

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019

**PRESENT:**      **Councillors:** Chapman (in the Chair), Bulley, Foskett, Merryweather, Parsons, Smith and Thompson,  
                         **The Clerk:** A Marabese  
                         **Others:** Ward Councillor Brown. 9 members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7:50pm.

## 301. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Thomason and Read, and Ward Cllr Liddiard.

## 302. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. As this would be the last meeting of the current 4-year councillor term the Chairman thanked the Clerk for joining mid-term and all councillors for their support during the last 4 years. He added that some current councillors were now standing down and will be sadly missed as the last 4 years had been a good team effort. Finally he also thanked those members of the public who regularly attend meetings and contribute.

## 303. 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.

## 304. MINUTES

a. *Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Smith. Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman. Carried*

**At this point (7:54pm) 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 Brown advised the meeting that:

- Local Plan – The first hearing will be on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019 at CBC's Council Chamber in Priory House, Chicksands starting at 10:00am with further time set aside in June and July. There are now 2 inspectors in place for the investigation. Attendance at the hearings is an advantage and responses should always be constructive.
- CCTV on High Street, Meppershall – CBC Traffic officers have agreed that they will pursue the installation of a mobile CCTV on an appropriate lamp post in order to monitor traffic problems outside the village stores.
- Fildyke Road – Traffic officers have agreed that when they re-surface Fildyke Road later this year they will also re-surface the footpath outside the Sugarloaf ph. When road re-surfacing has been completed, they intend to mark the road with experimental white glow paint to indicate that pedestrians may be walking from the new site to the start of the existing footpath on the left-hand side only. This part of the road is not wide enough for a raised footpath and the amount of different property orders would be a nightmare to resolve.

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- Town and Parish Meeting – Dates are 21<sup>st</sup> May and 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

Parishioners made the following comments and asked the following questions:

- Fildyke Road closures – The signage indicating road closure is inappropriate and needs to be in a recessed position. Also, how long will the road be closed. *Possibly 1 week for water connection work.*
- Fildyke Road markings – There are several pinch points on the road. Are there any plans for double yellow lines to alleviate the pinch points, especially opposite Buxton Close? *TB – TB will discuss with Highways but monitoring of illegal parking may be difficult to monitor.*
- Handscombe Road, Shillington closures – The signage indicating closure on the corner of Upton Road and High Road are obscured by fencing.
- Green Infrastructure Plan – The Foster and Brinkley families are disappointed that they were not specifically consulted about the GIP. *Clerk to contact BRCC to query emails received.*
- Why was there not a report from the Parish Council in the Messenger? *The Clerk and Chairman have struggled with finding time to produce.*
- Does CBC Planning have enough resources to push through planning applications? *TB to investigate.*

**Standing orders were reinstated at 8:10pm**

## REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

### 305. FINANCE

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

- i. Income received 2018/2019 – Vat refund of £8,602.67, escrow funds and minor allotment income.
- ii. Income received 2019/2020 – Half of precept £22,500.00
- iii. Urban grass cutting contribution from CBC not received last financial year. CBC confirmed it will be sent in April 2019.
- iv. AGAR 2018/2019 documents received from Mazars. Internal auditor visit planned for 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

#### b. Update of Parish Facilities purchases

- i. To review income and expenditure for parish facilities and donation of delivered purchases.  
Councillors noted the content of the report, reviewed all purchased and noted the powers accordingly.
- ii. To approve cost to purchase 3 x Wickstead Barton benches for Centenary Field.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Smith. Resolved to approve purchase of 3 x Wickstead Barton benches. Carried.*
- iii. To approve expenditure for statutory notices and other signs as specified by the Environment and Leisure working group (if quotations received).  
*Deferred to next meeting.*
- iv. To approve expenditure required to obtain legal advice regarding rights of access over allotment track.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the Clerk engage with previous suppliers BBW to confirm position regarding the allotment track with an approved budget of up to £1,950.00 on the proviso that a quotation is provided in advance of any work to be undertaken. Carried.*

#### c. 2018-2019 Actual v Budget – Review

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The 2018-2019 actual v budget figures as previously circulated were reviewed and accepted. The clerk was requested to add an analysis of all the funds held as at 31/3/19 so that new councillors would be arwe of the "starting" position for this year.

