Meopham Parish Council

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Minutes of the Full Council Meeting
held on Tuesday 9 December 2025 at 7:00pm
at Cricket Pavilion, Meopham Green, Wrotham Road, DA13 0PZ

Members Present:
Cllr S Buchanan
Cllr D Bramer
Cllr R Collings
Cllr D Fisher
Cllr S Gofton
Cllr P Haslam – Vice-Chairman
Cllr D Johnson
Cllr S Johnson
Cllr D Sims - Chairman
Cllr B Wade
Cllr P Watson

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

Meeting commenced 19:02

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

F.C. 163 Apologies were received from Cllr McNamara (unwell).

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

F.C. 164 Cllr Wade declared for Item 7.

Item 3: Minutes of Previous Meeting: To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 25.11.25

F.C. 165 Cllr D Johnson proposed and Cllr Buchanan seconded that the minutes of the Full Council meeting of 25.11.25 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. 166 The Chairman welcomed the public and the members from the Meopham District Allotment Association, who introduced themselves.

4.2 Borough Councillor and County Councillor

F.C. 167 There were no Borough Councillor or County Councillor present.

4.3 Police

F.C. 168 There were no Police present.

Item 5: Pitfield Green Toilets: To receive an update

F.C. 169 Update No5 on progress.

Councillors were asked to refer to the interim report following the meeting 21/11/25 regarding actions by them, which are included in the papers issued by the Clerk.

A new Mpan has been received but apparently we are unable to use the existing meter and will have to apply for a new one. From research Octopus appear to be the best value at present. The Clerk will sort this, but an alternative is Sustainable Advantage, who may be able to accelerate this, but for a £400 fee as they are a commercial company.

Materials have been ordered for new DB and delivered to the MPC Office.

The following works are outstanding:

1. Opening hours and roster to implement;
2. The PRM facility is currently secured with a RADAR key and I would recommend continuing this;
3. Replace the consumer unit prior to energisation / installation of new meter, in progress
4. New handles for the doors, new service door hinges, new key safe and key box, labels and signage (exception the PRM toilet alarm), coat hooks, works in progress;
5. Signage details to SirsEngraving – suggested text in report 25/11/25;
6. Quote of ongoing regular cleaning (Boom Services) enquiry sent;
7. Clerk to chase Orbis Security to remove the panels on windows;
8. Investigate further the no-operation of the wash station in the gents, needs power to do this;
9. Occupancy detection / reporting is under investigation, costs and more details shortly;
10. Replacement of outside lights.

Item 6: Pitfield Green Toilets: To consider and approve:

F.C. 170 **a. the opening and closing days and hours**
RESOLVED the opening and closing times as 8am-6pm everyday except Christmas Day;

b. the arrangements for the opening and closing (volunteers or contract)
c. the cleaning schedule (contract and frequency required)
RESOLVED that 6a and 6b be considered together. Agreed on a full contract basis to open/close the facility and clean everyday within a cost envelope of £15K.

d. signage – external 'Assistance require in the Reduced Mobility Toilet' and internally 'These premises are serviced & monitored by male and female personnel'
RESOLVED to approve the signage;

e. occupancy detection/counters (not required to get the toilets reopened but recommended if budget allows)
RESOLVED to approve the occupancy detection/counters;

f. additional reserves of £5.5k for a new path on the ladies side (not required to get the toilets reopened)
RESOLVED to approve the new path at a cost of £5.5k from reserves.

g. the use of the facility on Wednesday 17th December 2025 for the Carols on the Green Event (power or no power)
RESOLVED that it was not necessary to open the facility for this event.

Item 7: Cricket Pavilion: Review of use of the Cricket Pavilion and Health and Safety Assessments and arrangements

F.C. 171 Councillor Watson had request this item following an incident that occurred at the Act of Remembrance event especially as we had another event coming up which involved large public attendance including children. Questions were raised regarding the risk assessment which Councillor Buchanan confirmed was in place and that a First Aider was in attendance. Councillors agreed that lessons needed to be learnt including sign off of risk assessments clearly showing a paper trail.

Item 8: Flags: Approve the purchasing of a replacement Union Flag and the UK 'Saints' flags for flying on the appropriate days

F.C. 172 RESOLVED to defer this item to January to identify the responsible person to fly and store the flag(s), and for the policy to be updated/amended to reflect this.

