

Meopham Parish Council

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A Civility & Respect
Pledge Council

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 7th April 2026 at 7:00pm at Harvel Village Hall, Harvel, Meopham, DA13 0DS

Members Present:

- Cllr S Buchanan
- Cllr D Bramer
- Cllr R Collings
- Cllr D Fisher
- Cllr S Gofton
- Cllr P Haslam – Vice-Chairman
- Cllr S Johnson
- Cllr J McNamara
- Cllr B Wade
- Cllr P Watson

In Attendance:

- 23+ members of the public
- L Winter – Clerk

Meeting commenced 19:02

Item 1: Apologies for Absence: To receive and accept apologies

F.C. 251 Apologies were received from Cllr D Johnson (family commitment).

Item 2: Declarations of Members' Interests: To receive declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for this meeting

F.C. 252 None declared.

Item 3: Minutes of Previous Meetings: To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 03.03.26 and 20.03.26

F.C. 253 Cllr Buchanan proposed and Cllr Wade seconded that the minutes of the Full Council meetings of 03.03.26 and 20.03.26 be approved. All in favour.

Item 4: Public Session & External Reports

4.1 Public Session

Disclaimer: The statements made during the Public Session reflect the opinion of the speaker(s) and are not necessarily accurate or factual information.

F.C. 254 Numerous statements were made in connection with the Southdown Shaw Allotments and the Meopham District Allotment Association

(MDAA). For clarity, these have been grouped together within the minutes, although other matters were discussed in between during the public session.

An ex-chairman of the MDAA voiced concern over the taking back of the allotments, the investigation into the allegations have not been conducted in an impartial fair or objective manner and I have documentary evidence to prove that and accordingly you are in breach of your code of conduct. Another issue is the GDPR whereby information has been obtained by a letting person who is not the legal data controller. Apparently there is something going around that the letting officer has historically been the data controller, this wasn't the case when I was Chairman and I know it wasn't the case for the Chairman who proceeded me or after me. So you have received information not by the real data controller and there has been a breach of GDPR. Furthermore, the PlotMaster system has been handed over to MPC. I accept this has been done for a lawful purpose, but the person who has contacted the ICO is not the legal data controller. The legal data controller is basically the body of the officers of that organisation. The PlotMaster has been sent off without their consent, that in itself is an offence. Allegations of bullying and harassment. The bar for bullying and harassment has not been reached. Things may have got a bit heated, but the officers were merely asking for information that should have been provided and handed over to them. Accordingly, because PlotMaster has not been given to them, we have a situation where they cannot dissolve their organisation, as they do not have the necessary information in order to do it. They have asked for that information back, and it has not been provided, that in itself is a problem. Also, the Allotment Act 1950 says that you have to give 12 months statutory notice and you have not provided statutory notice. So again you have not complied with the law. The Chairman of the MDAA Committee has handed in a detailed complaint. I champion fair play, I am not here to say that you made the wrong decision, what I am here to say is that I do not think you have made a balanced, objective, fair, impartial decision, and I think that the current MDAA should have had the opportunity, a proper opportunity, not a walk around the site where some allegations were met, where we know, because we have been told, that you thought that they were just feeding you a line. That is not impartial, that's not fair, that's not objective.

The Chairman of MDAA addressed the councillors. I have been accused of harassment and bullying by our lettings manager and it is simply not true. I have the backing from nearly the whole Committee, who have shown great support. To be treated the way we have with false allegations and false information being posted up around the site and on social media by your Parish Clerk has led to further conflict for our Members. In particular a nasty confrontation by the ex-chairman towards one of our Committee Members, this has to stop. The documents we have handed in today make a formal complaint into the conduct of the Parish Clerk. All documents are evidenced, therefore factual. We ask that you take our complaints extremely seriously, we would like to invite you all to our EGM that we have arranged for 26th April @ Meopham Village Hall at 4.30pm to discuss

these complaints openly and transparently with our allotment members.

