MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, MEPPERSHALL ON MONDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER 2026

PRESENT: **Councillors:** L Wright (Chair), W Addy, T Choksi, J Marsh, P Merryweather, J Thompson and R Zavacky
The Clerk: A Marabese.
Others: Eleven members of the public.

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

1332. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

a. Councillors Avrili and Parsons provided apologies that were accepted.

1333. 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 Wright/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved to extend the meeting finish time beyond 2 hours if required. Carried.
c. Other information.
None.

1334. MEMBERS INTERESTS

a. To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda and requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests.
Councillor Wright declared an interest in agenda item 1338.b.i.
Councillors Thompson and Zavacky declared an interest in agenda item 1342.c.i.
No dispensations requested or granted.

1335. PUBLIC SESSION

At 7:15pm 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
- The Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group reported that he had contacted the Planning Officer dealing with the Coneygate application to understand why the applicant was getting multiple opportunities to alter their application and respond to issues raised with the current submission. He was advised that the applicant is given this opportunity to resolve issues prior to the Planning Officer making a final decision on the application so that if approval is not granted then the reasons are fewer and more specific. This application is likely to be heard before the CBC Development Management Committee and the Chair of the NPSG suggested that at that time as many people as possible would be required to attend.

7:16pm Councillor Merryweather arrived.

c. Questions from the pubic sent to the Clerk.
- Walnut Tree Way adoption and related issues: Residents have asked if MPC can contact CBC regarding the partial adoption of Walnut Tree Way to:

- Request 20mp signage at the entrance to Walnut Tree Way
- Request double yellow lines to be painted on the left-hand side of Walnut Tree Way as you enter from Shefford Road to prevent accidents happening due to cars parking on this part of the road.
- Ask whether the footpath on the left had side of Walnut Tree Way as you enter from Shefford Road will be re-surfaced as this has large cracks in it too.

The Clerk was asked to contact CBC to clarify what was due to be adopted and request responses to the above questions.

d. Members of the public raised the following questions and comments.

- None

Standing Orders were reinstated at 7:25pm.

1336. MINUTES

a. To receive and approve distributed minutes of the Statutory Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 20th July 2026.
Proposed Cllr Zavacky/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved that the minutes of the Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 20th July 2026 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chair. Carried.

1337. PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS & LEGAL

a. Working Group meeting updates

i. To receive minutes and proposals from Village Life Working Group:
Council received a verbal update on the minutes of the Village Life WG meeting that included:

- Allotments:
  - Proposal to increase allotment rents in Oct 2027 (see agenda item 1342.c.i.).
  - Allotment fencing installation imminent.
  - Clerk to pursue purchase and installation of toilet for site.
  - Clerk and Mr Hirst to review water standpipe locations and extensions.
  - Clerk to alter terms and conditions regarding trailing hosepipes.
- Green spaces:
  - Aspiration to have tennis / netball court (need to precept for this).
  - Aspiration to have trim trail for children.
  - Aspiration of have nets behind pitch goals.
- Old Road Meadow:
  - Info board needs updating.
  - Mr Hirst to move more plants from the allotments to Old Road Meadow (October / November).
  - Mr Hirst to build bug hotels and seek assistance from volunteers to build and residents for materials.
- Village History:
  - Need to find home for village plates and other items given to the Clerk that refer to village history. Clerk to liaise with MVH.
- Village sign design proposals discussed.
- New signage to include map of footpaths, village gateways, and other general signs.

- Get to know your village. Team would like to publicise more fact and interesting information on the village and are putting together a plan to do this.

b. Procedures

i. To confirm compliance with the updated NALC Parish Council's Basic Governance checklist.
The Council complete the checklist together and noted that personal development plans were needed for employees and that councillors should attend code of conduct training.

c. Legal

i. To discuss allotment and nature reserve boundaries and any actions required to resolve potential issues.
The Clerk reported that she had received complaints about an individual not linked to the Parish Council spraying at Old Road Meadow. This raises issues of health and safety and public liability and concerns about MPC land boundaries and other potential issues. Councillors agreed that only MPC approved contractors were permitted to conduct works on MPC land and that to reduce risk to the Council the Clerk must:

- Establish land boundaries for all MPC land and who is responsible for fencing. The Clerk is to purchase neighbouring properties land registry titles and plans if required.
- Advise all MPC land neighbours when and if required that they are not to conduct maintenance on MPC lands without written approval.
- Clerk and Councillor Merryweather to request assistance from the National Allotment Society with regards to the status of Wry Close Allotments.

d. Stocken House

i. Update on identified issues, risks, meeting, and actions required regarding land transfer.
Still no update since the Clerk spoke to Davidsons however CBC have approved the variation of condition planning applications. Clerk to chase for update and Clerk and Councillor Thompson to review the contract with them.

e. 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 has not worked on the website but plans to do this when time permits.

