

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD AT THE LOWER SCHOOL, MEPPERSHALL ON 4 MARCH 2009

PRESENT Councillors Parsons (in the Chair), Bryant, Castle, Chapman, Foskett, Merryweather, Sykes and Waite County Councillor Younger, District Councillors Carne and Rogers, 3 members of the public and the Clerk

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Councillors Crossley and Collins

1. The Chairman invited the police representative to present the crime figures for the previous month, which amounted to 2 burglaries, 2 thefts from motor vehicles and one criminal damage. The parking of a white van near the shop was referred to her as was the usual problem with parking in Fildyke Road

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from members, declarations and the nature thereof in relation to any item on this agenda.

- (a) Personal interest, where a decision on the matter in hand would affect the member, their partner, relatives or close friends, a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors. Any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £5,000 or any body in which such persons hold a position of general management or control.
- (b) Prejudicial interest, where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would view the member's personal interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgement of the public interest

No interests were declared

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 4 February 2008 at the Lower School, High Street, Meppershall are attached but not re-circulated

Councillor Merryweather requested that the omission from the minutes of his report on the replacement of the 'tyre swing' should be rectified. The following minute has been added :-
5D(a)iii Councillor Merryweather reported that he had obtained 3 quotations for replacement equipment for the 'tyre swing' and that the cost would be in excess of £15,000
RESOLVED that the matter be held in abeyance whilst enquiries are put in hand with regard to financing such a project

RESOLVED that with this addition, the minutes be adopted and they were signed by the Chairman

At this point the Chairman suspended proceedings to allow a period of up to 30 minutes to receive reports from our County and District Councillors and to enable members of the public to question Councillors or make observations

Councillor Younger reported from the County Council that that organisation will cease to exist on 31st March to be replaced by the Central Bedfordshire Unitary Authority and from that date he would no longer be in office. He confirmed that the Shefford Hill Footpath – into which he personally had put a great deal of effort – was definitely being carried forward to and accepted by the new Unitary Authority. He also reported that the County Council had committed additional funds for the filling of potholes throughout the county. He went on to thank members of the Parish Council for the help and friendship he had experienced during his time as a County Councillor.

Councillor Rogers advised that he and Councillor Carne would continue to be involved for 3 months following the establishment of Central Bedfordshire as part of a 'shadow authority' although there was uncertainty about their actual role. He also thanked the Council for their help over the years.

Councillor Carne reported that the Nursing Home planning application had at last been approved and that the position regarding the Fildyke Road footway will hopefully be reviewed by the new Authority as a long outstanding matter. He reported his concern that the padlock on the gate to the area to the rear of Crackle Hill had been cut off and suggested it should be replaced quickly

The Chairman responded by thanking all three Councillors for continued support and assistance in both County and District matters. He felt that the Parish Council had enjoyed a very good service both from the Councillors themselves and from their predecessors over the years and the attendance at the Parish Council meetings was evidence of that. On behalf of the Parish Council he wished them well in their future endeavours and suggested that if the Parish Council received half as good a service from the Unitary Councillors in the future, it should consider itself fortunate.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

5A PLANNING AND HOUSING

5A(a) Planning applications pending

- i. 05/01366/SE73 – Land between 92 & 112 Fildyke Road Removal of footpath provision
- ii. 08/00537/FULL – Meppershall Nursing Home, Shefford Road – extension with glazed walkway to main nursing home to provide 8 sheltered accommodation units and staff accommodation for 16 staff
- iv. 08/02360/FULL – Land off 2 Crackle Hill Road – retention of builder's store. A letter has been sent to the Enforcement Officer at the Planning Authority with a request for conditions to be added to the approval given. The response stated that conditions cannot be applied retrospectively
RESOLVED – noted

5A(b) Approvals/Refusals/Withdrawals Received

- i. Approval- 08/02026/FULL – The Stables, 2a Fildyke Close – insertion of two velux skylights into garage roof
RESOLVED – noted

5A(c) Appeals Pending

Land to rear of 82 Fildyke Road

5A(d) Recent Applications

5A(f) Mid Bedfordshire Local Development Framework
Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Draft Submission

