

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



A Civility & Respect
Pledge Council

To all Members of Meopham Parish Council

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **Full Council of Meopham Parish Council** on **Tuesday 28th October 2025 at 7:00pm** to be held at **Meopham Cricket Pavilion, Wrotham Road, DA13 0PZ**. Papers have been circulated for items marked with (*)

Yours faithfully

Lisa Winter

Lisa Winter

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Date of Issue: Tuesday 21st October 2025

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence:** To receive and accept apologies
2. **Declarations of Members' Interests:** To receive declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for this meeting
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 07.10.25. *This item is to confirm the accuracy of the minutes and not to raise matters arising (*)*
4. **Public Session & External Reports**
 - 4.1 **Public Session**
 - 4.2 **Borough Councillors and County Councillor**
 - 4.3 **Police**
5. **Hook Green:** To consider the quotes for the 2x horse chestnuts and 2x lime trees adjacent to Weavers Cottage (*)
6. **Pitfield Green Toilets:** To receive an update.

7. **Act of Remembrance:** To finalise the arrangements and agree the expenditure for the event
8. **Carols on the Green:** To agree the arrangements and the expenditure for the event
9. **Forecast Budget Outturn for 2025-2026:** To note the report (*)
10. **Council Budget for 2026-2027:** To review the draft budget for the 2026-2027 financial year (*)

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 07 October 2025 at 7:00pm at Harvel Village Hall, Harvel, Meopham, DA13 0DS

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 **arrived 19:42**
 Cllr S Johnson
 Cllr J McNamara
 Cllr D Sims – Chairman
 Cllr B Wade
 Cllr P Watson

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

Meeting commenced 19:02

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

F.C. 101 There were no apologies.

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

F.C. 102 None declared.

Item 3: To approve minutes of the of the meetings held on 09.09.2025 and 23.09.2025

F.C. 103 Councillor Buchanan proposed and Cllr Collings seconded that the minutes of the Full Council Meeting of 09.09.2025 be approved. All in favour.

Councillor Buchanan proposed and Cllr Wade seconded that the minutes of the Extra Ordinary Full Council Meeting of 23.09.2025 be approved. All in favour.

Item 4: Pitfield Green Toilets: Receive update from Clerk

F.C. 104 The Clerk advised that she had been working with a member of the public who had offered their services to draw up the scope of works

and assist with the project management. Many hours had already been put in by them with the Clerk. MPC should expect an invoice for their time, which was being accounted for.

Following instruction from the meeting on 09/09/25 the following has happened:

- Site visual survey carried out 16/09/25;
- Site intrusive survey carried out 29/09/25. 3 contractors briefed on required works to be able to submit quotes. Active woodworm found in the loft area;
- Pre-qualification letter produced and made available to prospective contractors;
- 7 contractors so far have expressed interest and submitted completed pre-qualification and public liability confirmation;
- 3 formal quotes have been received;
- 2 quotes for the drainage work have been received;
- 2 quotes have been instructed as under £499 to:
 1. Clean the roof of moss and the gutters – projected date 21/10/25
 2. Clean the loft void (enabling works for woodworm treatment) – projected date 30/10/25
- The final quote received is for £3200 (including VAT) so further quotes are required:
 1. To remove the L shaped wall by the gents entrance and also break out the pathway on the gents side and includes a ductwork route for the new electrical incoming service (this would form part of the 'contestable works')
- UKPN have given a price for an inappropriate solution and have been asked to submit an alternative option going to the opposite side of the building – these outline details have been received by MPC but awaiting the costings;
- An independent service provider have given an indicative cost of £6000 (plus VAT). Full quote awaited, with breakdown on contestable/non contestable works;

We have so far got a very low take up on village providers.

Item 5: Public Session & External Reports

5.1 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. 105 It was suggested that we have a cut-off date on the pre-qualification and it was agreed as 31/10/25.

A member of the public expressed well done to MPC for submitting a robust letter regarding the proposed planning site at Blackthorn Farm. They then went on to explain that they had attended a meeting where Councillor Harry Rayner was in attendance. At this meeting it was stated that the Lorry Park in Wrotham was the first site

given 'grey belt' classification, however this decision was subject to Judicial Review and the outcome of this could have massive implications on any sites given the 'grey belt' classification.

Discussions are also happening around the classification of the A227 – for the southern end to be classed as a 'B' road to reduce HGVs. They then asked if any of MPCs councillors were liaison for 'transport' or KALC, who would potentially meet with the 'green not greed group'. In response, Councillor Watson stated that he and the Chairman represented MPC at KALC and in principle agreed to meet to collaborate. They added that the Local Plan from Gravesham was being delayed because of the Lower Thames Crossing.

