Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council
held on Tuesday 27 September 2022 at 7.30pm
at Meopham Village Hall

Members Present: Cllr D Bramer
Cllr M Bramer
Cllr S Buchanan – Chairman
Cllr S Gofton
Cllr G Green – Vice-Chairman
Cllr J McTavish
Cllr M Moss
Cllr J Ogden DL
Cllr C Price
Cllr B Wade

In Attendance: S Fishenden – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
C Collings – Assistant Clerk
Cllr F Wardle – Borough Councillor

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

F.C. 137 Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Rose (prior commitment), Cllr Sims (Covid). They were also received from Borough Cllrs; D Tiran, E Aslam and G Harding along with Community Warden; M Cason.

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

F.C. 138 Cllr McTavish declared an interest in Item 10.5 due to her connection to Meopham Allotment Association. She would abstain from voting.

Cllr Wade declared an interest in Item 15 as a member of Meopham Cricket Club. Cllr Ogden also declared an interest in Item 15 as an interested party. They would abstain from voting.

The Clerk declared, that whilst not subject to the Code of Conduct, he would declare an interest in Item 20 and would withdraw from the meeting.

Cllr Green and Cllr M Bramer declared an interest in any item where the Council's decision might affect the assets held by Meopham Windmill Trust. They would abstain from participating in any discussion of such items and from voting on them. However, they would answer any questions arising from their joint report to the Council about the Trust.

Item 3: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting: 09.08.22

F.C. 139 The minutes of the 09.08.22 were approved subject to one amendment to include in minute F.C. 105 - *"Cllr D Bramer enquired whether the proposed community recreational facilities within the school expansion would impact on the Leisure Centre. Mr Sharrad was unaware of these proposals, Cllr D Bramer confirmed they were listed within the planning application and Mr Sharrad agreed he would look at them"*

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

Item 4: Public Session & External Reports

4.1 Public Session

F.C. 140 There were no members of the public present.

4.2 Borough Councillors and County Councillor

F.C. 141 Cllr F Wardle reported that the Gravesham Council had no meetings during August and during the Queen's mourning period.

The latest Speedwatch session had logged nine cars as speeding; five have been sent letters, two were foreign registered and two could not be identified. The next session is planned to be held in a fortnight's time.

Cllr F Wardle wished to express his thanks to the Parish Council for the book of condolence opened for Her Majesty and for the laying of the Borough Councillor's wreath at the War Memorial.

4.3 PCSO and Community Warden

F.C. 142 The PCSO and Community Warden were not present.

Item 5: Finance & Governance

5.1 Expenses Claims: To approve expenses claimed by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk

F.C. 143 The expenses claims of £261.71 for the Clerk and £50.52 for the Assistant Clerk were approved. Concern was expressed about the difficulties being experienced in obtaining the MultiPay Card from Unity Trust Bank. Cllr. Price agreed to assist the Clerk in finally securing the card.

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

5.2 Schedule of Payments: To approve the schedule of payments awaiting authorisation up to 13.09.22

F.C. 144 The schedule of payments were approved, subject to payment ***092/030822*** being checked and corrected.

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

5.3 Receipts and Payments Report: To note the report up to 13.09.22

F.C. 145 The receipts and payments report were noted with the following condition:

- The Clerk will seek advice from the internal auditor on how to record the bench donations within the accounts.
- The payment from the Notice Boards cost code will be reallocated to the Notice Boards reserve.

In discussion Cllr M Bramer raised the possibility of receiving an allowance to cover the cost of printing Council agendas and supporting papers on his home printer. The Clerk agreed to produce a paper for the next Full Council discussing the issue and in particular identifying whether a Parish Council has power to pay such allowances and setting out the statutory or other authority for any such power.

5.4 Payroll and Book-keeping: To consider approving the increase in MI Payroll & Book-keeping's fees from £114 per month to £120 per month

F.C. 146 The increase in fees from £114 to £120 per month was approved. PROPOSED: Cllr Wade. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden All in favour.

Item 6: Policy Review

6.1 Memorial Bench Policy: To review the Memorial Bench Policy

F.C. 147 It was agreed to impose a moratorium on allowing memorial benches and memorial trees to last until further notice. The Council will explore alternative options including a sponsorship scheme or memorial wall.

PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden.
Eight votes in favour, one against. The motion was carried.

6.2 Memorial Tree Policy: To review the Memorial Tree Policy

F.C. 148 This was dealt with by Item 6.1

Item 7: Standing Orders & Financial Regulations

7.1 Standing Orders: To consider approving the revised Standing Orders

F.C. 149 Cllr M Bramer PROPOSED a procedural motion to defer consideration of this until the next meeting to allow a small group of councillors to review the Standing Orders line by line. SECONDED: Cllr D Bramer.

