

# MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD VIA VIDEOLINK ON MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020

**PRESENT:**      **Councillors:** Parsons (in the Chair), Austin, Chapman, Karslake, Merryweather, Morgan, Seaman and Standbridge  
                  **The Clerk:**      A Marabese  
                  **Others:**          Ward Councillors Brown and Liddiard, and 6 members of the public

The Chairman declared the virtual meeting open at 7:52pm.

### 498. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Thomason.  
Cllr Chapman advised he would join the meeting late.  
No apologies were received from Cllr Read.

### 499. 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 requested that planning application CB/20/00708/OUT – The Mow, SG17 5LP - Outline Application: Demolition of 1 dwelling and erection of 13 dwellings and ancillary works be added to the agenda. Details of the revised application were received on 5<sup>th</sup> June by the Clerk and a response is required prior to our next meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

It was agreed to add the item to the agenda (507.a.iii) but councillors were reminded that planning applications that are submitted between meetings and for which an extension to the comment's deadline date is not given, powers have been delegated to the Clerk (with a proposed response circulated to the Council) to submit comments to CBC Planning.

Cllr Chapman joined the meeting at 7:56pm but it was agreed that Cllr Parson would remain in the Chair as he may have to leave during the meeting.

### 500. COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION

- a. To consider councillor co-option requests

The Clerk advised that 2 co-option requests had been received and the completed expression of interest forms circulated to councillors. Representations were made for the merits of each candidate and both were proposed and seconded for co-option as follows:

*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to co-op Mr J Thompson. Not Carried with 3 votes in favour*

*Proposed Cllr Seaman/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to co-op Mr Austin. Carried with 4 votes in favour*

The Chairman asked the Clerk to contact Mr Thompson to thank him for his applications and to ask if he would continue to support the Parish Council in his working group roles.

- b. To receive verbally the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and undertaking to observe the Code of Conduct from new councillor in lieu of receiving the signed declaration.

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Having been duly co-opted Mr Ashley Austin made a verbal Declaration of Acceptance of Office and undertaking to observe the Code of Conduct with the Proper Officer of the Council and was asked by the Chairman to join the meeting.

- c. To review the delegation arrangements to external organisations, committees and working groups in the light of councillor co-option.

It was agreed that Cllr Austin would join the Environment and Leisure Working Group.

### 501. MEMBERS INTERESTS

- a. To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda and requests for dispensation.

Cllr Merryweather declared a personal interest in item 504.b

### 502. PUBLIC SESSION

**At this point (8:03pm) 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:

- Test and Trace scheme launched on 28<sup>th</sup> May – Anyone with symptoms should ask for a test, either via the NHS website or by calling 119. If the test comes back negative, everyone in the household can go back to normal using social distancing. But if the test comes back positive, the NHS Test and Trace team will get in touch with the person infected to discuss who they have come into close contact with. Any of those contacts deemed at risk of catching the virus will be instructed by the NHS to isolate for 14 days, whether they are sick or not. They will be tested if they develop symptom. CBC wants all residents to engage with Test and Trace and will be looking carefully at any COVID-19 outbreaks in schools.
- Traffic Orders to support Social Distancing – CBC has discretionary powers to enforce social distancing near school and will introduce measures where required. They are publishing statutory notices which will enable them to respond to any issues by implementing changes to the highway quickly.
- Schools for the Future – The CBC consultation has begun and ends on 30<sup>th</sup> June. Residents are encouraged to respond.
- Business Grants – CBC will approve discretionary grants to keep business afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic. Details will be forwarded to the Clerk for circulation.
- OPCC funding – The OPCC has £29k available to fund projects around Central Bedfordshire. Application details can be provided by the Clerk.
- Ward Councillor Funding – Applications from local groups and organisations are welcome for £250 (match funded) for this financial year.

Ward Councillor Brown advised the meeting that:

- Local Plan is progressing, and a new consultation is anticipated in September.
- Fildyke Road re-surfacing 15 to 26 June – For clarity the road will be re-surfaced from the Sugarloaf ph to the Hoo Road footpath.
- 84 Fildyke Road – The Walnut tree does not have a Tree Preservation Order on it.

Members of the public asked the following questions:

- Can the timing of road works outside the Village Store be confirmed? *ML – CBC Highways need to see evidence of accidents / near misses. The shop owner has also expressed concern*

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*regarding accessibility of delivery vehicles to the shop. ML would be happy to receive and collate emails from residents providing evidence of highways issues at this location.*

- Residents in Brookmead and Brookside (and possibly other side roads) have not been informed of the impending closure of Fildyke road for re-surfacing. *ML – Will inform CBC Highways of the issue immediately and request that signage and letters are sent.*
- How will people access the allotment track if Fildyke Road is closed to all traffic? *The Clerk was asked to email details of the road closure and alternative parking options to all allotment tenants.*

**Standing orders were reinstated at 8:37pm**

### 503. MINUTES

- Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Standbridge. Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020 are an accurate record of the proceedings and that they be signed by the Chairman of this meeting (at the first opportunity). Carried*

### 504. CLERKS REPORT AND MATTERS ARISING

- To request clarification on matters arising and items within the Clerks report.