Another Councillor added that a weight restriction on the bridge could also be a possibility. It was agreed that one campaign for the A227 would be a way forward.

5.2 Borough Councillor and County Councillor

F.C. 106 There were no Borough Councillor or County Councillor present.

5.3 Police

F.C. 107 There were no Police present.

Item 6: Strategic Plan 2024-2027: To note the Strategic Plan adopted 15th May 2024

Councillor D Johnson arrived during this item at 19:42

F.C. 108 There was a lengthy debate around the strategic plan with statements ranging from too progressive, not realistic, a lot of content; needs to be achievable. The Clerk stated that the strategic plan contained a staffing structure with 4 officers, providing resilience within the office. However, they were aware that a number of Councillors were unhappy with the administration costs, in particular the staffing costs, and that a decision needs to be made before they continue with the recruitment process. The delivery of the strategic plan has implications on staffing costs and the budget. The next draft budget meeting being on the 28th October 2025.

A Councillor asked the question "Are the 85+ hours right for the staffing level? We have a duty of care for officers They have been unable to take annual leave and consistently doing extra hours. "Does the Clerk continue with the recruitment process?" Another option suggested was meeting halfway with the hours. A further debate ensued with comments ranging from the 'office needs resilience' to 'we can get in a locum'.

Following the discussion, it was suggested that a working group for the Strategic Plan be set up. However, an agreement was not reached regarding its future.

Item 7: Highways Improvement Plan (HIP): To review the HIP and Prioritise the items prior to sending to KCC for response

F.C. 109 The Clerk advised that, following various requests from members of the public, Councillors needed to decide if they were to be included in the HIP, and if so prioritise them.

No.1 Following discussions, it was agreed that the top priority was the A227 and its classification to a 'B' road.

No.2 Camer Parade parking would be removed as this was unachievable due to the individual shops being unable to agree, as they have different requirements. However, the School Close car park would remain high on the priority, but it was noted that this was GBC not KCC.

Councillors then prioritised according to what they believed could be achievable, so slotted the next in at:

No.3 Wrotham Road/Junction of Green Lane – double yellow lines.

No.4 Camer Park Road – installation of a safety mirror to assist exiting Camer Park Road onto Green Lane.

No.5 North Lodge, South Street, Wrotham Road – dropped kerb to access path opposite North Lodge.

It was agreed not to include in the HIP - 'lack of adequate pedestrian crossings on Wrotham Road between the secondary school and The Parade'.

The updated version of the HIP would be submitted to KCC.

Item 8: Request for a Memorial Bench: To consider the request as detailed in the report

F.C. 110 It was noted that MPC currently have a moratorium on allowing memorial benches and trees. However, this is a request to replace a bench in front of Wellington Cottages that is in very poor condition.

RESOLVED that: The request be approved subject to the requester bearing the costs to remove and install a new one, and paying a donation charge of £500 that covers 10 years maintenance. The requester will also be advised of the 2 types of benches permitted by the Council.

Item 9: Southdown Shaw Allotments: To consider the quotes for the new site entrance

F.C. 111 It was agreed that Hooper & Sons be awarded the business subject to the revised quote being within the £3300 envelope.

F.C. 112 Suspension of Standing Order 3(x) – a meeting shall not exceed a period of two hours

PROPOSED: Cllr Wade. SECONDED: Cllr Watson. All in favour.

Item 10: **Review of various policies and procedures (HR01, HR02, HR03, HR04, HR05, HR06, HR07, HR08, HR09, HR10, HR11, HR12, HR13, HR14, HR15, HR16, HR17)**

F.C. 113 It was proposed that the policies and procedures be accepted subject to the addition of 'or the Chairman of Personnel Committee' in the Administration of the Policy section which is included in each one. All agreed.

Item 11: **Financial Matters**

F.C. 114 Councillors considered the documentation presented.

RESOLVED that:

- 11.1** The schedule of payments since the last meeting up to 30 September 2025 be agreed.
- 11.2** The receipts and payments report for the same period be received.
- 11.3** The bank statements and supporting Bank Reconciliation be received.
- 11.4** The council reserves statement be received.
- 11.5** The External Auditors report and certificate for the year ended 2024-2025, Section 3 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the Parish Council be received. The notice of conclusion of audit will remain on display for 14 days in compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
- 11.6** The Interim Audit report be received and its recommendations implemented.

The meeting ended at 21:25.

