



# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A STATUTORY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2026

## 1292. 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 on interests advised.  
No dispensations requested or granted.

## 1293. PUBLIC SESSION

At 7:40pm 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
  - None present.
- c. Questions from the public sent to the Clerk.
  - A resident has asked if anything can be done to repair the highways sign in front of the Water Tower that points to Meppershall but only the letters 'persha' are visible. *The Clerk will report this to CBC.*
  - A resident has written to the Clerk as follows:  
*"We would like to say a big thank you to you and the Parish Council members for your support in fighting the planning application for 78 High Street (CB/26/00278/FULL) and would like you to pass on our thanks to everyone at the next available opportunity or the next meeting. We really appreciated the time everyone spent in listening to us and supporting us. Attending the Parish Council meeting was a real eye opener for us we had no idea how much you covered and how hard you all work. So, thank you for everything you all do behind the scenes for the good of the village. We were very relieved to see that planning permission was refused but realise it's just one battle in the war. I'm sure the developer will be looking for a return on his investment, so we wait to see what happens next".*
- d. Members of the public raised the following questions and comments.
  - A resident noted the refusal and response of the Highways Officer to planning application CB/26/00905/VOC - Land North of Fildyke Road where the developer is seeking to remove the pre-commencement condition to install a footpath from the site to circa 51 Fildyke Road. *The Clerk was asked to follow this up with Planning Enforcement*

Standing Orders were reinstated at 7:46pm.

## 1294. MINUTES

- a. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved that the minutes of the Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chair. Carried.*

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## 1295. DELEGATION ARRANGEMENTS

7:50pm

### a. To appoint members for the following Committees:

- i. Personnel.
- ii. Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group.

### b. To appoint members to the following Working Groups.

- i. Village Life (covers planning, Neighbourhood Plan, environment & leisure, village history and highways).
- ii. Community Engagement (covers events, volunteering, websites, social media and communication)
- iii. Governance (covers personnel, finance, community safety, risk management, procedures).

### c. To confirm defibrillator Inspector(s).

Name	Councillor Delegation	Non-Councillor Membership
Personnel Committee	Cllr Will Addy Cllr Roma Avrili Cllr John Parsons Cllr Paul Merryweather	Clerk
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Committee)	Cllr Choksi Cllr Marsh Cllr Parsons	Clerk Mrs Sally Chapman - Chapman Planning Ms Jane Hubbard - CBC Mr Andrew Pain
Village Life Working Group • Planning • Neighbourhood Plan • Environment & Leisure • Village History • Highways	Cllr Will Addy Cllr Roma Avrili Cllr Tejal Choksi Cllr Jack Marsh Cllr Paul Merryweather Cllr John Parsons	clerk Mr Roger Hirst
Community Engagement Working Group • Events • Volunteers • Websites • Social Media • Communication	Cllr Roma Avrili Cllr Phil Russell Cllr Leo Wright Cllr Romeo Zavacky	Clerk Mrs Sarah Hossack Miss Lucy Standbridge
Governance Working Group • Personnel • Finance • Community Safety • Risk management • Procedures • Legal	Cllr Roma Avrili Cllr Tejal Choksi Cllr John Parsons Cllr John Thompson Cllr Leo Wright	Clerk
Defibrillator Inspectors	Cllr Will Addy Cllr John Parsons	

*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Avrili. Resolved to appoint councillors, and members to committees and working groups as listed above. Carried.*

### d. To consider any other groups required.

Councillors agreed that the current committees and working groups met the needs of the Council.

