

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD AT THE LOWER SCHOOL, MEPPERSHALL ON 1 April 2009

PRESENT Councillors Parsons (in the Chair), Bryant, Castle, Chapman, Foskett, Merryweather, Sykes and Waite County Councillors Rogers, 2 members of the public and the Clerk

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Councillor Collins & District Councillor Carne

1. The Chairman introduced David Rolfe, Senior Pilot of the Police Helicopter based in Meppershall who gave a presentation of the work of the force and the difficulties sometimes experienced in keeping noise at low level when the wind is from the wrong direction. It was an enlightening and interesting 10 minute presentation into the work of the police in the air.

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 March 2008 at the Lower School, High Street, Meppershall are attached but not re-circulated

RESOLVED that 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

There were no points raised by either Councillors or members of the public present

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising

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
RESOLVED – noted

5A(b) Approvals/Refusals/Withdrawals Received

- i. Approval - 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
RESOLVED – noted

5A(c) Appeals Pending

Land to rear of 82 Fildyke Road
RESOLVED – noted

5A(d) Recent Applications

09/00468/FULL – land to the rear of 15 Shefford Road adjacent to 13a Shefford Road – change of use to residential garden
RESOLVED – no objections

5A(e) Other Planning Matters

Site at 2 Cracklehill Road

Clerk has received a communication from Mr B Warnock relating to the site and its development in which he advises his intention to start building work in the summer. He requests the Parish Council to consider permitting him to use the adjacent track 'to avoid damaging the trees on the wide verge'. In this connection he would be happy for the condition of the track to be recorded before and after such usage (if it is to be permitted) and he would expect to be required to restore it to its original condition if any damage should occur. He would also be prepared to donate £500 to a 'village cause' as a thank you in this proposed instance.

RESOLVED that no such permission should be granted and the access to the site from the road be the first step in the development.

5B FINANCE

- (i) **Audit** of accounts 2008/2009 is scheduled for 30th June 2009
RESOLVED - noted
- (ii) **Mid Beds Link a Ride** - a copy letter from the Manager of the Service containing a request for a grant is attached to these minutes but not re-circulated
- (iii) **Whitbread Wanderbus** – a copy of an email requesting financial assistance is attached but not re-circulated
RESOLVED - that a grant of £300 be made available to each charity

5C HIGHWAYS & LIGHTING

i General maintenance

Councillor Bryant reported on the footpath between Hoo Road and Brookmead
RESOLVED that the Caretaker should maintain it and that it should be specifically included in the Grasscutting tender documentation

ii Shefford Hill Footpath

The Mayor of Shefford, Councillor Paul Makin has been in communication - Jon Shortland, Service Director at Bedfordshire Highways, has advised him that "the present timescale for the project is currently in the financial year 2011/12. It may nevertheless be brought forward to 2010/2011 but regrettably, whilst the Plan is in preparation, it has not been completed in time to be included in the 2009/10 programme, which is being finalised this month. I will keep the situation under review, however, and look at it again once the Plan has been signed off." Meppershall and Shefford Councils are to keep in touch and exchange news on progress.

RESOLVED that contact be maintained on future actions.

- iii **Fildyke Road Parking**
The Clerk has written to Aragon Housing Association in regard to the provision of the additional parking spaces in an attempt to establish a timescale for the project - a response is awaited
RESOLVED - noted
- iv **74 Shefford Road**
Councillor Bryant reported that the encroaching wall has been removed
RESOLVED - noted
- v **High Street Parking**
A copy of a predictable response to the Clerk's enquiry about installing waiting restrictions in the vicinity of the shop and chapel is attached for information. Following discussion at the last meeting a response has been sent enquiring about the installation of a pedestrian crossing in that area, the cost of installation and whether Partnership funds can be utilised for the purpose.
RESOLVED - noted

Vehicle Parking in and around the Village

Councillor Bryant is proposing to make a tour of the Village with a camera to identify instances of illegal and/or inconsiderate parking
RESOLVED - noted

5D ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE

5D(a) Play Equipment on Fosters Field

- i **Annual Inspection**
- ii **Lighting of the teenage area**
Clerk reported that there has been no news on the submitted application
- iii **Use of Fosters Field**
A request has been received from the Village Hall Fund Raising Committee, for the area to be host to a Summer Fayre on Saturday 1 1st July 2009 from 10 am until 4 pm.
RESOLVED that permission be given

5D(b) Maintenance of Fosters Field

- i Top area of grass/ Bonfire site. Councillor Castle had a site meeting with Martin Granger, further debris was removed and the issue of the cheque was authorised. There remains the final seeding to be carried out and this is scheduled for the next 10 days. The inclusion of the extra area in the normal cutting will cost an additional £60 per cut.
RESOLVED - noted
- iii **Normal Maintenance** The clearance work referred to at the last meeting will be carried out within the next 2 weeks.
RESOLVED - noted

