

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2019

**PRESENT:**      **Councillors:** Chapman (in the Chair), Foskett, Merryweather, Read  
Smith, Thomason and Thompson,  
                  **The Clerk:** A Marabese  
                  **Others:** Ward Councillor Liddiard. 8 members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7:48pm.

## 275. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

## 276. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. It was requested that Council consider adding participation in the Great British Spring Clean as part of the agenda, as not to do so would mean making a decision too late to be of benefit. Cllrs all agreed to include this item.

## 277. MEMBERS INTERESTS

- a. To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda
  - 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.

## 278. MINUTES

a. *Proposed Cllr Smith/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried*

**At this point (7:50pm) 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.**

Ward Councillor Liddiard advised the meeting that:

- Budget 2019/2020 – The consultation has now closed, and CBC will be recommending an increase in precept of 1%. The consultation confirmed that residents were not in favour of contributing more than 1%.
- Waste contract – CBC have 7 companies bidding for the contract. If the current contractor wins then the new contract will start in Sept 2019. If an alternative contractor wins, handover will be in Dec 2019. There are currently no plans to change weekly collections but bins for green waste are being considered (for which there will not be a charge for collection).
- Community Safety Programme – CBC has invested £1million into this which will result in 12 new Safety officers who will work directly for CBC but deal with issues like anti-social behaviour. They will hopefully develop a link between parish councils and the Police. CBC have also invested in a CCTV hub to be based at Priory House.
- Local leisure facility – CBC have invested substantial amounts into leisure facilities elsewhere in the county and there is the potential to create something local (possibly Shefford). Cllr Liddiard to meet with the leisure portfolio holder to discuss.

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- Local Plan – The public hearing is like to take place in at the end of May or the beginning of June if the Inspector is happy with all the information provided. CBC is confident in its site allocation and housing numbers but is expecting to be challenged on this.
- Ofsted – CBC were inspected (as a Local Authority) on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> February. The inspection looked at the placement, provision and supervision of ‘looked after’ children in the care of CBC. CBC is happy with the initial feedback.
- Flitwick Leisure Centre – CBC are installing an immersive spin centre.
- Saxon Pool – CBC are investing in new changing rooms. Disruption is hoped to be kept to a minimum.
- A421 Closure – From 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> February<sup>[A1]</sup>.
- Fildyke Road – Cllr Liddiard and CBC officers will be inspecting the quality of Fildyke Road next week to review potential improvements and repairs. Concerns have also been raised with CBC planning regarding highways issues presented by the planning application submitted for 81 Fildyke Road.
- VAS on Shefford Road – Concerns have been raised with CBC officers regarding the potential removal of the VAS on Shefford Road. Investigation on best course of action for MPC if this happens in progress. Please note that the installation of a raised table has been requested by CBC Highway officers at the entrance to the 32 Shefford Road / Inland Homes development as a planning condition.
- Traffic issues on the High Street – Cllr Liddiard is happy to raise concerns with CBC highways regarding traffic issues both at the School and outside the Post Office but will do so only with the support of MPC. <sup>[A2]</sup>
- Planning application 1 Shefford Road – A noise assessment will be asked of the developer as concerns have been raised regarding potential noise to new residents (if the application is granted) coming from the Village Hall and Centenary Field.

Parishioners made the following comments and asked the following questions:

- Has the Planning Inspector commented on Luton BC objection to the Local Plan? *No. CBC is confident the ‘Duty to Co-operate’ with relevant bodies has been conducted and documents signed by other councils. Ultimately the duty to co-operate is not a duty to agree.*
- Has CBC installed traffic survey equipment into Shefford Road this week? If so do they realise it is school half term? *Cllr Liddiard to investigate.*
- The bend sign on Shefford Road heading towards Shefford cannot be seen as it is in the bushes. Also, the central white line on the bend is no longer visible. *Clerk will add details to CBC Highways Report It portal.*
- Water taps on the allotments need replacing. *Clerk to discuss with Mr Carne when water is turned on and tested.*

Standing orders were reinstated at 8:25pm

### REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

#### 279. FINANCE

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

- i. NALC Allotment income so far totals £1,425.

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

Councillors noted the content of the report and updates made to it.

