

Meopham Parish Council

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A Civility & Respect
Pledge Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 09 September 2025 at 7:00pm at the Meopham Cricket Pavilion, Meopham Green, DA13 0DQ

Members Present: Cllr S Buchanan
Cllr D Bramer
Cllr R Collings
Cllr D Fisher
Cllr S Gofton
Cllr D Johnson
Cllr S Johnson
Cllr D Sims – Chairman
Cllr P Watson

In Attendance: L Winter – Clerk
10 members of the public

Meeting commenced 19:01

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

F.C. 73 Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Haslam and Cllr Wade (away) and Cllr McNamara (illness).

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

F.C. 74 None declared.

Item 3: To approve minutes of the of the meeting held on 29.07.2025

F.C. 75 Following a discussion on minute reference F.C.63 Pitfield Green Toilets it was clarified that Option 1 was agreed with the use of the £15K budget allocated for the demolition.

RESOLVED that: The minutes of the full Council Meeting of 29.07.2025 be agreed.

Item 4: Community Grants: To consider applications received for the Community Grant Scheme for the 2025-2026 financial year

F.C. 76 It was agreed to make the following community grants. All in favour.

Organisation	Amount	Legal Power
Harvel Village Hall	£500	S133 of Local Government Act 1972

Meopham Windmill Trust	£500	S133 of Local Government Act 1972
Kent Air Ambulance	£500	S137 of Local Government Act 1972
Meopham Carers	£1000	S19 of Local Government Act (Miscellaneous Provisions) 1976

Item 5: Meopham Windmill Trust: To consider granting permission to the Windmill Trust to attach Christmas lights to the flagpole

F.C. 77 RESOLVED that permission be granted with a caveat that the Meopham Windmill Trust carry out a risk assessment to comply with all health and safety requirements taking into account the extra weight to the pole, weather conditions and all foreseeable health and safety issues to meet insurance requirements.

Item 6: Arboricultural Survey: To consider and choose a contractor from the quotes

F.C. 78 RESOLVED that: Crown Tree Consultancy be awarded the contract with a quote of £1350 plus VAT.

Item 7: Judsons Pavilion: To note that we have not received a set of keys from the leaseholders for the Pavilion and decide a course of action

F.C. 79 The Clerk stated that keys had been dropped to the office earlier today. However, we had not been given a key for the storage/garage area, as this contains valuables.

Item 8: Pitfield Green Toilets: Receive an update and advise on course of action

F.C. 80 The Clerk proposed that the order of the works required to get the toilets reopened should be drainage survey, asbestos survey and legionella testing. As any issues here need to be addressed before continuing.

Followed by the deep clean and clearing of the guttering and downpipes. These essentially need to be before the reinstatement of the electricity, purely for health and safety reasons.

The Clerk also advised that the regulations have changed and a electricity kiosk has to be fitted to the outside of the toilet block. This requires a check with GBC regarding its siting, as it is within a conservation area. In addition, we need to consult with a suitably qualified electrician to ascertain if what UKPN have suggested is possible in that location. Current quote £3425 plus VAT plus the work to be carried by an electrician.

The Clerk requested that they been given the authority by Councillors to procure the goods, services or works required to get the toilets reopened. This would be as far as practicable, that the best available

terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk have the authority within a £20K envelope (£15K demolition budget plus £5K hand-dryer) to administer the council's financial affairs in accordance with proper practices as the holder of a statutory office to achieve the reopening of the toilets. Councillors would like the Clerk to endeavour to use locals. There were 8 votes in favour and 1 against. Motion carried.

Item 9: Public Session & External Reports

9.1 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. 81 A trustee from Meopham Cricket Club asked if anything had been decided with regards the perimeter fencing of Meopham Green to prevent quad-bikes accessing the green. The Clerk advised that following the request from the trustee to postpone the decision until it had been discussed by all the trustees, it would not be an agenda item until requested again. The Chairman stated that it would be a future agenda item.

