Meopham Parish Council
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LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME FOUNDATION

A Civility & Respect Pledge Council

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting
held on Tuesday 28th July 2026 at 7:00pm
at Cricket Pavilion, Meopham Green, DA13 0PZ

Members Present:
Cllr D Bramer
Cllr S Buchanan
Cllr R Collings
Cllr D Fisher
Cllr S Gofton
Cllr S Johnson **(19:03)**
Cllr J McNamara (Chairman)
Cllr D Sims (Vice Chairman)
Cllr B Wade

In Attendance:
L Winter – Clerk
A Brown – Assistant Clerk
16 Members of Public

Meeting commenced 19:03

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

F.C. 66 Apologies were received from Cllr D Johnson (prior commitment) and Cllr P Watson (prior commitment).

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

F.C. 67 None declared.

Item 3: **Minutes of Previous Meetings: To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 30.06.2026**

F.C. 68 Cllr S Buchanan PROPOSED and Cllr B Wade SECONDED that the minutes of the meeting of 30.06.2026 be approved. All agreed with one abstention due to not being at the meeting.

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. 69 A member of the public had a number of points:

- They had recently attended a parish council meeting at Sole Street where planning matters were on the agenda. They commented that they had been made to feel welcome and had been permitted to speak throughout the meeting.
- They questioned why Meopham Parish Council held confidential ("closed session") items. They referred to a previous meeting where members of the public had been required to leave the meeting room and wait in their vehicles before being able to return for the remainder of the meeting. The Clerk explained that this had occurred approximately two years previously during the budget-setting meeting, when a confidential item requiring a decision had affected the final budget. As a result, the confidential item could not be scheduled elsewhere on the agenda. The Chairman stated that the Council did not share the view that confidential items were unnecessary and noted that there are occasions when exclusion of the press and public is required.
- They commented that the meeting agenda had not been displayed on the parish noticeboards. The Clerk advised that the agenda had been posted on five of the six noticeboards, with the exception of the Meopham Parade noticeboard due to parking difficulties. The annual schedule of meeting dates had, however, been displayed on all six noticeboards. The member of the public responded that they considered the Meopham Parade noticeboard to be the most important location and that the omission was not acceptable.
- They suggested that draft minutes should be published on the Parish Council website within 48 hours of the meeting. The Clerk advised that this was not currently achievable due to other work priorities but confirmed that efforts would be made to publish draft minutes sooner where possible.

A member of the public referred to the planning application for Land South of Heron Hill, which appeared later on the agenda, and expressed concern regarding the retrospective nature of the application. They hoped that the Parish Council shared these concerns.

Another member of the public asked about the Local Plan and if any guidance can be given to the public on how to respond? The response needed by 18th August. Where does the Parish Council sit with this plan, and are they planning on presenting anything to the public?

A further member of the public asked whether the Parish Council could provide guidance to residents on responding to the consultation on the Local Plan, noting that responses were required by 18 August. They asked what position the Parish Council had taken on the Local Plan and whether any information would be presented to the public. Councillor Collings responded that he had submitted his response to the briefing note shortly before the meeting. He stated that the Local Plan could not be considered in isolation and that he was due to meet with the Parish Council's Planning Consultant and barrister. He advised that it would not be appropriate to discuss those matters in a public meeting but assured those present that work was ongoing. In the meantime, he encouraged residents to review the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), the Local Plan proposals relating to Norwood Lane, and the associated planning application for the site.

4.2 Borough Councillor and County Councillor

F.C. 70 There were no Borough Councillors or County Councillor present

4.3 Police

F.C. 71 There were no Police present.

Item 5: Declarations of Members' Interests: To remind all Councillors that they are required to submit their declaration of interest forms to the Monitoring Officer

F.C. 72 Members sought clarification on the requirement to resubmit their Declarations of Interest forms. Officers advised that the forms had been updated following changes to the publication requirements relating to Members' addresses. Councillors may request that their home address be redacted from the version published by the Monitoring Officer.

It was agreed that Officers would recirculate the email containing the relevant information and forms.

Item 6: Pitfield Green Toilets: To consider a Baby Changing Unit

F.C. 73 Officers advised that there was sufficient space within the female toilet facility to accommodate a baby changing unit. Appropriate signage would be required to indicate that the baby changing facilities were available for use by all parents and carers, regardless of gender. It was also noted that sufficient funding remained within the current budget allocation.

Councillor S. Johnson PROPOSED and Councillor Wade SECONDED that a baby changing unit be installed within the female toilet facility. It was further agreed that Officers would first explore the availability of a County Councillor Member Grant to fund the installation before utilising the remaining Pitfield Green Toilets budget.

