

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL



MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 9TH JUNE 2025

PRESENT: **Councillors:** Parsons (Chair), Litchfield Merryweather, Thompson, Wright and Zavacky
 The Clerk: A Marabese.
 Others: 6 members of the public.

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

1166. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- a. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillors Addy, Avrili, Choksi and Russell, and Ward Councillor Stephenson.

1167. 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 if required. Carried.
- c. Other information
 - The Chairman suggested Council add a discussion regarding planning application CB/25/01405/FULL (Land North of Fildyke Road - Erection of four dwellings (Use Class C3) including two bungalows with associated private drive and landscaping. Amendments to this application in respect of the above property. Other Plans Received - Plan No: REVISED Landscape Scheme and Topographical including pump stations) to the planning section of the meeting agenda to help guide the Clerk in producing a response.

1168. MEMBERS INTERESTS

- a. To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda and requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests.
No declarations or dispensations were declared or requested.

1169. PUBLIC SESSION

At this point (7:20pm) 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.

- a. Ward Councillor Stephenson
 - No report.
- b. Village Organisations
 - None present.
- c. Questions from the public sent to the Clerk.
 - Property owner at the top end of Fildyke Road is concerned with parking in the off-road bays and further down the road. A resident is parking at least 5 cars in these bays therefore making it impossible for anyone else to park there. This results in cars parking on the road at a very narrow point on Fildyke Road opposite the pub, or on the bend opposite the entrance to Brookmead. This parking causes problems for the flow of traffic through the village and is potentially an accident waiting to happen. Is there anything that can be done to prevent this one resident taking up so many

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parking spaces? *Council agreed that there is nothing they can do to help alleviate this situation as highways is not an MPC remit. Council suggests that the property owner contact CBC and the Police regarding dangerous parking and possibly Grand Union Housing Group if the resident parking so many cars is one of their tenants.*

- d. The following questions were raised, or comments made by members of the public.
- Would the Clerk be able to provide draft minutes for publication in the Messenger?
Council agreed that the Clerk would provide minutes in a summary form.

Standing Orders were reinstated at 7:26pm.

1170. MINUTES

- a. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Statutory Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 12th May 2025.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Wright. Resolved that the minutes of the Statutory Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 12th May 2025 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried.

1171. PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS & LEGAL

a. Procedures - Review and adoption of:

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

b. Health & Safety and Risk Management

- i. To receive MPC Risk Review Assessment report for 2024-2025 (actions to March 2026).
Deferred to next meeting.

c. Stocken House

- i. Update on identified issues, risks, meeting and actions required regarding land transfer.
The Clerk advised that there have been no updates on pending planning applications or any communication from Davidsons.

d. IT and Communications

- i. Update from the Clerk.
A report on website usage was circulated to councillors at the beginning of the month. Creation of the Meppershall.org website and amendments to the MPC gov.uk website is now in progress after the Clerk met with Miss Standbridge of Iris Web Media. The Clerk also advised of a request to provide email addresses to members of the Meppershall FC management team. It was noted that all organisations in Meppershall can apply for a meppershall.org email address.

1172. FINANCE

a. Purchase Orders / Contracts

- i. To approve any purchase order requests.
1. Goal clips and ties, and jack for goal post removal.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to purchase goal clips, ties and jack. (Public Health Act Amendment Act 1907 s76(1)). Carried.
 2. Chain and lock for access from track to Centenary Field

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Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to purchase chain and lock for Centenary Field (Open Spaces Act 1906 s10). Carried.

3. Welding for repair to Storage Container

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to purchase goal clips, ties and jack. (Local Government Act 1972 s111). Carried.

4. Pallet load of topsoil for Centenary Field

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to purchase goal clips, ties and jack. (Open Spaces Act 1906 s10). Carried.

