

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL



MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2023

**PRESENT:**      **Councillors:** Thompson (Chair), Merryweather, Morgan, Parsons, Russell, Seaman and Wright.  
                  **The Clerk:** A Marabese.  
                  **Others:** Ward Councillor Stephenson, and 2 members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7:15pm.

## 915. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- a. Councillors Addy, Avrili and Standbridge all provided apologies that were accepted.

## 916. 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.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved to extend the meeting finish time beyond 2 hours. Carried.*
- c. Other information
- The crime statistics for Meppershall in May show 3 reported incidents including blackmail. It is noted that villagers are not reporting minor incidents e.g.: anti-social behaviour, criminal damage etc. to the Police via 101 but continue to raise issues on Facebook. This is frustrating.

## 917. MEMBERS INTERESTS

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

## 918. PUBLIC SESSION

*At this point (7:15pm) the Chairman suspended Standing Orders to receive reports from our Ward Councillor, 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 Stephenson advised the meeting that:

- CBC is currently unsure of the timing of a by-election caused by the announcement that our Member of Parliament, Ms Nadine Dorries, will be resigning.
- At CBC's first full council meeting since the elections in May roles were assigned to councillors. Councillor Stephenson has been appointed as a member of the Development Management Committee and the Police and Crime Panel in addition to Vice Chair of Sustainable Communities. The Full Executive has not met yet and although a meeting is planned for some time this month.
- It is noted that the Planning Inspectorate appeal regarding the refusal of planning permission by CBC for the 100 High Street site in Meppershall is later this month. Councillor Stephenson will be attending and requesting a speaking slot.
- A meeting has been scheduled on the 19<sup>th</sup> June with the CBC Interim Head of Highways, the Clerk and Councillor Seaman to discuss Meppershall highways issues.
- The CBC Ward Councillor Grant Scheme is now open for applications. This is a match funded scheme and more details are available on the CBC website.

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- A response on CBC's policy regarding giant hogweed was sent directly to the Clerk who has forwarded this on to the Council.

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

- A while back when the private school at the village hall wanted private use of the playing fields it was rightly disallowed by the Parish Council. However they are now using the football pitch on Mondays and Thursdays? Why is this allowed when village residents cannot use it? Someone must have agreed to it as they must have a key to get in? Please could you investigate this as this is not fair for a fee paying school to use our facilities when we the residents of Meppershall are not allowed? *The Clerk – For clarity the Parish Council refused hire of the MUGA when requested by Regina Caeli. The fenced pitch area and all of Centenary Field is currently available for hire by organisations or individuals upon application to the Clerk as per MPC's Hire of Open Spaces Policy and Schedule of Delegation. A number of organisations have hired both Centenary Field and the fenced pitch to date. Minimal use and hire of the pitch had been agreed (3-4 hours per week) to see how the repaired surface fared with 'soft use'. Hire agreements and contracts are currently under review for the pitch area which will be used for the new football season by Shefford Saints who approached the parish council in 2018 hoping to hire the facilities. If we can get other teams to use the facilities when Shefford Saints are not we will also consider hiring to others. The pitch area was originally locked during renovation works to protect the refurbished surfaces. Unfortunately although MPC purchased combination locks for the gates a number of village residents picked the locks, shared the codes and a significant minority of dog walkers who take no social responsibility used the pitch area as a dog walking and pooing area, leaving their deposits behind - much to the chagrin of our employees and our grass cutting contractors. MPC therefore changed the locks to key operated locks, as we cannot have a pitch area covered in dog poo and this was our only solution to avoid this irresponsible behaviour becoming a habit. MPC will be erecting goal post elsewhere on Centenary Field for use 24/7.*
- Councillor Merryweather advised the meeting that he had attended the National Allotment Society's AGM. During the meeting it was proposed to increase membership rates for councils dramatically however this was not approved. It is now proposed to increase membership rates as per CPI every 2 years.

Standing Orders were reinstated at 7:45pm.