RESOLVED: That a baby changing unit be installed within the female toilet facility, subject to Officers first seeking funding through a County Councillor Member Grant. If unsuccessful, the installation will be funded from the remaining Pitfield Green Toilets budget. All Members in favour.

Item 7: Pitfield Green Toilets: To consider the request that MPC purchase a banner to advertise that the toilets are open

F.C. 74 The Chairman advised that a member of the public had offered to provide a banner, free of charge, to publicise the opening of the facilities.

Members discussed whether the display of a banner would be appropriate, noting the Parish Council's general policy of not permitting banners around the Green. Some Members considered that the proposed banner would not constitute advertising but would instead serve as a public information notice to advise residents that the facilities were open.

Councillor Buchanan PROPOSED and Councillor Gofton SECONDED that an appropriate banner be approved.

RESOLVED: That an appropriate banner be approved for display. Voting: 5 in favour, 3 against, and 1 abstention. The motion was carried.

Item 8: **Pitfield Green: To consider approval of a memorial Oak tree dedicated to Reverend D Giles, suitable position to be discussed with contractor**

F.C. 75 Councillor Bramer advised that the Parish Council currently had a moratorium on the planting of memorial trees. However, she considered this request to be appropriate as it would replace trees that the Parish Council had been required to fell earlier in the year.

Councillor McNamara PROPOSED and Councillor R. Collings SECONDED that a memorial oak tree, together with a small commemorative plaque, be approved.

RESOLVED: That a memorial oak tree and a small commemorative plaque be approved, with the location of the tree to be agreed with the Council's contractor. All Members in favour.

Item 9: **Training: Mulberry LAS Finance & Governance Networking Day available for Clerks, Officers and Councillors – to approve attendees**

F.C. 76 Councillor D. Bramer PROPOSED and Councillor S. Johnson SECONDED that the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and the Vice-Chairman be approved to attend the training event.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and the Vice-Chairman attend the Mulberry LAS Finance & Governance Networking Day. All Members in favour.

Item 10: **Motion from Councillor Collings: Support for Meopham Windmill Trust - That Meopham Parish Council awards a grant of £500 to Meopham Windmill Trust, funded from the Families and Young People budget, in support of the Trust's educational and community work and its continued engagement with children, young people and families**

F.C. 77 Councillor Bramer stated that she would have preferred the request to have been submitted through the Parish Council's Community Grant Scheme.

Councillor Collings PROPOSED and Councillor Fisher SECONDED that a grant of £500 be awarded to the Meopham Windmill Trust, funded from the Families and Young People budget.

A recorded vote was requested.

Member	**Vote**
Councillor D. Bramer	Against
Councillor S. Buchanan	For
Councillor R. Collings	For
Councillor D. Fisher	For
Councillor S. Gofton	Abstain
Councillor S. Johnson	For
Councillor J. McNamara	For
Councillor D. Sims	For
Councillor B. Wade	For

RESOLVED: That a grant of **£500** be awarded to the Meopham Windmill Trust, funded from the Families and Young People budget. Voting: 7 in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention. The motion was carried.

Item 11: Motion from Councillor Collings: Support for 1st Meopham Scout Group following the burglary and vandalism - That Meopham Parish Council awards £750 to 1st Meopham Scout Group, funded from the Families and Young People budget, in support of the Group's recovery following the recent burglary and vandalism and towards the repair, security, renovation, refurbishment and other needs associated with the continued use of the Scout Hall for the benefit of children and young people

F.C. 78 Councillor Collings introduced the motion and outlined the extent of the damage caused. He advised that the originally proposed grant of £750 would be insufficient to meet the costs associated with recovery and invited Members to consider an amendment. He explained that the Group's insurance would not cover all costs, as the policy provided for like-for-like replacement, whereas many of the damaged items required replacement with modern, higher-security alternatives.

Councillor McNamara PROPOSED and Councillor Collings SECONDED that the grant amount be increased to **£1,500**, to be funded from the Families and Young People budget.

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A recorded vote was requested.

Member	**Vote**
Councillor D. Bramer	For
Councillor S. Buchanan	For
Councillor R. Collings	For
Councillor D. Fisher	For
Councillor S. Gofton	For

Councillor S. Johnson	For
Councillor J. McNamara	For
Councillor D. Sims	For
Councillor B. Wade	For

RESOLVED: That a grant of **£1,500** be awarded to the 1st Meopham Scout Group, funded from the Families and Young People budget, in support of the Group's recovery following the burglary and vandalism. The Council also requested that the Group review the adequacy of its insurance provision. Voting: 9 in favour. The motion was carried unanimously.

