



PRESENT: **Councillors:** J Parsons (Chair), R Avrili, T Choksi, J Marsh, P Merryweather and J Thompson.

The Clerk: A Marabese.

Others: Eleven members of the public.

The Chair declared the meeting open at 7:10pm.

1249. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- a. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillors Russell and Zavacky and Ward Councillor Stephenson. Councillor Thompson advised that he would be arriving late.

1250. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The Chair 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 Avrili. Resolved to extend the meeting finish time beyond 2 hours if required. Carried.
- c. Other information
 - None.

1251. 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.

1252. PUBLIC SESSION

At this point (7:11pm) the Chair 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
 - No reports submitted.
- c. Questions from the public sent to the Clerk.
 - None
- d. Members of the public raised the following questions and comments.
 - A member of the public provided an update on the number of objections submitted against planning application 25/03804 East of Conegate. There are currently 309 objections listed online and a further 523 were hand delivered to CBC last week. In addition, another 50+ have been collected for submission later this week. The petition has 522 signatories to date and will be submitted later this week. There are informative objections and comments from CBC Officers and external consultees on the planning portal. Members of the public conducted a traffic survey last week and the summary details will be sent to the Clerk but also submitted to CBC.

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2026

The Chairman on behalf of the Council wished to record the thanks of the Council to all those residents and organisations who have set aside so much time and effort to get the village behind this objection. This is a splendid job!

Standing Orders were reinstated at 7:25pm.

1253. MINUTES

- a. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Tuesday 27th January 2026.

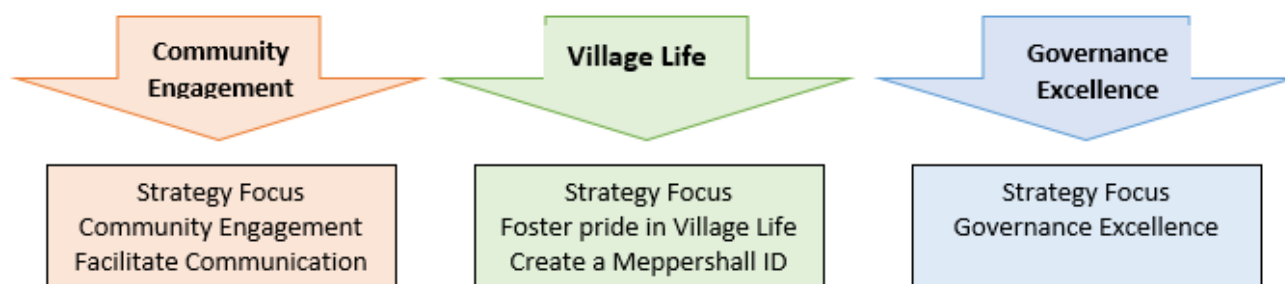
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Tuesday 27th January 2026 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chair. Carried.

1254. PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS & LEGAL

a. Strategy Focus

- i. To confirm strategy focus working groups and way forward.

The Clerk proposed the following three working groups going forward:



Councillors agreed that the three proposed working groups should also include all current working groups and asked that the Clerk and Councillors Avrili and Thompson make a proposal for the next parish council meeting on how this could work.

b. Procedures

- i. To review NALC governance checklist and actions arising.

NALC have issued a basic governance checklist. Having reviewed the checklist there are 3 action areas for MPC. Once these action areas are addressed MPC can apply for a NALC Bronze Local Council Award:

1. Personal Development Plans required for all staff – *Clerk to work on this.*
2. Councillors to undertake Code of Conduct training – *Council agreed that the Clerk should seek collaboration from Stondon and Gravenhurst Parish Councils to arrange Code of Conduct training.*
3. Councillor training plan required – *Working group to work on this.*

Once these action areas are addressed MPC can apply for a NALC Bronze Local Council Award. The Clerk and Councillors Avrili and Thompson have created a one-page Governance Excellence Improvement Plan that includes actions from the strategy focus sessions together with actions resulting from the NALC governance checklist.

- ii. To approve Honorary Freedom of the Parish v2.0.

Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to approve Honorary Freedom of the Village policy v2.0 Carried.

- iii. Re-approve:

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2026

1. Biodiversity Policy v1.0.
2. Asset Register Policy v1.0.
3. Reserves Policy v1.0.
4. Investment Policy v1.0

Proposed Cllr Parsons/Secoded Cllr Avrili. Resolved to re-approve all policies under agenda item 1254.b.iii. Carried.

c. 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.