1338. FINANCE

a. Purchase Orders / Contracts

i. Wreath for Remembrance Day.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Choksi. Resolved to approve purchase of wreath for Remembrance Day (Local Government Act 1972, s.137). Carried.

ii. Christmas Tree and Installation.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Choksi. Resolved to purchase Christmas Tree and organise installation (Local Government Act 1972 s144). Carried.

iii. Christmas Tree Light Switch on event banner.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Choksi. Resolved to purchase Christmas Tree Lights Switch on banners (Local Government Act 1972 s144). Carried.

iv. Christmas Lunch for pensioners – food, crockery etc.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Choksi. Resolved to purchase items required for the Pensioners Christmas lunch with assets up to £2,000 (Local Government Act 1972 s137 and s145). Carried.

v. To approve insurance renewal with Clear Insurance (pending update to documentation issued).
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Choksi. Resolved that the Clerk negotiate a 3 year long term agreement with Clear Insurance (Local Government Act 1972 s111 and others). Carried.

vi. To approve all other purchase orders.
None.

b. Grants

i. To consider grant request of £2,540 from Meppershall Village Hall for replacement benches.
Proposed Cllr Zavacky/Seconded Cllr Addy. Resolved to purchase and donate replacement benches to Meppershall Village Hall. Councillors agreed to exceed the budget for grants to allow for this purchase (Local Government Act 1972 s137). Carried.

ii. To consider grant request of £460 from Meppershall Brownies for leader uniforms and unit neckties.
Proposed Cllr Addy/Seconded Cllr Choksi. Resolved to approve grant request of £460 from Meppershall Brownies (Local Government Act 1972 s137). Carried.

iii. To consider grant request of £300 from Meppershall Social Club for child gifts at Christmas Tree Lights Switch on event.
Proposed Cllr Addy/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved to approve grant request of £300 from Meppershall Social Club (Local Government Act 1972 s137). Carried.

c. Accounts and Audit

i. To appoint Auditing Solutions Ltd as MPC Internal Auditor and sign Letter of Engagement.
Proposed Cllr Addy/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved to appoint Auditing Solutions as Internal Auditor and sign Letter of Engagement. Carried.

ii. To confirm receipt of email from External Auditor regarding AGAR completion.
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.

d. Document approval

i. To approve journal entries, bank reconciliations, and bank statements.
Proposed Cllr Assy/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved to approve journal 93, bank reconciliations and statements MultiPay 27.07.2026, 26.08.2026, Savings a/c 081, 82 and Current a/c 218, 219.

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.