Item 9: NALC/British Toilet Association Public Conveniences Snapshop Survey: To agree the response

F.C. 173 Councillor Bramer had requested this item and advised that MPC had not received any monetary value from GBC for the toilet block. However, she would add that they had been misled by GBC as they did not fully inform MPC of all the contracts involved with the running of the toilet block.

Councillor S Johnson asked whether items such as this, which are requesting a response, need to come before Full Council or whether these could be delegated to the Clerk. Other Councillors showed dissent to this, stating that they should come before Full Council.

The Clerk to submit the response.

Item 10: **Reforms to the Statutory Consultee System: To agree the response**

F.C. 174 Following a debate it was agreed that MPC would not submit a response.

Item 11: **NALC Training – Beyond the Precept: To approve attendance @ £35 plus VAT and fees**

F.C. 175 It was agreed that the Finance Officer and Councillor Gofton be booked into this online training.

Item 12: **Planning Application: To consider and make recommendations on the following planning application:**

F.C. 176 **20251202 – 32 Longfield Road, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent DA13 0EN**
Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey read infill extension

RESOLVED no objection.

Item 13: **Precept for 2026-2027: To set the precept for the 2026-2027 financial year**

F.C. 177 The Clerk stated that GBC had issued a second provisional taxbase for 2026/27 and suggested that Councillors agree an option A and an option B.

GBC will finalise the taxbase at its meeting on Tuesday 16th December 2025. If the outcome is a different taxbase to either option then it will require another decision at the next Full Council meeting on 20th January 2026, as the setting of the precept must be agreed by Councillors, it cannot be delegated to the Clerk.

Councillors agreed that the reserves figure would be adjusted to keep the amount payable per Band D Household at £75.58 (exactly the same as last year).

Option A provisional taxbase of £3079.92 with reserves of £64,956.
The precept demand for 2026-2027 was agreed at **£232,780**
OR
Option B provisional taxbase of £3063.06 with reserves of £66,234.
The precept demand for 2026-2027 was agreed at **£231,502**

Item 14: Financial Matters

F.C. 178 Councillors considered the documentation presented.

RESOLVED that:

14.1 The schedule of payments since the last meeting up to 30 November 2025 be agreed.
14.2 The receipts and payments report for the same period be received.
14.3 The bank statements and supporting Bank Reconciliation be received and signed.
14.4 The council reserves statement be received.
14.5 The Statement of Internal Control be approved.

Item 15: Motions from Councillors:

F.C. 179 15.1 Motion proposed by Cllr Collings: Professional Services Budget

In light of current and expected development proposals affecting Meopham, I propose that:
The Council creates a ring-fenced 'Professional Services' budget of £25k in the current financial year, funded from reserves, to obtain legal, technical and expert advice on planning and related matters.
Any unspent balance at year end is rolled forward into the next financial year, giving up to £50k available across financial years 2025/26 and 2026/27.
The Clerk is given delegated authority to commit expenditure from this budget in line with Financial Regulations and within any overall limits set by Council.

PROPOSED by Councillor Collings. SECONDED by Councillor Fisher. All in favour.

F.C. 180 15.2 Motion proposed by Cllr D Johnson: Standing Agenda Item

Subject to the Professional Services Budget motion being approved, propose that:
A standing agenda item is added to each Full Council meeting to consider any need for professional advice or reports on planning or related issues.
This item will allow Council to note and, where necessary, ratify any use of delegated authority by the Clerk under the Professional Services budget.

PROPOSED by Councillor D Johnson. SECONDED by Councillor Buchanan. All in favour.

F.C. 181 15.3 Motion proposed by Cllr Collings: Traffic Assessment

Subject to the Professional Services Budget motion being approved, I propose that:
The Council agrees in principle to commission a traffic assessment, including a single junction model (anticipated to be at the A227 / Green Lane junction), at a cost of up to £8k, funded from the Professional Services budget.
The purpose of this work is to collect and model traffic data and report the findings objectively, to inform the Parish Council's responses to current and future planning applications and consultations.

Following a debate it was proposed to defer this decision until January 2026. PROPOSED by Councillor Buchanan. SECONDED by Councillor S Johnson. Councillor Collings as the proposer of the original motion agreed with the reasons for deferral. The proposal to defer was put to the vote. There were 8 in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention. Item deferred.

The meeting ended 20:50