Item 5

Elite Tree Care and Gardening Services Ltd

13 Montpelier Avenue

Bexley

KT

DA53AP

+0132251797007522088482

elitetreecare@hotmail.com

VAT Registration No.: 461957070



Elite Tree Care
& Gardening Services LTD

Estimate

ADDRESS

TRACY HANLON
STEELES LANE
MEOPHAM
DA13 0PZ

ESTIMATE NO. 3696

DATE 10/10/2025

DATE	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
10/10/2025	Tree Surgery	Description of Works: To carry out the reduction of 2 lime trees and 2 horse chestnut trees using a truck-mounted MEWP and NPTC climber(Mobile Elevated Work Platform). All work will be carried out in accordance with BS3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations. Scope of Works: • Full site assessment prior to commencement. • Set up pedestrian control measures. • Use of truck-mounted MEWP to safely access upper canopy. • Track mats supplied to protect grass from any wheel marks • Reduce all 4 trees to specification that has been granted by council	1	5,750.00	5,750.00

DATE	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
		• Remove and chip all arising debris on site. • Leave site clean and tidy upon completion.			
		PLEASE NOTE - Road closures would need to be arranged in order to work on both of the horse chestnuts			

SUBTOTAL	5,750.00
VAT TOTAL	1,150.00
TOTAL	£6,900.00

VAT SUMMARY

	RATE	VAT	NET
VAT @ 20%		1,150.00	5,750.00

Accepted By

Accepted Date

Broadway Hall
Horsforth
Leeds
LS18 4RS

Tel: 44(0)113 259 3560
enquiries@arborisk.co.uk

Elite Tree Care and Gardening Services Limited

We confirm details of our client's insurance programme below:

Business Description: Tree Surgery

Employers Liability

Insurer: Aviva Insurance Limited
Policy Number: ARB/47121893/002411
Renewal Date: 15/12/2025
Limit of Indemnity: £10,000,000 any one occurrence

Public/ Products Liability

Insurer: Aviva Insurance Limited
Policy Number: ARB/47121893/002411
Renewal Date: 15/12/2025
Limit of Indemnity: £5,000,000 any one occurrence in respect of public liability; any one occurrence and any one period of insurance in respect of products liability

Date: 14/12/2024

Signed for and on behalf of Arborisk

Yours sincerely

The Arborisk Team

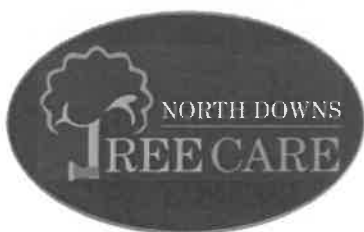
Email : enquiries@arborisk.co.uk

Phone: 0113 259 3560

The policy includes an indemnity to principals clause.

This letter is issued as a matter of information only and confers no rights upon the recipient of this letter other than those provided by the policy. This letter does not amend, extend or alter the coverage afforded by the policy or policies as described herein.

Notwithstanding any requirement, term or condition of any contract or other document with respect to which this letter may be issued or pertain, the insurance afforded by the policy described herein is subject to all terms, conditions or exclusions of such policy.



ESTIMATE

From: NORTH DOWNS TREE CARE
Highfield
White Horse Road
Meopham
Kent
DA13 0UF
United Kingdom

To: Meopham parish council

Issue Date	02/10/2025
Estimate No.	000006
Valid until	01/12/2025

Accept/Decline online at: <https://northdownstreecare.quickfile.co.uk>

Description	Unit Cost	Qty	Total
To reduce 4 trees (2 X limes and 2 X horse chestnuts) on hook green by 30%	2,500.00	1	2,500.00

All waste removed from site.

All insurance's and certificates are available upon request.

A full copy of RAMS will be available as well.

Sub Total: 2,500.00

Estimate Total (GBP): 2,500.00

Payments terms are 7 days from invoicing.