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	
Direct debits, standing orders, salaries etc				
DD01-2608	Standard Life	Clerk ER Pension Contribution (17/08/26)	£399.14	Direct Debit
DD01-2609B	Standard Life	Clerk ER Pension Backdated contribution	£252.60	
DD03-2608	Everflow	Water (08/09/26 to 07/10/26) (17/08/2026)	£404.25	Direct Debit
DD03-2609	Everflow	Water (08/10/26 to 07/11/26) (16/09/2026)	£191.40	Direct Debit
DD04-2608	Smarty Mobile	Clerk Mobile Plan (19/08/26)	£7.20	MultiPay
DD06-2607	Lloyds Bank	MultiPay monthly fee (26/07/26)	£3.00	Multipay
DD06-2608	Lloyds Bank	MultiPay monthly fee (26/08/26)	£3.00	MultiPay
DD07-2607	Smarty Mobile	Allot Co-ord Monthly Mobile Plan (28/08/25)	£5.40	MultiPay
DD07-2608	Smarty Mobile	Allot Co-ord Monthly Mobile Plan (28/07/25)	£5.40	MultiPay
DD08-2608	Smarty Mobile	Env Officer Mobile Plan (3/08/26)	£4.50	MultiPay
DD08-2609	Smarty Mobile	Env Officer Mobile Plan (3/09/26)	£4.50	MultiPay
DD09-2608	Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges July 2026	£7.00	Direct Debit
DD09-2609	Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges August 2027	£7.00	Direct Debit
FA04-2608	Mr R Hirst	Salary (10/08/26)	[redacted]	
FA04-2609	Mr R Hirst	Salary (09/09/26)		
FA05-2608	NEST	RH ER Pension Contribution		Direct Debit
FA05-2609	NEST	RH ER Pension Contribution		Direct Debit
FA06-2608	A Marabese	Monthly Salary (16/08/26)		
FA06-2609	A Marabese	Monthly Salary (15/09/26)		
Payment requests				
BACS 1201	Arbour Tide Limited	Events Branded Gazebo	£990.00	Paid 10/08/26
BACS 1202	Scotts Grounds Maintenance	July Grounds Maintenance	£3,650.75	Paid 10/08/26
BACS 1203	Meppershall Village Hall	Hall Hire 08/06 & 20/07	£80.00	Paid 10/08/26
BACS 1204	Meppershall Village Hall	Hall Hire 13/040, 27/04 & 11/05	£120.00	Paid 10/08/26
BACS 1205	Beds & River IDB	Agricultural Drainage Rates	£2.76	Paid 10/08/26
BACS 1206	Meppershall Messenger	Local Plan Leaflet Printing	£154.00	Paid 10/08/26
BACS 1207	Meppershall Village Hall	Hall Hire 10/08	£40.00	Paid 10/08/26
BACS 1208	Krystal Hosting Ltd	Website and email hosting	£237.60	
BACS 1209	Krystal Hosting Ltd	Gov.uk domain renewal	£12.00	
BACS 1210	Scotts Grounds Maintenance	August Grounds Miantenance	£868.06	
BACS 1211	Mr R Hirst	Expenses - Leech Battery UK Ltd - Rep battery	£24.99	
BACS 1212	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire - Call for sites	£29.00	
BACS 1213	Meppershall Village Hall	Room Hire - Call for sites - session 2	£29.00	
BACS 1214	MVI Corporate Merchandise Ltd	Event banner - Meppershall Eats	£102.00	
BACS 1215	Amazon Business EU SARL	TP Link WIFI Extender	£101.99	MultiPay
BACS 1216	Amazon Business EU SARL	Epsom Projector	£399.98	MultiPay
BACS 1217	Amazon Business EU SARL	Cable Ties	£14.52	MultiPay
BACS 1218	Amazon Business EU SARL	Ratchet straps	£31.96	MultiPay
BACS 1219	Amazon Business EU SARL	Projector Screen	£145.98	MultiPay
BACS 1220	Amazon Business EU SARL	4 stroke mower engine oil	£7.02	MultiPay
BACS 1221	Assurant General Insurance Limited	2 year accidental damage insurance Projector	£15.59	MultiPay
BACS 1222	Amazon Business EU SARL	Events - animals and clipboards	£48.27	MultiPay
BACS 1223	Amazon Business EU SARL	Events - magnifying glasses	£17.98	MultiPay
BACS 1224	Paige Winterfell Limited	Events - pencils	£7.43	MultiPay
BACS 1225	The Meppershall Messenger	Call for sites objection letter and various	£60.00	
BACS 1226	Elan City Ltd	Vehicle Activated Signs	£5,495.98	Paid 07/09/2026
BACS 1227	Costco	Black bin bags	£34.16	MultiPay
BACS 122B	Meppershall Social Club	Litter pick refreshments	£72.70	
BACS 1228	Post Office Ltd	Postage - track letter	£5.95	MultiPay
BACS 1229	Amazon Web Services EMEA SARL	Website storage	£0.10	MultiPay
BACS 1230	Laszlo Balogh	Allotment deposit return	£60.00	
BACS 1231	Amazon Business EU SARL	Padlocks for VAS's	£23.05	MultiPay
BACS 1232	EMSRUN Group	First Aid bandages	£18.98	MultiPay
BACS 1233	EVAQ8 LTD	First Aid Kit	£54.00	MultiPay
BACS 1234	Rialtas	Web user	£148.40	
BACS 1235	Oak & Ivy Landscaping Ltd	Allotment Fence installation	£1,600.00	
BACS 1236	Start Safety	Jubilee clips for VAS installation	£37.37	MultiPay

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Note of Transfers and Income received:

Transfers			
07/09/2026	From Savings	To Current Account	£20,000.00
Income			
01/07/2026	Meppershall FC	Line marking contribution	£300.00
20/07/2026	[redacted]	Allotment rent	£19.80
24/07/2026	Gravenhurst Parish Council	VAS posts and accessories payment	£262.28
07/09/2026	Central Bedfordshire Council	Precept - second payment	£55,477.00
10/09/2026	Don Bosco	Pitch Hire	£162.00

