

Meopham Parish Council

The Windmill, Meopham Green, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0QA - Tel: 01474 813779
Email: enquiries@meopham-pc.gov.uk Website: www.meopham-pc.gov.uk



Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council held on Tuesday 20th December 2022 at 7:30pm at Meopham Village Hall

Members Present:

Cllr D Bramer
Cllr M Bramer
Cllr S Buchanan – Chairman
Cllr S Gofton (**arrived at 7:31pm**)
Cllr G Green – Vice-Chairman
Cllr J McTavish (**arrived at 7:31pm**)
Cllr M Moss
Cllr J Ogden DL
Cllr C Price
Cllr D Sims
Cllr B Wade

In Attendance:

S Fishenden – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
C Collings – Assistant Clerk
K Everson – Work Placement

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

F.C. 272 Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Rose (holiday). Apologies were also received from Borough Cllrs; E Aslam and D Tiran; Community Warden; M Cason and Member Pioneer; G Duffort.

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

F.C. 273 Cllr M Bramer and Cllr Green declared an interest in Item 14 as Trustees of Meopham Windmill Trust. They would abstain from voting and not participate in any council discussions.

Cllr Price declared a non-pecuniary interest in application **20221241** as she knows the owner of the property.

Cllr D Bramer and Cllr M Bramer declared a non-pecuniary interest in application **20220657** due to Cllr D Bramer's role as trustee of The Pathway Academy Trust.

Item 3: **To approve the minutes of previous meetings: 15.11.22**

F.C. 274 The minutes of the meeting held on 15.11.22 were approved.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. All in favour.

Item 4: **Public Session & External Reports**

4.1 Public Session

F.C. 275 There were no members of the public present.

4.2 Borough Councillors and County Councillor

F.C. 276 There were no Borough or County Councillors present.

4.3 PCSO and Community Warden

F.C. 277 There was no PCSO report. The Community Warden provided a written report:

Within my role I have dealt with and reported the following Untaxed, abandoned vehicles Neighbourhood disputes Defected streetlights Highways issues Fly tipping Potholes.

I regularly visit the following:

- Scam victims and provide reassurance, making referrals to agencies to support them with benefit advice, adaptations, tele-care systems and hospital transport.
- I regularly attend the Carers group at St Johns, Church Hall and have provided scam awareness presentations and monthly I attend Harvel Pop Up Café.
- I have been actively promoting the Sustainable Warmth, Government grant scheme, designed to provide FREE fully funded energy-efficiency upgrades to those who would be eligible.
- I will continue supporting local neighbourhood watch coordinators and promote the scheme.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and A Happy New Year.

4.4 Co-op Member Pioneer

F.C. 278 There was no Member Pioneer report.

Item 5: **Planning Applications: To consider and make recommendations on the following planning applications**

F.C. 279 **20221241 – Priesthood, Priestwood Road, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0DA**

Conversion of existing outbuilding to a new 2-bedroom dwelling

It was agreed to object to this application on the grounds of inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Green. Ten votes in favour, one abstention due to declared interest.

20221234 – 1 Warwick Gardens, Meopham, Gravesend, DA13 0PJ

Erection of a two-metre-high garden fence to the side garden area

It was agreed to object to this application on the grounds of being out of character with the street scene and having a detrimental impact on the sight lines and therefore safety of the road.

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

20220657 – Culverstone Green Primary School, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Gravesend, DA13 0RF

Construction of a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) on the school field outdoor

It was agreed that we would raise no objection to this application and ask the Clerk to query the opportunity of community usage.

PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Price. Eight votes in favour, two abstentions due to declared interests

Item 6: Finance & Governance

6.1 Expenses Claims: To consider approving expenses claimed by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk

F.C. 280 The expenses claim from the Clerk of £332.18 were approved. It was recognised that it is not good practice to use personal debit cards but in the absence of the council Multi-pay card from Unity Bank it would be permitted temporarily.

The Clerk and Cllr Price confirmed they would be making a visit to Unity Bank in January 2023 to resolve the issue.

6.2 Schedule of Payments: To approve the schedule of payments awaiting authorisation up to 13.12.22

F.C. 281 The Schedule of Payments were approved. A copy is attached as an appendix to the minutes.

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

6.3 Receipts and Payments Report: To note the report up to 13.12.22

F.C. 282 The Receipts and Payments Report up to 13.12.22 was noted.

6.4 Bank Statements: To receive the bank statements as of 13.12.22

F.C. 283 The Lloyds and Unity bank statements up to 13.12.22 were noted.

Item 7: Community Grants Policy Review: To review the community grants policy

F.C. 284 The Community Grants Policy was approved, subject to a few amendments. The final version will be circulated to all councillors and published on the website.

A short informative leaflet will be produced about the grants scheme for prospective applicants.