5D(c) Refurbishment of Village Sign

Delivery is expected within the next two weeks
RESOLVED - noted

5D(d) Old Road Meadow

Councillor Foskett had nothing to report and Councillor Bryant advised that he had received an offer of some primroses if required
RESOLVED - noted

5D(e) Brought forward from previous meetings

i Planters

Report on the current situations - a proforma agreement between the Parish Council and the individual sponsor is attached to these minutes for amendment/adoption. but not re-circulated

RESOLVED that the Agreements be adopted and made available for the Planter sponsors

ii Refuse bin in Play Area

John Savory has been requested to install this and hopes to be able to do so within the next week

RESOLVED - noted

5E HEALTH AND SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT

Councillor Castle again raised the question of the rubbish/dumped concrete in the hedgerow round the Recreation Ground

RESOLVED that John Savory be requested to clear this when installing the waste bin.

6. OTHER MEETINGS

At a meeting of the Village Hall Management Committee the issue of the Recycling Bins was discussed and since there is no financial incentive to have the bins on the Car Park their permanent removal may be sought. The question of using the area at the rear of the Hall also came under discussion and an approach made to Chris Foster at Polehanger Farms

7. ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD GATES

No request has yet been received for the release of the grant monies - however, the Chairman advised that the gates had now been removed - presumably for the work to be carried out and a request for the grant money now seems imminent

RESOLVED - noted

8. PARISH PLAN

Regrettably the Clerk's computer problems have prevented the circulation of the comments sheet - this will be rectified at the first available opportunity

RESOLVED - noted

9. CCTV INSTALLATION

The installation has been authorised and the contractor, Kevin Balderstone is to liaise with Steve Ansell regarding the timing and the access to the premises -start date to be advised.

RESOLVED - noted

10 BUDDLEIA BUSHES AT GREGORY CLOSE

Since the last Council meeting, this matter has been referred to Councillor Robin Younger who contacted the Clerk for the background. A copy of his email is attached together with copies of the Clerk's letters to the two residents. The Village Caretaker has been instructed to carry out the severe pruning necessary.

RESOLVED - noted

11. MID BEDS CYCLE ROUTE MAPPING

A 4 page insert is enclosed (partially the reason for the grass cutting mapwork not being done?)

Whilst the date for responses will have passed by the time of the meeting, Councillors opinions will be welcome if phoned in direct

RESOLVED - noted

12. **AFFORDABLE RURAL HOUSING**
A copy of a letter from John Welch, Operations Director of the Howard Cottage Housing Association, is attached for information
RESOLVED - noted
13. **MOBILE LIBRARIES**
A copy of a letter from the Head of Library Services is attached for information
RESOLVED - noted
14. **CLERKS' REMUNERATION**
The National Final Salary Award has now been agreed which reflects an additional 0.30% increase on the interim settlement. This has been calculated at precisely £23.25p and is included with this month's remuneration on the graded scale.
RESOLVED that the final adjustment be implemented
15. **COMPUTER EQUIPMENT**
The recent problems with the computer suggest that the Council should have in place a depreciation/replacement scheme for the IT equipment. Repairs have been effected at a cost of £120 (see Cheques for authorisation below), but the future IT requirements need to be established.
RESOLVED that the Council's IT equipment should be updated and a replacement computer purchased. The Clerk to liaise with Councillor Sykes prior to any deal being concluded.
16. **GRASS CUTTING**
The continued absence of the required maps necessary for a meaningful tender invitation, coupled with the computer problems has meant that this will be put to one side until November when the process can be set in motion for the 2010 grass cutting season.
RESOLVED that the existing arrangements should continue for the current growing season but the tendering should be an agenda item for the July meeting to ensure that the tendering package is complete for the following season.
17. **BEDFORDSHIRE EAST SCHOOLS TRUST**
A copy of a letter from the Project Manager for BEST is attached for information
RESOLVED - noted
18. **VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**
It appears that two cheques issued to the VHMC have gone astray since they have not been presented for payment. They have therefore been cancelled and a replacement cheque included in the payment schedule.
RESOLVED - noted
19. **ORDERS FOR THE PAYMENT OF MONEY FOR AUTHORISATION**
Schedule of Payment is attached for Authorisation and Approval
RESOLVED that with the addition of cheque number 785 payable to Mid Beds Link a Ride for £300 and 786 payable to Whitbread Wanderbus for £300, the payments be approved and authorised
20. **NEXT MEETINGS**
The next meetings of the Parish Council will be the Statutory Annual Meeting on 6 May and an ordinary meeting on 3 June at the Lower School commencing at 7.45 pm