The Clerk has been sent two c/ds relating to the submission made by the District Council. They are available to any Councillor wishing to peruse them. An initial run through highlights the following:-

- i. As members are already aware, Meppershall is designated as a Large Village and this is confirmed in Clause 3.7.1. of the submission
- ii. Within that same clause, and under the heading *Rural Areas – Large and Small Villages* is the following statement “In the rural part of the district new development will be limited in overall scale. The site allocations DPD will make small scale allocations of new homes, jobs and community facilities that reflect the size and character of the community

RESOLVED – noted. Councillor Chapman took the 2 c/ds for perusal

- iii. In its consideration of Green Belt issues, the submission in Clause 3.5.3. states – The East of England Plan considers the broad extent of Green Belts in the region is appropriate and should be maintained. PPG2 endorses this and the Council considers that its development requirements can be accommodated without the need to loosen Green Belt boundaries. No Green Belt land will therefore be allocated for development through this LDF
- iv. A revised Settlement Envelope forms part of the submission and this shows two additional areas to those on the current local Plan – these are land at The Mow and part of the New Nurseries site to the rear of some of the properties on Fildyke Road.

RESOLVED that these matters be noted and that a letter of enquiry be sent to establish the reason for the inclusion of both the new areas.

5B FINANCE

AUDIT 2007/2008

The Finance Working Group meeting took place on Wednesday 18 February and the recommendations of the Internal Auditor were considered. The following suggestions for implementation are recommended to the Council

- a) The Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations should be reviewed by 2 Councillors and the Clerk and their findings referred to the full Council for action as appropriate. The Working Group suggested that Councillors Chapman and Foskett should work with the Clerk on this matter and report back to the May meeting of the Council with their findings
- b) With effect from the first meeting of the new financial year, the powers relied on for approval of the expenditure should be recorded on the monthly cheque list.
- c) The Council's Risk Assessment Register should be reviewed annually. Since Councillor Parsons carried out the original assessment, the Working Group suggests that he should re-visit this issue with, if required one other Councillor reporting back to the May meeting of the Council

RESOLVED that this report be accepted and items (a) and (c) marked on for inclusion and further consideration at the Council's meeting in May.

5C HIGHWAYS & LIGHTING

i General Maintenance

Councillor Bryant reported that after the various cold snaps and snow flurries there is a need for more salt bins than the one in Fildyke Road. The Clerk to review and make representation for the provision of three more, one at the top of the village, one on Hoo Road and one on the High Street. He also reported that he had received an offer of the use of a snow plough should the need arise. Also on the positive side many of the bulbs planted in the verges were showing signs of coming through
RESOLVED - noted

ii Shefford Hill Footpath

It was reported that Councillor Paul Makin, Town Mayor of Shefford has been very pro-active in his support of this footpath, from the point of view of Shefford residents going to Meppershall as well as pedestrian traffic going the other way.
RESOLVED that a letter should be sent thanking him for his efforts

iii Boundary wall at 74 Shefford Road

The Clerk reported that the Enforcement Officer has established that the wall had been built partly on Highways land and would need to be demolished and re-erected on a correct alignment
RESOLVED – noted

iv Fildyke Road additional off road parking

This item to be an open agenda heading for a monthly review.

v High Street parking

Concern was again expressed at the problems caused by parked vehicles in the vicinity of the shop were raised again.
RESOLVED that the Clerk ascertain the situation, costs etc of installing a pedestrian crossing at this point.

5D ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE

5D(a) Fosters Field

i Lighting of the teenage area

No response has yet been received from the Planning Authority to the re-submission of the application
RESOLVED - noted

ii Play Equipment Annual Inspection

As discussed at the last meeting, Digleys have been requested to carry out the annual inspection and have also agreed to assist with the production of a new weekly report which will satisfy Health and Safety requirements.
RESOLVED - noted

5D(b) Refurbishment of Village Sign

The Clerk reported that the matter was proceeding and after a brief discussion it was RESOLVED that the sign should remain in its present location

5D(c) Old Road Meadow

Councillor Foskett reported that there was nothing to report
RESOLVED - noted