- d. 2019-2020 Budget** – To consider amendment to 2019-2020 budget to include unspent budget from 2018-2019

*Proposed Cllr Smith/Seconded Cllr Foskett. Resolved to approve the proposed 2018-2019 budget accruals to the 2019-2020 budget (nett addition of £2,988). Carried.*

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

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

- f. Direct debits and standing order payments** – A revised schedule of payments will be distributed at the meeting for approval.

*Proposed Cllr Foskett/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that the schedule of payments as presented be approved and authorised. Review date of April 2020 noted. Carried.*

- g. Orders for the payment of money**

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Chapman. 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 and part of 2018-2019 accounts</b>			
BACS192	BIGDUG Limited	Parish Facilities - Shelving	£2,197.14
BACS195	Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges for cheque deposits	£6.30
SVCHARG1903	Unity Trust Bank	Service Charge	£18.00
<b>Payment requests received before agenda published</b>			
BACS193	Community Heartbeat Trust	Replacemnt defib battery	£282.00
BACS194	EKM Services Ltd	Parish Facilities - Cleaning Machinery	£2,134.80
BACS196	P Carne	Allotment and other maintenance	£54.00
<b>Payment requests received after agenda published</b>			
BACS197	Wybone	Ground Anchor for waste bin	£92.33
BACS198	BATPC	Affiliation Fees 2019-2020	£379.00
BACS199	Meppershall Messenger	Grant 2019/2020	£750.00

### 306. PLANNING AND HOUSING

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

- i. CB/19/00710/FULL– Land to the south of Sandy View, SG17 5LL– Erection of two detached chalet style Bungalows.

*Proposed Cllr Smith/Seconded Cllr Bulley. Resolved to repeat objection on the grounds of overdevelopment as per previous application. Carried*

- ii. CB/19/00324/FULL – Workshop and Premises, Campton Road, SG17 5PB – Change of use from workshop premises to 2 no dwellings.

*Proposed Cllr Smith/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved that there is no objection to this application. Carried*

- iii. CB/19/00770/FULL - 6 Rectory Road, SG17 5NB - Proposed two storey rear extension and associated works.

*Proposed Cllr Smith/Seconded Cllr Bulley. Resolved that there is no objection to this application. Carried*

Cllr Bulley requested that thanks be recorded to Cllr Smith for all the work he has done on planning and that he will be a quite an act to follow.

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## **b. Other Planning Matters for consideration**

- i. Points to note from the Clerks report:
  - No decisions made on pending planning applications since last meeting
- ii. Clerk to provide update on appeals and enforcements
  - CB/EN/19/0096 – 4 High Street - Alleged non-compliance with planning condition attached to a planning permission CB/16/04896/FULL re: on-site parking. Under investigation
  - Received resident complaints regarding building site at New Close Nurseries who are starting work regularly at 7:45am. Clerk to advise CBC enforcement.
- iii. To consider Central Bedfordshire Local Plan Examination process and MPC representation.

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Bulley. Resolved to rely on original representations made. Carried*

- iv. CBC Councillor Young's apology in Biggleswade Chronicle.

This article was subsequently published in the Meppershall Messenger and the first sentence of the second paragraph reads as follows: 'The local parish council was in favour of these new houses on Shefford Road, which they recognised were in keeping with the local area and seemed well designed.' In the same paragraph he also refers to Meppershall as a town, whereas we are classified by Central Bedfordshire Council as a small village. It is to be highlighted that MPC were not in favour of this development and that Councillor Young is mis-informed.

