

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2019

**PRESENT:**      **Councillors:** Chapman (in the Chair), Bulley, Foskett, Merryweather, Read  
Smith, Thomason and Thompson,  
                  **The Clerk:**      A Marabese  
                  **Others:**          Ward Councillor Liddiard. 13 members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7:45pm.

## 262. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Parsons also Ward Cllr Brown.

## 263. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. None made

## 264. MEMBERS INTERESTS

- a. To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda  
Cllrs Foskett and Thomason declared an interest in item 267.a.ii
- b. To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests (if any)
- c. To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate  
No declarations or dispensations were received.

## 265. MINUTES

Cllr Foskett queried minute 259.d regarding the location of the 2019/2020 Parish Council meetings and requested that the following (summarised by the Clerk) be noted in these minutes.

- A parishioner has emailed the Chair about this part of the published draft minutes and is yet to receive a response. Clarity is requested with regards to when was the item discussed and was it endorsed by the five councillors present or is it the views of the Parish Clerk?
- The minute say, *'There seems to be little partnership working on the part of the Village Hall Trustees with MPC at present and this is something that needs to be re-established for the benefit of the community as a whole'*. As the nominated MPC representative to the MVHT Trustees for a number of years, Cllr Foskett questioned how can the minutes say there is not a partnership, when Cllr Foskett is dealing on a daily basis with the other Trustees? Cllr Foskett reported that he and other trustees are upset by this comment request that it be struck from the minutes.
- Cllr Foskett also pointed out that in the minutes it also says that *'would like to remind Village Hall Trustees that parish council money is residents money'*. Cllr Foskett took the opportunity to remind the Council that Meppershall Village Hall money is residents money and the Trustees are also accountable.
- The minutes also state the *'the increase in cost proposed by the village hall trustees is high and not in keeping with neighbouring parish council meetings held in village halls'*. Cllr Foskett questioned if this was factually comparing like for like? A lot of village halls receive subsidies from their parish councils. MVH has not had a grant since 2012 and stands on its own two feet. The proposed increase in rental, which was last increased in 2011, is in line with the RPI for the period since the last increase. It is also subject to a discount for booking throughout the year. The purpose of the rent which the MVHT

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believe is fair and competitive with other local venues covers lighting and heat used, some of the cleaning costs and future maintenance.

- Cllr Foskett continued and stated that the design of the new building specifically included a Parish Council Office at the front of the building so that parishioners could visit the Clerk who would be in residence on named days each week. MPC has now told MVHT that this office is no longer required, and the Clerk will not be in residence. Had this been known before perhaps that part of the building could have been designed in a different or better way.
- MVHT are all volunteers who have worked thousands of hours on the new village hall project for free and who work tirelessly to ensure the charity works smoothly for the benefit of the residents of Meppershall. Cllr Foskett thinks that the Council should try to work with the Trustees to ensure this fantastic facility (the new village hall) flourishes into the future for the residents of Meppershall and to privately discuss any concerns before publishing in documents of record.

The Clerk confirmed that the minute note was not '*the view of the Parish Clerk*'. During the meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> December it was specifically requested by councillors that the minutes register the points made during the discussion in the minutes and what has been recorded is as per the Clerks notes.

Cllr Smith who was present at the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December confirmed that the minutes are an accurate account and true representation of what was said at the meeting. If Cllr Foskett wishes to disagree with the minutes, then this is a different issue to be discussed as a separate agenda item.

Cllr Merryweather said that Council cannot change the content of the minutes as they are a true reflection of the meeting dialogue.

Cllr Thompson wished it noted that the parishioner who emailed the Chair requesting clarification cannot have an answer to the content of the minutes until after this meeting when the minutes are approved.

Cllr Thomason and Read wished to thank Cllr Foskett for all his hard work that he has put into the new village hall and parish facilities project.

Cllr Chapman advised that a meeting had been held between MPC and MVHT and that another was planned. Some issues raised at the meeting already held and others on the agenda for the next meeting required resolution.