### 919. MINUTES

- a. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023.  
*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that the minutes of the Statutory Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried.*

### 920. PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS & LEGAL

#### a. Procedures

- i. Social Media Policy

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Wright. Resolved to re-approve MPC Social Media Policy v1.1. Carried.*

#### b. Village Fayre (Meppershall Summer Fair)

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- i. Approve Meppershall Summer Fair Risk Assessment and Event Policy Statement to meeting MPC Insurance Policy requirements.

A draft of both the risk assessment and event policy statement was provided to councillors prior to the meeting. Two minor amendments were requested to the risk assessment that were noted by the Clerk.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Wright. Resolved to approve Meppershall Summer Fair Risk Assessment as amended and Event Policy Statement. Carried.*

### **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 advised that councillors, staff and MPC volunteers would need to review and sign new conformity to data protection requirements which would be sent out shortly. Councillors asked if the dog barking campaign could be issued.

### **d. MPC Crackle Hill Track / Driveway**

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

Works were completed by Anglian Water and all non MPC water utilities have now been removed from MPC land and are laid into the highway or on Poppy Fields land.

## **921. FINANCE**

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

- i. To approve purchase order requests.

New Councillor Induction training at cost of £70 (£35 per person).

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to book new councillor induction training (Local Government Act 1972 s111). Carried.*

### **b. Grant Request**

- i. To consider grant request from new Neighbourhood Watch scheme for marketing materials.

Deferred to next meeting.

### **c. Banking Mandate**

- i. To approve banking mandate changes - removing old councillors, adding new and updating permissions accordingly.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the Clerk action the following changes to the MPC banking mandate: remove Mr Crossley and Mr Chapman, add Councillors Avrili and Russell, provide Councillor Wright with online access to view, approve and setup payments. Carried.*

### **d. Document approval.**

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

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Seaman. Resolved to approve Bank Statements & Reconciliations Current Account 174 and 175 and Bank Statements, Reconciliations Savings Account 043 and MultiPay Statement and Reconciliation 26/05/23. Carried.*

### **e. 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 two councillors present at the meeting.

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*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Seaman. 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	MultiPay Card
<b>Payments made prior to meeting date including direct debits, standing orders, salaries etc</b>				
DD01-2306	Standard Life	Clerk ER Pension Contribution (12/06/2023)		
DD02-2306	Everflow	Allotment Water 8/6/23-7/7/23 (16/6/23)	£605.41	
FA01-2306	Mrs V Thorne	Salary (13/06/23)		
FA02-2306	NEST	EE Pension Contribution		
FA03-2306	NEST	ER Pension Contribution		
SO01-2306	A Marabese	Monthly Salary (15/06/23)		
DD04-2305	Smarty Mobile	Clerk Monthly Mobile Plan (19/05/2023)	£7.20	Yes
DD06-2305	Lloyds Bank	Monthly MultiPay Card Charge (26/05/23)	£3.00	Yes
DD07-2305	Smarty Mobile	Env Officer Monthly Mobile Plan (28/05/23)	£5.40	Yes
<b>Payment requests received before agenda published</b>				
BACS756	Communicorp	Freedom Scroll	£108.66	
BACS757	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire - 15/05/23	£36.00	
BACS758	A&B Gardening Ltd	May grass cuts	£2,708.76	
BACS759	BATPC	New councillor training - P Russell	£35.00	
BACS760	BATPC	New councillor training - R Avrili	£35.00	
BACS761	HMRC	Qtr 1 NI & PAYE	£457.08	
BACS762	Unity Trust	Qtr 1 Bank Charges (30/06/2023)	£18.00	