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

Item 8: Parking/Vehicular Access at Meopham Green and A227: To consider concerns raised by residents residing around the Green and on the A227 Wrotham Road

F.C. 285 It was agreed the Clerk would write to GBC and KCC Highways about the issues raised with us and we would request that they take urgent action.

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

Item 9: Council Administration

9.1 Council Training: To approve the quote for training received, as agreed in principle on 15.11.22

F.C. 286 It was agreed to accept the quote from LGRC to provide the training required at a cost of £984.50 + VAT and expenses. This will be arranged to take place following the May 2023 elections.

PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Sims. Six votes in favour, two against and two abstentions. The motion was carried.

9.2 'What to do in Meopham? Guide': To consider arrangements for printing and distributing the updated guide

F.C. 287 It was agreed to defer both item 9.2 and Item 9.3 until the January 2023 meeting to enable officers to complete further research into this.

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

9.3 Meopham Mercury: To consider approving the costs of printing the Mercury at £420 + VAT per edition and delivery by Royal Mail at £405 + VAT per edition

F.C. 288 This item was dealt with at the same time as Item 9.2

Item 10: Environment & Amenities

10.1 Memorial Bench Maintenance & Replacement: To agree a rolling programme of maintenance and replacement for existing Memorial Benches within the parish

F.C. 289 This item was deferred to enable officers to consult the Liaison Cllrs for Environment & Amenities before presenting to Full Council

10.2 Judsons Recreation Ground: To consider any response received from Meopham Colts regarding maintenance work at Judsons

F.C. 290 It was agreed the Clerk would produce a paper setting out the correspondence with the Colts and outstanding issues for presentation to Full Council in January 2023

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

10.3 Judsons Play Area: To consider the quotes received from Playdale for a replacement spring for existing rocker or new rocker

F.C. 291 It was agreed to defer this until the January 2023 meeting in order to explore other play equipment providers.

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

10.4 Streetlights: To consider the recommendations of the report from the Clerk

F.C. 292 It was agreed to defer consideration of the recommendations to enable the Clerk to write to Gravesham Borough Council to seek clarity on the ability to not accepting the streetlights and the consequences of doing so.

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

10.5 Climate Change: To consider the recommendations of the report from the Clerk and K Everson

F.C. 293

It was agreed to adopt the following recommendations:

- To plant the saplings from Kent County Council on Culverstone Recreation Ground as a natural flood management technique (if GBC give permission when we formally ask them)
- To encourage Meopham Colts to install solar panels with battery storage at Judson Pavilion

The Clerk and K Everson were also asked to compile a generic Climate Change policy for the council to consider in February 2023.

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

10.6 Pitfield Green Toilets – Maintenance: To consider required maintenance/renewals at the toilet block

F.C. 294

It was agreed to defer consideration of item 10.6 and 10.7 pending the results of the footfall count survey which will conclude on 31 August 2023.

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

10.7 Pitfield Green Toilets – Enquiry Received: To consider the enquiry received and the report recommendations

F.C. 295

This item was dealt with at the same time as Item 10.6

Item 11:

Youth & Community

11.1 Coronation: To consider arrangements for celebrating the Coronation of the King and Queen Consort

F.C. 296

It was agreed that the Council should aim to plan celebrations for all ages and to retain the provisional bookings the Clerk had made. Councillors were invited to submit ideas to the Clerk in time for the January 2023 meeting.

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

11.2 Southfield Shaw Defibrillator: To consider the proposal to install a public access defibrillator at Southfield Shaw

F.C. 297

It was agreed to defer consideration of this item pending the final quote from Community Heartbeat Trust and to investigate funding streams.

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

11.3 A227 Road Closures: To consider the response received from Adam Holloway's office regarding the A227 road closure as a result of the sinkhole

F.C. 298

The response from Adam Holloway MP was noted. It was agreed to ask the Clerk to write to KCC Highways to ask for improvements to the contingency planning for road closures on the A227

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

11.3 Men's Shed: To receive an update on the mobile men's shed event

F.C. 299 Cllr McTavish provided a verbal update on the mobile Men's Shed event which will be held at the end of January/beginning of February. It will be held either at the Village Hall, Judsons or St Johns Centre.

K Everson was currently producing a poster for the event.

Item 12: Motions from Councillors:

12.1 Motion from Cllr Gofton - Remembrance Bench: To consider the installation of a Remembrance bench to be located by the War Memorial on Meopham Green

F.C. 300 It was agreed to explore the option of installing suitably designed commemorative bench, the next time that a bench needs replacing within the parish.

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

12.2 Motion from Cllr Gofton - London Green Belt Council: To consider whether the Council wishes to purchase an annual membership for the London Green Belt Council at a cost of £25 per annum

F.C. 301 It was agreed to purchase an annual subscription to the London Green Belt Council at a cost of £25 per annum.

