Meopham Parish Council

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LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME FOUNDATION

A Civility & Respect Pledge Council

Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting
held on Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 7:00pm
at the 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 D Johnson
Cllr S Johnson
Cllr J McNamara
Cllr D Sims
Cllr B Wade
Cllr P Watson

In Attendance:
9 members of the public
L Winter – Clerk
A Brown – Assistant Clerk

Meeting commenced 19:00

Item 1: **To elect the Chairman of Meopham Parish Council for the 2026/2027 Council Year and to receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office from the Chairman**

F.C. 01 Cllr McNamara was proposed by Cllr Buchanan and seconded by Cllr S Johnson. Elected unanimously.

Cllr McNamara signed the Acceptance of Office.

Item 2: **To elect the Vice-Chairman of Meopham Parish Council for the 2026/2027 Council Year and to receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office from the Vice-Chairman**

F.C. 02 Cllr Buchanan was proposed by Cllr Wade and seconded by Cllr Bramer. Cllr Sims was proposed by Cllr Watson and seconded by Cllr S Johnson. Cllr Buchanan received five votes and Cllr Sims received six votes.

Cllr Sims was elected Vice-Chairman of Council and signed the Acceptance of Office.

Item 3: **Apologies for Absence: To receive and accept apologies**

F.C. 03 None. All present.

Item 4: **Declarations of Members' Interests: To receive declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for this meeting**

F.C. 04 Cllr D and S Johnson declared an interest in Item 10.6 Software Licences

Item 5: **To approve minutes of the of the meeting held on 07.04.2026**

F.C. 05 The Clerk advised that version 3 was what was before Councillors following a number of comments received from the MDAA and public who were present at that meeting. The minutes are not verbatim, but to try and appease the MDAA and public, using a recording of the meeting from a third party, the minutes had been added to. This is not normal procedure so Councillors can choose to accept these or revert to the original version.

RESOLVED that: The minutes of the Full Council meeting of 07 April 2026 (version 3) be agreed. There were 10 in favour and 2 abstentions.

Item 6: **Policy Review: To establish a Policy Review Working Group to review all council policies, with the exception of employment policies and the Employee Handbook**

F.C. 06 RESOLVED that a policy review working group be agreed.

Item 7: **Committees & Working Groups – Terms of Reference**

7.1 Planning: To agree the terms of reference for a Planning Committee or for a Planning Applications Working Group the Personnel Committee
7.2 Personnel Committee: To agree the terms of reference for the Personnel Committee
7.3 Policy Review Working Group: To agree the terms of reference for the Policy Review Working Group

F.C. 07 RESOLVED that:

7.1 Planning be a working group, 6 votes for and 2 abstentions, with 5.3 amended to read … at least two of the four ward councillors representing the ward the application is from. There were 7 votes for.

7.2 Personnel Committee be agreed subject to the following amendments:
- 5.1 bullet 3 add including non councillors but subject to a quorum of 3;
- 6.1 bullet 8 add after HR provider, KALC and the council's insurers, as appropriate;
- 6.1 bullet 12 add , as per co-option policy.

There was 1 abstention.

7.3 Policy Review Working Group be agreed subject to adding at 2.2 to include either the Chairman or Vice- Chairman. Agreed unanimously.

Item 8: **Membership**

8.1 Planning: To elect members to the Planning Applications Working Group as per the agreed terms of reference

F.C. 08 The Planning Applications Working Group would consist of Cllr Bramer, Cllr Buchanan, Cllr Collings, Cllr Gofton, Cllr Wade, Cllr Watson along with Cllr McNamara ex officio, and one vacancy.

8.2 Personnel: To elect members to the Personnel Committee as per the agreed terms of reference

F.C. 09 6 nominations were received for 4 places.

Cllr Watson raised a concern over Cllr Buchanan nomination due to an outstanding grievance. Councillors agreed that any Councillor would recuse themselves from meetings if there was a conflict. Votes were made with the lowest 2 becoming the substitute members.

The Personnel Committee would consist of Cllr Buchanan, Cllr D Johnson, Cllr S Johnson, Cllr Sims along with Cllr McNamara ex officio.

Cllr Fisher and Cllr Watson would serve as substitute members.

Cllr Watson questioned further the eligibility of Cllr Buchanan on the Personnel Committee due to their potential ability to influence the Committee.

Item 9: **Council Governance – Scheme of Delegation: To review and approve the Council's Scheme of Delegation for the 2026/2027 municipal year**

F.C. 10 RESOLVED that the Scheme of Delegation be reviewed and approved for the 2026/2027 municipal year subject to an addendum of a list of responsibilities that cannot be delegated to the Clerk and what has been explicitly delegated to the Clerk.