*Proposed Cllr Smith/Seconded Cllr Bulley. Resolved that the Clerk write to Councillor Young and request that he retracts or corrects the errors made in his statements published in the Biggleswade Chronicle and the Meppershall Messenger, and that this correction or retraction be republished in those papers. Carried*

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

*Deferred to next meeting*

## **307. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

### **a. Report from Clerk**

The steering group is now focussed on the results of the Green Infrastructure Plan and policy writing. Another public event is planned for the near future.

## **308. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

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

- i. Prev. ref: 153.b.i – Hoo Road Safety – New signage pending installation.
- ii. Meppershall VAS - Decision needed by Council on whether to take over VAS now or wait until it breaks.

*Proposed Cllr Foskett/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved that the Clerk write to CBC Highways to request the adoption of the VAS on Shefford Road. Carried*

### **b. To consider making a request to CBC Highways for the deployment of CCTV on the High Street near the Village Stores / Post Office.**

This item was actioned by Ward Cllr Brown and reported upon in the public session.

## **309. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE**

### **a. Report from Cllr Merryweather:**

- i. All issues covered in the Clerks report

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**b. Cllr Foskett to provide Village Hall update.**

Cllr Foskett reported that the village hall is busy. There are still some snagging items to resolve. BT Open Reach has still not turned up and so free WiFi is still not available to users. There continue to be acoustic issues in the main hall and the saplings room. Quotes have been received and advice differs on resolution, however a decision needs to be made on the best way forward and who will pay.

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

- i. Email circulated to all local Clerks and further investigation to understand current market prices for hire of football pitches and maintenance costs. John O'Connor have been asked to quote for the maintenance and Croudace have also been asked for the maintenance schedule. Some information back but more required.
- ii. No response received from Meppershall Summer Fair Committee after informing them that Centenary Field will not be available this year.
- iii. Re-powder coating of benches and picnic table ordered as well as bin anchor.
- iv. Email received from allotment plot holder on behalf of others to say that they would be willing to contribute £10 pro-rata a year on top of allotment rent to cover water costs and keep system of watering as is.
- v. Parish Facilities - Meetings held with MVHT (Cllr Merryweather in attendance) and also Croudace Site Manager Simon Adamson. Minutes of meeting with MVHT circulated. Meeting with Simon Adamson concerned mostly issues raised by Clerk from previous meeting and clarification and also play equipment / furniture install on Centenary Field. Clerk, Chair and Cllr Merryweather are working together on a number of areas and issues with Croudace, Hags and R&H.
- vi. Met with SEMMS (metal fabricator) to review allotment fencing quotation, potential resolution to Brookmead fence and fencing around PC Stores. Quotation pending.

Cllr Parsons left the meeting

**d. Clerk to provide Centenary Field Parish Facilities update including meetings with Croudace and MVHT.**

- i. To consider location of play equipment.  
The proposed location of the toddler fenced play area will be partly in Meppershall Village Land and partly in Parish Council land. Cllr Foskett confirmed that the Meppershall Village Hall Trustees were happy that the toddler play area sits on village hall land.  
*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Bulley. Resolved that the proposed location of the toddler play area on both Parish Council and Village Hall land be approved pending the exchange of necessary letters between MPC and MVHT. Carried*
- ii. To review correspondence from Croudace regarding value of play equipment and propose response.  
*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Thompson. Resolved that the Clerk engage with Croudace in order to install equipment as per the 2014 – 2018 quotations and to ensure that any difference in cost is to be covered by Croudace. Carried*
- iii. To consider options for hire of football pitches.  
*Proposed Cllr Smith/Seconded Cllr Bulley. Resolved that MPC should hire the pitch in the most effective way ensuring that MPC running costs are always covered by hire fees. Discussions should be held with MVHT (Clerk, Cllrs Chapman and Merryweather) to see if terms agreeable to both parties can be reached in the hire of the football pitch. Carried*
- iv. To consider installation of fencing around PC Stores (if quotation available).