5. All purchases included within budget and in Schedule of Delegation to Clerk.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved to delegate purchase of all budgeted items and those within Schedule of Delegation to the Clerk. Carried.

b. Grants

- i. **To consider gifting of PC Stores to Meppershall Village Hall.**

The Parish Council is no longer storing any items in the PC Stores. The Village Hall Committee have suggested that they could make good use of the PC Stores. Council can gift the PC Stores to MVH if they wish to do so. The PC Stores was a gift from Croudace Homes. The Clerk was asked to write to MVHT and arrange handover of keys.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to gift PC Stores to Meppershall Village Hall. Carried.

c. Budget v Actual

- i. To receive 2024-2025 budget v actual reports and consider any amendments required to 2025-2026 budget.

The Clerk provided Council with a budget v actual report for 2024-2025. Councillors raised no questions.

d. Asset Register

- i. Review of asset register.

The Clerk presented the current Asset Register to councillors for review and its' contents as at 31st March 2025 were noted to be valued at £155,179. Additional play equipment purchased after this date to be added. It was noted that MPC insurance needs to be amended due to new play equipment.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the Clerk arrange and make payment for MPC insurance to include new play equipment. Carried.

e. Reserves

- i. Review and approval of adjustment to Earmarked Reserves.

The Clerk provided details of current earmarked reserves and Councillors agreed to the following amendments.

Account	Opening Balance	Net Transfers	Closing Balance
313 Village Highway Fund (Hoo Rd)	8,132.24	3.94	8,136.18
318 Local Election Costs	1,559.67		1,559.67
320 Contingency Fund	6,000.00		6,000.00
322 Traffic Calming Programme	3.94	-3.94	0.00
324 Enviro. Maint Capital Expendit	37,000.00	13,000.00	50,000.00
330 Neighbourhood Plan	1,824.50		1,824.50
332 Allotment Deposit	2,818.67		2,818.67
333 Locum Clerk	9,000.00		9,000.00

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335 Centenary Field	3,329.34		3,329.34
336 New Defibrillator	2,500.00	2,500.00	5,000.00
337 Christmas Tree	750.00	500.00	1,250.00
338 Defib Batteries	0.00	300.00	300.00
	<u>72,918.36</u>	<u>16,300.00</u>	<u>89,218.36</u>

Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved to make amendments to Earmarked Reserves as shown above. Carried.

f. Internal Auditor report

- i. To receive report and any associated action plan.

The Clerk provided both the signed AGAR Internal Auditor Report and the separate report to councillors. Council expressed thanks to the Clerk for having received an Internal Auditor Report without issues.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Zavacky. Resolved to receive the Internal Auditor Report on 2024-2025 and noted that no issues were identified. Carried

g. Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025

- i. To approve the Governance Statement for submission to the External Auditor.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Zavacky. Resolved to approve the Governance Statement 2024/2025 as circulated for submission to the External Auditor and that it be signed by the Clerk/RFO and Chairman of the meeting. Carried

h. Accounting Statements 2024/2025

- i. To approve the Accounting Statements for submission to the External Auditor checking the bank reconciliation to accompany it.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Zavacky. Resolved to approve the Accounting Statements 2024/2025 and bank reconciliation as presented to council by the Responsible Financial Officer (& Clerk) for submission to the External Auditor and that it be signed by the Chairman of the meeting. Carried

i. Exercise of Public Rights to Inspect MPC Accounts

- i. To receive details of the dates set for the exercise of public rights.

Councillors noted the dates set by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer regarding the exercise of public rights to inspect MPC accounts as 11th June 2025 to 22nd July 2025. This is a 30 day period that includes the first ten working days of July.

j. Document approval

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

Proposed Cllr Wright/Seconded Cllr Zavacky. Resolved to approve journal 86. Carried.

k. 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.