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**c. To approve allocation of funds in order to retrieve information on land ownership**

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Read. Resolved to approve allocation of funds to retrieve information on land ownership. Carried.*

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

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Smith. Resolved to approve bank reconciliation as presented and that it be signed by Cllr Smith. Carried.*

**e. Orders for the payment of money**

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Thomason. 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>			
BACS167	Sheldon Electricals	Parish Facilities TV	£52.98
BACS168	AIM Aerial Systems	Parish Facilities TV	£140.00
BACS169	HSD Online	Parish Facilities Baby Changing Station	£145.72
BACS172	Qbic Internet Solutions	Meppershall.org 1 year renewal	£19.19
<b>Payment requests received before agenda published</b>			
BACS170	Society of Local Council Clerks	Regional Training Seminar	£48.00
BACS171	Vision Blinds	Parish Facilities Blinds	£773.94
BACS172	Meppershall Village Hall	Hall hire 14/01/19	£30.00

## 280. PLANNING AND HOUSING

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

- i. CB/18/03306/FULL – 32 84 Fildyke Road, SG17 5LU - Demolishing of 1.5 storey cottage and erection of 5 No. 2 story dwellings with a new access road and car parking. The revised planning application was a slight reduction in one property size and greater landscaping which improved the application slightly  
*Proposed Cllr Smith/Seconded Cllr Read. Resolved to reiterate our previous comments on the planning application. Carried*

**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/18/03671/FULL	Land to the south of Sandy View, Shefford Road, Meppershall, SG17 5LL	Erection of two detached bungalows - Amendments	Granted
CB/18/03781/FULL	32 Shefford Road, Meppershall, Shefford, SG17 5LN	Demolition of No. 32 Shefford Road and existing nursery buildings, and the construction of 60 No. dwellings, new vehicle access, site-wide highways works, and provision of associated landscaping and amenity space (including SuDS).	Granted

- CB/SN/18/0388 – The addresses 1 -10 Old Nurseries Close, [A3]SG17 5PZ have been registered.
- ii. Clerk to provide update on appeals and enforcements
  - CBC Planning enforcement have confirmed that sites at both 10 Hoo Road and 52 Fildyke Road do not have restrictions on working times as part of planning conditions and that disruption caused by contractor vehicles parking and blocking the roads is also not contrary to planning permission conditions. Cllr Liddiard has been asked to raise this issue with the CBC Planning team. It is suggested that in the meantime MPC request that all planning applications have conditions on

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working times and parking included in any permission given to eliminate any further issues arising.

- The Planning Inspectorate has granted Arran Park Fishery a certificate of lawful use or development in respect of having use of the land as a recreational fishery and siting of one associated caravan has been granted.
- iii. Report from Cllr Smith regarding attendance at DMC meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Cllr Smith reported that CB/18/03781/FULL – 32 Shefford Road was approved by CBC's Development Management Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> February. He would like to thank those who attended and provided support and in particular wished to thank a parishioner Dr. Chappell for her help on the day and whose presentation was well thought out and delivered.

Learning points from the meeting were as follows:

- It appears, that the default position of all planning officers is now in favour of sustainable development and the concept of sustainable development is therefore presumed for all development. The burden is to prove development is not sustainable.
  - Planning officers are in a difficult position as they are seemingly caught in-between two Local Plans (the one currently in place and the newly submitted Local Plan). However, this means that they are picking and choosing which policies they wish to refer to from both plans dependant upon what they see is best for the housing supply but possibly worse for the community.
  - Cumulative impact of development is ignored and each site reviewed in isolation.
  - The issue of 'prematurity' is not accepted by CBC as a ground for refusing development.
  - Feeling of those attending was that the committee had made up their minds before the meeting had started. It was disappointing that our Ward Councillors view on the application was different to that of MPC and their recommendation to approve undermined any arguments that MPC or the public had put forward.
- c. **Cllr Thomason to provide update from Meppershall Action Group (MAG)**  
MAG attended the DMC meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February and questioned the demographic of the committee as not representative of the community (all those present were seemingly men of a certain age). A frustration to those attending was that Dr. Chappell raised some relevant points that were totally ignored (e.g.: noise) and not debated by the committee and therefore the final decision to approve was seen as biased and already made.

## 281. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### a. Report from Cllr Thomason

The Green Infrastructure Plan workshop held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 was an extremely successful event. The hall was full of a mix of people aged 16 to 80. Feedback was positive with those attending engaged in the process. An article on the event will be in the next Messenger. The Steering group have a new member and are working on the draft plan. Banners on the neighbourhood plan will shortly be up in the village.

