Meopham Parish Council

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MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council
held on Tuesday 17th May 2022 at 7.30pm
at the Cricket Pavilion, Meopham

Members:
Cllr D Bramer
Cllr M Bramer
Cllr S Buchanan – Chairman
Cllr G Green – Vice-Chairman ***(from item 2)***
Cllr J Ogden – Vice-Chairman ***(until item 2)***
Cllr A Rose
Cllr B Wade

In attendance:
S Fishenden – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
C Collings – Assistant Clerk

Item 1: **To elect the Chairman of Meopham Parish Council for the 2022/2023 Council Year and to receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office from the Chairman**

F.C. 1 Cllr Ogden PROPOSED that Cllr Sheila Buchanan is elected as Chairman of the Council for the 2022/23 council year. SECONDED: Cllr D Bramer. All in favour.

Cllr Buchanan then read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was also witnessed and signed by the Proper Officer.

Item 2: **To elect the Vice-Chairman of Meopham Parish Council for the 2022/2023 Council Year and to receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office from the Vice-Chairman**

F.C. 2 Cllr Ogden announced he did not wish to be elected again as he felt it was time for someone new to take the role. He thanked councillors for allowing him to serve as Vice-Chairman for the past seven years. Nominations were therefore invited from those present.

Cllr D Bramer PROPOSED Cllr Graham Green is elected as Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the 2022/23 council year. SECONDED: Cllr Rose. All in favour.

Cllr Green then read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was also witnessed and signed by the Proper Officer.

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

F.C. 3 Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Price (holiday), Cllr Gofton (holiday) and Cllr McTavish (holiday).

It was noted Cllr D Sims was not present but no apologies had been received.

Item 4: **Declarations of Members' Interests:**

4.1 To remind all Members that if any of their disclosures on the Disclosable Pecuniary Interests form submitted to GBC have changed, they need to update their forms within twenty-eight days, forms can be obtained from the Clerk.

F.C. 4 This was noted.

4.2 To receive declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for this meeting

F.C.5 Cllr Green and Cllr M Bramer declared an interest in any matters relating to Meopham Windmill as a result of their roles as Trustees of Meopham Windmill Trust. They would abstain from any votes.

Item 5: To approve the minutes of the previous Full Council meeting: 22.03.22

F.C. 6 These were approved. PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Green. All in favour.

Item 6: 2021-22 End-of Year Financial Matters

6.1 To review the effectiveness of the system of Internal Control (*) (to follow): **Councillors are asked to consider the attached Statement of Internal Control in support of the Annual Governance Statement. The Chairman of the Council and the Clerk to sign.**

F.C. 7 The Statement of Internal Control document was approved. PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden. All in favour.

6.2 Annual Governance Statement (*):
To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2021-22, Section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2022

F.C. 8 This was approved. PROPOSED: Cllr Ogden. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. All in favour.

6.3 Accounting Statements, Bank Reconciliation and Variances (*):
To approve the Accounting Statements for 2021-22, Section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2022 and the supporting Bank Reconciliation as at 31 March 2022 and the explanation of the significant variations from last year (2020-21) to this year (2021-22)

F.C. 9 These documents were approved. PROPOSED: Cllr Ogden. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. All in favour.

6.4 Exercise of Public Rights
To note the proposed dates (Monday 13 June 2022 to Friday 22 July 2022) for the Exercise of Public Rights as selected by the Council's Responsible Finance Officer.

F.C. 10 This was noted.

Item 7: Schedule of Meetings for 2022-2023

7.1 To approve the proposed schedule of meetings of the Full Council and Standing Committees for 2022/23 up to and including the next Annual Meeting of Council (*)

F.C. 11 It was agreed the schedule for 2022-2023 would be approved, subject to the inclusion of Personnel Committee meetings within the schedule. PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Rose. All in favour

7.2 To agree all ordinary meetings of the Council and Standing Committees to start at 7:30pm, subject to any changes in accordance with council policy

F.C. 12 This was approved. PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr M Bramer. All in favour

Item 8: Council Governance: To review and approve the Council's –

8.1 Standing Orders

F.C. 13 These were approved with the NALC amendment to Standing Order 18 to remove reference to EU regulations.
PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. All in favour.

8.2 Financial Regulations

F.C. 14 The amendments as recommended by A&R were approved. PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden. All in favour.

8.3 Delegation Policy

F.C. 15 This was approved without amendment. PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Green. All in favour.

8.4 Complaints Policy

F.C. 16 This was approved, subject to the complaints procedure and adopted Code of Conduct being reviewed at the next A&R meeting.
PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED: Cllr Green. All in favour.

Item 9: Committees and Working Groups: To approve Terms of References for the following committees and working groups that report to Full Council -

9.1 Administration and Resources Committee

F.C. 17 This was approved with the minor amendment to correct the reference to 'Environment and Amenities'.
PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. All in favour.

