

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD VIA VIDEOLINK ON MONDAY 11TH MAY 2020

PRESENT: **Councillors:** Chapman (in the Chair), Karslake, Merryweather, Morgan, Parsons Seaman, Standbridge and Thomason
 The Clerk: A Marabese
 Others: Ward Councillor Liddiard, and 5 members of the public

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

483. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Ward Councillors Brown.
No apologies were received from Cllr Read

484. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The Chairman thanked all participants of the meeting which was being held via video link. The Chairman then explained that during the 15-minute public session interventions would be limited to 3 minutes per person. All participants to the meeting were asked to 'mute' themselves and to raise a hand when wishing to speak. Councillor voting would be conducted by a show of hands. Cllr Standbridge would act as the meeting 'moderator' so that the Clerk and Chair could concentrate on the meeting.
- b. The Chairman advised of Mr Anthony Magee's resignation from the role of councillor the previous week effective immediately and wished to express thanks for his help over the last year. CBC had been advised of the resignation and the appropriate notices had been displayed. It was hoped that MPC would be able to co-opt a new councillor at the next meeting and therefore co-option interest forms are available from our website or the Clerk.
- c. The Chairman wished to remind participants that this meeting was not the usual annual meeting of council as permitted by the Local Government and Police and Crime Commissioner (Coronavirus) (Postponement of Elections and Referendums) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

485. MEMBERS INTERESTS

- a. To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda and requests for dispensation.
None

486. PUBLIC SESSION

At this point (7:54pm) the Chairman suspended Standing Orders to receive reports from Ward Councillors, village organisations 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:

- Tidy Tips had re-opened today with restrictions on use (for essential waste only, access by appointment only and open to residents of CBC only).
- Business Support Grants – CBC are proactively contacting eligible local businesses and organisations / charities who have not yet applied for the Government's Business Support Grant. Grants of either £10,000 or £25,000 have been paid out to 2,500 applicants. Over 400 applications have been rejected.

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- The Community Hub - continues to support local groups, has assisted in sending out 950 emergency food parcels and has contacted circa 5,700 vulnerable residents.
- PPE for adult social care - £300,000 of PPA purchased by CBC for distribution to all care homes (both council and privately run) in Central Bedfordshire.
- Mortality Plan for COVID-19 burials – Officers across CBC have been seconded to assist on this project which seeks to work closely with key town councils to increase burial capacity as and when required.
- Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Next of Kin phone line – The introduction of next of kin lines will help people to keep in touch with loved ones who are admitted into hospital by providing them with a daily update.
- Mobile testing Units in Central Bedfordshire – 3 mobile testing units confirmed to support essential worker testing over the coming weeks at Bedford Borough Hall, Cedars Upper School in Leighton Buzzard and Biggleswade Hospital.
- M1/A6 Judicial review – Refused by the High Court in favour of CBC
- Schools for the Future – Statutory notices and further consultation will be delayed and issued possibly in June.
- The footpath in Fildyke Road has been re-surfaced.
- Fildyke Road will be re-surfaced this summer and the recommendation is to re-surface from the Sugarloaf ph to 84 Fildkye Road, leaving the rest for the following year.
- Shefford Road - Carriage way repairs have been requested. Provisional markings are in situ for the road tables to be installed by the Linden Homes site.
- Bovis Homes have bought Linden Homes and it is thought that Bovis wish to return to the original plans granted planning permission on 18/03781
- The installation of steel posts outside the village stores is being discussed with Highways officers.
- Council decision making on Planning Applications - In these unique times the CBC following advice from government is required to keep its decision-making process under review. Parish councils have received a recent email from Cllr Kevin Collins with regards to the recent changes to the Councils decision making process as CBC obtained and trialled a secure webinar system where public/community/stakeholder views could be heard. A recent trial of a live Traffic Management Committee means that future DMC committees will be held on a web-based system.

Standing orders were reinstated at 8:06pm

487. MINUTES

- Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 9th March 2020 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman (at the first opportunity). Carried*
- Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Karlake. Resolved that the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Tuesday 24th March 2020 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman (at the first opportunity). Carried*

488. CLERKS REPORT AND MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk highlighted:

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- The offer from Polehanger Farms to visit the site of the proposed car park planning application.
- The offer of assistance from CPRE regarding responses to planning applications submitted in the parish.
- The response from Cllr James Jamieson, Leader of the Council regarding MPC's objection of the proposed decision-making process on planning applications (now superseded).
- Clarification on disclosable pecuniary and other interests.
- Assistance provided to Meppershall Gnomes as authorised by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

489. DELEGATION ARRANGEMENTS

- a. To approve the delegation arrangements to external organisations, committees and working groups.

Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to approve the delegation arrangements to external organisations, committees and working groups as presented to Council altering only the name of the Highways Spokesman to Cllr Seaman. Carried.

Organisation, Committee or Working Group	Councillor Delegation / Membership	Non-Council Delegation / Membership
Governor to Meppershall Cof E Academy	Cllr Morgan for 4 years from May 2019	
Personnel Committee*	Chairman (role of)- Spokesman	Clerk
	Vice-Chairman (role of)	
	Cllr Merryweather	
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group*	Cllr Thomason - Spokesman	Clerk
	Cllr Parsons	Mr Foster
	Cllr Karslake	Mr Pain
	Cllr Standbridge	Mr Price - CBC
		Mrs Chapman - Chapman Planning
Environment & Leisure working group	Cllr Merryweather - Spokesman	Clerk
	Cllr Thomason	Mr Carne
	Cllr Morgan	
Planning & Housing working group	Cllr Karslake - Spokesman	Clerk
	Cllr Read	
Highways & Transport working group	Cllr Seaman - Spokesman	Clerk
Finance working group	Chairman (role of)- Spokesman	Clerk
	Vice-Chairman (role of)	
	Cllr Seaman	
Health & Safety / Risk Management working group	Cllr Chapman	Clerk
	Cllr Seaman	
Procedures working group	Cllr Parsons	Clerk
		Mr Thompspon
IT working group	Cllr Standbridge	Clerk
Neighbourhood Watch and Policing	Cllr Seaman	Clerk

* Terms of reference govern these committees

490. PROCEDURES

Council agreed to re-order this section of the meeting differently to the agenda so that decision-making and voting was easier.

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- g. To approve Standing Orders v4.0
Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to approve Standing Orders v4.0. Carried.
- c. To consider that the Council delegates the power to grant dispensations to the Proper Officer. The power rests with the relevant authority under section 33(1) of the Localism Act 2011 and the basis is set out under section 33(2).
Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Karlake. Resolved to delegate the power to grant dispensations to the Proper Officer until May 2023. The power rests with the relevant authority under section 33(1) of the Localism Act 2011 and the basis is set out under section 33(2). Carried.
- a. To re-approve MPC Code of Conduct v2.0
- b. To re-approve MPC Dispensation Guidance v2.0 and Dispensation Request Form v2.0
- d. To re-approve MPC Co-option Form v1.0
- e. To re-approve MPC Engagement with Developers Policy v1.1
- f. To re-approve MPC Financial Regulations v3.1
- h. To re-approve Personnel Committee Terms of Reference v1.1
- i. To re-approve Neighbourhood Plan Terms of Reference v2.1
Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved to re-approve Code of Conduct v2.0, MPC Dispensation Guidance and Request Form v2.0, Co-option Form v1.0, Engagement with Developers Policy v1.1, Financial Regulations v3.1, Personnel Committee ToR v1.1 and Neighbourhood Plan ToR c2.1 Carried.

491. FINANCE

- a. **Update of Parish Facilities purchases** - To review and approve income, expenditure and purchase orders for parish facilities.
Councillors noted the content of the report, reviewed and approved all purchase requests (as within original resolution) and noted the powers accordingly.
- b. **2019-2020 Budget v Actual** – To receive 2019-2020 budget v actual financial report.
Councillors noted the content of the 2019-2020 budget v actual report provided.
- c. **Asset List** – To review asset register
Councillors noted the content of the asset list report provided and asked questions on content.
- d. **Reserves** – To approve movement from and to reserves funds
Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Standbridge. Resolved to approve movement from and to earmarked reserves. Carried.

EARMARKED RESERVES MOVEMENTS		2019/2020	2020/2021		Notes
		net movement	cf	Recommend ed Start Position	
311	Village Hall		£ 1,000	£ -	Not required
312	Recreation Ground		£ -	£ -	Not required
313	Hoo Road improvement		£ 6,500	£ 8,500	Need £8.5k
318	Local Election Costs	-£ 84	£ 776	£ 1,650	Need £1.65k to cover budgetted cost of an election
320	Contingency		£ 4,230	£ 5,000	10% of £50k precept
322	Traffic Calming Programme		£ 3,250	£ 3,250	
324	Allotments			£ 3,500	Towards an MPC tractor
325	Social Club Grant		£ -	£ -	Not required
330	Neighbourhood Plan Grant	-£ 1,322	£ 3,719	£ 3,719	Grant spending
332	Allotment Deposits	£ 200	£ 350	£ 350	Deposits to be returned
NEW ?	Locum Clerk			£ 3,000	Need 6 months salary
Total reserved funds		-£ 84	£ 19,825	£ 28,969	

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- e. Document approval** – To approve journal entries, bank reconciliations and bank statements.

