

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025



**PRESENT:** **Councillors:** J Parsons (Chair), T Choksi, J Marsh, P Merryweather, P Russell, J Thompson and L Wright

**The Clerk:** A Marabese.

**Others:** 3 members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7:03pm.

## 1204. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

## 1205. 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 Parsons/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved to extend the meeting finish time beyond 2 hours if required. Carried.*

- c. Other information

- None.

## 1206. 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.

No dispensations requested or granted.

## 1207. PUBLIC SESSION

At this point (7:05pm) 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 submitted

- b. Village Organisations

- Meppershall Messenger advised that they have put together 3 prizes for the Christmas Tree Lights Switch on Competition. The competition is aimed at children 16 and under and asks them to guess the number of lights on the Christmas Tree.

- c. Questions from the public sent to the Clerk.

- None

- d. The following questions were raised, or comments made by members of the public.

- None

Standing Orders were reinstated at 7:08pm.

## 1208. MINUTES

- a. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Statutory Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

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HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025

*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Wright. Resolved that the minutes of the Statutory Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried.*

### 1209. PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS & LEGAL

#### a. Co-option

- i. To consider co-option requests for vacant councillor position.

The Clerk advised that there was currently a vacant councillor seat, and that an expression of interests in co-option form had been received and circulated to Councillors with meeting papers. The individual interested in co-option, Mr Jack Marsh was present at the meeting. The Chair reminded all present that the ethos of the Parish Council is to help the village, that we are not party political and then invited Mr Marsh to introduce himself.

*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved to co-opt Mr Jack Marsh as Councillor to Meppershall Parish Council. Carried.*

Mr Marsh signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office before the Proper Officer and Clerk of the Council and was then asked to join the meeting by the Chairman.

#### b. Consultations

- i. To consider response to CBC Waste Strategy consultation.

Councillor Addy attended a CBC information session on this consultation and has responded to it. Councillors were also asked to respond to the consultation personally.

#### c. Procedures - Review and adoption of:

- i. Digital and data compliance actions update to include IT Policy, appointment of Data Protection Officer, data audits and training.

The Clerk has attended Part 2 GDPR training with Part 3 booked for 17<sup>th</sup> October. Confirmation has been received that the Practitioners Guide has been amended to state that the appointment of a Data Protection Officer for Parish Council is not mandatory. Once the Clerk has completed training the Council will need to undertake a personal data audit as a first step to ensure our digital and data compliance.

- ii. Lone Working

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Wright. Resolved to adopt MPC Lone Working Policy v1.0. Carried.*

#### d. Stocken House

- i. Update on identified issues, risks, meeting and actions required regarding land transfer.

The Clerk advised:

- No update received from Davidson's or CBC regarding standpipe, alternative play area design or the planning application variation of condition to alter the height and design of the green open space areas intended for adoption by MPC. The Clerk has responded to numerous emails regarding the lack of dog poo bins on the site and explained that this is an issue to be addressed by Davidsons. The Clerk will chase for an update.

#### e. IT and Communications

- i. Update from the Clerk.

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025

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 area still in progress with Iris Web Media. The Clerk is struggling to contact them. Mr Hirst has looked at the Clerk's MPC computer and advised it is running slowly due to age. He recommends purchasing a new laptop. Clerk to add to 2026-2027 budget.

### 1210. FINANCE

#### a. Purchase Orders / Contracts

- i. Purchase and gifting of tables and chairs required for village hall £3,362.80+VAT.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Wright. Resolved to purchase tables and chairs at cost of £3,362.80+VAT and gift them to the Village Hall (Local Government Act 1972 s.133). Carried.*
- ii. Purchase and gifting of replacement seats for chairs in village hall £1,748.25+VAT.  
Councillors agreed that replacement seats for chairs was a maintenance issues that MVH should finance from revenue. Clerk to advise MVH.
- iii. Green Infrastructure Plan update £1,350+VAT.  
*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Choksi. Resolved to place order for GIP update at cost of £1,350+VAT (Localism Act 2011). Carried.*
- iv. Conservation Area Extension for inclusion in Neighbourhood Plan circa £1,960+VAT.  
*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Choksi. Resolved to place order inclusion of conservation area extension in Neighbourhood Plan at cost of £1,960+VAT (Localism Act 2011). Carried.*
- v. Litter pick equipment – 10 x bag hoops £38.20, 12 x kids hi viz £28.87, 8 x kid's pickers £44.8.  
*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Russell. Resolved to purchase litter pick bag hoop, kids hi viz and kid's pickers (Litter Act 1983). Carried.*
- vi. BATPC planning training 05/11 – Councillors Choksi and Zavacky £80.  
*Proposed Cllr Russell/Seconded Cllr Wright. Resolved to organise planning training for councillors (Local Government Act 1972 s111). Carried.*
- vii. Storage container cleaning and painting.  
The Clerk advised that this quotation is pending.  
*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved to delegate cleaning and painting of storage container up to cost of £2k+VAT. Carried.*
- viii. To approve all other purchase order requests.  
None.

