

**MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL STATUTORY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**  
**HELD AT THE LOWER SCHOOL, HIGH STREET, MEPPERSHALL ON 6 MAY 2009**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Chapman [in the Chair], Bryant, Castle, Parsons, Crossley, Foskett, Merryweather, Sykes and Waite, District Councillors Carne and Rogers, nine members of the public and the Clerk

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**                      Councillor Collins

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2009/2010**

Councillor Parsons announced that he would not be standing for re-election as Chairman for the coming year. Councillor Chapman was elected unopposed and took the Chair

**2. RECEIPT OF CHAIRMAN'S DECLARATION OF OFFICE**

The Chairman signed the usual Declaration of Office which was witnessed by the Clerk

**3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Foskett was re-elected unopposed

**4. APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNOR TO MEPPERSHALL LOWER SCHOOL**

Councillor Bryant agreed to continue in the role and the meeting confirmed the appointment

**5. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE TO VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Councillor Collins was re-appointed unopposed

**6. APPOINTMENT OF SPOKESMEN**

- a) Environment & Leisure Working Group (previous year Councillor Merryweather)
- b) Planning and Housing Working Group (previous year Councillor Chapman)
- c) Highways and Lighting Working Group (previous year Councillor Bryant)
- d) Finance Working Group (previous year Councillor Foskett)
- e) Health and Safety and Risk Management [previous year Councillor Castle]

**RESOLVED** that the five Spokesmen be re-appointed for a further year

**7. APPOINTMENTS TO WORKING GROUPS.**

**RESOLVED** that, the composition of the Working Groups should remain as last year

**8. 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

**9. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 1 April 2009 at the Lower School, High Street, Meppershall are attached to these minutes but not re-circulated

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be adopted and they were signed by the Chairman

**At this point in the meeting the Chairman allowed a period of up to 30 minutes to receive reports from the District Councillors or members of the public to question Councillors or make observations.**

Both District Councillors suggested that the move to a Unitary Authority appears to be going quite smoothly and Councillor Rogers introduced two of the members of the public present as Lewis Burt and Tony Brown who will both be standing as candidates for the Central Bedfordshire Council on 4 June. Each of these gentlemen pledged that, given success at the polls, he would continue the support for the Town and Parish Councils within his constituent area currently provided by the County and District Councillors. Councillor Carne then paid tribute to the dedication that had always been a part of Tony Rogers approach to his responsibilities.

A short presentation was made by Mrs Linda Parker of the newly formed Meppershall Garden Club [copy attached] which included a proposal that some funding be made available for the provision of planters at the front of the Village Hall. This was felt by Councillors to be a timely request since the proposed sponsors of the planters recently purchased by the Council had all fallen through.

Other matters referred to were the absence of white lining on some of the village roads [Councillor Bryant to resolve with Highways, the replacement of a mature silver birch tree in St Mary's Place, [Clerk to contact Bob Morwood] the condition of the middle track and some of the individual plots on the allotment field [to be identified at the time of the June Inspection].

0

**10. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were none

**11. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

(a) **Planning & Housing**

(i) **Planning applications pending**

1. 05/01366/SE73 – Land between 92 & 112 Fildyke Road Removal of footpath provision
2. 09/004679/FULL- Land adjacent to 13a Shefford Road – change of use to residential garden

Councillor Carne reported that this application has been approved.

**RESOLVED -** noted

(ii) **New Applications received**

(iii) **Notices of Decisions Received**

**Appeals Pending**

- i. Land to rear of 82 Fildyke Road

(iv) **Other Planning Matters**

Land off 2 Crackle Hill Road – copies of emails

a. Clerk's email to the builder read:

Your email on the above subject was considered at the last council meeting and I'm instructed to advise you that your request for permission to use the existing adjacent track is declined, despite the financial inducement offered.

