Meopham Parish Council

St Johns Centre, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0AA - **Tel:** 01474 813779
Email: enquiries@meopham-pc.gov.uk **Website:** www.meopham-pc.gov.uk

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME FOUNDATION

A Civility & Respect Pledge Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Tuesday 10 June at 7:00pm
at the Harvel Village Hall, Harvel, Meopham, DA13 0DS

Members Present:
Cllr S Buchanan
Cllr D Bramer
Cllr D Fisher
Cllr P Haslam – Vice-Chairman
Cllr D Johnson – **arrived 7.45pm**
Cllr S Johnson – **arrived 7.13pm**
Cllr D Sims – Chairman
Cllr B Wade
Cllr P Watson

In Attendance:
L Winter – Clerk
Georgia Foster – County Councillor
10 members of the public

Meeting commenced 1900

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

F.C. 18 Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Gofton (prior commitment) and Cllr McNamara (away).

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

F.C. 19 None declared.

Item 3: **To approve minutes of the of the meeting held on 06.05.2025**

F.C. 20 RESOLVED that: The minutes of the Annual Council Meeting of 06.05.2025 be agreed.

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. 21 A trustee of Meopham Cricket Pavilion stated that the basal which was blocking the fire exit had been removed but the contractor had failed to take the cuttings away and had left them in a pile at the rear of the pavilion. They added that all the trees required basal removal so that the whole area could be tidied up.

A member of the public asked for Councillors and Officers to work together, which the Chairman assured was the case.

Another member of the public asked for the decision not to demolish the toilets taken in March be confirmed. The Chairman confirmed that this was the case and that we would be moving forward with an update on where we are at.

A member of the public stated that current councillors should not be endorsing those standing for election.

1913 Cllr S Johnson arrived

A member of the public referred to an email that had been sent out to Meopham residents, which his grandmother had received and it was not respectful and talking about drama. Such things should not be included in connection with the elections. He was a nominee for the upcoming election and was approaching it with genuine integrity and respect and keeping it decent. The Chairman stated that they were aware of the email but would not be commenting on it, however, he added that the Councillors were here to try and make it a better place to live.

4.2 Borough Councillor and County Councillor

F.C. 22 Georgia Foster introduced herself as the County Councillor for Gravesend East and that she was here to represent Kent County Council and Diane Morton, who was the County Councillor for Gravesham Rural who, unfortunately, was unable to attend this meeting.

4.3 Police

F.C. 23 There were no Police present.

Item 5: Standing Orders: To review and approve the Council's Standing Orders for the 2025/2026 municipal year

F.C. 24 This agenda item was deferred.

Item 6: Membership

6.1 Personnel Committee: To elect members to the Personnel Committee as per the agreed terms of reference (5 inc. CH plus 2 sub)

F.C. 25 The current membership was Cllr Fisher, Cllr Johnson, Cllr Sims (as Chairman of Council) and Cllr Watson with Cllr Haslam as a substitute.

RESOLVED that: Cllr S Johnson be added to the Personnel Committee membership.

6.2 Planning: To elect members to the Planning Applications Working Group as per the agreed terms of reference (CH plus 7)

F.C. 26 The current membership was Cllr Fisher, Cllr Haslam, Cllr Sims and Cllr Watson. Planning training required for all councillors. Cllr Sims proposed this agenda item be deferred. All in favour.

Item 7: Parish Council Representatives on External Bodies: To agree representatives for the 2025-2026 council year

F.C. 27 RESOLVED that: the appointments be noted and agreed for Secure the landscape and Public Rights of Way.

1945 Cllr D Johnson arrived

Item 8: 2024-25 End of Year Financial Matters

8.1 Annual Governance Statement: To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2024-25, Section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2025

F.C. 28 RESOLVED that: the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 Section 1 be approved.

8.2 Accounting Statements, Bank Reconciliation and Variances: To approve the Accounting Statements for 2024-25 , Section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2025 and the supporting Bank Reconciliation as at 31 March 2025 and the explanation of the significant variations from last year (2023-2024) to this year (2024-25)

F.C. 29 RESOLVED that: the Accounting Statements, Bank Reconciliation and Variances, Section 2 of the AGAR be approved.