#### b. Grants

- i. To consider grant request from Social Club for child gifts at Christmas Tree Lights Switch on event - £300.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Choksi. Resolved to approve grant of £300 to Meppershall Social Club for child gifts at Christmas Tree Lights Switch On event. Carried.*

#### c. MPC Insurance

- i. Confirmation of insurance renewal.  
The Clerk confirmed that after amendments were made with Clear Councils Insurance to the parish council assets register and in consultation with Councillor Wright the

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Parish Council insurance policy has been renewed at a cost of £1573. This will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a 3 year long term agreement.

ii. Requirement for motor excess insurance for employees when using own vehicle for MPC business.

The Clerk and Councillor Wright explained to Councillors that the parish council insurer has changed terms and conditions of their insurance policy, and they no longer offer motor excess insurance for employees when using their own vehicles for MPC business. Council agreed that a standalone policy would not be required. Instead, Council should set aside adequate earmarked reserves to cover for this cost should it be required and advise employees by letter that motor excess cover will be covered by MPC if employees have business cover for their vehicles.

*Proposed Cllr Wright/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved that Clerk to set up earmarked reserve for £500 to cover insurance excess and advise employees via letter of this change to their terms of employment. Carried.*

### **d. Audit 2024-2025**

i. To receive External Auditor Report and Certificate regarding 2024-2025 accounts. Councillors noted that the External Auditor Report and Certificate indicated no issues. The Clerk advised that completion of audit documentation was already on the Council's website.

### **e. Budget 2026-2027**

i. To agree budget working group.

It was agreed that Councillors Thompson and Wright would work with the Clerk on the preparation of the 2026-2027 budget and precept proposals. Meeting set for 12th November.

### **f. Village Escrow Fund**

i. Update on fund holding and potential projects.

The Clerk advised that the Village Escrow Fund currently stands at circa £40k. The Village Hall trustees have advised that they are looking at the potential to add solar panels to the village hall and may request part funding from the Village Escrow Fund.

### **g. Document approval**

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

*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Choksi. Resolved to approve bank reconciliations and statements Current a/c 207 and 208, and Savings a/c 70 and 71. Carried.*

### **h. 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 Russell. 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
<b>Payments made prior to meeting date including direct debits, standing orders, salaries etc</b>				
DD01-2509	Standard Life	Clerk ER Pension Contribution (15/09/25)	£386.74	Direct Debit
DD01-2510B	Standard Life	Clerk ER Additional Contribution	£12.40	
DD03-2510	Everflow	Water (08/11/25 to 07/12/25)	£245.92	Direct Debit

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## MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025