## 282. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

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

- i. Prev. ref: 153.b.i – Hoo Road Safety – New signage pending installation.

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- ii. Meppershall VAS – Cllr Liddiard and the Clerk are investigating options available to MPC if the VAS on Shefford Road is removed.

**b. High Street traffic issues**

*Council agreed that they would like Cllr Liddiard to pursue options for improvement to traffic issues on the High Street.*

**283. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE**

**a. Report from Cllr Merryweather:**

- i. Clerk is organising a meeting of the Environment and Leisure Working Group. Help has been given in providing quotations for Parish Facilities.

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

- i. Clerk has been invited to attend the National Allotment Society Regional Forum on 4<sup>th</sup> April in Maldon, Essex.  
*Council confirmed that they would like the Clerk to attend.*
- ii. Reminder letters sent to allotment plot holders still pending payment. If no payment is made by the end of February, tenancies will be ended.
- iii. Complaint regarding dog mess on allotment plots to be discussed by Environment and Leisure Working Group.
- iv. Update received from Polehanger Farms regarding the clearing of brash, brambles and weeds and the planting of 9000 mixed hedgerow plants across the farm.
- v. Does the Council wish to take part in the Great British Spring Clean between 22<sup>nd</sup> March and 23<sup>rd</sup> April?  
*Council confirmed a willingness to participate and organise event on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March.*
- vi. Meppershall Summer Fair Committee are asking to run an event on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September on Centenary Field. They are also asking for a small grant.  
*Council asked the Clerk to advise the Fair Committee that Centenary Field will not be ready for an event in September as Croudace are not expected to be off site until July and the area is yet to be fully landscaped and grassed. It was also noted that no specific allocation has been made in the 2019/2020 budget for the summer fair so the availability for a grant would be limited.*

**c. Cllr Foskett to provide Village Hall and Parish Facilities update.**

Cllr Foskett reported that building snagging continues. Baby changing facilities are now available in the Female toilets and another unit will be installed in the accessible toilets. Consultants will be visiting the main hall to make recommendations to reduce or eliminate the noise / echo issues. Landscaping has been completed on the area of the interim hall and tarmacking will be completed this week. A Parish Facilities handover meeting has been scheduled for Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> February with Cllrs Foskett, Chapman and Merryweather, the Clerk and the Croudace Site Manager in attendance.

**d. To approve signing of revised Licence for Storage Building.**

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that MPC sign the revised Licence for the Storage Building with the inclusion of Meppershall Village Hall. Carried*

**e. To consider hedge maintenance on Crackle Hill path.**

*Council requested that the Clerk write to Croudace and complain about the hedge and ask them to cut it back before the site is handed back.*

**284. HEALTH & SAFETY and RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

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- 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.

**b. To consider claiming ownership of the unregistered strip of land at the bottom of Brookmead adjacent to the Mow**

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Read. Resolved to instruct the Clerk to take necessary steps to claim ownership of the unregistered strip of land at the bottom of Brookmead adjacent to the Mow. Carried (6 in favour / 1 abstention)*

**c. To consider working with Shefford and Campton parishes for the provision of more mobile CCTV cameras in our towns/villages.**

*Council agreed that the Clerk should pursue and investigate options available in the provision of CCTV for the village.*

## 285. PROCEDURES

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

- i. Website, email and IT recommendations
  - New Meppershall Parish Council website via Beds Parishes ready to start building.
- ii. Clerk attended SLCC conference on 30th January. It was a good event to attend.

**b. To approve amendments to MPC Engagement with Developers Policy v1.1 as circulated.**

*Defer to next meeting*

**c. To review Allotment Track Agreement.**

The Clerk advised Council that 2 houses on the High Street were advertising their properties with access to parking at the rear via the allotment track and that the homeowner of one property was claiming a right to access due to the length of time they have been using the track. It therefore seemed prudent to resolve this matter prior to issuing residents with an Allotment Track Agreement.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Clerk seek legal advice from the NSALG, NALC via BATPC and any other accredited source with regards to ownership of the track and rights of access over it. Carried*

## 286. OTHER ISSUE, MEETINGS & MATTER ARISING

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

- i. Parish Council new noticeboard. Delivery pending approval of header board script.
- ii. Meeting planned with CBC Elections Manager on 19<sup>th</sup> February.

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

No councillor was available to attend.

## 287. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10:00pm

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

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