

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD AT THE LOWER SCHOOL, MEPPERSHALL ON 2 DECEMBER 2009

PRESENT Councillors Chapman (in the chair), Bryant, Castle, Collins, Crossley, Foskett, Merryweather, Parsons, Sykes and Waite and the Clerk

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Unitary Councillors Birt and Brown

1. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 4 November 2009 at the Lower School, High Street, Meppershall are attached to these minutes but not re-circulated

At this point the Chairman read a written report from Councillor Brown - copy attached to these minutes but not re-circulated. Councillor Birt then referred to the need of the Unitary Authority to identify sufficient sites in the area to accommodate 80 plots for Travellers: of the 110 proposed sites, the nearest to Meppershall is a site somewhere in Shefford.

Since no members of the public were present the meeting continued without being suspended.

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
Councillor Tony Brown hopes to be in a position to make a report to the January Council meeting
- ii. CB/09/06287/FULL 39 Orchard Close pitch roof to single storey extension
RESOLVED - noted

5A(b) Approvals/Refusals/Withdrawals Received

Refusal - CB/09/06084/FULL Land rear of 30 Shefford Road - erection of bungalow with associated access. Grounds for refusal - detrimental impact etc, substandard access, reversing onto highway etc
RESOLVED - noted

5A(c) Appeals Pending

5A(d) Recent Applications

- i CB/09/06235/FULL/Methodist Chapel, High Street/change of use and conversion of church into single dwelling
RESOLVED that whilst no objection is raised, the Planning authority be requested to add a condition to any approval given requiring the outside fabric of the building should be retained without alteration

5A(e) Other Planning Matters

- i **Central Bedfordshire Council Housing Strategy Consultation** event will be held on Friday 15 January at Chicksands 9.30 until 4.00 pm incl lunch. One representative from the Council only
Councillor Crossley will endeavour to attend as the Council's representative
- ii **Development Land Boundaries** - Councillor Sykes to comment on the legal opinion offered by the solicitors - copy attached. Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the opinion suggest a need for a volunteer to identify all developments since 1985 and to establish which are "open-ended" at some point in the perimeter giving the potential for further development complications at some time in the future.
RESOLVED after some discussion that a survey should be carried out to identify all such land and that records should be kept starting with the former Bovis development at Gregory Close

5B FINANCE

- i **Audit**
A meeting of the Finance Working Group convened on 29 October to consider the comments made by both Internal and External Auditors. These were of quite a minor nature. The Action Plan is in process of compiling
- ii **Sect 137 cash limit for 2010/2011**
The amount is unchanged at £6.15 per elector
RESOLVED - that the above matters be noted

5C HIGHWAYS & LIGHTING

- i **Highway Parish Liaison**
Councillor Bryant confirmed his conversation with the liaison Officer and the offer of £2000 to help bring forward various footway improvement schemes - no request or plan for these funds has yet been received.
RESOLVED- noted
Councillor Bryant also reported that the street light in the vicinity of the Village Hall is still not connected up and the manhole cover outside 55 High Street needs replacing with a heavier duty cover. Unitary Councillor Birt offered to follow this up with Central Bedfordshire

- iv **Additional off road parking in Flldyke Road**
Clerk reported that the promised progress had not taken place
RESOLVED that further chasing should take place and the matter reported on again at the next meeting

5D ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE

5D(a) Fosters Field

- i **Lighting of the teenage area**
Both the Clerk and Councillor Castle are concerned that following heavy rain and the waterlogged condition of the ground, a heavy vehicle crossing to the site for the light column will result in deep and unacceptable rutting
RESOLVED that the installation should be put off until the ground has dried out

5D(b) Play Equipment Inspection & Maintenance

- I **Annual Inspection**
Working Group to report on the quotation passed to the group for consideration at the last meeting. It appears that both the quotation from Clements Construction and the copy of the report itself have gone astray
RESOLVED that a further copy of the quotation be obtained and in the meantime all the high and medium risk items need to be resolved.
- ii **Future Inspections and Maintenance**
The Clerk has produced a new weekly report in a 3 part format covering both sections of the Fosters Field Recreation Facilities.
RESOLVED that this would be acceptable, that it should be printed, a contractor found for the quarterly inspections and for the weekly check-ups
- iii **Fosters Field Maintenance Work**
The Chairman reported that he had met with the new handyman who would be contacting the Clerk regarding a price for the repair of the seat and the clearance of extraneous rubbish from the perimeter fence area
RESOLVED - noted

5D(c) Old Road Meadow

- i Councillor Foskett had nothing to report but suggested that the annual cut of the Old Road Meadow should have been included in the Grass cutting tender documentation
- ii A copy of a letter from Complete Weed Control is attached for information. Confirmation required for the sum of £850 to be included in the Precept calculations
RESOLVED that both the annual weed control treatment programme and the annual cut should be taken into account with the Precept calculations

5D(d) Crackle Hill Land

The fence repair and the gateway should be completed either this week or next
RESOLVED - noted

6. OTHER MEETINGS

Councillor Bryant reported on the last School Governors' meeting at which it appears that due to school holidays, the School Hall will not be available for the April, June or September Council meetings
RESOLVED - that the Clerk should report back to the January meeting

7, WRY CLOSE ALLOTMENT FIELD

- i **Tenancy Agreements and Renewals.**
These have now been delivered with a settlement date of Friday 6 December
- ii **Tanks and taps**
Requirements and provision (Mr Carne?) to be reviewed
- iii **Track Licences**
Following the discussion in November, this question was deferred to this meeting for a decision on the action to be taken with regard to the gate and the licences, After some discussion the consensus of the meeting was to move the gate from its present location to a point further along the track beyond the last High Street property access. This would mean that keys would only be needed by Allotment Holders. Unfortunately it would also leave the whole field open to commercial fly tipping unless a fence/barrier was erected to the gate's new position. This in turn will inconvenience plot holders. Chairman to speak with relevant plot holders and report back in January
RESOLVED - noted

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

- i Councillor Parsons reported that he had reviewed The Council's Health and Safety on behalf of the Council and was of the opinion that no changes, alterations or amendments were necessary
RESOLVED - noted

9. GRASS CUTTING

Six 'Invitations to Tender' packs have been sent out to prospective contractors with a closing date of 15 December - a copy will be in circulation during the meeting. Responses will be considered after the closing date with a view to their being placed before the Council meeting in January
RESOLVED - noted

10. CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE REVIEW OF LOCAL BUS SERVICES

A copy of a letter and the objectivity of the Review is attached and the co-operation of Parish Council is requested in the formulation of the review
The Chairman agreed to respond to this appropriately
RESOLVED - noted

11. CLERK'S ANNUAL REVIEW

Chairman to report on progress in establishing 'modus operandii'
Chairman re[ported no further progress
RESOLVED - noted

12. ORDERS FOR THE PAYMENT OF MONEY FOR AUTHORISATION

Schedule of payments for Authorisation and Approval will be distributed at the Council Meeting
RESOLVED that the payments be approved and authorised

13. PRECEPT REQUIREMENTS

The various amounts mentioned during this meeting will be incorporated into the Precept proposals for presentation to the January meeting

14. VENUE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

The next meetings of the Parish Council will be on Wednesday 3 February and Wednesday 3 February 2010 at the Lower School