

Meopham Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 14th August 2023 at 7:00pm at Harvel Village Hall

Members Present:

Cllr M Adam
Cllr D Bramer
Cllr S Buchanan
Cllr A Burlington
Cllr G Green – Chairman
Cllr P Haslam
Cllr A Nicolaus Evans
Cllr C Price – Vice-Chairman
Cllr D Sims
Cllr B Wade
Cllr P Watson

In Attendance:

S Fishenden – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
G Duffort – Locum Assistant Clerk
M Cason – KCC Community Warden
Two members of the public

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

F.C. 100 Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Ogden DL (prior commitment)

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

F.C. 101 Cllr Price declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning application **20230697** as the property belongs to a family member. She would abstain from voting.

Cllr Bramer declared a personal interest in Item 4.

Item 3: **To approve minutes of the previous Full Council meeting: 18.07.23**

F.C. 102 It was agreed to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18.07.23

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

Item 4: **Meopham Windmill Trust: To consider the response received from the Charity Commission and to agree any actions arising from the advice**

F.C. 103 It was agreed to accept the advice received from the Charity Commission. This advice confirmed there were no current serving trustees of Meopham Windmill Trust

PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Price. Ten votes in favour, one abstention. The motion was carried.

F.C. 104 It was agreed to appoint Mr D Denman and Mr A Parker as trustees of Meopham Windmill Trust.

PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. Ten votes in favour, one abstention. The motion was carried.

Item 5: County Council Consultations

5.1 Community Warden Consultation: To consider how the Council wishes to respond

F.C. 105 It was agreed to approve the draft response subject to two amendments:

- To replace 'demand' with 'strongly urge'
- To including evidence of a benefit that the Warden offers such as partnership working with the local beat officer

The Clerk will submit the response to KCC.

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

5.2 Family Hub and Start for Life Consultation: To consider how the Council wishes to respond

F.C. 106 It was agreed to approve the draft response subject to one amendment:

- To include an evidence base for the users of The Grand from Meopham

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

Item 6: Strategic Plan – Vision Statement: To consider the draft vision statement for the Parish Council

F.C. 107 It was agreed to adopt the following as the Council's vision statement for the next four years:

- Support, protect and enhance Meopham Parish in a proactive, ethical way that promotes community engagement, positive interaction between the Council and residents which ensures that they feel well represented and served.

It was agreed to adopt the aims and objectives as drafted:

- Promoting improving to local infrastructure and amenities to meet the evolving needs of residents.
- Enhancing engagement by the Parish Council with the Meopham community including the businesses, religious organisations, clubs, and associations operating within the Parish
- Strengthening partnerships between local organizations and community groups to foster collaboration and address shared challenges
- Enhancing consultation processes for major decisions and initiatives
- Recognising the threat posed by climate change, working to promote sustainable practices and environmental initiatives within the Parish.
- Promoting protection of the Green Belt and ensuring that any development that takes place in the village is aimed first and foremost at meeting its needs and is sympathetic to the rural nature of the Parish.
- Ensuring effective financial management and resource allocation to support the Council's objectives and initiatives.
- Supporting local businesses and economic development to enhance the parish's prosperity.

- Investing in social programs and initiatives that promote inclusivity and address community needs.

PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. There were ten votes in favour, one abstention. The motion was carried.

F.C. 108

It was agreed to establish a Working Group to produce a strategic framework/plan around the aims and objectives.

The Working Group would consist of Cllr Adam, Cllr Green, Cllr Sims and Cllr Haslam plus the Clerk.

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

Item 7: Planning Applications: To agree responses to planning applications received

F.C. 109

It was agreed to adopt the proposed responses for the planning applications under consideration.

A copy of the proposed responses will be attached as an appendix.

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

Item 8: Planning Applications Working Group - Meeting Day: To consider amending the day meetings are held, from Tuesday evenings to Wednesday evenings

F.C. 110

It was agreed to consult all councillors on the possibility of moving the Planning Applications Working Group meeting day.

Item 9:

Personnel

9.1 Personnel Committee - Minutes: To note the minutes of the meeting held on 25.07.23

F.C. 111

The minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 25.07.23 were noted.

9.2 Overtime - Payment Request: To consider authorising payment of sixteen hours of overtime worked by the Clerk

F.C. 112

It was agreed to authorise the payment of sixteen hours of overtime worked by the Clerk.

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

Item 10: Southdown Shaw Allotments: To receive a report from the Clerk and agree any actions from this

F.C. 113

The Clerk reported concerns that the allotment association were allowing those outside the borough of Gravesham to take plots on the site. In addition, they had unsubscribed from the National Allotment Society which provided plot-holder insurance.

It was agreed to authorise the Clerk to arrange a meeting with the Allotment Association to discuss these concerns, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council

Item 11: Judsons Pavilion: To receive a report from the Clerk and agree any actions arising from this

F.C. 114 The Clerk reported that we were still awaiting a response from Meopham Colts as to the letter we sent to them.

The Council authorised the Clerk to convene an urgent meeting with the Colts, to discuss its concerns in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council.

Item 12: Hook Green – Trees: To receive an update on a complaint received regarding trees on Hook Green and to agree works relating to this

F.C. 115 It was agreed to consult the tree officer for permission to carry out the works to resolve the overhanging trees by Weavers Cottage.

The issue will then be referred to the September 2023 Council meeting for approval of the proposed work to resolve the issue and its cost.

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 13: Staffing Review - Recommendations: To consider the recommendations from the Personnel Committee following the independent staffing review

F.C. 116 It was agreed to adopt the following recommendations:

1. To enable the Clerk to utilise the opportunity to use volunteers in the office, subject to the clear understanding of there being a clear expectation of what the volunteer will be asked to do.
2. To investigate the cost of key person cover on the council's insurance
3. To update the job descriptions for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to reflect their true responsibilities.
4. To produce an employee handbook, including the updated job descriptions and a volunteer policy. To be produced by officers for scrutiny by the Personnel Committee before coming to Full Council

The recommendations around increased staffing hours and salary reviews were deferred until September 2023 to enable a response to be received from LGRC regarding the queries raised.

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

F.C. 117 It was agreed to extend the locum arrangements for the Assistant Clerk until the end of September 2023. The arrangements are that the paid hourly rate is SCP10, the ability to work unrestricted hours in the absence of the Deputy Clerk and that a monthly invoice is submitted.

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

Item 14: Subject Access Request – Potential Complaint: To note a potential complaint regarding a subject access request and to consider endorsing the Clerk's actions

F.C. 118

The Clerk reported on the subject access request received from a resident. The Council agreed to refuse the request on the grounds it was excessive.

PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED: Cllr Price. Ten votes in favour, one against. The motion was carried.

The meeting closed at 8:37pm