DD04-2509	Smarty Mobile	Clerk Mobile Plan (19/09/25)	£7.20	MultiPay
DD06-2509	Lloyds Bank	MultiPay monthly fee (26/09/25)	£3.00	Multipay
DD07-2509	Smarty Mobile	Allot Co-ord Monthly Mobile Plan (28/09/25)	£5.40	MultiPay
DD08-2510	Smarty Mobile	Env Officer Mobile Plan (3/09/25)	£4.50	MultiPay
DD09-2509	Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges August 2025	£6.00	Direct Debit
DD09-2510	Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges September 2025	£6.00	Direct Debit
FA04-2510	Mr R Hirst	Salary (09/10/25)		
FA05-2510	NEST	RH ER Pension Contribution		Direct Debit
FA06-2509	A Marabese	Monthly Salary (15/09/25)		
BACS1069	Derbyshire Services t/a Kidshivis	Litter pick Hi Vis for children	£28.87	MultiPay
BACS1070	Apple Retail UK Limited	RH IPAD Pro 11	£999.00	MultiPay
BACS1071	Amazon Business EU SARL, UK Branch	Anti Climb Paint	£39.16	MultiPay
BACS1072	Amazon Business EU SARL, UK Branch	Case for IPAD	£27.17	MultiPay
BACS1073	Amazon Business EU SARL, UK Branch	Signage - anti climb paint	£6.34	MultiPay
BACS1074	Amazon Business EU SARL, UK Branch	Signage - anti climb paint	£15.17	MultiPay
BACS1075	Clear Insurance Management Ltd	MPC Insurance	£1,573.93	
BACS1076	Net World Sports	Pitch Line Marker and accessories	£419.21	MultiPay
BACS1083	Hermeq UK Ltd	road Barriers and Signs	£549.59	MultiPay0
<b>Payment requests received before agenda published</b>				
BACS1077	Albane Lester	MPC Strategy Facilitation session		
BACS1078	Sign of the Times	Repair and repaint FOB Sign	£438.00	
BACS1079	BATPC	Training	£80.00	
BACS1080	Scotts Grounds Maintenance	Sept Grass Cutting	£2,124.72	
BACS1081	R Hirst (Shefford Building Supplies)	Expenses - Concrete Mix	£8.99	
BACS1082	Badger Hill Christmas Tree Farm	Nordman Fir	£888.00	

ii. To approve payment between meetings.

Councillors agreed that the Clerk already has delegated powers to make payments when required between meetings.

## 1211. PLANNING AND HOUSING

### a. Applications responded to under delegated powers.

i. CB/25/02814/PIP - Grass Land to the West of Shillington Road - Permission in Principle: Development of up to 9 single storey Bungalows.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that the Council objects to planning application 25/02814 due to and not limited to the following reasons: outside settlement envelope, within conservation area, rights of way issues, non-sustainable transport, highways issues, capacity of Shillington wastewater treatment services, BMV Grade II land. Carried.*

ii. 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 application.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that the Council continues to object to planning application 25/01405. Carried.*

iii. CB/25/02867/FULL - 102 Shefford Road, SG17 5LL - Erection of a part single part two storey rear extension. Conversion of loft and raising the roof height. Front pitch and rear flat roof dormers. Rear Juliet balcony and rooflights. Removal of chimney and alterations to windows and doors.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Wright. Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application 25/02867. Carried.*

## 1212. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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

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The Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group thanked the Council for agreeing to fund the revised Green Infrastructure Plan and extension to the Conservation Area – both for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan. He reported that together with the Clerk he is working on the Design Code. This is highlighting Meppershall good and bad design features. It was agreed that he would prepare a timeline for completion of the Neighbourhood Plan at the next meeting and was aiming for a draft plan for circulation in December.

### **1213. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

#### **a. Update on all Highways issues.**

The Clerk reported that resurfacing works are now planned for Shefford Road from the Esso garage up to the village entrance. Works planned for December 2025.

### **1214. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE**

#### **a. To consider issues with access to allotment via track and residents parking.**

The Clerk reported that she has not yet written to High Street homeowners reminding them that the Allotment Track is the property of MPC, access for license holders only and they are not to obstruct traffic or the track. The licence agreement to formalise access to the allotment track for High Street homeowners is also pending.

#### **b. Update on allotments.**

Councillor Wright have inspected half the allotment plots with the other half to be completed later this week.

#### **c. Update on Old Road Meadow list of works.**

The Clerk is working on the list with our ground's maintenance contractor.

#### **d. Christmas Tree Light Switch On event.**

Event planning is in hand, and the Clerk will begin publicising the event, competition and need for volunteer marshals shortly. A letter will also be issued to all Walnut Tree Way residents about the road closure.

#### **e. Update on all other environment and leisure issues.**

Mr Hirst has completed pitch marking for the 9x9 pitch and met with Shefford Saints on goal location. Water at the allotments and on Centenary Field will be switched off at the end of October.

### **1215. STAFF MATTERS**

#### **a. Allotment Co-ordinator update**

The Clerk advised that the role will be advertised shortly.

#### **b. Clerking cover during Clerk absence.**

The Clerk is hoping to be available for the next meeting in November but has arranged for Mrs van der Merwe, Clerk to Stondon Parish Council, to cover the meeting if required.

Mrs van der Merwe was present at the meeting to meet councillors.

### **1216. CLOSE OF THE MEETING**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:10pm and reminded everyone that the next meeting would be 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025, starting at 7pm in the Village Hall.

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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