The Clerk highlighted:

- Attendance at 84 Fildyke Road by planning enforcement officers regarding unauthorised engineering works.
- Issue of youths congregating at the Banlands empty bungalow.
- Meeting held with contractor to discuss requirements for review, repair and replacement of water lines on allotments.
- Bench and table at Old Road Meadow repainted.

- To consider options concerning fencing and land at end of Brookmead and approve expenditure accordingly.

The Clerk presented a report prepared by Mr. Thompson and previously circulated to councillors concerning the land at the end of Brookmead. The Chairman requested that the Clerk write to Mr. Thompson thanking him for his work on this item.

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Karlake. Resolved that the Clerk authorise repairs to the fence up to a cost of £3,000 and that Mayo Wynne & Baxter (commercial lawyers) be appointed to deal with land registration. Carried*

Note: Cllr Merryweather did not participate in this item on the agenda.

Cllr Parsons left the meeting at 8:49pm and Cllr Chapman presided the meeting until his return at 8:52pm

### 505. PROCEDURES

- To approve Press and Media Relations Policy v1.0 as circulated.

*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to approve Press and Media Relations Policy v1.0. Carried.*

- To consider providing meppershall.org email addresses to councillors.

It was agreed that all a meppershall.org email address would be provided to all councillors with instructions on how to install.

Cllr Parsons returned to the meeting at 8:52pm and returned to the role of meeting Chair

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- c. To consider provision of appropriate PPE for MPC staff so that normal duties may resume.  
Discussion deferred to item 511.b
- d. To review meeting schedule over summer months.  
It was agreed to alter the meeting schedule for the rest of the year and to hold a meeting in August. The Clerk was asked to send the new schedule out to all councillors and to update the website.

### 506. 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. **Banking Mandate** – To approve banking mandate changes - removing old councillors, adding new and updating permissions accordingly.  
*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to update the banking mandate – remove non-councillors, add Cllrs Standbridge and Austin and request online authorisation access for Cllr Seaman. Carried.*
- c. **Internal Auditor report** – To receive report and any associated action plan  
The Chair wished to congratulate the Clerk the result of the Internal Auditor report.  
*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Standbridge. Resolved to receive the Internal Auditor Report 2019-2020 and note that no actions are required. Carried.*
- d. **Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020** – To approve the Governance Statement for submission to the External Auditor.  
*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Seaman. Resolved to approve the Governance Statement 2019/2020 as circulated for submission to the External Auditor and that it be signed by the Clerk and Chairman of the meeting. Carried.*
- e. **Accounting Statements 2019/2020** – To approve the Accounting Statements for submission to the External Auditor.  
*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Karlake. Resolved to approve the Accounting Statements 2019/2020 as presented to council by the Responsible Financial Officer for submission to the External Auditor and that it be signed by the Chairman of the meeting. Carried.*
- f. **Exercise of Public Rights to Inspect MPC Accounts** – To receive details of the dates set for the exercise of public rights.  
Councillors noted the dates set by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer regarding the exercise of public rights to inspect MPC accounts as 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 to 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020 inclusive.
- g. **Document approval** – To approve journal entries, bank reconciliations and bank statements.  
*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Standbridge. Resolved to approve Bank Statements and Reconciliations numbered 006 & 007 savings account and 125, 126 & 127 current account, and that they be signed electronically by Cllrs Morgan and Standbridge. Carried.*
- h. **Orders for the payment of money**  
*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved that the schedule of payments as presented be approved and authorised noting issue with BACS312. Carried.*

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| Payment No:  | Payee   | Purpose                        | Amount    |
|--|---|--------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Payments made prior to meeting date</b>   |   |                                |           |
| BACS304  | Anglian Water Business                        | Allotment Water                | £4.26     |
| BACS305  | Anglian Water Business                        | Allotment Water                | £1.44     |
| <b>Payment requests received before agenda published</b>   |   |                                |           |
| BACS306  | Auditing Solutions Ltd                        | Internal auditor fee           | £444.00   |
| BACS307  | Mr P Carne                                    | Expenses - Petrol for Strimmer | £21.34    |
| BACS308  | HMRC  | Q1 PAYE, EE NI & ER NI         | £228.41   |
| BACS309  | NHCVS   | Gnomes DBS application         | £8.00     |
| BACS310  | Constance Riley                               | ORM Bench re-paint             | £170.00   |
| BACS311  | Village Garden Services Ltd                   | Grass cutting April and May    | £2,037.60 |
| BACS312  | The Community Heartbeat Trust (Solutions) Ltd | Replacement defib pads         | 100.80*   |
| * Payment BACS312 to be confirmed as credit notes pending and confirmation on invoices payable required. |   |                                |           |