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 in progress. The Clerk has met with our website developer and is requesting input from Councillors. *Clerk to send link of new websites to all Councillors for their comments.*

1255. FINANCE

a. Purchase Orders / Contracts

- i. Pruning of ORM Community Orchard.

Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Secoded Cllr Parsons. Resolved to arrange for pruning of ORM Community Orchard at a cost of no more than £500+VAT. (Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10). Carried.

- ii. 25kg bags of Potassium Sulphate and Blood Fish and Bone at £65.

Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Secoded Cllr Avrili. Resolved to purchase 25kg bags of potassium sulphate and blood fish and bone at £65+VAT. (Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10). Carried.

- iii. Training courses via both NALC and BAPTC at £35 each.

Proposed Cllr Thompson/Secoded Cllr Avrili. Resolved to book training sessions with NALC: Funding Beyond Precept (JT), Attracting Young Talent (AM), The Housing Puzzle (JT), with BAPTC: Boosting Council Identity (AM & RA) and Communicating with your Community (RA). (Local Government Act 1972 s.111)). Carried.

- iv. To approve all other purchase order requests.

None

b. Document approval

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

Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Secoded Cllr Avrili. Resolved to approve bank reconciliations and statements Current a/c 212, Savings a/c 75, and MultiPay 260126. 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 two councillors present at the meeting.

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2026

Proposed Cllr Choksi/Seconded Cllr Marsh. 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
Payments made prior to meeting date including direct debits, standing orders, salaries etc			
DD01-2512	Standard Life	Clerk ER Pension Contribution (15/12/25)	
DD03-2602	Everflow	Water (08/03/26 to 07/04/26)	£54.87
DD04-2512	Smarty Mobile	Clerk Mobile Plan (19/01/26)	£7.20
DD06-2601	Lloyds Bank	MultiPay monthly fee (26/01/26)	£3.00
DD07-2512	Smarty Mobile	Allot Co-ord Monthly Mobile Plan (28/01/25)	£5.40
DD08-2602	Smarty Mobile	Env Officer Mobile Plan (3/02/25)	£4.50
DD09-2602	Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges January 2026	£6.00
FA04-2602	Mr R Hirst	Salary (09/02/26)	
FA05-2602	NEST	RH ER Pension Contribution	
FA06-2602	A Marabese	Monthly Salary (15/02/26)	
BACS1123	Turfix	Line Fix Refill Pack	£38.38
BACS1124	Turfix	Line Fix Refill Pack	£40.18
BACS1125	Bowcom	replacment line marking nozzels	£48.36
BACS1134	Net World Sports	Line Marking Paint	£392.36
BACS1135	Gov.uk Land Registry	29 High Street Title Register	£7.00
BACS1136	Gov.uk Land Registry	29 High Street Title Plan	£7.00
BACS1137	Gov.uk Land Registry	31 High Street Title Register	£7.00
BACS1138	Gov.uk Land Registry	33 High Street Title Register	£7.00
BACS1139	Gov.uk Land Registry	35 High Street Title Register	£7.00
BACS1140	Gov.uk Land Registry	37 High Street Title Register	£7.00
BACS1141	Gov.uk Land Registry	39 High Street Title Register	£7.00
BACS1142	Gov.uk Land Registry	41 High Street Title Register	£7.00
BACS1143	Gov.uk Land Registry	43 High Street Title Register	£7.00
BACS1144	Gov.uk Land Registry	Land NE to Taylors Close	£14.00
Payment requests received before agenda published			
BACS1122	Meppershall Messenger	Printing	£41.80
BACS1126	A Marabese	Expenses - strategy refreshments	£24.70
BACS1127	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire 14/04/25	£40.00
BACS1128	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire 08/09, 13/10, 24/11/25 & 12/01/2	£160.00
BACS1129	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire 27/01/26	£40.00
BACS1130	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire 15/09/25 DEFIB	£40.00
BACS1131	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire 09/02 & 09/03/26	£80.00
BACS1132	Mc Veigh Parker & Co Ltd	ORM Kissing Gate	£690.96
BACS1133	Albane Lester	Strategy Session 2	£300.00

1256. PLANNING AND HOUSING

a. Applications since last Council meeting for consideration.

