

# Meopham Parish Council

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## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024 at 7:00pm at Judsons Pavilion

### Members Present:

Cllr S Buchanan – Vice-Chairman (*until Item 2*)  
Cllr D Bramer  
Cllr P Crow – Vice-Chairman (*from Item 2*)  
Cllr A Evans  
Cllr D Fisher  
Cllr P Haslam  
Cllr C Price – Chairman  
Cllr G Smith  
Cllr B Wade  
Cllr P Watson

### In Attendance:

S Fishenden – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer  
L Winter – Assistant Clerk

### Item 1: To elect the Chairman of Meopham Parish Council for the 2024/2025 Council Year and to receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office from the Chairman

**F.C. 01** It was agreed to elect Cllr Cheryl Price as Chairman of Meopham Parish Council for the 2024/25 municipal year. Her signing of the declaration of Acceptance of Office was witnessed by the Proper Officer.

PROPOSED: Cllr Evans. SECONDED: Cllr Smith. There were eight votes in favour and two abstentions. The motion was carried.

### Item 2: To elect the Vice-Chairman of Meopham Parish Council for the 2024/2025 Council Year and to receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office from the Vice-Chairman

**F.C. 02** There were two nominations received:

- Cllr Buchanan PROPOSED that Cllr Peter Crow be elected as Vice-Chairman of Council. SECONDED: Cllr Haslam.
- Cllr Watson PROPOSED that Cllr Anna Evans and Cllr Gary Smith be elected as Joint Vice-Chairman of Council. SECONDED: Cllr Fisher.

The two proposals were put to a vote.

- Cllr Crow received six votes in favour, three against and one abstention.
- Cllr Evans and Cllr Smith received five votes in favour and five against.

**F.C. 03** Cllr Peter Crow was therefore duly elected as Vice-Chairman of Council. His signing of the declaration of Acceptance of Office was witnessed by the Proper Officer.

- Item 3: Apologies for Absence: To receive and accept apologies**
- F.C. 04** Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Adam (prior commitment) and Cllr Sims (prior commitment)
- Item 4: Declarations of Members' Interests: To receive declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for this meeting**
- F.C. 05** There were no declarations of interest.
- Item 5: To approve minutes of the previous Full Council meeting: 15.05.24**
- F.C. 06** The minutes of the previous meeting were approved, subject to the minor amendment to include the words 'Happy Valley' in **F.C. 320**.
- PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Smith. All in favour.
- Item 6: Committees & Working Groups – Terms of Reference**
- 6.1 Personnel Committee: To agree the terms of reference for the Personnel Committee**
- F.C. 07** It was agreed to adopt the Personnel Committee terms of reference, subject to the following amendments:
- To clarify with the Council's HR provider that the wording of bullet point three is suitable.
  - To break bullet point six into three separate sentences.
  - To add '*inclusive of contractual statements*' after the words 'staffing structure' in bullet point eight
  - To add a tenth bullet point '*To recommend candidates for co-option to any councillor vacancy*'.
- PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Smith. All in favour.
- 6.2 Planning: To agree to adopt either the draft terms of reference for a Planning Committee or for a Planning Applications Working Group**
- F.C. 08** It was agreed to adopt the terms of reference for a Planning Committee for an initial trial period of six months. It was noted all councillors would continue to be expected to review planning applications as they are received.
- It was agreed the Committee would elect the Chairman of the Planning Committee at it's first meeting after the Annual Council Meeting.
- The membership would consist of Cllr Adam, Cllr Buchanan, Cllr Bramer, Cllr Crow, Cllr Haslam and Cllr Wade.
- PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. All in favour.
- Item 7: Personnel Committee - Membership: To elect members to the Personnel Committee as per the agreed terms of reference**
- F.C. 09** It was agreed that the Personnel Committee would consist of the following permanent members: Cllr Buchanan, Cllr Fisher, Cllr Smith, Cllr Watson along with Cllr Crow ex officio.

It was agreed that Cllr Adam, Cllr Haslam and Cllr Sims would serve as substitute members.

PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Smith. There were nine votes in favour and one against. The motion was carried.

**Item 8: Annual Review of Council Administration**

**8.1 Schedule of Meetings: To agree the schedule of meetings of meetings up to and including the next Annual Meeting of Council**

**F.C. 10** It was agreed to adopt the schedule of meetings for the 2024/2025, with the amendment to include a formal budget meeting between November and December's Full Council.

PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

**8.2 Asset Register: To review and approve the inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment**

**F.C. 11** The Asset Register for 2024/2025 was reviewed and approved, subject to the following amendments:

- To remove the chamber table and chairs, as this has been donated to the Windmill Trust
- To remove the metal storage container, as this has been donated to the Windmill Trust
- To add 'Fowlers Stone Green' to the land for insurance purposes

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

**8.3 Keyholders: To review and approve the key-holders for council buildings and assets**

**F.C. 12** The list of keyholders for 2024/25 was approved, subject to one amending to give a set of office keys to the Chairman of Council.

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

**8.4 Professional Memberships: To review and approve the Council's and employees' memberships to other bodies for 2024/2025**

**F.C. 13** It was agreed to approve the following Professional Memberships:

- Kent Association of Local Councils - £1765 + VAT
- SLCC Membership for Clerk - £303 + VAT
- SLCC Membership for Deputy Clerk - £253 + VAT
- SLCC Membership for Assistant Clerk - £210 + VAT
- SLCC Membership for Finance & Grants Officer - £195 + VAT
- Town & County Planning Association - £110 + VAT
- Campaign to Protect Rural England - £45.00

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

**8.5 Software Licences: To review and approve the Council's software licences for the 2024/2025 municipal year**

**F.C. 14**

It was agreed to approve the following software licences:

- Scribe for Accounting Software - £933.12 + VAT
- Parish Online for Digital Mapping Software - £356.00 + VAT

PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Fisher. All in favour.