9.2 Environment and Amenities Committee

F.C. 18 This was approved with the amendment to include street lighting and to add the word 'community' before the words grants.
PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. All in favour.

9.3 Planning and Projects Committee

F.C. 19 This was approved with the amendment of removing street lighting from the terms of reference.
PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

9.4 Planning Applications Working Group

F.C. 20 This was approved without amendment.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr M Bramer. All in favour.

9.5 Personnel Working Group

F.C. 21 It was agreed Personnel would remain a committee rather than converting to a Working Group. It would continue with the terms of reference adopted for the committee in 2021-22.
PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Green. All in favour.

Item 10: **Committee and Working Group Membership:** To approve the membership of the Committees and Working Groups that report to Full Council

F.C. 22 The membership list as presented was approved.
PROPOSED: Cllr D Bramer SECONDED: Cllr Rose. All in favour.

Item 11: **Election of Committee and Working Group Chairman and Vice Chairman**

11.1 Administration and Resources Committee

F.C. 23 Cllr Green PROPOSED Cllr M Bramer be elected as Chairman of A&R. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. All in favour.

Cllr Wade PROPOSED Cllr Green be elected as Vice-Chairman of A&R. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

11.2 Environment and Amenities Committee

F.C. 24 Cllr Wade PROPOSED Cllr D Bramer be elected as Chairman of E&A. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

Cllr D Bramer PROPOSED Cllr Wade be elected as Vice-Chairman of E&A. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

11.3 Planning and Projects Committee

F.C. 25 Cllr D Bramer PROPOSED Cllr McTavish be elected as Chairman of P&P. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

Cllr Green PROPOSED Cllr Rose be elected as Vice-Chairman of P&P. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden. All In favour.

11.4 Planning Applications Working Group: To consider continue to operate a rotating chairmanship and to delegate to the Clerk to arrange

F.C. 26 It was agreed to continue with the rotating chairmanship and to delegate to the Clerk to arrange the rota.
PROPOSED: Cllr D Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. All in favour.

11.5 Personnel Committee

F.C. 27 Cllr Green PROPOSED Cllr Buchanan be elected as Chairman of Personnel. SECONDED: Cllr Rose. All in favour.

Cllr Buchanan PROPOSED Cllr Green is elected as Vice-Chairman of Personnel. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden. All in favour

Cllr Green and Cllr M Bramer declared an interest in Item 12 as Trustees of Meopham Windmill Trust. They withdrew from the room and did not participate in the vote.

Item 12: **Parish Office Working Group: To review the membership of the Parish Office Working Group and to approve that it reports to Full Council instead of A&R (*)**

F.C. 28 The paper circulated by the Clerk was considered.

It was agreed to appoint Cllr Buchanan, Cllr Wade, Cllr Ogden and Cllr Price to the working group. The Working Group will report to Full Council. PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED: Cllr Rose. All in favour.

Cllr Green and Cllr M Bramer returned to the meeting.

Item 13: **Council Restructure – Motion from Cllr Buchanan**

13.1 In the light of the fact that there have been a significant number of extra-ordinary meetings of the Council and committees in the last year, it is proposed that a Working Group of four councillors, one of whom should be a newer councillor, and the Clerk, be established to review the structure and current functions of the Council and to the terms of reference of each Committee of the Council, in particular with the aim of avoiding such extraordinary meetings except when they are strictly imperative, and that the said group should make a report to Full Council in July 2022.

F.C. 29 There was an amendment to this motion to add the following text after the words 'strictly imperative', *'the group should produce an initial report for discussion at the Full Council meeting in October. Any substantial changes proposed to the Committee structure should be implemented from the next Annual Council Meeting'*.
PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Green. All in favour.

The motion with the substantive amendment was then approved.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden. All in favour.

13.2 *If the above motion is approved* to determine the composition of the said Working Group

F.C. 30 It was agreed to appoint Cllr Price, Cllr Buchanan, Cllr Ogden, Cllr Rose and the Clerk to the Working Group.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Rose. All in favour.

Item 14: **Working Groups: To agree that the membership of any Working Groups that report to individual committees will be reviewed at the first Committee meeting after the Annual Council Meeting**

F.C. 31 This was agreed.
PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden.

Item 15: **Representation on External Bodies: To approve the Council's representation on external bodies (*)**

F.C. 32 The representation on external bodies list was approved with the following amendments –
- Cllr Green to represent us at CPRE

- Cllr D Bramer to report on Rights of Way Committee updates
- Addition of Cllr Price as a representative at Harvel Village Hall Committee
- Confirmation the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of MPC can appoint proxies to KALC meetings if they are unable to attend
- The Council will not appoint a representative to the Lower Thames Crossing Association

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

Item 16: **Asset Register: To review and approve the inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment**

F.C. 33 This was reviewed and approved.
PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Rose. All in favour.