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*Deferred to next meeting*

**e. Update on allotment track high barrier regarding health and safety.**

Clerk advised that the Fire Services will gain entry as required. The Ambulance Service will gain entry via an individual's property and if not possible will call the Police to assist with gaining entry. The high barrier therefore poses no issues to the health and safety of allotment users.

**f. Update on Great British Spring Clean initiative.**

Meppershall Spring Clean held on 31<sup>st</sup> March with 11 people participating. Areas covered included Shefford Road from Esso Garage to Care Home, Walnut Tree Way, High Street Bus Stop, Hoo Road, Brookmead alley, Old Road Meadow, Fildyke Road and Crackle Hill Path from High Street up to green space. Greatest area of concern is the green space in between High Street and the village hall car park where the Aragon garages once were. Many thanks to all those who participated but also to Graham Walker and team who made tea and coffee for helpers. It was suggested by volunteers that we consider organising another event at the end of the summer.

*The Clerk was asked to contact the CBC assets team regarding the green space between the High Street and the village hall car park where the Aragon garages used to be to see if they own this. The Clerk was also asked to organise another village litter pick at the end of September 2019.*

**g. To consider options for making good or repainting Brookmead fence.**

*Deferred to next meeting*

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

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

- i. Prev. ref: 155 – Land search / registration – Initial investigations indicate that the strip of land at the bottom of Brookmead adjacent to the Mow is unregistered. Contact made with solicitors to understand costs in progress and make.
- ii. Signage quotations for all areas controlled by MPC pending.
- iii. PCSO Anne Jeeves has confirmed that she has had a PSG (Problem Solving Group) meeting with CBC Alan May and a Social worker. They discussed the issues effecting Meppershall and what the Police are doing and if CBC could assist in any way. They would like to reassure us that they are still looking at individuals and what measures can be put in place to help address these. The Chairman added that Nick Masters has contacted him to discuss issues in the village.

**b. To receive and approve 2018-2019 risk assessment report.**

*Deferred to next meeting*

**c. To approve purchase of online IT backup service.**

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Smith. Resolved that the clerk purchase online a 2-year online IT backup service with Carbonite. Carried*

**d. To approve the completion of the Corporate Governance Questionnaire provided by the Internal Auditor.**

*Deferred to next meeting*

**311. PROCEDURES**

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

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- i. Website, email and IT – Meeting with Cllr Foskett and Lucy Standbridge on 10th April to handover all IT.
- ii. Agenda and invitations to Annual Parish Meeting sent out on behalf of the Chairman. Monday 29th April, 7:45pm, village hall.
- iii. Request for assistance in implementing Dog Exclusion Order / Public Space Protection Order made to CBC but it seems they think we cannot request this. Assistance from BATPC.  
Cllr Brown has said he will assist with this issue. It was suggested that the Clerk speak to Henlow regarding the stencil they use in and around the pavilion.

## 312. OTHER ISSUE, MEETINGS & MATTER ARISING

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

- i. Parish Council new noticeboard - Supplier has failed to deliver when promised due to lack of thumb turn openers. Clerk has impressed upon them her disappointment.
- ii. Elections – All nomination forms submitted to Elections Officer by Clerk – 7 in total with 2 new to Council. There have only been 7 nominations confirmed so there will not be an election in Meppershall. 3 empty seats to be filled. Since closing date of elections Clerk has received interest from another resident who may wish to be co-opted.

### b. To consider response to consultation on the new Code of Audit Practice and NALC's request for the sectors views.

*Proposed Cllr Thompson/Seconded Cllr Foskett. Resolved that MPC support NALC's highlighted points and that the code should not include more with respect to when auditors might be expected to use their additional powers. Carried*

## 313. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10:15pm

Note: Agenda numbering amended due to repeat of previous months numbering on published agenda.

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

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