There were two votes in favour, seven against and one abstention. The motion fell.

F.C. 150 The Standing Orders were then approved subject to the addition to the final sentence of Standing Order 13a of the wording: *'The term 'disclosable pecuniary interest' in these Standing Orders shall be interpreted as meaning one of the types of interest listed in Appendix A of the Code of Conduct'.*

PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Price. Seven votes in favour, two against and one abstention. The motion was carried.

7.2 Financial Regulations: To consider approving the revised Financial Regulations

F.C. 151 Cllr M Bramer PROPOSED a procedural motion to defer consideration of this until the next meeting to allow a small group of councillors to review the Financial Regulations line by line. SECONDED: Cllr D Bramer.

There were two votes in favour, eight against. The motion fell.

F.C. 152 Cllr M Bramer then PROPOSED an amendment to alter Regulation 4.1 to reduce the delegated amount to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman of Council from £1,000 to £500. In addition to remove 'Vice Chairman' from the sentence.

SECONDED: Cllr D Bramer. Two votes in favour, six against and two abstentions. The amendment fell.

F.C. 153 The Financial Regulations were then approved.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Price. Eight votes in favour, two against. The motion was carried

Item 8: **Personnel Committee**

8.1 Terms of Reference: To agree a revised Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee

F.C. 154 Cllr M Bramer PROPOSED an amendment to alter Paragraph 1.1 to 'The Committee shall consist of the Chairman of Council and four members elected by Full Council. SECONDED: Cllr D Bramer.

There were two votes in favour, eight against. The amendment fell.

F.C. 155 The revised terms of reference were agreed subject to;

- Replacing the first paragraph 'Objective' with 'The Personnel Committee will deal with all personnel issues affecting the staff as specified in Sections 4 and 5 and subject to powers reserved to the Full Council under its delegation policy
- Bullet point two of 5.1 being amended from 'A&R Committee' to 'Full Council'

PROPOSED: Cllr Price. There were six votes in favour and four abstentions. The motion was carried.

8.2 Committee Membership: To elect three members and two substitute members to the Personnel Committee as per the revised Terms of Reference

F.C. 156 Cllr M Bramer PROPOSED that Cllr D Bramer, Cllr McTavish and Cllr Ogden be elected to the Personnel Committee. SECONDED: Cllr Gofton. There were four votes in favour, six against. The motion fell.

F.C. 157 It was agreed that Cllr D Bramer, Cllr Ogden and Cllr Wade be elected to the Personnel Committee.

PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED: Cllr Price. There were six votes in favour, four abstentions. The motion was carried.

F.C. 158 It was agreed that Cllr Price and Cllr McTavish be elected as substitute members to the Personnel Committee.

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

Item 9: **Liaison Councillor Roles: To consider appointing Liaison Councillor roles**

F.C. 159 It was agreed in principle to appoint liaison councillors, with allocations to be finalised with the Chairman and Clerk after the meeting.

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

Item 10: **Environment & Amenities**

10.1 Village Green Surveys: To receive the results of the Village Green surveys completed by Councillors and consider actions required

F.C. 160 The survey results were received, and it was agreed to complete the following actions:

- Remove bench at Culverstone Green
- Instruct service contractor to complete litter pick at Fowlers Stone Wood and ask GBC to install a litter bin at Fowlers Stone.
- Ask service contractor to remove leaves in mid-October from Edmund Green and to raise land level with manhole cover
- Clean water fountain at Meopham Green and arrange repairs for Scorers Bench
- Replace two village green posts at Priestwood Green
- Replace one village green post at Harvel Green
- Request the Colts repair guttering at Judsons Pavilion and seek quotes for patio trip hazard.
- Complete the recommendations of the playground inspection report
- All sites to undergo tree survey and cleaning of benches

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

10.2 Tree Survey: To consider quotes from arboriculturists for conducting the annual tree survey on Parish Council owned sites in Autumn 2022

F.C. 161 It was agreed to delegate to the Clerk the power to instruct an arboricultural consultant to conduct a tree survey at a cost up to £3,000. This will be funded from general reserves.

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

10.3 Playground Inspection: To receive the inspection report for Judsons Play Area and consider the quote received from Playdale

F.C. 162 The play area inspection report was received. The quote from Playdale of £570.96 + VAT was approved subject to photographic evidence being taken once the works have been completed.