## 922. PLANNING AND HOUSING

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

- i. CB/23/01172/FULL - Jigglers Cross, 57 High Street, SG17 5LX - Construction of a front porch with single storey rear extension and detached wooden garage.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application 23/01172. Carried.*
- ii. CB/TRE/23/00184 - 84 Shefford Road, SG17 5LL - Works to a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order: (MB/TPO/99/00008-T1) - Reduce the crown of English Oak (Quercus Robur) by 2m and removal of all deadwood within canopy (T1). Tree is located outside of No.84 & 86 Shefford Road.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application TRE/23/00184. Carried.*
- iii. CB/23/01268/FULL - 52 Emery Croft, SG17 5ST - Proposed garage conversion to habitable space with new side windows and rear bi fold door.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application 23/01268 if the dwelling has sufficient parking spaces as per CBC parking guidelines. Carried.*
- iv. CB/23/01374/VOC - Woodview Nurseries, Shefford Road, SG17 5LL - Variation of condition number 12 of planning permission CB/22/02944/FULL Construction of two dwellings and ancillary works. Variation is to change the approved drawings to enable revisions comprising of improved layout, provision of accommodation within the roof void and detaching previous semi-detached garages, replacement drawings 2022-1025-02D - Site Location & Block Plan, 2022-1025-03A - Plot 1 Floor Plans & Elevations, 2022-1025-04A - Plot 2 Floor Plans & Elevations, 2022-1025-05A - Garages Plots 1 & 2 Plans & Elevations.

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*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that the Council objects to planning application 23/01374/VOC as no revised drawings are visible on the CBC planning portal to view. Carried.*

- v. CB/23/01427/FULL - ACO Technologies Plc, SG17 5TE- Temporary external open storage area with provision of external lighting.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that the Council supports the comments of the CBC Officer requesting suitable lighting in a rural area. Carried.*

- vi. CB/22/04621/FULL - Land at Hoo Farm - Change of use from a caravan storage area to an area for general B8 storage.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that the Council objects to planning application 23/04621 and re-requests the removal of permitted development rights on site and that the removal of any hedging is minimal and reviewed by CBC officers. Carried.*

- vii. CB/23/01732/FULL - 73 High Street, SG17 5LY - Single storey rear extension.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Russell. Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application 23/01732. Carried.*

### **b. Appeals**

- i. To confirm attendance at appeal Hearing on 27th and 28th June starting at 10.00am, the event will be at Central Bedfordshire Council, Room FC, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, SG17 5TQ for 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.

It was agreed that Councillor Wright would attend the hearing with Ward Councillor Stephenson and that the Clerk raise awareness in the village of the hearing by posting on social media.

## **923. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

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

The Clerk is progressing with this.

## **924. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

### **a. OPCC and RMF grant funding and works update including dispute raised with CBC regarding invoice received for part of the works.**

The Clerk advised that CBC contractors have now moved the right hand bend signage that was previously in front of the VAS on Shefford Road. No response has been received from CBC regarding the Clerk's request to see correspondence from them to MPC for the costs of VAS and RMF scheme installation and until this is received together with any final invoicing, all invoices received will be 'on hold'. This issue will be discussed with the Interim Head of Highways at a meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June.

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

Councillor Seaman is awaiting an update from Davidsons and CBC. Clerk to chase.

### **c. To consider action after removal of newly installed VAS on Shillington Road.**

The new VAS on Shillington Road has been removed in accordance with the Fix My Street report 384611. This was a new sign provided under a S278 Agreement by the developers

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of 15 Shillington Road and there is no logic to its removal as it was part of traffic calming measures. Councillors were in agreement that the Clerk should request reinstatement.

### 925. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

#### a. Update on maintenance works

Installation of noticeboards, bollards and fencing pending. Mrs Thorne has had to deal with a number of holes dug into the drainage channels by children in Centenary Field using plastic cups. Social media posts have been issues asking people to be vigilant.

### 926. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:05pm and reminded everyone that the next meeting would be the 24<sup>th</sup> July 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
- MPC = Meppershall Parish Council
- MVH = Meppershall Village Hall & MVHT = Meppershall Village Hall Trustees
- NP = Neighbourhood Plan
- ORM = Old Read Meadow Nature Reserve
- PCC = Bedfordshire Police Crime Commissioner
- VAS = Vehicle Activated Sign