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

12.3 Motion from Cllr D Bramer - Covid Garden: To consider inviting designs for a post-Covid garden on the small green opposite the war memorial with the selected design being actioned should suitable funding be found

F.C. 302 It was agreed to launch a design competition for a potential post-Covid garden.

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

Item 13: Financial Matters for 2023-2024

13.1 Budget: To approve the budget for the 2023-2024 financial year

F.C. 303 It was agreed to set the budget for 2023-2024 at £170,375.00

PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr McTavish. Nine votes in favour, two against. The motion was carried.

13.2 Precept: To set the precept for the 2023-2024 financial year

F.C. 304 It was agreed to set the precept for 2023-2024 at £150,560.87. This would be supplemented by an income of £814.13 and a one-off subsidy from the general reserves of £19,000.

It is recognised that regular subsidies from general reserves are not good practice, but the Council would do this as a one-off in light of the current economic climate and in order to reduce excess reserves. The Council would be reviewing our largest expenditure items to identify cost savings over the forthcoming year in order to minimise future precept increases.

PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr McTavish. Nine votes in favour, two against. The motion was carried.

F.C. 305 Cllr Buchanan PROPOSED that consideration of Item 14 is moved to the closed session at the end of the meeting due to commercial sensitivities.

SECONDED: Cllr Price. Nine votes in favour and two abstentions. The motion was carried.

Item 15: Liaison Councillor Reports: To receive reports from Liaison Councillors

F.C. 306 The Chairman asked all Councillors to provide verbal reports from their liaison allocations. A summary of their reports is listed as an appendix to these minutes.

Item 16: Parish Representatives on External Bodies: To note the reports received

F.C. 307 The reports were noted.

Item 17: Clerk's Report: To note the report of items for information from the Clerk

F.C. 308 The written report was noted. The Clerk also provided three further updates:

- The Clerk had been contacted by Cllr Perry Cole from KCC who is exploring the option of establishing a community bus service for Fawkham, Hartley, New Ash Green and Meopham. A grant application will be prepared by Cllr Cole.

The Council confirmed they were willing to support the proposal in principle.

- NALC had confirmed Meopham had been awarded the Foundation award as part of the Local Council Award Scheme
- The Clerk is giving a presentation to Gravesham Youth Council in Feb 2023 to explain the role of Parish Councils and the work we do.

Item 18: Progress Tracker: To note the progress tracker of council decisions

F.C. 309 The Progress Tracker was noted.

F.C. 310 Cllr Green PROPOSED the council now enters closed session. SECONDED: Cllr Price. 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 were asked to leave the meeting

Item 14: Meopham Windmill Trust: To report that the meeting with Meopham Windmill Trust planned for 08.12.22 was cancelled unilaterally by the Chair of Trustees; the legitimacy of his actions are disputable. The Parish Council considers it essential to still hold a tripartite meeting

with MWT and KCC. The trustees appointed by MPC will be invited to comment on the situation.

F.C. 311

Both Cllr M Bramer and Cllr Green provided their own different individual account of events as to why the cancellation of the meeting with MPC occurred. That of Cllr Green, accorded with the Chairman and Clerk's understanding of the situation.

It was noted that Cllr M Bramer's term of office as a trustee expires in May 2023, having begun his term in May 2019. This note serves as a formal correction to the minutes of Full Council on 07.12.21 which incorrectly describes Cllr M Bramer as being appointed in Dec 2021.

Following the verbal accounts from Cllr M Bramer and Cllr Green, they did not participate in the Council discussion. The Council expressed their desire for a meeting to be held including KCC.

Given their conflicting views as to the future of the management of the site and the difficult situation in which they are placed by being both Councillors and Trustees, the remaining Councillors asked both trustees to consider resigning in order to enable the Parish Council to appoint two non-councillor trustees of standing in the community. Cllr Green expressed his willingness to do so if Cllr M Bramer was prepared to. Cllr M Bramer declined to resign as trustee.

Item 19:

Personnel:

19.1 Personnel Committee Minutes: To note the minutes of the committee meeting held on 21.11.22

F.C. 312

The minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 21.11.22 were noted.

19.2 Salary Review: To review the salary of the Clerk

F.C. 313

It was noted that the Clerk would have an additional point on LC2 in April 2023 following a successful appraisal under the terms of his contract.

The Personnel Committee recommended that a further additional point should be awarded to the Clerk upon him successfully concluding the CiLCA qualification and a third additional salary point in any event in recognition of his excellent work during the time he has been in the role.

Therefore, if the Clerk successfully concluded the CiLCA qualification he would be on point 27.

PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan: SECONDED Cllr Ogden

The motion was carried with ten votes in favour and one abstention.

The meeting closed at 10:45pm