Plot holders outside the area had extenuating circumstances. This has not been an impartial investigation and the lease should be extended for 12 months. In addition, staff may not know what work is involved, so ask MPC to reconsider.

The MDAA Secretary addressed the councillors stating that they had been given 6 reasons for closing down the MDAA. A survey had been carried out, with the feedback of 84 plot holders out of approximately 120 either strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with the reasons.

They had been a plot holder for 2 years, and that it felt like a community now. The survey had to be carried out to show that to MPC.

Where has democracy gone? You have announced that you are not going to renew our lease with the Allotment Association. Gave only a few weeks notice, that is not what the rules say. There has been a data breach, and on behalf of the MDAA committee, I am the data controller. Been doing it for many years, its never been a problem, never been an issue, but it is now because we have a lettings manager who has not cooperated with the Committee over a period of 6 months almost, and the lettings manager has gone into a collaboration with your Parish Clerk and caused a data breach. This was before April 1st, before you had any rights to the data, and your Parish Clerk has taken the data away from the control of the data controller. We do not deal with paperwork now, we have it all on the web, the only people who can access PlotMaster (capital P capital M) are the Secretary, the Chair and the Treasurer when he needs to reconcile the bank account. Now, thanks to this collaboration, that trust has been broken and we have issued a complaint to the Information Commissions Office. I call upon the Parish Clerk to explain why she was collaborating with somebody who did not even have any permission from any of us to do this? I know you are not going to answer now, but that is the challenge.

In response Councillor Haslam, who was the chairman of this meeting, said that is a challenge that we will take, but we will not respond directly. It is in every ones interest to make sure that the allotments are well run, with good governance and both yourselves and the Council are working collaboratively in a mutual way to the success of that particular site. We will review everything that has been put to us tonight.

If MPC decide to give MDAA another chance, it would be a very good idea that one of your councillors is co-opted on to MDAA.

They had a severely disabled child they cannot leave alone, so rely on these committee volunteers to cut the grass, cut hedges back. This is my childs safe place.

Councillor Haslam stated that we will not respond because we will get into a dialogue and we could be here until midnight. What I will assure you is that the Council is very much focussed, and we want it to be as successful as you do, with good governance and a well run allotment. Why would we want anything else? Leave it with us, if we have to review a few things, we will have to review a few things. I will make no promises, but if there is anything we can move forward we will.

Other matters raised under the public session:

A member of the public asked if there was any further information on the town Meopham was twinned with in Ukraine. It would be nice to have an update and sight of any photos. In addition they mentioned the noticeboard at Neville Parade being out of action for some time and requested that MPC look to fixing it.

A member of the public provided information on Hunnypot Hundred. The Hunnypot Hundred is a long distance walking association with around 500 people starting the event along with all their supporters. It starts in Meopham on Saturday 23rd May 2026. MPC may wish to provide support or advertisement.

A trustee for the Windmill addressed councillors. KCC still owns the windmill but the trust owns the land around it. We have a one off opportunity to purchase some land adjacent to the windmill site and this would not only benefit them, but could benefit MPC with a provision of a building on that site which could be a visitor centre for the trust and a meeting place for MPC and perhaps one or two additional disabled parking spaces. Mutual benefit. Comes at a cost and would have to talk figures but is in the region of £20K to purchase the land, plus land clearance and the provision of a building.

4.2 Borough Councillor and County Councillor

F.C. 255 There were no Borough Councillor or County Councillor present.

4.3 Police

F.C. 256 There were no Police present.

Item 5: Annual Parish Meeting: To approve the purchase of light refreshments for the Annual Parish meeting on Wednesday 15th April 2026

F.C. 257 RESOLVED: That up to £200 be approved for the purchase of light refreshments for the Annual Parish meeting, to include but not limited to, wine, fruit juices, snacks, crisps and fruit.

Item 6: Pitfield Green Toilets: To receive an update

F.C. 258 Update No 9 on progress received.