Item 17: **Key-Holders: To confirm and approve the key-holders for council buildings and assets**

F.C. 34 The key-holders list was reviewed.
- Cllr Buchanan confirmed her set of keys contained a key for the 'middle' door in the office.
- Cllr D Bramer confirmed she did not have her own set of keys, as she shared with Cllr M Bramer.

It was then approved. PROPOSED:

Item 18: **Subscriptions: To review and approve the Council's and employees' subscriptions to other bodies**

F.C. 35 It was agreed the Council would continue with the following subscriptions for 2022-23:
- Rural Kent
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Kent Association of Local Councils
- Meopham Review
- Kent County Playing Fields Association
- Open Spaces Society
- SLCC (Clerk and Assistant Clerk both holding memberships)

PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr M Bramer. All in favour.

Item 19: **Arrangements for Receiving Correspondence: To confirm that all councillors will continue to receive summons, agendas and minutes plus other correspondence via email**

F.C. 36 This was confirmed for 2022-2023.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden. All in favour.

Item 20: **Policy Review - To agree to adopt a rolling review schedule for all council policies, for them to be considered by Full Council or Administration and Resources rather than being presented at Annual Meetings of the Council**

F.C. 37 This was approved.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr M Bramer. All in favour.

Item 21: **Banking Arrangements**

21.1 To authorise the Clerk to order a Unity Trust Bank Corporate MultiPay card with an initial set-up fee of £50 and charges of £3 per month

F.C. 38 This was approved. PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr McTavish. All in favour.

21.2 To authorise the Clerk to complete an application to set up a 'Council Saver' account with Cambridge Building Society and to authorise two signatories to transfer an opening sum of £82,000 from the Lloyds account

F.C. 39 This was authorised. PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED: Cllr Green. All in favour.

21.3 To authorise the Clerk to internally transfer the amount required to bring the Unity account in-line with the £85,000 threshold. This money will be transferred to the Lloyds account

F.C. 40 This was authorised. PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. All in favour.

21.4 To review and approve the list of bank account signatories for 2022/23 (*)

F.C. 41 The bank signatories list was approved, including the addition of Cllr Price as a signatory and C Collings as an administrator on the Unity account. PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. All in favour.

Item 22: Financial Matters for 2022-2023

22.1 To consider the expenses claimed by the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Cllr McTavish

F.C. 42 The expense claims forms were approved.
PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden. All in favour.

22.2 To approve the schedule of payments in accordance with Financial Standing Order 5.2

F.C. 43 The schedule of payments was approved.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden. All in favour.

22.3 To receive the bank statements as of 09.05.22

F.C. 44 These were received.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden. All in favour.

22.4 To receive Meopham Parish Council's receipts and payments report up to 15.03.22

F.C. 45 It was noted the R&P report was up to the 09.05.22 and not 15.03.22. The report was received.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr M Bramer. All in favour.

Item 23: Chairman's Announcements

F.C. 46 Cllr Dalby has resigned from the Council. A notice of vacancy has been displayed. GBC will advise us after 30th May as to whether an election is being called or not.

Due to the loss of a CiLCA qualified clerk and councillor resignations, the Council lost its General Power of Competency in October 2021. The Council will be able to regain it in May 2023 when it meets the criteria again of a qualified clerk and two-thirds of elected members.

A reminder that the Clerk (and Assistant Clerk via the Clerk) report to the Council as a corporate body, and not to individual councillors.

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

Cllr Green PROPOSED entering closed session. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden. All in favour.

Item 24: **Operation London Bridge: To receive an update from the Clerk and Assistant Clerk on Op London Bridge preparations and authorise any necessary expenditure**

F.C. 47 The Assistant Clerk provided a verbal update on the preparations required for Operation London Bridge.

It was agreed to create a £600 earmarked budget drawn from the general reserves to be used for Op London Bridge expenditure.

PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. 6 votes in favour, 1 against.

Item 24: **Office Cleaning Contract:**

24.1 **To consider terminating the office cleaning contract with the current provider**

F.C. 48 After discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk be authorised to write to the contractor with our issues and invite the contractor to respond within 21 days and advise them that a lack of positive response may lead to termination of the contract. The matter would be referred to the next meeting of the A&R Committee to review the situation in the light of the outcome of the said correspondence.

PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden. All in favour.

24.2 ***If the vote to item 25.1 is positive*, to authorise interim arrangements for office cleaning**

F.C. 49 This item was not required.

24.3 ***If the vote to item 25.1 is positive*, to authorise the Clerk to advertise for a replacement cleaner or contract cleaner for the office, subject to it being within the allocated budget for 2022/23**

F.C. 50 This item was not required.

The meeting closed at 21:18pm