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## 1296. PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS & LEGAL

### a. Procedures

- i. Update on next steps as part of digital and data compliance actions.  
The Clerk advised that she is moving on with compliance actions and is amending policies and procedures as they come up.
- ii. Code of Conduct v3.0 (no changes).  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Avrili. Resolved to re-approve MPC Code of Conduct v3.0. Carried.*
- iii. Committee Terms of Reference v1.0 (new replaces individual TORs)  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Avrili. Resolved to adopt MPC Committee Terms of Reference v1.0. Carried.*
- iv. Co-option Policy and Application Form v1.0 (no changes).  
*Proposed Cllr Avrili/Seconded Cllr Russell. Resolved to re-approve MPC Co-option Policy and Application Form v1.0. Carried.*
- v. Dispensation Guidance and Form v2.0 (no changes).  
*Proposed Cllr Avrili/Seconded Cllr Russell. Resolved to re-approve MPC Dispensation Guidance and Form v2.0. Carried.*
- vi. Engagement with Developers v1.1 (no changes).  
*Proposed Cllr Avrili/Seconded Cllr Russell. Resolved to re-approve MPC Engagement with Developers v1.1. Carried.*
- vii. Financial Regulations v5.0 (changes made).  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Avrili. Resolved to adopt MPC Financial Regulations v5.0 with amendments made to spending limits in sections 5, 6 and 9. Carried.*
- viii. Internal Audit v1.0 (new).  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Avrili. Resolved to adopt MPC Internal Audit Policy v1.0 Carried.*
- ix. Standing Orders v7.1 (changes made).  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to adopt MPC Standing Orders v7.1. Carried.*
- x. Working Group Terms of Reference v1.0 (new).  
Deferred to next meeting.

### b. Consultations and meetings

- i. To confirm meeting date schedule and location for Working Groups.  
Councillors requested that the Clerk circulate proposed meeting dates, times and locations for each working group meeting three times a year on a Monday evening.
- ii. Update on meeting with Clarion Housing Group regarding proposed development of land off Chapel Road.  
The Clerk together with Councillors Avrili and Parsons met with representatives of Clarion on 29<sup>th</sup> April. They are currently in the early stages of preparing a planning application for 180-200 dwellings (50% affordable housing) on land off Chapel Road. They have not bought the land but have an option to buy if planning permission is granted. Vehicle access would be via Chapel Road only. They have had initial conversations with CBC Officers and are looking to submit an outline planning application for access and indicative site plan in October / November 2026.

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- iii. Update on proposal of CBC General Purposes Committee Meeting regarding the previously proposed reduction in number of councillors for MPC from 10 to 9. The Clerk confirmed that the Committee voted to retain 10 councillors at Meppershall.
  - iv. To agree on how and what to respond to the CBC Local Plan 2050 Scoping Consultation.  
Councillors agreed that the Clerk should respond to the consultation highlighting the following:
    - Infrastructure must be built and in place prior to additional building.
    - Parish Councils to have greater say and involvement in the final decision on the location and type of housing allocations within the village. Parish Councils should be given an option to engage in the process within a specific time limit.
- c. Stocken House**
- i. Update on identified issues, risks, meeting, and actions required regarding land transfer.  
The Clerk has spoken to Davidsons who have advised that they are waiting for CBC Planning to decide on the variation of condition planning applications submitted. Until a decision is made, they will not make any changes to the play area or bins etc.
- d. IT and Communications**
- i. Update from the Clerk.  
A report on website usage was circulated to councillors at the beginning of the month. The Messenger have engaged with feedback on the new websites. Councillors agreed that the Clerk would lead on providing feedback on the website proposals.

## 1297. FINANCE

### a. Purchase Orders / Contracts

- i. To approve cost of Chapman Planning to assist with finalising Neighbourhood Plan. *Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Avrili. Resolved to approve cost of Chapman Planning to assist with finalising the Neighbourhood Plan (10 hours at £75p/hr). (Localism Act 2011). Carried.*
- ii. To approve pitch repair costs.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to approve cost of pitch repairs up to £2k (Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (Section 19). Carried.*
- iii. To approve all purchase orders.  
None.

### b. Grants

- i. To approve grant to CPRE for £600.  
*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved to approve grant to CPRE Bedfordshire of £600 (Local Government Act 1972 s.137). Carried.*

### c. Budget v Actual

- i. To receive 2025-2026 budget v actual reports and consider any amendments required to 2026-2027 budget.  
*Proposed Cllr Avrili/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved to add to the new fixed assets budget purchase of benches, fencing and signage not purchased last year financial year. Carried.*

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## 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 2026 were noted and agreed to be valued at £222,451.