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Seaman. Resolved to approve Journals 59, 60 and 61 and that they be signed electronically by Cllrs Morgan and Standbridge. Carried.

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved to approve Bank Statements and Reconciliations numbered 005 savings account and 123 & 124 current account, and that they be signed electronically by Cllrs Morgan and Standbridge. Carried.

- f. Standing orders and direct debits** – To approve the standing order, direct debit and monthly salary payments.

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Thomason. Resolved to approve standing order, direct debit and monthly salary payments noting that the salary of the Green Space Officer is to be approved monthly by the Clerk and a member of the Personnel or Finance Committee as required. Carried.

- g. Orders for the payment of money**

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Thomason. Resolved that the schedule of payments as presented be approved and authorised. Carried.

Payment requests received before agenda published

BACS298	BATPC	2020-21 Affiliation fees	£409.00
BACS299	Meppershall Village Hall	Meeting room hire 9/3/20	£32.00
BACS300	North Herts Centre for Voluntary Service	Gnomes DBS applications	£56.00
BACS301	P Carne	Tesco Express - Petrol for machinery	£10.61
BACS302	P Carne	April Salary (payable 15/05/20)	
BACS303	A Marabese	Additional May salary (payable 15/05/20)	£20.83

492. PLANNING AND HOUSING

- a. Applications since last Council meeting for consideration - none**
b. Other Planning Matters for consideration - none

493. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- a. Report from Cllr Thomason**

Cllr Thomason reported that the writing of the draft neighbourhood plan has been delayed due to COVID-19. Nevertheless, the group have had 2 virtual meetings and have been working on the consultation statement that accompanies the plan. The end of grant report is now due and together with the Clerk a new grant submission will be made. Whilst all referendums have been delayed until May 2021, Cllr Parsons informed councillors that if a Neighbourhood Plan is prepared but cannot be implemented due to the delay in referendum it can still be used to influence planning decisions and therefore it is worthwhile that the team continues pushing forward.

494. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

- a. Village footpaths** – Update from Cllr Magee on review of footpaths with CBC Highways Officer.

It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Seaman would accompany Cllr Liddiard and a Highways Officer on a walk of the village and that MPC should issue positive message to residents on footpath improvements. It was suggested that a survey (via Facebook or the MPC website) about which footpaths should be a future focus for repair could be carried out.

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495. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

a. Croudace Parish Facilities – Update from Clerk and to consider actions specific to:

i. Snagging list and method of resolution, and handover

The Clerk advised councillors that the Regional MD of Croudace had responded to confirm receipt of the letter sent earlier in the day.

Proposed Cllr Thomason/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the Clerk:

- *Send an email with an Excel snagging list requesting proposals for resolution of each item by week ending 22nd May to Croudace and include the Croudace Regional MD in the circulation list.*
- *Request that a virtual meeting be arranged between both parties prior to week ending 29th May where both parties can lay down grievances and provide proposed resolutions. Cllrs Merryweather and Morgan to attend the meeting.*
- *Emphasise that we trust matters can progress on an amicable basis, and that it will not be necessary to either appoint an Expert to deal with these matters, or to invoke the Performance Bond.*

b. Grass Cutting update from Clerk

The Clerk reported that the new grass cutting contractor is settling in and that they responded the same day when a complaint was made about grass inside the 30mph signs on Shillington Road and Shefford Road has not been cut. Invoices have not yet been received for work and the Clerk has reminded them about sending these in a timely manner.

Unfortunately, the churchyard grass cuts carried out by volunteers in between those carried out by our contractors cannot be completed due to COVID-19, which presents a problem.

Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Merryweather. Resolved that the Clerk request additional grass cuts to be carried out at the churchyard (as there is currently an underspend on the grass cutting budget due to not cutting Centenary Field). Carried.

c. Old Road Meadow table and bench re-painting – To consider quotation for re-painting with paint already purchased by MPC.

Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Seaman. Resolved that the Clerk together with the Chair and Vice Chair authorise the re-painting of the table and bench at Old Road Meadow up to a budget of £300. Carried.

496. HEALTH & SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

a. Risks assessments – To provide update on risk assessments for Village Caretaker, Green Space Officer and Council.

The Clerk advised that she hoped to complete these in the coming month.

497. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9:30pm

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