1339. PLANNING AND HOUSING

a. Update on applications responded to under delegated powers.

i. CB/26/01903/FULL - 20 High Street, SG17 5LX - Demolition of rear extensions and erection of single storey rear extension with rooflight.
The clerk confirmed that a response of no objection has been made on planning application 26/01903.

b. Applications since last Council meeting for consideration.

i. CB/26/02470/FULL - 78 High Street, SG17 5LZ - Demolition of existing garage and alterations to existing bungalow and erection of two chalet style dwellings with detached car barns.
Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Zavacky. Resolved that the Council repeat its previous objection to development on this site 26/02470. Carried.

c. Planning appeals responded to under delegated powers.

i. App Ref: 6011001 - CB/26/00905/VOC - Land North of Fildyke Road - Removal of condition number 4 and 5 of planning permission CB/25/01405/FULL (Erection of four dwellings (Use Class C3) including two bungalows with associated private drive and landscaping). Variation sought that a financial contribution via S106 be more appropriate.
The Clerk has repeated councils' previous objections to removal of footpath requirement for this application.

1340. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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

i. Extension to Conservation Area.
ii. Design Guide.
iii. Draft Plan.
The Clerk will try to focus on this for the next meeting. Councillor Choksi suggested attendance at a training session on 16th December aimed at keeping neighbourhood plans on track. *The Clerk will forward details of training to Mr Pain and Councillor Choksi.*

1341. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

a. VAS installation update

VAS's on Shefford Road and Fildyke Road have now been installed, and Mr Hirst will provide data once enough time has passed to provide speed trends etc.

b. Update on concerns regarding footpath installation from Poppy Gardens to Crackle Hill

Contractors now due to start work on 28th September. Councillor Thompson and Mr Hirst to monitor works.

c. Update on all other Highways issues.

- Clerk to invite CBC Portfolio Holder for Highways to view potholes on Shefford Road and rest of village.
- Clerk to chase CBC as VAS on Shefford Road is still not working.
- A resident has raised concerns regarding parking of the Sugarloaf patrons on the pavement and close to the junction of the High Street and Fildyke Road. Parking is available elsewhere in the village and Clerk to contact the Sugarloaf licensee to request they monitor.

1342. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

a. Update on Events held since last meeting and plans for upcoming events.

- Meppershall Eats went extremely well and was well attended.
- Nature Detectives attendance was poor, but this may have been due to the weather. Future events to be planned nearer to village hall.

b. Update on Allotment Access Track Agreements.

Deferred to next meeting.

c. Update on allotments including any actions.

i. Approval of allotment charges from October 2027.

The Clerk proposed an increase to the current Allotment charges effective from 2027 as agreed with the Village Life Working Group.

Plot Size	Meppershall Residents and pre-October 2018 tenants irrespective of residency	Non Meppershall Residents
Category A < 120m²	£17.01	£18.90
Category B 121-160m²	£22.68	£25.20
Category C 161-200m²	£28.35	£31.50
Category D 201-240m²	£34.02	£37.80
Category E 241-280m²	£40.68	£45.20
Category F 281-320m²	£45.36	£50.40
Plot Deposit	£65.00	£65.00

Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Choksi. Resolved to increase allotment charges effective 1st October 2027 and that the Clerk publicise the increase. Carried

d. Update on ORM including any actions.

i. Approval of creation and installation of bug hotels.

Mr Hirst currently has two volunteers to help build bug hotels in Old Road Meadow Nature Reserve at the end of October, but we would like to request more. We already have pallets but will be emailing allotment plot holders and residents to see if they can donate materials to fill the hotels with e.g.: bamboo, bricks etc.

Councillors agreed that this was an excellent initiative.

e. Update on Centenary Field including any actions.

Mr Hirst has laid out the pitches in both white and blue.

The drainage runs need refilling and overseeding, and we will consult with our ground's maintenance contractor regarding this.

f. Update on all other environment and leisure issues.
Nothing of note.

1343. STAFF MATTERS

a. Allotment Co-ordinator update.
Deferred to next meeting.

b. To approve recruitment of Community Engagement Officer.
Deferred to next meeting.

c. To confirm update of pay scales as per NJC 2026-27 pay scale notification.
The Clerk reported that amendments have been made to staff salaries as per updated NJC pay scales.

1344. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chair closed the meeting at 9:40pm and reminded everyone that the next meeting would be on 19th October 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