**8.6 Arrangements for Receiving Correspondence: To confirm that all councillors will continue to receive summons, agendas and minutes plus other correspondence via their council email address**

**F.C. 15**

It was confirmed that all councillors will continue to receive summons, agendas and minutes plus other correspondence via their council email address for the 2024/25 municipal year.

**8.7 Banking Arrangements: To review and approve the list of bank account signatories for 2024/2025**

**F.C. 16**

It was agreed the bank account signatories for the Council would be the following for the 2024/25 municipal year:

**Unity Trust Bank – Current Account**

- **Signatories:** Cllr Buchanan, Cllr Crow, Cllr Price, Cllr Evans, Cllr Haslam and Cllr Wade
- **Administrators:** S Fishenden, G Duffort and T Hanlon
- **Corporate Multipay Card:** S Fishenden

**Lloyds Bank – Treasurers Account**

- **Signatories:** Cllr Buchanan, Cllr Crow, Cllr Evans, Cllr Price and Cllr Wade
- **Administrators:** S Fishenden & G Duffort

**Cambridge Building Society – Council Saver**

- **Signatories:** Cllr Buchanan, Cllr Crow, Cllr Haslam and Cllr Price
- **Administrator:** S Fishenden

PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Haslam. All in favour.

**8.8 Payments by Standing Order & Direct Debit: To agree regular payments to be made by either standing order or direct debit for 2024/2025**

**F.C. 17**

The following payments were agreed to be paid by standing order and direct debit.

| Payee       | Type           | Service | Amount        | Payment Date                  |
|-------------|----------------|---------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| S Fishenden | Standing Order | Salary  | Agreed salary | 20 <sup>th</sup> of the month |
| G Duffort   | Standing Order | Salary  | Agreed salary | 20 <sup>th</sup> of the month |

|                              |                |                         |                              |                               |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| L Winter                     | Standing Order | Salary                  | Agreed salary                | 20 <sup>th</sup> of the month |
| T Hanlon                     | Standing Order | Salary                  | Agreed salary                | 20 <sup>th</sup> of the month |
| Meopham PCC                  | Standing Order | Office Rent             | £435 per month               | 20 <sup>th</sup> of the month |
| HMRC                         | Direct Debit   | PAYE Contributions      | Agreed PAYE contributions    | Variable                      |
| Kent Pension Fund            | Standing Order | Pension Contributions   | Agreed pension contributions | 20 <sup>th</sup> of the month |
| Highview Tree Services       | Standing Order | Service contract        | £475.00 per month            | 20 <sup>th</sup> of the month |
| Business Stream              | Direct Debit   | Drinking Fountain Water | Variable                     | N/A                           |
| Microsoft 365                | Direct Debit   | Email Hosting & VOIP    | Variable                     | N/A                           |
| Lloyds Bank (Multi-pay card) | Direct Debit   | Multi-pay card charge   | £3.00 per month              | N/A                           |
| Smart Office Systems         | Direct Debit   | Photocopier Lease       | Variable                     | N/A                           |

PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Evans. All in favour.

**Item 9: Council Governance**

**9.1 Standing Orders: To review and approve the Council's Standing Orders for the 2024/2025 municipal year**

**F.C. 18** The Council's Standing Orders were adopted with the following amendments:

- To amend 3 (j) to insert the word 'direct between 'shall' and 'their';
- To amend 3 (x) to remove the words 'and thirty minutes'
- To amend 5 (c) to amend 7:30pm to 7:00pm

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

**9.2 Financial Regulations: To review and approve the Council's Financial Regulations for the 2024/2025 municipal year**

**F.C. 19** It was agreed to re-adopt the current Financial Regulations, to enable the new model financial regulations to be reviewed and presented to the June 2024 Full Council meeting.

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

**9.3 Scheme of Delegation: To review and approve the Council's Scheme of Delegation for the 2024/2025 municipal year**

**F.C. 11** It was agreed to adopt the Scheme of Delegation for the 2024/25 municipal year.

It was noted the Clerk would circulate the list of powers that the legislation states are reserved for Full Council.

PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Bramer. All in favour.

**9.4 Publication Scheme: To review and approve the Council's publication scheme for the 2024/2025 municipal year**

**F.C. 12** It was agreed that the Council's publication scheme would be approved.

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

**Item 10:** **Employee Handbook: To review the council's employee handbook including all employment-related policies and determine whether to adopt**

**F.C. 13** It was agreed to defer the consideration of the employee handbook to the Personnel Committee.

**Item 11:** **Parish Council Representatives on External Bodies: To agree representatives for the 2024-2025 council year**

It was agreed to appoint the following representatives for the 2024/25 municipal year:

|                                    |                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meopham Village Hall Committee     | Cllr Buchanan                                                                          |
| Kent Association of Local Councils | Cllr Price and Cllr Bramer<br>( <i>empowered to appoint proxies in their absence</i> ) |
| Culverstone Community Association  | Rotating amongst the four members of the Culverstone and Harvel ward                   |

**Item 12:** **Contracts Register: To note the Council's contract and leases register for the 2024/2025 municipal year**

**F.C. 14** The Contracts Register for the 2024/25 municipal year was noted.

**Item 13:** **Work Programme for 2024/25: To note the Council's work programme and agenda management timetable for the 2024/25 municipal year**

**F.C. 15** The Work Programme for 2024/25 was noted.

**Item 14:** **Officer's Report: To receive a report of items for information from the Clerk and Deputy Clerk**

**F.C. 16** The Officers Report was presented by the Clerk, a copy of the report is attached as an appendix to the minutes.

***The meeting closed at 9:06pm***