## 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
313 Village Highway Fund (Hoo Rd)	8,136.18
318 Local Election Costs	1,559.67
320 Contingency Fund	6,000.00
324 Enviro. Maint Capital Expendit	50,000.00
330 Neighbourhood Plan	1,209.50
332 Allotment Deposit	2,653.20
333 Locum Clerk	9,000.00
335 Centenary Field	3,329.34
336 New Defibrillator	5,000.00
337 Christmas Tree	1,250.00
338 Defib Batteries	300.00
339 Village Sign	1,000.00
	<u>89,437.89</u>

*Proposed Cllr Avrili/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved to make amendments to Earmarked Reserves as shown above to value of £89,437.89. 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 Merryweather. Resolved to receive the Internal Auditor Report 2026-2026 and noted that no issues were identified. Carried*

## g. Annual Governance Statement 2025/2026

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

*Proposed Cllr Avrili/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved to approve the Governance Statements 2025/2026 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 2025/2026

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

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Avrili. Resolved to approve the Accounting Statements 2025/2026 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.

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Councillors noted the dates set by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer regarding the exercise of public rights to inspect MPC accounts as 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026 to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025. This is a 30-day period that includes the first ten working days of July. Notices will be published on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2026.

**j. To approve banking mandate changes.**

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to add Councillors Avrili, Marsh and Wright to the banking mandate with rights to approve payments. Carried*

**k. To approve standing orders and direct debit list.**

*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Avrili. Resolved to approve standing orders and direct debits as presented. Carried.*

Payment No:	Payee	Purpose	Amount
FA04	R Hirst (9th Month)	Monthly Salary	Variable *2
FA05	NEST	Environment Officer ER Pension	Variable *2
FA06	Alessandra Marabese (15th month)	Monthly Salary	Variable *1
DD01	Standard Life (mid month)	Clerk Pension	
DD02	ICO	Annual Data Protection Fee	£47.00
DD03	Everflow	Monthly Water Charges	Variable
DD04	Smarty Mobile	Mobile Contract Clerk	£7.20
DD05	Amazon	Amazon Web Storage	Variable
DD06	Lloyds Bank	MultiPay Card Balance Clearance (includes £3 monthly fee)	Variable
DD07	Smarty Mobile	Mobile Contract - Allotment Co-ord	£5.40
DD08	Smarty Mobile	Mobile Contract - Environment Officer	£5.00
DD09	Unity Trust	Monthly Bank charges	Variable

Strictly Private and Confidential

\*1 Clerks montly salary fluctuates due to PAYE & NI rounding

\*2 Salary and ER Pension to be approved by Clerk and a councillor

**l. Document approval**

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

*Proposed Cllr Avrili/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved to approve journals 87 to 92. Carried.*

**m. 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 Parsons/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	MultiPay Card
<b>Payments made prior to meeting date including direct debits, standing orders, salaries etc</b>				
DD01-2604	Standard Life	Clerk ER Pension Contribution (16/03/26)		Direct Debit
DD03-2605	Everflow	Water (08/06/26 to 07/07/26) (18/05/2026)	£43.92	Direct Debit
DD04-2604	Smarty Mobile	Clerk Mobile Plan (19/04/26)	£7.20	MultiPay
DD06-2604	Lloyds Bank	MultiPay monthly fee (27/04/26)	£3.00	Multipay
DD07-2604	Smarty Mobile	Allot Co-ord Monthly Mobile Plan (28/04/25)	£5.40	MultiPay
DD08-2605	Smarty Mobile	Env Officer Mobile Plan (3/05/26)	£4.50	MultiPay
DD09-2605	Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges April 2026	£7.00	Direct Debit
FA04-2604	Mr R Hirst	Salary (24/04/26)		
FA05-2604	NEST	RH ER Pension Contribution		Direct Debit
FA04-2605	Mr R Hirst	Salary (11/05/26)		
FA05-2605	NEST	RH ER Pension Contribution		Direct Debit
FA06-2604	A Marabese	Monthly Salary (15/02/26)		
FA06-2605	A Marabese	Monthly Salary (15/02/26)		
BACS1172	Meppershall Messenger	Grant 2026-2027	£1,000.00	
BACS1173	Chairty Café / Mandie Edwards	Refreshments litter picking	£40.00	MultiPay
BACS1174	HP Inc UK Limited	Gnomes Computer - Grant	£399.00	MultiPay