8.3 Exercise of Public Rights: To note the proposed dates (Friday 13 June 2025 to Thursday 24 July 2025) for the Exercise of Public Rights as selected by the Council's Responsible Finance Officer

F.C. 30 RESOLVED that: the dates be noted.

Item 9: Contracts Register: To note the Council's contract and leases register for the 2025-2026 municipal year

F.C. 31 RESOLVED that: the Contracts Register be noted.

Following a query raised regarding the migrating of minutes to the new website. It was agreed that all years needed migrating across from the old to the new website. The Clerk advised that this would probably result in more expenditure and would therefore be a future item for full council to determine.

Item 10: Financial Matters

F.C. 32 Councillors considered the documentation presented.

RESOLVED that:

10.1 The schedule of payments since the last meeting up to 31 May 2025 be agreed.
10.2 The receipts and payments report for the same period be agreed.
10.3 The bank statements and supporting Bank Reconciliation be received.
10.4 The council reserves statement be received.

The Clerk asked Councillors if they were happy for the Lloyds Bank Account to be closed as we do not receive any interest on it, but the bank have recently started charging fees. The clerk advised that they would start the process and then ask full council for approval as to where they wanted the money moved to.

Item 11: Judson's Pavilion: To consider correspondence received from Meopham Colts and agree any actions arising from this

F.C. 33 RESOLVED that:

i) The Colts register the lease, including any amendments of named trustees;
ii) The Colts be advised that, as it is a self-repair lease, should they wish the Parish Council to consider funding or part funding of anything, as prior approval is required from the landlord before anything is carried out, they submit the request with three quotes for consideration;
iii) The Clerk advise The Colts that Meopham Parish Council have grants available each year, which they may be eligible to apply for;
iv) A letter be sent to The Colts asking for keys to be provided within 30 days of receipt of the letter, advising that if this is not forthcoming, a locksmith will be engaged and the costs forwarded to The Colts.

Item 12: Speedwatch: To consider correspondence received from Meopham Speedwatch and agree any actions or funding from this

F.C. 34 RESOLVED that: Following a lengthy debate with regards to who would own the device and the implications of this answer for storage, maintenance and insurance purposes, it was agreed that in principle they would like to fund the device, but until these issues were resolved this could not be progressed at this time.

Item 13: **Meopham Green: To consider the quotes for the lime trees at the rear of the cricket pavilion**

F.C. 35 RESOLVED that: Elite Tree Care be awarded to the work. It was also agreed to ask if they carried out basal cutting and if so to quote on the trees around Meopham Green, Hook Green and Edmund Close.

Item 14: **Post Renewal: To consider the options and quotes for the post renewal at Meopham Green, Priestwood Green and Harvel Green**

Cllr D and S Johnson declared an interest as they had used A Day and would abstain from the decision.

F.C. 36 RESOLVED that: this item be deferred for a green survey to be carried out by officers.

F.C. 37 Suspension of Standing Order 3(x) – a meeting shall not exceed a period of two hours

PROPOSED: Cllr D Johnson. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. All in favour.

Item 15: **Meopham Green: Following requests from Meopham Cricket Club Trustees to prevent illegal access to the green, consider the options and quotes for the boundary of the green**

F.C. 38 RESOLVED that: following representation from the trustee who was present at the meeting, this item be deferred. Cllr Sims to attend the next Meopham Cricket Committee meeting on 23rd July 2025, with the trustees consent, to discuss this item with the trustees.

F.C. 39 Closed Session – all public, press and county councillors were asked to leave the meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr Sims. SECONDED: Cllr D Johnson. All in favour.

CLOSED SESSION
Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that due to the confidential nature of the next item, the public and press were asked to leave the meeting

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Item 16: **Form of Authority: To consider signing the form of authority received from ARAG Law and the correspondence from our HR advisers**

F.C. 40 RESOLVED that: the form be signed by the Councillors present after point 4 was crossed out and initialled by the Chairman, as the settlement amount and terms would never be agreed by the Proper Officer.

The meeting ended at 9.47pm