Item 7: Financial Matters

F.C. 259 Councillors considered the documentation presented.

RESOLVED that:

- 7.1 The schedule of payments since the last meeting up to 28 February 2026 be approved.
- 7.2 The receipts and payments report for the same period be received.
- 7.3 The bank statements and supporting Bank Reconciliation be received and signed.
- 7.4 The council reserves statement be received and signed.
- 7.5 The earmarked reserve for 'Professional Services' of £22,350 be noted.
- 7.6 The earmarked reserve for the Pitfield Toilets of £7403 be noted.
- 7.7 The expenses claim for the Clerk be approved.

Item 8: Standing Agenda Item: To consider any need for professional advice or reports on planning or related issues

F.C. 260 Councillor Collings stated that a meeting was needed to discuss what path the Council wants to go down with regards Regulation 19. Discussions and meetings regarding this have already been delegated to Councillor Collings and Councillor D Johnson. At present we do not have all the facts. It was possible a new draft plan may be issued, but things keep changing and at present, it is all rumours.

Item 9: Southdown Shaw Allotments: To consider the approval of the allotments package available with our current accounting provider

F.C. 261 PlotMaster has been handed over but it remains unopened as MDAA informed us that the information was incorrect. With the information being incorrect, we would breach GDPR if used. In addition, it is on a memory stick which could contain viruses, therefore, in line with our policies, it cannot be used.

Councillor S Johnson felt that £49 per month was excessive and PROPOSED that this package be rejected. SECONDED by Councillor McNamara. There were 9 votes for and 1 against this proposal.

Item 10: Asset of Community Value (ACV): To approve renewal of the ACV for the Amazon and Tiger Public House, Harvel

F.C. 262 RESOLVED to approve the application for renewal.

Item 11: Harvel Green: To agree to the request from Harvel Village Hall Management Committee for the use of Harvel Green on Saturday 4th July 2026 for the Harvel Village Fete – appropriate documentation received with request

- F.C. 263** It was agreed to authorise the use of Harvel Green. PROPOSED by Cllr Bramer and SECONDED by Cllr Gofton. All agreed.
- Item 12: Meopham Green: To agree to the use of Meopham Green on Thursday 23rd July 2026**
- F.C. 264** It was agreed to authorise the use of Meopham Green. Councillor Wade abstained, all others in favour.
- Item 13: Internal Auditors: To approve the internal auditors for 1 or 3 years**
- F.C. 265** RESOLVED: that Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd be appointed the internal auditors for MPC for 3 years. PROPOSED by Cllr Bramer and SECONDED by Cllr S Johnson. All in favour.
- Item 14: Street Lighting Maintenance Contract: To note that there will be a 4% price increase for the 26/27 contract due to the rise in material costs, wages, fuel and investment in vehicles**
- F.C. 266** Noted.
- Item 15: Meopham Parish EV Chargers: To approve (if for MPC) the renewal of the legal agreement (the agreement is between Meopham Village Hall Charitable Trust)**
- F.C. 267** Councillors were advised by Cllr Bramer that MPC had discussions with KCC to find a location for the EV Chargers. Discussions were had with Meopham Village Hall, who were in favour. So the agreement is between the Meopham Village Hall Charitable Trust and KCC.
- Meopham Village Hall Charitable Trust need to have the discussions with KCC. MPC are not involved in the agreement.
- Item 16: Motion from Councillor Buchanan: To agree in principle to provide financial assistance, if needed, to the Meopham Windmill Trust in the acquisition of a small plot of land adjacent to the Windmill which would be used to establish a Visitor & Educational Centre in support of the objectives of the Trust.**
- F.C. 268** After a lengthy discussion, Cllr Gofton PROPOSED and Cllr Buchanan SECONDED to amend the wording to the motion: To agree in principle *that MPC may* provide financial assistance,
- There were 8 in favour and 2 against. The amended motion was carried.

The meeting ended 20:46