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Payment requests received before agenda published			
BACS 1175	Scotts Ground Maintenance Ltd	April grounds maintenance	£2,511.09
BACS 1176	Hugh Harris Ltd t/a Fresh Air Fitness	Gym Equip Service	£1,100.88
BACS 1177	Mr L Wright	Lawnmower	£50.00
Payment requests received after agenda published			
BACS1178	CPRE	Grant	£600.00

## 1298. PLANNING AND HOUSING

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

- i. CB/TCA/26/00168 - The Manor House, Church Road, SG17 5NA - Works to trees within a Conservation Area: Sectionally fell close to ground level to Eucalyptus Tree (T1), the tree is in decline.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Avrili. Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application TCA/26/00168. Carried.*

## 1299. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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

- i. Green Infrastructure Plan draft.  
The Clerk has chased BRCC and is pending a response from them.
- ii. Extension to Conservation Area.  
The Clerk has chased the consultant for next actions required and is pending a response from them.
- iii. Design Guide.  
Clerk to meet with Mr Pain and Mr Reed.
- iv. Draft Plan.  
Councillor Marsh has completed review of the questionnaire data. The Clerk to send Cllr March the plan policies. Councillors previously agreed in the meeting to use Chapman Planning to help with completion of the Plan.

## 1300. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

### a. To confirm VAS locations.

It was agreed that Mr Hirst and Councillor Thompson would meet to agree on location of the VAS's.

### b. Update on Highways issues.

- The Clerk advised of a pending closure of the A600.

## 1301. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

### a. To consider request to hire Centenary Field for dance / movement classes.

The Clerk has received a request from a resident Idea who wishes to organise a series of free community meetups focused on dance, movement, and wellbeing. The intention behind these sessions is to create a welcoming and inclusive space for residents to connect with themselves and with other through gentle movement and shared rhythm. Each session would include elements such as:

- Free-form dance and movement
- Light yoga and stretching
- Simple rhythm and music-based activities
- Short guided meditation or grounding practices

The aim is to support mental wellbeing, encourage physical activity, and help foster a stronger sense of community among residents. These sessions would be open to all ages

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and abilities, with an emphasis on accessibility and inclusivity rather than structured performance or skill level. Ideally this would be a weekly meet up, maybe 1/2 times a week, but also weather permitting. The resident has public liability and any other necessary documents.

*Councillors requested that the Clerk offer free hire of Centenary Field if the sessions are free of charge to attendees. Hire request and all other documentation still required.*

**b. Update on litter pick on 18th April.**

The Clerk advised that all went well with over 30 attendees. The next litter pick will be on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September.

**c. Update on Allotment Access Track Agreements.**

The Clerk advised that to date we have had 4 agreements are outstanding.

*The Clerk was asked to write to those who have not responded.*

**d. Update on allotments including any actions.**

The Clerk reported that 3 plots have been let with only 4 vacant. 3 plots are to be cleared by our ground's maintenance team.

**e. Update on ORM including any actions.**

The Clerk reported that the CPRE celebration tree has been planted.

**f. Update on all other environment and leisure issues.**

The Clerk has had a meeting with Sarah Hossack and the Social club to start planning village events later this week.

**1302. STAFF MATTERS**

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

The Clerk to arrange interview with the candidate and Councillor Merryweather after 26<sup>th</sup> May.

**1303. CLOSE OF THE MEETING**

The Chair closed the meeting at 9:45pm and reminded everyone that the next meeting would be 8<sup>th</sup> June 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.

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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