Meopham Parish Council

Detailed Budget Summary

20 October 2025 (2025-2026)

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2025 and 20/10/2025)

Council		Last Year 2024-2025		Current Year 2025-2026			
Administration		Receipts		Payments			
Code	Title	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total
24	Staff Salaries Tax & NIC		74.40	85,000.00	54,878.99	55430	26,063.42
25	Staff Pensions			16,000.00	9,113.46	8500	4,809.46
26	Cllr & Staff Expenses			400.00	68.94	362	212.66
28	Professional Memberships			4,850.00	1,804.00	3400	3,070.00
29	Chairman's Allowance			100.00	100.00	0	
30	Training			7,000.00	313.00	1250	496.78
33	Photocopier Contract			700.00	734.66	1267	1,020.84
34	Communications & IT			1,800.00	1,704.35	2745	1,898.80
87	Insurance		100.00	2,750.00	2,676.50	2235	2,234.88
88	Office Rent		435.00	10,220.00	6,964.00	6580	3,384.79
89	Venue Hire for Meetings			480.00	240.00	550	159.30
90	Office Supplies			1,200.00	392.97	400	153.01
91	Software Licences			1,030.00	2,046.53	1378	419.99
92	Internal & External Audit Fees			1,200.00	614.65	1200	616.25
93	Payroll Services			360.00	336.00	336	168.00
104	Bank Charges			336.00	145.70	195	112.35
105	Professional Services		97.85		2,999.00	2778	2,058.40
110	Water Supply		842.63		41.49	50	
112	Other Office expenses: 90				1,599.76		
113	Multipay Card Payment		16.00			47	47.00
114	ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION				1,935.00		
117	VILLAGE POLL				3,367.28		
123	RESERVES				10,902.95		
129	EAP-EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME					780	
132	ELECTIONS					15179	15,178.75
133	NEW BANK ACCOUNT						
	Compensation					33750	
	Allotments					3300	
	SUB TOTAL		1,565.88	133,426.00	102,979.23	141712	62,104.68

Item 9

Council Projects
& Events

Last Year 2024-2025

Current Year 2025-2026

Code Title	Receipts		Payments		Payments		
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast
2 Community Events		2,575.00	650.00	2,987.69	7,000.00		1000
82 Health & Wellbeing			1,000.00	650.00			0
100 Village Greens - Post Replacements			8,000.00	2,751.00			5000
102 New Website Project			6,000.00		704.00		1000
103 Camer Parade - Highways Scheme			7,000.00				0
109 Harvel Bench				721.97			0
124 MEOPHAM WINDMILL		1.24			5,000.00		5000
125 JUDSONS PAVILLION					6,000.00		6000
126 LIBRARY SERVICES					12,500.00		12500
127 SCHOOL CLOSE					5,000.00		5000
SUB TOTAL		2,576.24	22,650.00	7,110.66	35,500.00	704.00	35500

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Council
Services

Last Year 2024-2025

Current Year 2025-2026

Code Title	Receipts		Payments		Payments		
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast
4 Defibrillator Maintenance			145.00		150.00		0
8 Service Contract & Litter Collection			10,000.00	5,700.00	20,000.00		8000
13 Trees			3,000.00		3,300.00	1,260.00	12000
16 Community Grants Scheme		500.00	3,000.00	3,500.00	3,000.00	2,500.00	2500
17 Families and Young People			5,000.00	5,000.03	6,000.00	6,000.00	6000
19 Community Toilet Scheme			3,000.00				0
22 Bus Shelter Cleaning			1,000.00	1,254.00	1,200.00	664.62	1327
68 Streetlights			7,500.00	3,423.00	11,040.00	4,829.56	7000
83 Community Engagement		-2,875.00	4,750.00		3,000.00		0
85 Village Sign & Flagpole			2,000.00	950.00	1,000.00		0
106 Harvel Pond				133.12			0
107 Former Toilet Block				4,588.28	15,000.00	19.16	20000
108 Drinking Fountain				40.42		48.66	100
128 ARBORICULTURAL SURVEY - ROLLING PROVISION					1,650.00		1620
130 SPEEDWATCH					1,500.00		3000
134 JUDSONS MAINTENANCE						220.00	220
SUB TOTAL		-2,375.00	39,395.00	24,588.85	66,840.00	15,542.00	61767

report due could oo up

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Agenda Item	Item 10
Meeting Date	28 th October 2025
Report Title	Draft Budget 2026-2027
Recommendation/s	To review the draft budget for the 2026-2027 financial year
Prepared By	Clerk – Lisa Winter
Detailed Information	
Please find attached a draft budget, based on year-to-date expenditure. Councillors are invited to comment on/suggest amendments at this meeting. The Clerk will take the comments from both draft budget meetings away for consideration, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council. The revised/final budget will be submitted to the 25th November 2025 Full Council meeting for final agreement/sign off.	