A member of the public stated that Councillors may be able to carry out unpaid work for the Parish Council. The issue is insurance and suggested we check the legal position.

A member of the public stated that they were a mechanical engineer with their own public liability insurance and offered to look at what UKPN had proposed and discuss with the Clerk whether it was feasible. Their offer to provide technical assistance with scoping the re-commissioning works was gratefully accepted by the Clerk.

A member of the public requested that the names of the public who contributed be published within the minutes. Councillor Bramer stated that this was not possible due to GDPR.

A member of the public asked what the Parish Council were doing to take action against the large scale planning applications? Councillor Watson advised that Gravesham KALC (Kent Association of Local Councils) were looking to pool resources and produce a response. All the local parishes have the same issue of large scale planning applications and an approach together is believed to be better than individual parishes.

Members of the public were advised that a Parish Council is only a consultee, and as such can only voice a collective opinion. However, every resident can individually voice an opinion direct to Gravesham Borough Council.

Councillor Gofton stated that you need to have reasons to object, it cannot just be 'not in my back yard', we do not want all 5 bedroom detached, etc, you must have reasons. Do your homework and be smart about it so that you have a say about what you are getting. Do not be objecting to environmental issues, the developer has to meet these requirements.

The Chairman advised that we have an Extra Ordinary Full Council meeting on Tuesday 23rd September 2025 at 7.30pm in Meopham Village Hall to discuss the large scale planning application for Blackthorn Farm, Culverstone. Councillors requested borough councillors be invited and for the police to be advised of the meeting as there could be parking issues. They agreed to not invite Esquire Developments as this was not a public consultation meeting, it was the Parish Council agreeing its response as a consultee.

9.2 Borough Councillor and County Councillor

F.C. 82 There were no Borough Councillor or County Councillor present.

9.3 Police

F.C. 83 There were no Police present.

Item 10: Service Contract: To consider the final draft specification for the tender of the service contract

F.C. 84 The Clerk stated that this service contract had been drafted following consultation with Councillor Bramer and Wade. Councillor Bramer added that the cost of the previous service contract had been majorly under estimated for the amount of work. The Clerk advised Councillors that they should anticipate the tenders to be significantly higher than previous and that Harvel Pond and Edmund Green had been added to the specification. In addition, the Clerk queried the hourly rates for ad hoc tasks and emergency tasks.

Councillors stated that the contractors submitting tenders should state what they would charge and specify when/where the charges started e.g. emergency tasks – from when then leave home or from when they arrive at the job. The service contract be amended to allow for this information to be provided.

RESOLVED that the Service Contract be issued for tenders with the above amendment incorporated.

Item 11: Council Budget for 2026-2027: To review the draft budget for the 2026-2027 financial year

F.C. 85 The Clerk advised that this was a very draft budget with a number of the figures being guestimates but these will hopefully be firmed up by the final budget.

Comments were received from Councillors regarding the rolling provisions and the Clerk explained that these were necessary as

devolution would happen and as the Responsible Financial Officer they are required to advise Councillors that the Parish Council need to start provisioning for the things that are likely to be passed to them. Anything that the Parish Council takes the responsibility for will also have cost implications on the council administration, for instance, officer resources.

A number of other comments were received around the total council administration figure, election costs and grant funding which the Clerk would discuss with the Chairman of the Council prior to the next draft budget.

It was agreed to circulate the Strategic Plan and for this to be an agenda item on the next meeting along with the Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) as these could have an impact on the budget.

Item 12: Financial Matters

F.C. 86 Councillors considered the documentation presented.

RESOLVED that:

- 12.1** The schedule of payments since the last meeting up to 31 August 2025 be agreed.
- 12.2** The receipts and payments report for the same period be received.
- 12.3** The bank statements and supporting Bank Reconciliation be received.
- 12.4** The council reserves statement be received.
- 12.5** The expenses claimed by the Clerk be approved.
- 12.6** The agreement to open new accounts with the signatories being the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council and those Councillors who are Chairman and Vice Chairman of Committees.

The meeting ended at 21:00.