### 507. PLANNING AND HOUSING

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

- i. CB/20/01468/FULL - Polehanger Farm, SG17 5LH - Change of use and development of an existing agricultural grass paddock into a permeable, permanent hardstanding car park for use all year round.  
*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Karlake. Resolved that the Council has no objection to 20/01468. Carried.*
- ii. CB/20/01710/FULL – Sandy View, SG17 5LL - Erection of one 4 bedroom detached house with detached garage.  
*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Karlake. Resolved to object to planning application 20/01710 on the basis of highways, access, overdevelopment and overcrowding and landscape and environment issues. Carried.*
- iii. CB/20/00708/OUT – The Mow, SG17 5LP - Outline Application: Demolition of 1 dwelling and erection of 13 dwellings and ancillary works.  
*Proposed Cllr Parsons/Seconded Cllr Karlake. Resolved to object to revised planning application 20/00708 as changes made do not resolve material objections previously raised, that the Clerk draft a letter for review by councillors prior to submission and that Ward Councillors be asked to call the application into DMC. Carried.*

#### b. Other Planning Matters for consideration - none

### 508. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

#### a. Report from Cllr Parsons

Cllr Parsons reported that the steering group had been unable to meet at the beginning of the month however a draft plan was being reviewed by the group. All meetings are being held virtually.

### 509. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

#### a. Village footpaths – Update from Clerk on review of footpaths as provided by Ward Councillors.

Ward Councillor Liddiard has provided the Clerk with the following update on 28<sup>th</sup> May:

- Fildyke road footpath is now complete.
- Fildyke Road will be re-surfaced in 2 sections – Sugar Loaf to 84 Fildyke Road first and then 84 to Chappell Road once a number of smaller residential sites are completed. It was hoped to complete the works in one go but Paul Middleton, Highways Assets

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Manager who we met on site advised against it as it is very hard to get developers to rectify any subsequent damage caused and we want to ensure that the road lasts.

- A request has been made that the ragons teeth on the entrance to Shefford Road and traffic calming measure from Shillington Rd be re-marked.
- A section of the footway in Orchard Close is to be replaced during the summer.
- A request has been made to inspect the footways and road be at Brookside and Hoo Road. Depending upon feedback a request will if possible be made t replaced them in future capital programmes.

Ward Councillors have requested that when possible all councillors report potholes via the CBC Report IT online portal and that an article regarding the reporting of road issues be submitted to the Messenger.

### 510. 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 no response providing resolution to issues had been received despite communication with both the North Thames Regional Managing Director and another Director from Croudace as directed by MPC at the last meeting. *Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to appoint a working party made up of the Clerk, Cllrs Merryweather and Morgan, Mr Foskett, Mr Thompson and Mr Jones (if all willing to assist) to review all details of the contract, performance bond, communication, agreements etc and to push Croudace for resolution of identified issues. Carried.*

#### b. Grass Cutting update from Clerk

The Clerk reported that the contract had been drafted but required review prior to sending to the contractor. Teething issues were still present, but the contractor was responding quickly when prompted, albeit a cutting schedule has still not been submitted. It was agreed that Cllr Karlake and Mr Thompson be asked to review the contract prior to sending to the contractor.

#### c. Allotments

##### i. To approve skip hire for removal of rubbish at allotments

*Proposed Cllr Karlake/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to approve expenditure of up to £400 for skip hire. Carried.*

##### ii. To consider tenant installation of pond in allotment plot

*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Parsons. Resolved not to permit the installation of a pond on the allotment site due to concerns regarding health and safety, water usage and conflict between the provision of a pond and the purpose of an allotment as per legislation. Carried*

##### iii. To approve purchase of noticeboard

*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Chapman. Resolved to approve purchase of noticeboard for the allotments as quoted by Noticeboards online. Carried*

#### d. Football pitch

##### i. To approve purchase of goals and associated equipment

*Proposed Cllr Chapman/Seconded Cllr Morgan. Resolved to approve purchase of goals and associated equipment as quoted by Broxap. Carried*

##### ii. To consider reduction in pitch hire to Meppershall Rovers

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The Clerk advised that Meppershall Rovers had requested a reduction in the pitch and changing room hire fees from MPC and the Village Hall due to lack of start-up funds. MVHT has suggested that they put forward proposals for both our organisations to consider. It was agreed that a reduction in pitch hire fees would not be the best way forward for MPC and that the Meppershall Rovers could submit a grant request to MPC to cover some start-up costs. A decision was deferred pending feedback from Meppershall Rovers.

### 511. 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.

- b.** To approve motion to exclude members of the public and the press from discussion of this agenda item due to personal sensitive issues.

*Proposed Cllr Merryweather/Seconded Cllr Karlake. It is hereby resolved in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted at Agenda Item 511.b as councillors wish to consider the provision of PPE to staff for use in their day to day duties and to consider how all staff may resume normal duties for the Council. It is advisable in the public interest that the Press and/or the Public be temporarily excluded from this meeting and they are herewith instructed to withdraw. Carried*

Members of the public left the meeting.

Please see separate private and confidential minutes of agenda item 511.b.

### 512. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10:10pm

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

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