- a. Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Smith. Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried (4 in favour, 4 abstentions)*

**At this point (8:05pm) the Chairman suspended Standing Orders to receive reports from Ward Councillors 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.**

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Parishioners made the following comments and asked the following questions:

- Could the Clerk write to CBC Planning Enforcement regarding the traffic issues caused by construction vehicles at 52 Fildyke Road obstructing the road? *The Clerk advised that a complaint has already been raised with CBC Planning Enforcement regarding this issue and an investigation is underway. Cllr Thompson asked that residents report all road blockages immediately to the Police by calling 101.*
- Could the Parish Council write an article for inclusion in the Messenger on how to contact the Police? *Yes*
- What is the Parish Council doing about speeding on Shefford Road? *The Clerk advised that CBC Highways will not replace the vehicle activated sign on Shefford Road once it no longer works as speed data shows that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile is within an acceptable speed limit.*
- What can the Parish Council do about the criminal damage to resident fences and walls on Shefford Road? *Cllr Thompson advised that all issues of anti-social behaviour or incidents of criminal damage should be reported to the Police by calling 101.*
- Can the Council ask CBC Highways to repaint the central white line at the bend of the Shefford Road entrance to the village as there have been 2 accidents at this site in the last 4 weeks with the Police in attendance at both? *Cllr Liddiard will assist with this.*
- When will the Crackle Hill path lights be turned back on? *Tomorrow.*

Ward Councillor Liddiard advised the meeting that:

- Budget 2019/2020 –CBC are consulting on their budget. There is likely to be an increase of 1% which will be voted on in February. There is no increase for adult social care as CBC applied an increase of 3% in both the 2 previous years. The Police and Fire Service are both requesting a 3% increase.
- Advice Central Service – This is being brought under one umbrella. Residents can request assistance and information similar as they might do with the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- School Admissions – The process for 2020/2021 was agreed last month. No changes made to this area. No decision has been made by CBC whether they will change to a two-tier system. The implementation of a two-tier system would take 3-5 years however it is believed that very few lower schools would not be able to accommodate the 2 additional year groups required.

Standing orders were reinstated at 8:22pm

## REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

### 266. FINANCE

#### a. Points to note from Clerks report:

- i. NALC Allotment income so far totals £965.80.
- ii. Thanks to Cllr Smith who has assisted with the 2019/2020 budget preparation.

#### b. Grant applications

- i. None

#### c. Update of Parish Facilities purchases – To review income and expenditure for parish facilities and donation of delivered purchases.

The Clerk and Cllr Thompson were asked to review all purchases and to ensure appropriate power to purchase allocated.

#### d. 2019/2020 Budget – To approve 2019/2020 budget and precept request.

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*Proposed Cllr Smith/Seconded Cllr Foskett. Resolved to approve 2019/2020 precept of £45,000 and to budget as circulated with amendment to VAT line. Carried.*

- e. Internet Banking authorisation** – To consider increasing the number of councillors who can approve online payments.

*Proposed Cllr Smith/Seconded Cllr Bulley. Resolved to add Cllr Thomason to the bank mandate with authority to approve online payments and sign the revised bank mandate. Carried.*

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Thomason. Resolved to remove former Cllr Smith R from the bank mandate and to sign the revised banking mandate. Carried.*

- f. Document approval** - journal entries, bank reconciliation and bank statements.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Bulley. Resolved to approve journal entries and bank reconciliations as presented and that they be signed by Councillors. Carried.*

- g. Orders for the payment of money**

*Proposed Cllr Smith/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved that the schedule of payments as presented be approved and authorised. Carried.*