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

Payment No:	Payee	Purpose	Amount	MultiPay Card
Payments made prior to meeting date including direct debits, standing orders, salaries etc				
DD01-2505	Standard Life	Clerk ER Pension Contribution (12/05/25)	£386.74	Direct Debit
DD03-2503CR	Everflow	Allotment Water (08/03/25 to 07/04/25)	-£33.07	Credit

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DD03-2503B	Everflow	Allotment Water (08/03/25 to 07/04/25)	£36.62	Direct Debit
DD03-2504CR	Everflow	Allotment Water (08/04/25 to 07/05/25)	-£33.50	Credit
DD03-2504	Everflow	Allotment Water (08/04/25 to 07/05/25)	£66.57	Direct Debit
DD03-2505CR	Everflow	Allotment Water (08/05/25 to 07/06/25)	-£34.61	Credit
DD03-2505	Everflow	Allotment Water (08/05/25 to 07/06/25)	£66.60	Direct Debit
DD03-2505B	Everflow	Allotment Water (08/06/25 to 07/07/25)	£122.84	Direct Debit
DD03-2506	Everflow	Water (08/07/25 to 07/08/25)	£636.10	Direct Debit
DD04-2505	Smarty Mobile	Clerk Mobile Plan (19/05/25)	£7.20	
DD06-2505	Lloyds Bank	MultiPay monthly fee (27/05/25)	£3.00	MultiPay
DD07-2505	Smarty Mobile	Allot Co-ord Monthly Mobile Plan (28/05/25)	£5.40	MultiPay
DD08-2506	Smarty Mobile	Env Officer Mobile Plan (3/06/25)	£4.50	MultiPay
DD09-2506	Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges 01/05/25-31/05/25	£6.00	Direct Debit
FA01-2506	Mrs V Thorne	Salary (09/06/25)		
FA02-2506	NEST	VT EE Pension Contribution		Direct Debit
FA03-2506	NEST	VT ER Pension Contribution		Direct Debit
FA04-2506	Mr R Hirst	Salary (09/06/25)		
FA05-2506	NEST	RH ER Pension Contribution		Direct Debit
FA06-2506	A Marabese	Monthly Salary (15/06/25)		
BACS1027	IMH Transport & Construction Ltd	Dog Poo Bags	£34.18	MultiPay
BACS1028	Amazon Business EU SARL	Angle grinder discs	£20.89	MultiPay
Payment requests received before agenda published				
BACS1022	JRB Enterprise Ltd	Dispenser Dog bags	£321.60	
BACS1023	Amazon Business EU Sarl UK	Grinding Discs for Angle grinder	£20.89	
BACS1024	Iris Web Media	Formidable forms Pro for 1 year (NP&Surveys)	£37.99	
BACS1025	Scotts Ground Maintenance	May grass cutting	£2,557.32	
BACS1026	HMRC	Qtr 1 PAYE & NI	£974.33	
BACS1029	NALC	JT Planning for the Future Training	£42.00	
BACS1030	Anglian Water Business National	CF Water	£156.35	

1173. PLANNING AND HOUSING

a. Applications responded to under delegated powers.

- i. CB/25/01508/FULL - Hoo Farm, Chapel Road, SG17 5NQ - The closing up of two existing accesses and the creation of a new singular access.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Zavacky. Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application 25/01508. Carried.

- ii. CB/25/01407/FULL - 1 Orchard Close, SG17 5LW - Conversion of garage into a habitable space and the change to a pitch roof, with roof lights.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Zavacky. Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application 25/01407. Carried.

- iii. Pre-consultation request from WHP Telecoms Limited regarding Meppershall Water Tower, Stondon Road, Meppershall, SG17 5NG – Replacement Antenna and associated works.

Councillors noted that whilst the water tower is referred to as Meppershall Water Tower it is actually in the parish of Stondon and WHP should be advised of this.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that the Council has no objection to proposals regarding replacement antenna and associated works to Meppershall Water Tower. Carried.

- iv. CB/25/01405/FULL - Land North of Fildyke Road - Erection of four dwellings (Use Class C3) including two bungalows with associated private drive and landscaping.