MEOPHAM	PARISH	COUNCIL
	PROPOSED	
	BUDGET FOR	
	2026/27	

Council Projects & Events		Information
Community Events	£1,000	Remembrance £500, Carols on the Green and Christmas Tree £500
Meopham Windmill	£5,000	Rolling provision in the event that the Windmill Trust need financial support due to KCC selling the Windmill
Library Service	£7,500	Rolling provision due to the likely devolving of services to Parish Councils
School Close Parking	£5,000	Rolling provision due to the likely devolving of services to Parish Councils
TOTAL - Council Projects	£18,500	

Council Services		Information
Service Contract	£20,000	Provisional figure tender to be issued
Tree Maintenance	£15,000	102 trees (£9180 spent on 6 lime trees and basal cutting) - prior provision too low
Community Grants Scheme	£3,000	This figure has been static for a number of years
Families and Young People	£6,000	This figure remains the same as 25/26
Bus Shelter Cleaning	£1,950	Uplift for rising costs. New contract 2026.
Streetslights Maintenance	£10,000	Maintenance Contract due for renewal and repair costs
Pitfield Green Toilets	£15,000	Service Contract and annual maintenance inspections, Water & Electricity Bills - provisional figure tender to be issued
Drinking Fountain	£110	Water Bill approx £25 per quarter with 10% uplift
Judsons Maintenance	£500	The Colts have indicated they are happy with the self repair lease. So nominal allowance for things that fall within MPC as landlord remit.
Arboricultural Survey - Rolling Provision	£1,500	Required every 2 years.
Judsons Play Area	£2,000	Rolling provision for replacement of play equipment
Village Green Maintenance	£600	General Maintenance
Village Posts	£7,500	Post replacement and general maintenance - prior provision too low
Allotment Maintenance	£7,500	Rolling provision for fencing maintenance, boundary trees & shrubbery maintenance - no prior provision. This year entrance driveway needs renewing approx. £3000 and boundary fencing very poor. Need to start provisioning.
Community Engagement	£3,000	May not be required depending on Strategic Plan
Village Sign & Flagpole	£1,000	This figure remains the same as 25/26
TOTAL - Council Services	£94,660	

Council Administration		Information
Staff Salaries, Tax & NIC	£88,101	No adjustments made yet as recruiting
Staff Pension	£15,000	No adjustments made yet as recruiting
Cllrs and Staff Expenses	£400	
Professional Memberships	£4,500	SLCC £1000 (4 officers) and NALC £1870 and HR Support £1200
Training	£4,680	Councillors 12x£65x2 Officers CILCA £750, ILCA £120, £1000 misc training courses/webinars - data protection, H&S, First Aid, Finance. Conferences - planning, clerks, Chairmans
Photocopier Contract	£1,300	
Communications & IT	£2,465	
Insurance	£3,600	Uplift and increase due to current claims
Office Rent	£6,828	RPI increase per year
Venue Hire for Meetings	£550	Harvel Village Hall, Meopham Village Hall, St Johns Centre
Office Supplies	£600	Reduced costs for 26/27.
Software Licences	£1,800	Scribe Accounting, Website address, Microsoft, Email addresses
Internal & External Audit Fees	£1,200	External Audit £600 Internal Audit x2 £600
Payroll Services	£360	Based on 4 staff
Refreshments	£500	Annual Parish Meeting, Training Days
Bank Charges	£230	Reduced due to changing accounts
Professional Services	£3,000	Locum, Legal, Media Adverts,
Annual Subscription	£50	ICO
EAP	£780	
Elections	£20,000	Earmarked budget used. Need to replace plus rolling provision for elections in 2027
Litigation	£50,000	External Auditors - need to budget for outstanding grievance and possible litigation from councillors and ex-councillors
Total - Council Administration	£205,944	

TOTAL ALL	£319,104
Income (See Below)	£5,096

Receipts (Transfer from General Reserves)	£70,000	Cover Litigation and Elections
PRECEPT (Total expenditure less income and receipts)	£244,008	
TAX BASE 2026-27	3,064	
Amount Payable per Band D Household for the previous year	£ 75.58	
Amount Payable per Band D Household for the year shown	£ 79.64	
Increase/(Decrease) per Household (£.p per annum)	£ 4.06	
Increase/(Decrease) per Household (% per annum)	5%	
Estimated Income		
Income source	Amount	
Allotment Association - Rent	£525	New lease to be negotiated for 1st April 2026. They are about to increase plot fees from £35 to £40. 160 plots with 3 on waiting list.
Judsons Pavilion - Rent	£200	The rent review is at ten-year mark which would be 2030
Wayleave - EDF	£170	The wayleave figure is not adjustable
Cricket Club rent	£1	The lease provides only for charging a peppercorn rent.
Bank Interest	£4,200	Uplifted due to interest rates on new accounts
Total	£5,096	