to confirm with our solicitor that the agreement and transfer documents are acceptable.

d. MPC Crackle Hill Track / Driveway

i. To receive update on works carried out by Anglian Water to remove non-authorise utilities from MPC land and agree on any actions required.

Anglian Water were to visit site and carry out remedial works between 12th to 14th April. Permissive path closure signs were erected and notices posted on social media. Works have not been completed within timescales due to broken parts. Upon inspection on 17th April the Clerk found that utilities for water have not been moved – with only the positioning of meters changed. The Clerk has contacted Anglian Water and asked them to come back and move the water line, meters and stopcock as agreed.

893. FINANCE

a. Purchase Orders.

i. To approve cost of training – Level 1 Grounds Maintenance at £42 per person.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that Mrs Thorne undertake Level 1 Grounds Maintenance training at cost of £42+VAT. Carried.

ii. To consider purchase and donation of television to MVH at cost of £565.83 +VAT. Councillor Parsons chaired this agenda item.

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to purchase and donate television to MVH at cost of £565.83 +VAT (Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19). Carried.

iii. To approve cost of coronation mugs of £1097+VAT.

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to purchase coronation mugs for distribution to village school children and other residents at cost of £1097+VAT (Local Government Act 1972, s.137). Carried.

iv. To approve other purchase order requests.

1. Gym equipment spares and maintenance items – rubber limiters, lubricant, Krust
2. Cordless Palm Sander
3. Cordless drill / screwdriver
4. Set of tools

Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to purchase gym equipment spares and maintenance items, cordless palm sander, cordless drill and a set of tools. Carried.

b. Grant Applications

i. To consider grant application from CPRE for £500.

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Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to approve grant funding of £500 for CPRE Bedfordshire (Local Government Act 1972, s.137). Carried.

- ii. To consider grant application from Meppershall Social Club for £400.

Councillor Parsons chaired this agenda item.

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to approve grant funding of £500 Meppershall Social Club (Local Government Act 1972, s.137). Carried.

c. Document approval.

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

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved to approve Bank Statements & Reconciliations Current Account 172, Bank Statements and Reconciliations Savings Account 041. Carried.

d. Orders for the payment of money.

- i. A schedule of payments was distributed at the meeting for approval and authorisation. This included a schedule of payments made by the Clerk under delegated authority for payments required prior to 31st March 2023 but requested after the last meeting. Payments presented for payment were checked by two councillors present at the meeting.

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

Payment No:	Payee	Purpose	Amount
Payments made during March under delegated responsibilities to the Clerk			
BACS727	Strictly Tables & Chairs Ltd	Tables for Vhall	£1,086.24
BACS728	Gravenhurst Parish Council	Zoom subscription - April to July	£20.20
BACS729	Chapman Planning	NP July 2022 - March 2023	£1,645.00
Payment No:	Payee	Purpose	Amount
Payments made prior to meeting date including direct debits, standing orders, salaries etc			
DD01-2304	Standard Life	Clerk ER Pension Contribution (17/04/23)	
DD02-2304	Everflow	Allotment Water 8/5/23-7/6/23 (17/4/23)	£15.96
FA01-2304	Mrs V Thorne	Salary (13/04/23)	
FA02-2304	NEST	EE Pension Contribution	
FA03-2304	NEST	ER Pension Contribution	
SO01-2304	A Marabese	Monthly Salary (18/04/23)	
DD04-2303	Smarty Mobile	Clerk Monthly Mobile Plan (19/03/2023)	£7.20
DD06-2303	Lloyds Bank	Monthly MultiPay Card Charge (28/03/23)	£3.00
DD07-2303	Smarty Mobile	Env Officer Monthly Mobile Plan (28/03/23)	£5.40
BACS738	Sugar Loaf PH	Litter pick volunteer refreshments	£67.20
Payment requests received before agenda published			
BACS730	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire - 24/04/23 APM	£36.00
BACS731	CPRE	Annual Membership	£60.00
BACS732	Bedfordshire & River Ivel DB	Agricultural Drainage Rates	£5.01
BACS733	Meppershall Events Committee	Grant approved 9.1.2023 852.d.i.1	£1,500.00
BACS734	Meppershall Messenger	Grant approved 9.1.2023 852.d.i.2	£750.00
BACS735	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire - 13/03/2023	£36.00
BACS736	BATPC	Affiliation Fee	£468.00
BACS737	Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd	Allotment Software support and maintenance	£219.59

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894. PLANNING AND HOUSING

a. Applications since last Council meeting for consideration.

- i. CB/23/00906/FULL - 81A Shefford Road, SG17 5LL - Standalone outbuilding for ancillary use (Garden Room) (retrospective).
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application 23/00906. Carried.
- ii. CB/23/00806/FULL - 64 Emery Croft, SG17 5ST - Single storey rear extension.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application 23/00806. Carried.
- iii. CB/23/00411/FULL - 114 Fildyke Road, SG17 5LU - Erection of three dwellings.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Council objects to planning application 23/00806. Carried.
- iv. CB/23/01044/FULL - 65 High Street, SG17 5LX - Erection of a single storey rear extension following removal of the conservatory.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application 23/01044. Carried.

b. Appeals

- i. APP/P0240/W/23/3317603 - CB/22/01261/OUT - 100 High Street, Meppershall, Shefford, SG17 5LZ - Outline Application: Development of 23 dwellings and associated works following the demolition of 100 High Street with all matters reserved except access.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that the Council continues to object to application 22/01261 and that the Clerk submit a response to the appeal to the Planning Inspector. Carried.

895. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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

The Clerk is progressing with this.

896. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

a. OPCC and RMF grant funding update.

The Clerk advised that no further work has been completed the gateway was installed in January. Installation of the VAS is still pending as reported by Councillor Brown. The clerk has received an invoice for works from CBC is not putting this forward for payment as works are yet to be completed and details will need to be provided on the invoicing costs. *The Clerk and Councillor Brown were asked to continue to chase Highways on the installation of the VAS again.*

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

Councillor Seaman is awaiting an update from Davidsons.

897. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

a. Update on maintenance works

The Clerk, Mrs Thorne, Councillor Thompson and Councillor Morgan inspected the outdoor gym equipment together this morning and have revised the weekly and monthly inspection schedule as a result of this.

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The Clerk has issued a purchase orders for the installation of fencing at the far end of the copse on Centenary Field and another for the installation of the replacement gate and bollard at Old Road Meadow, notice boards and reinstallation of the bollard on the Crackle Hill driveway.

The litter pick organised for last month went well with more than twenty volunteers turning up on a wet and rainy day. *Councillors wished to thank all those who took part.*

898. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:30pm and reminded everyone that the next meeting would be the 15th May 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