The reason is quite simply that the track is not designed for commercial use and damage to the surface would be inevitable; this in turn would result in inconvenience to the legitimate users which would be unacceptable. Since a permanent access to the site has been negotiated with the Highways Authority, it

Meppershall Parish Council meeting 6 May 2009

seems logical that its construction should be the first step in the development and that due care and attention is exercised to avoid damaging the established trees on the verge. It is suggested that the services of a tree specialist be employed to carry out some judicious pruning to limit the potential for damage.

b. Mr Waldock's response:

Thank you for your reply, its advice has been noted.

**RESOLVED** – noted.

i. Tree on Shillington Road

Copy of a letter from Bob Morwood to Mr. Power for information

**RESOLVED** – noted.

**11B** **FINANCE**

i **Audit** The accounts to 31 March are in course of preparation and the Audit is set for the end of May

**RESOLVED** – noted.

ii **Precept** – Although the documentation received with the Precept intimated that the Precept funds, regardless of amount would be paid in one amount in April, this was incorrect - £15,500 (50%) of the Precept has been placed on the Council's Bank Account.

**RESOLVED** – noted.

iii **Clerk's Remuneration** – Councillors will observe from the latest issue of the Bedfordshire Bugle that the Employers have offered a 0.50% annual 'Cost of Living' increase for 2009/2010 which will be 'on the Table' until 1 June – if not accepted, the offer will be withdrawn.  
(N.B. If accepted the Clerk will receive the benefit of an increase of £38.65 before tax – per annum!)

**RESOLVED that the new scales be implemented.**

**11C** **HIGHWAYS & LIGHTING**

i **Highway Parish Liaison and General maintenance**

Councillor Bryant reported that he'd had a further meeting with a Highways representative on various repairs.

**RESOLVED** – noted.

ii **Shefford Hill Footpath**

Clerk reported that he had spoken with the Town Mayor of Shefford, who is carrying out a survey of pedestrian use of Shefford Hill and is also organising a petition at various events during the year. He will be letting us have the results in due course.

**RESOLVED** – noted.

iii **Enhanced Parish Partnership Schemes 2009/2010**

Once again, the allocation is £7,000 to be utilised for the improvement and repair of local footpaths and carriageways. The Clerk has spoken with Central Bedfordshire Council on the subject of the installation of a pedestrian crossing in the village – there seems little hope (barring the incidence of a traffic accident death) of this becoming a reality unless the Parish Council can produce the £30,000 construction costs.

**RESOLVED** – noted.

- iv **Additional off road parking in Fildyke Road**  
The Clerk has spoken with Dennis Maher of the Aragon Housing Association and was advised that the project is one of many scheduled for completion this year and a start date has yet to be finalised  
**RESOLVED** – noted.

**11D ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE**

**11D(a) Fosters Field**

- i **Lighting of the teenage area**  
This matter remains in the hands of the planners CB/090/00646 – an initial response suggests that the very purpose of erecting the lighting will be the principal reason for the application to be declined. Should a Decision Notice not be received by 27 May an appeal can be entered with the Planning Inspectorate  
If the application is withdrawn, Councillors should be aware that the Council has already earmarked £2,500 towards the cost from the Confident Communities Fund. After discussion it was decided to defer this item until the next council meeting, by which time it should be established whether the funds earmarked for lighting can be used for other purposes.  
**RESOLVED** – noted.

**11D(b) Maintenance of Fosters Field**

- i Councillor Castle reported on the current situation on the perimeter hedgerows and provided photographs of the problems. A regular strimming programme will be included in the grass cutting tender documentation to cover this in future years. The new sign for the Children's Play Area have been ordered and delivery is awaited.  
**RESOLVED** – that John Savory be requested to carry out a clearance after establishing with Councillor Castle the extent of the problem.  
It was also decided that future works carried out on behalf of the council should be against a detailed works order to ensure that regulations are met.

**11D(c) Sports Facilities in the Village**

Councillor Foskett introduced this topic and further development of sporting facilities within the village will be considered as and when they are proposed.  
**RESOLVED** – noted.