Item 12: Strategic Plan 2024-2027: To review the Strategic Plan adopted 15th May 2024

F.C. 79 It was agreed that the current Strategic Plan would be used as the basis for developing the Council's next Strategic Plan during the meeting scheduled for 1 September 2026.

RESOLVED: That consideration of the Strategic Plan be deferred to the meeting on 1 September 2026, where it will form the starting point for the development of the Council's next Strategic Plan.

Item 13: Planning Applications: To consider and make recommendations on the following planning applications

F.C. 80 20260559- Land South Of Heron Hill Meopham Gravesend Kent - Change of use of the land for the stationing of 1 static homes, 1 touring caravans, and a single day room for Gypsy / Traveller occupation. Associated hard and soft landscaping. Retrospective.

We recommend refusal on the grounds inappropriate development in the greenbelt.

20260627 – 4 Monkreed Villas Longfield Road Longfield Kent DA3 7AR - Erection of a first floor side extension and retention of a carport and outbuildings within rear garden ancillary to existing dwelling.

We raise no objection to the application.

20260711 – Lily Cottage Wrotham Road Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0QA - Demolition of existing rear conservatory and erection of rear single storey extension.

We raise no objection to the application.

Item 14: Planning Appeal: To note the following appeal has been received

20250121- Leasden Rhododendron Avenue Meopham Gravesend Kent - Erection of two bedroom, self-build bungalow, with associated works including hardstanding for two cars and pedestrian access path. Appeal Ref: 2026/031/REF Inspectorate ref: 6012617

F.C. 81 Noted.

Item 15: Hook Green Village Sign: To consider the quote received for the paint work only

F.C. 82 The Clerk advised that the budget allocation for both the Hook Green Village Sign and the flagpole was £2,000. However, the flagpole was due to undergo its annual inspection, and quotations had been requested for any necessary works.

The Clerk further advised that the quotation received for the Village Sign covered the paintwork only and did not include the costs of removing and reinstalling the sign. Should Members wish to proceed with the refurbishment, additional quotations would be required for these elements of the work.

RESOLVED: That consideration of the quotation be deferred until the Council had received the full costs associated with both the Village Sign and the flagpole, including any additional quotations for the removal, reinstatement and painting/refurbishment of the sign. Members acknowledged that these works require specialist expertise.

Item 16: Financial Matters

F.C. 83 The payment and bank documents were considered.

RESOLVED that:

16.1 The schedule of payments since the last meeting up to 01.07.2026 be received.
16.2 The receipts and payments report for the same period be received.
16.3 The bank statements and reconciliation be received and signed.
16.4 The council reserves statement be received and signed.

Councillor Bramer requested that a future agenda item be included to consider the use of the earmarked reserve for Judson's to meet the legal costs associated with registering the lease, noting that this had always been the intended purpose of the reserve.

16.5 Transfer of Funds: Councillor Buchanan PROPOSED and Councillor Wade SECONDED that £60,000 be transferred to the Hampshire Trust Bank account.

RESOLVED: That **£60,000** be transferred to the Hampshire Trust Bank account. All Members in favour.

Item 17: **Liaison Councillor Report Form(s)**

F.C. 84 Noted.

20:29 Cllr Sims left the meeting

Item 18: **Standing Agenda Item: To consider any need for professional advice or reports on planning or related issues**

F.C. 85 Councillor Collings stated that this had been covered under the public session.

Item 19: **Officers report: To receive a report of items for information from the Clerk and Assistant Clerk**

F.C. 86 Noted.

F.C. 87 20:36 Closed session – all public and press were asked to leave the meeting.

PROPOSED Cllr S Johnson SECONDED Cllr Wade. 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

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Item 20: **Pitfield Green: To consider the request to cover the cost associated with the repair to the fencing**

F.C. 88 Councillor McNamara PROPOSED and Councillor Gofton SECONDED that MPC offer a gesture of goodwill towards the cost of the fencing repair. However, it was noted that the Council's Financial Regulations must be followed. Accordingly, the resident would be required to obtain and submit three quotations for the repair works. The quotations would be presented at a future meeting, at which Councillors would consider and agree the amount of any goodwill contribution.

Item 21: **Service Contract: Review**

F.C. 89 Officers gave an overview of the current service contract. Following discussion, Councillors requested that officers prepare revised contract documentation separating the individual tasks and their frequencies to support the future procurement of the service.

Item 22: **Standing Agenda Item: To receive an update on Southdown Shaw Allotments**

F.C. 90 Nothing to report.

The meeting ended 21:03