Payment No:	Payee	Purpose	Amount
<b>Payments made prior to meeting date</b>			
BACS150	Wooden Hill Coffee Company Ltd	Parish Facilities Coffee Machine	£3,405.60
BACS151	Cater-Kwik Limited	Parish Facilities Cooler	£386.95
BACS152	Sheldon Electricals	Parish Facilities TV	£489.99
<b>Payment requests received before agenda published</b>			
BACS153	Robinson & Hall	Parish Facilities Professional Services	£472.50
BACS154	Robinson & Hall	Parish Facilities Professional Services	£3,456.04
BACS155	Meppershall Village Hall	Hall Hire 8/10, 12/11, 10/12/2018	£90.00
BACS156	The National Allotment Society	Membership Renewal	£66.00
BACS157	Anglian Water Business Ltd t/a Wave	Allotments water to Dec 2018	£107.59
BACS158	Anglian Water Business Ltd t/a Wave	Allotments water to Dec 2018	£13.32
BACS159	The Community Heartbeat Trust (Solutions) Ltd	Replacement Adult Pads	£45.60
BACS160	Bedfordshire & River Ivel IDB	Agricultural Drainage Rates	£4.42
BACS161	John O'Connor Ground Maintenance	October grass cuts	£921.33
BACS162	Strictly Tables and Chairs Ltd	Parish Facilities table wheels	£62.16
BACS163	HMRC	Q3 NI & PAY	£321.14
BACS164	CP Servicing	Parish Facilities Glass washer	£1,764.00
BACS165	A Marabese	Additional hours Nov & Dec NP	£40.04
<b>Payment requests received after agenda published</b>			
BACS166	Sheldon Electricals	Parish Facilities TV & Fridge Freezer	£789.98

## 267. PLANNING AND HOUSING

### a. Applications since last Council meeting for consideration

- i. CB/18/04569/FULL– Tower View Nurseries, 81 Fildyke Road, SG17 5LU – Demolition of existing greenhouses and redevelopment with 9 residential dwellings including new access and all ancillary works.

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Read. Resolved to object to the planning application due to the following: site partially outside village envelope, aesthetic view of village when entering not pleasing, concern of creating a precedence for more development, Meppershall has taken its fair share of development for the region (205 new dwellings). Carried*

- ii. CB/18/03781/FULL – 32 Shefford Road, SG17 5LN - Demolition of No. 32 Shefford Road and the construction of 60 No. dwellings. Noise report now received.

*Proposed Cllr Smith/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to reiterate previous objection to the planning application and raise the issue of noise testing irregularities. Carried*

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## b. Other Planning Matters for consideration

### i. Points to note from the Clerks report:

- Planning application decisions made since last meeting

CBC Application ref:	Location	Proposal	CBC Decision
CB/18/03669/VOC	79 Shefford Road, Meppershall, Shefford, SG17 5LL	Variation of Conditions 5 & 7 of planning permission CB/17/05090/FULL Erection of 3 bed detached single storey dwelling with integral garage and detached garage. Omitting the detached garage.	Granted
CB/18/03964/VOC	New Close Nurseries, Fildyke Road	Variation to Condition to planning permission CB/17/02409/FULL Removal of Condition 12 (2M wide	Withdrawn

- CB/SN/18/0388 – MPC proposal of ‘New Close’ refused by CBC. After online consultation with councillors Old Nurseries Close proposed.

### c. Cllr Thomason to provide update from Meppershall Action Group (MAG)

No update

## 268. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### a. Report from Cllr Thomason

A meeting was held last week. The Green Infrastructure Plan workshop is open to all residents on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019, starting at 7:30pm. Leaflets are in the process of being distributed to all Meppershall homes and posters displayed at key village locations. The group need to finalise budget for next year and confirm photo competition winners.

## 269. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

### a. Points to note from the Clerks report:

- Prev. ref: 153.b.i – Hoo Road Safety – CBC Highways team have confirmed that new signage has been designed and should be installed this financial year.
- Prev. ref: 153.b.vi – CBC Highways have advised that the current VAS (vehicle activated sign) on Shefford Road will not be replaced when broken as the average speed of the 85th percentile is less than 36mph (police prosecution level). A copy of data specific to this VAS has been provided. Data has been received from Inland Homes regarding the traffic survey they conducted in March 2018 which is in line with this data.

*Cllr Liddiard was asked to see what could be done to retain the VAS on Shefford Road.*

### b. Election of Highways and Transport Working Group Spokesman

Item deferred until after councillor elections in May 2019.

### c. To consider the submission of an RMF 2019/2020 application.

*Proposed Cllr Thomason/Seconded Cllr Read. Resolved to submit an RMF 2019/2020 application with the following two priorities:*

- 1. Excessive vehicle speeds at the village entrances at Shefford Road, Shillington Road and Fildyke Road.*
- 2. No safe footpath for pedestrians walking along Fildyke Road or Shillington Road which causes problems with children and other pedestrians making their way to school or on foot (or cycling) to other village amenities. Carried*

## 270. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

### a. Report from Cllr Merryweather:

- Clerk to organise a meeting in February for the Environment and Leisure Working Group.