- i. CB/25/04030/OUT - Land East of Greenway, Campton - Outline Application: Residential development up to 260 dwellings, including self-build, open space, NEAP, LEAP, community allotments, landscaping, drainage features and associated infrastructure. Vehicular access sought from Greenway, all other matters reserved except access.

Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved that the Council objects to planning application 25/04030 due to and not limited to reasons of visual impact from and to Meppershall. Carried.

b. To consider attendance at CBC Development Management Committee meeting on 11th February regarding planning application CB/25/00338/OUT - Land at and adj. to Aco

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2026

Technologies Plc, SG17 5TE - Outline Application: Erection of up to 11, 212m² of Use Class E(g)/B2/B8 floorspace with associated access, parking, landscaping, drainage and ancillary works. All matters reserved except means of access.

Council agreed that the Clerk and Councillor Thompson to review the delegated officers report and then to agree whether attendance would be appropriate.

c. To consider writing to CBC to request what steps the local authority is taking to counter developer claims that the authority has no five-year land supply in place.

Councillors agreed that an evidenced lack of five-year land supply in Central Bedfordshire has created an environment for speculative development of inappropriate sites including those in and around Meppershall. If the situation is allowed to continue then it will be difficult for the local authority or the Planning Inspectorate to refuse any proposed development. It was therefore agreed that the Clerk write to CBC (cc Member of Parliament) to request what steps that are taking to counter developer evidenced claims of a lack of five-year housing supply.

Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Avrili. Resolved that the Clerk write to CBC to request confirmation of what steps the local authority is taking to counter developer claims that the authority has no five-year land supply in place. Carried.

d. To consider writing to Rt. Hon. Alistair Strathern to highlight concern regarding sections within the proposed NPPF 2025 (sections H02, H03 and Annex D) that cover housing calculations and supply.

The Clerk and Councillor Thompson highlighted an issue with the proposed new NPPF that excludes the number of houses provided from windfall sites (those not included in the Local Development Plan) from the local authorities five-year housing land supply calculations.

Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Avrili. Resolved that the council write to our Member of Parliament to submit the written parliamentary question or as modified "To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, would he consider the benefits of taking steps to ensure all windfall developments are specifically incorporated into the NPPF Five Year Land Supply calculation". Carried.

1257. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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

The Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the Clerk gave the following update:

- A consultation on the proposed extension to the Conservation Area is underway and will close at the end of February. The consultation can be responded to either via the Parish Council website or via a paper form that can be posted in one of specified MPC post boxes.
- Cllr Marsh is assisting with a review of the village questionnaire responses, creation of summary of responses document and addition of results into the draft Neighbourhood Plan.
- Mr Pain has received an offer of assistance with the Design Guide and the Neighbourhood Plan from a local resident. Clerk to circulate information.
- Green Infrastructure refresh – Clerk to chase BRCC.

1258. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2026

a. Update on Highways issues.

- Councillors agreed that potholes on Shefford Road between Stocken House and Fildyke Road and into the High Street are getting worse. *Clerk to request Mr Hirst log them on Fix-My-Street.*
- The Clerk advised that she is liaising with CBC Highways, Anglian Water and residents regarding water coming out of kerb drainage and running down Chapel Road.
- UKPN have advised that the High Street will be closed for urgent repairs until 13th February.

1259. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

a. Update on Allotment Access Track Agreements.

The Clerk advised that all agreements have been posted / delivered. One has been returned to sender, and the Clerk has received a call from one homeowner.

b. Update on allotments.

The Clerk will prioritise allotment actions as soon as is possible.

c. To agree works to ORM Community Orchard with volunteers.

The Clerk reported that the Community Orchard trees require pruning and an area of one meter digging around each tree and fertiliser added. The Clerk proposes a working party of volunteers to carry out the digging on Saturday 21st February from 10am to 12noon. Councillors agreed that the Clerk organise a volunteer working party to carry out works within the Community Orchard.

d. Update on all other environment and leisure issues.

No other issues to report.

1260. STAFF MATTERS

a. Allotment Co-ordinator update.

The Clerk will publish the job advert online with a view to appointment for 1st April 2026.

1261. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chair closed the meeting at 9:00pm and reminded everyone that the next meeting would be 9th March 2026, 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
- NALC = National Association of Local Councils
- NP = Neighbourhood Plan
- ORM = Old Read Meadow Nature Reserve