Item 10: **Annual Review of Council and Administration**

F.C. 11 RESOLVED to consider and approve the matters placed before them.

10.1 The schedule of meetings be agreed with Planning changing to teams meetings.
10.2 The starting time of meetings to be 1900.

Councillor Collings left at 20:09

10.3 The asset register be deferred.
10.4 The key holder list be agreed with the Chairman provided the pin code for the key safe.

Councillor Collings returned at 20:15

10.5 Professional membership fees be agreed.

10.6 Councillor D Johnson advised that he was about to launch a piece of software for council governance and associations such as allotments. Offer to MPC for life, for free including support. Councillors accepted this offer.
Councillors queried ParishOnline cost and how long the information remained if not renewed.
Councillors requested this item be deferred to the next meeting.

10.7 The arrangements for receiving correspondence be continued.

10.8 The bank signatories be agreed subject to the replacement of Cllr Haslam with Cllr McNamara, as the Chairman of the Council.

10.9 Standing Orders and Direct Debits be agreed.

10.10 The acceptance of the insurance quote from Zurich for 3 years subject to the Clerk finalising the insured items which may affect the exact final quoted figure.

Item 11: 2025-26 End-of-Year Financial Matters

F.C. 12 Councillors considered the documentation presented.

RESOLVED that:

11.1 The statement of Internal Control in support of the Annual Governance Statement be approved and signed.

11.2 The Internal Audit report for Financial year end 31 March 2026 be received with its recommendations noted.

11.3 The Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26 and Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 Section 1 be approved and signed.

11.4 Accounting Statements, Bank Reconciliation and Variances be approved and signed.

11.5 The dates 03.06.26 – 14.07.26 for the Exercise of Public Rights be noted.

11.6 The financial risk assessment be approved.

Item 12: Financial Matters

F.C. 13 The payment and bank documents were considered.

RESOLVED that:

12.1 The schedule of payments since the last meeting up to 31.03.26 and 30.04.26 be agreed.

12.2 The receipts and payments report for the same period be received.

12.3 The bank statements be received.

12.4 The council reserves statement be received.

Item 13: **Parish Council Representatives on External Bodies: To agree representatives for the 2026-2027 council year**

F.C. 14 Councillors considered the proposed representatives. RESOLVED that:

Councillor Sims be appointed to Meopham Village Hall Committee.

A number of Councillors were nominated for Gravesham KALC and following a vote Councillor Watson be appointed along with Councillor McNamara, as the Chairman of the Council. Both empowered to appoint proxies in their absence.

Councillor Bramer be appointed to Culverstone Community Association and Councillor Watson be appointed to GROWC and Securing the Landscape.

Item 14: **Contracts Register: To note the Council's contract and leases register for the 2026-2027 municipal year**

F.C. 15 RESOLVED that: the Contracts and Leases Register be noted.

Item 15: **Work Programme for 2026/27: To note the Council's work programme and agenda management timetable for the 2026-2027 municipal year**

F.C. 16 RESOLVED that: The work programme be received.

Item 16: **London Green Belt Council: To consider joining this Council with membership starting at £25**

F.C. 17 RESOLVED that Meopham Parish Council join the London Green Belt Council.

Item 17: **Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration**

F.C. 18 RESOLVED that the 14^{th} Edition of Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration be purchased at £144 for SLCC members.

Item 18: **The Clerks' Manual 2023**

F.C. 19 RESOLVED that The Clerks' Manual 2023 be purchased at £47.50 for SLCC members.

F.C. 20 Suspension of Standing Order 3(x) – a meeting shall not exceed a period of two hours.

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

F.C. 21 Closed Session – all public and press were asked to leave the meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr D Johnson. SECONDED: Cllr S 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 will be asked to leave the meeting

Item 19: **Bus Shelter Cleaning Contract: To consider quotes received for a new three year bus shelter cleaning contract (*)**

F.C. 22 RESOLVED that the Bus Shelter Cleaning Contract be awarded to Element UK Limited

PROPOSED by Cllr Ward and SECONDED by Cllr S Johnson. All in favour.

Item 20: **Southdown Shaw Allotments**

F.C. 23 RESOLVED that:

20.1 The offer of the free software from Councillor D Johnson would meet the management system requirements.
20.2 Legal action was agreed with a caveat that the Clerk checks with the insurers what cover, if any, we have in the first instance. If not covered then contact the previous solicitor recommended by KALC. No dialogue with the MDAA until advice received. There were 10 in favour and 1 abstention.

Councillors D and S Johnson left at 21:33

20.3 The outstanding Site issues were noted but Councillors and Officers cannot attend the Site until 20.2 implemented.

The meeting ended 21:37