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## **b. Points to notes from Clerks report:**

- i. Two requests received from High Street residents requesting opening of allotment track high barrier. One request agreed to enable garden waste to be removed from site on 8th and 9th January. The other request is for daily access to park a large vehicle at the back of a property. This request will not be granted.

*The Clerk was asked to provide Council with a draft Allotment Track Access Agreement for residents.*

## **c. Cllr Foskett to provide Village Hall update.**

Cllr Foskett reported that the MVH took possession of the new village hall before Christmas and the car park will now be completed with a tarmac top coat. A snagging list was being dealt with by Croudace. MHVT are aware of issues with the hall acoustics and hopefully the installation of blinds will help with this. Bookings are high, and the diary of day events is looking promising.

The football pitch grass is growing but the rest of Centenary Field is not yet finished (missing top soil). The MUGA will be re-installed and brought back into use.

Croudace hope to be off site by the end of June 2019.

The Police are patrolling the areas due to issues of ASB.

The following questions / comments were made:

- The piece of 'cemetery land' will be fenced off at the end and will have a path running down the centre with a standpipe installed.
- Crackle Hill path currently belongs to Croudace but will be transferred back to the Parish Council. The lighting of Crackle Hill path is via the Village Hall electrics.
- The grass bund in front of the Village Hall carpark belongs to MVH but will require cutting.

## **271. HEALTH & SAFETY and RISK MANAGEMENT**

### **a. Points to note from Clerks report:**

- i. Prev. ref: 155 – Land search / registry is still outstanding. The purpose of this is to ensure all land in the parish that should belong to MPC is registered accordingly.
- ii. Prev. ref. 187.a.ii - Old Road Meadow Play Area – Signage pending.

## **272. PROCEDURES**

### **a. Points to note from Clerks report:**

- i. Website, email and IT recommendations
  - Current website Meppershall.org - Clerk and DF in process of handing over.
  - New Meppershall Parish Council website requested via Beds Parishes.
  - Gov.uk domain name – Holding back on registration until construction of new website underway.
  - Gov.uk emails – Will purchase and progress so that they are available to councillors and others from May.
  - Ordinance survey mapping – Not handed over yet
  - Risk Assessment software – Not handed over yet
- ii. Cllr Merryweather and the Clerk met with the village caretaker at the beginning of January. Employee Handbook issued, and a revised timesheet and tasks list will be created.

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- iii. Updated PC Stores contract with Croudace has been provided to the Clerk. After reviewing it will, as resolved, be signed by the Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk
- iv. Clerk to attend SLCC conference on 30th January. Gravenhurst Parish Council have offered to meet cost of BATPC VAT course.

**b. To approve the creation of an Appeals Committee and elect members of the committee.**

*Proposed Cllr Smith/Seconded Cllr Foskett. Resolved to create an Appeals Committee as and when required from councillors not on the Personnel Committee. Carried*

**c. To consider process for publication of parish council meeting minutes.**

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Smith. Resolved to publish on the Parish Council website only approved minutes. Carried*

**273. OTHER ISSUE, MEETINGS & MATTER ARISING**

**a. Points to note from Clerks report:**

- i. Prev. ref: 158.d – Clerks Laptop purchase – In progress.
- ii. Parish Council new noticeboard. Delivery pending. Location to be agreed with MVH this evening.

**b. To consider nomination of MPC Chairman for the opportunity of attending a Summer 2019 Garden Party hosted by Her Majesty.**

*Proposed Cllr Read/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to nominate Cllr Chapman for the opportunity to attend a summer 2019 garden party hosted by Her Majesty. Carried*

**c. To consider response to Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Budget Consultation Survey 2019/20.**

It was agreed that councillors should respond as individuals.

**274. CLOSE OF THE MEETING**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9:50pm

Where no signature exists in this electronic version, a hard copy version is available for inspection from the Clerk.

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