**11D(d) Bonfire Night 2009**

Now that the old site has been cleared and brought back as part of the Recreation Ground, consideration must be given to establish a new site for the 2009 event.  
This was discussed at some length and bearing in mind the problems encountered in the restitution of the site and the cost of clearance [in excess of £1000, it was felt that the expenditure is not really justified.]  
**RESOLVED** – that in future years whilst the Parish Council is prepared to continue to assist the Village Hall Management Committee with this event, the bonfire arrangements as at present are not acceptable.

**11D(e) Old Road Meadow**

There was nothing to report

**11D(f) Play Rangers**

An email request has been received from Loren Crowley for the Play Rangers to re-visit Meppershall on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm and on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August from 12.00 noon to 1.30 pm  
**RESOLVED** – that permission be granted for these two dates.

**11E      HEALTH & SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT**

This has already been covered in earlier agenda items.

**12.      WRY CLOSE ALLOTMENT FIELD**

I            A copy of the quotation from STD Civils for the installation of a gate is attached to these minutes but not recalculated.  
Apart from the cost ( the Crackle Hill gate cost £440 + VAT) the quote provides options for the size of the gate and the possibility of having a narrow, ungated pedestrian access. A further quotation from Jarrett fencing has been received and after discussion it was decided that a full width gate should be installed as soon as it can be arranged.

**RESOLVED** – noted.

**Further RESOLVED** –that in future years and at the beginning of April a full scale maintenance and service of the water system should be carried out.

**13.      PARISH PLAN**

- i)          The blank schedules sent to Councillors by email need to be completed and return for collating into one plan for the future from the Parish Council perspective  
**RESOLVED** – that this be carried forward to the next meeting for further response from councillors.
  
- ii)        A copy of a letter from Laurent Martial, the Community Development Officer Rural Areas at Central Bedfordshire is attached for information. A copy of the Meppershall Village Plan has been sent to him.  
**RESOLVED** – noted.

**14.      FOOTPATH MAINTENANCE**

For the current season, the timing of the first clearance needs to be established  
And the Village Caretaker instructed  
**RESOLVED** – noted.

**15.      ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

This meeting will take place on Wednesday 20 May in the Lower School commencing at 7.45 pm  
**RESOLVED** – noted.

**16.      VILLAGE SIGN**

The new sign should be delivered before the next meeting of the Council. Plans for its install need to be finalised  
**RESOLVED** – noted.

**17.      MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER**

A copy of a letter from the Treasurer of the Magazine Committee, requesting assistance in the financing of a special 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue of the Messenger.  
**RESOLVED** – that the requested assistance be provided and a cheque for £500 be added to the schedule of payments below.

**18,      REPAIRS TO CHURCHYARD GATES**

Councillor Parsons reported that the repairs to the gate have now been carried out and a request that the agreed grant should be received shortly.  
**RESOLVED** – noted.

**19.      PLANTERS**

Following the presentation by Mrs Parker above, the planters are to be offered to the group since none of the sponsors under the existing arrangements have taken up the opportunity.  
**RESOLVED** – noted.

20. **CCTV INSTALLATION**  
For a variety of reasons this did not take place as originally hoped during the Easter holidays – it is now scheduled for the week following the Bank Holiday at the end of May.  
**RESOLVED** – noted.
21. **STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**  
Councillors Chapman and Foskett met with the Clerk and carried out a review. A number of minor alterations were made and a revision update will be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting of the Council. The only point where a decision from the full Council is required concerns the limit on expenditure that the Clerk can authorise without reference. This is currently set at £500.  
Any Councillor who has not got/cannot find his copy of these documents, please advise the Clerk  
It was decided that, rather than issuing amendments, each Councillor should be provided with a new set  
**RESOLVED** – noted.
22. **ORDERS FOR THE PAYMENT OF MONEY FOR AUTHORISATION**  
**RESOLVED** that with the addition of cheque number 793 for £500 in respect of the grant referred to above, the schedule is authorised and approved
23. **DATE & VENUE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
The next meetings of the Parish Council will be on Wednesday 3 June 2009 and Wednesday 15 July at the Lower School commencing at 07.45 pm