Amendments to this application in respect of the above property. Other Plans

Received - Plan No: REVISED Landscape Scheme and Topographical including pump stations.

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Councillors agreed that after reviewing revised drawings submitted for this planning application that there was no reason to alter the previous objection submitted.

1174. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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

The Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group advised the Village Questionnaire closed on 18th May with only a few questionnaires still to collect. There are now 583 paper responses that need to be input into the MPC website. Each survey takes just under 5 minutes to input therefore there is circa 49 hours of data entry work required. Responses to the Youth survey have been disappointing so another approach for this may be required. Next steps are to contact CBC regarding SEA screening and to organise Housing Needs survey and Design Codes.

Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that the Clerk hire a data entry clerk to input NP questionnaire data ASAP. Carried.

1175. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

a. Update on all highway's issues including Shefford Road repairs / resurfacing and pedestrian footway on Fildyke Road.

The Clerk advised that:

- Shefford Road will be closed from 23rd June from the roundabout up to Stocking Drive to enable Civils, resurfacing works with Paco and road marking orks to take place in safety.
- Woodlands Rest raised tables on site – CBC's Highways Agreements Team Leader confirmed via email that CBC are not satisfied with the speed table in its current state and have communicated this to Davidsons Homes. It does not meet CBC's adoptable standard but has also not been flagged as a safety issue. As the estate roads are not yet ready to be put forward for adoption (and there is no Section 38 agreement in place at present), the roads remain private. As such, Davidsons retain full autonomy to do their works in the order of their choosing. CBC can again tell Davidsons that this work requires doing, but the only timescale that they need to work to is prior to offering the road up for adoption. Therefore, there is little that CBC can offer in terms of a date by which remedial works be done.
- The Clerk has written to CBC's S278 Agreement Team for an update on the progress of the construction of a footpath on Shefford Road / High Street (from Poppy Gardens to Crackle Hill Road) that was part of conditions of planning approval given for CB/21/00053/FULL - 1 Shefford Road, Meppershall, Shefford, SG17 5LJ. Update pending.
- The Clerk has written to CBC's S278 Agreement Team for an update on the progress of the construction of a footpath on Fildyke Road that was part of conditions of planning approval given for the following sites: CB/17/02409/FULL- New Close Nurseries, Fildyke Road, Meppershall – see also CB/19/02994/VOC and CB/18/04569/FULL - Tower View Nurseries, 81 Fildyke Road, Meppershall, Shefford, SG17 5LU – see also CB/19/02679/VOC. Update pending.

1176. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

a. To consider maintaining grounds, boundaries and hard spaces around the Village Hall.

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At the Village Hall Management Committee meeting on 12.05.25, members agreed that they should contact MPC to ask whether MPC would be willing to maintain the grounds, boundaries and hard spaces around the Village Hall as a service to the village and to enhance recreation areas. Within the grounds there are several seating areas / benches which are used by people visiting the social club as well as friends and families watching / waiting for their children whilst playing.

Councillors agreed that more information was required on this matter and that it would be better to appoint a working group to liaise with the Village Hall Management Committee to better understand their request and what the possible cost implications might be.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that a MPC Village Hall Liaison working group be set up to review request for maintenance of grounds from MVH and report back to Council with recommendations. The working group to consist of the Clerk, Mr Hirst and Councillors Wright and Litchfield. Carried.

b. Update on allotments.

Councillor Merryweather advised that he will be attending the National Allotment Society AGM. The Clerk advised that progress needs to be made on the new fence installation and that there are several new contracts that need to be issued.

c. Update on all other environment and leisure issues.

The Clerk has found that the East Anglian Air Ambulance service runs free of charge defib / CPR training and would like to progress with organising a session for the village later in the year. Councillors agreed that this would be a great idea.

Mr Hirst is investigating the availability of electricity for use by the village from the old box for the old temporary Village Hall.

1177. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:07pm and reminded everyone that the next meeting would be 21st July 2025, 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
- 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