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

10.4 Harvel Green Post Works: To consider the quote received for installing two additional drop-down posts

F.C. 163 It was agreed to approve the quote from Meopham Fencing of £1056.28 + VAT, subject to the works and the removal of the existing gate being completed at the same time.

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

10.5 Oversight of Council Assets: To consider the recommendations in the report from the Clerk for overseeing tenants in council-owned assets

F.C. 164 It was agreed to adopt recommendation one to establish an arrangement of holding twice-yearly landlord/tenant meetings with our tenants.
It was agreed to consult the Allotment Association on recommendation two and re-consider this at a later date in the light of the Association’s response.

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

There was some discussion as to whether the Council had power to request copies of the plot holder records, annual budget information and Association meeting documents. The Clerk agreed to produce a paper setting out what powers the Council has in this regard having reviewed the lease and the appropriate statutory provisions.

11. Diamond Jubilee Plaque: To agree the final design of the plaque for installation at Judsons

F.C. 165 It was agreed to select Design A for the Diamond Jubilee plaque. There were nine votes in favour and one abstention.

Item 12. Camer Parade

12.1 Highways Engineer: To consider the quote received for an independent highways engineer to assess alternative improvement options at Camer Parade

F.C. 166 It was agreed to approve the quote from Local Transport Projects for £2200.00. The Council will publicise the fact that it had instructed the engineer once the work had been completed to demonstrate that it was leaving no stone unturned in trying to find a solution of the difficulties at this location.

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

12.2 Joint Parish Enforcement: To consider instructing the Clerk to discuss the option of a joint initiative to fund a dedicated enforcement officer with the other parishes in Gravesham

F.C. 167 It was agreed to instruct the Clerk to discuss with the Gravesham parishes, the possibility of a joint parish initiative to fund a dedicated enforcement officer.

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

Item 13: Council Administration

13.1 Civility and Respect Project: To consider signing the Civility and Respect pledge as part of a joint NALC and SLCC initiative

F.C. 168 The Council agreed it would sign the Civility and Respect Pledge.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

13.2 Internal Audit Report for 2021-22: To receive the Internal Auditor’s report for 2021-22 and consider its recommendations

F.C. 169 The Internal Audit Report for 2021-22 was received and the following recommendations considered and approved:

- Concerns around virtual meetings: It was noted the Council had already ceased to conduct virtual meetings as regular practice
- Budget-setting: The Clerk would ensure the budget figure was included in the minutes as well as the precept figure

- Use of Personal Debit Card: The Council has already agreed to obtain a Unity Trust Bank Multi-pay Card

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

13.3 Induction Process for New Councillors: To authorise the Clerk to prepare a paper setting out a revised induction process

F.C. 170 It was agreed to authorise the Clerk to prepare a paper ***proposing*** a revised induction process.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Price. All in favour.

13.4 Website Domain Name: To authorise the Clerk, in consultation with Cllr M Bramer and Cllr Price, to make appropriate arrangements for the transition from meopham.org to meopham-pc.gov.uk

F.C. 171 This was agreed.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan.

13.5 Budget Setting Process for 2023-24: To agree the process for setting the Council's budget for the 2023-24 financial year

F.C. 172 Cllr M Bramer PROPOSED an amendment to insert 'The Clerk, *in consultation with a small group of councillors elected by Full Council* will draft a budget'. There being no seconder, the amendment did not proceed to a vote.

F.C. 173 It was agreed to adopt the following recommendations:

- The Clerk will draft a budget, based on year-to-date expenditure and agreed decisions made in 2022-23 requiring future expenditure. There will be three scenarios presented; no increase, an increase reflecting the current rate of inflation and an above inflation increase.
- A separate budget meeting will be called prior to Full Council in October 2022, if the agenda for that F.C. would not allow for sufficient consideration of the draft budget.
- Councillors will be invited to comment on/suggest amendments. The Clerk will take these away for consideration, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council
- The Clerk will submit a revisedversion of the budget for final agreement at the November 2022 Full Council meeting

13.6 Motion from Cllr D Bramer: Should the proposal to abolish the existing committees be approved, to consider establishing a new finance and audit committee with a membership of at least four councillors to meet regularly, monitor all aspects of the Council's finances and give any advice considered appropriate to Council. *Deferred from 09.08.22 meeting*

F.C. 174 It was confirmed the Internal Auditors advice was that a finance and audit committee was not required.

F.C. 175 Cllr D Bramer PROPOSED the establishment of a new finance and audit committee. SECONDED: Cllr M Bramer.

There were two votes in favour, six against and two abstentions. The motion fell.

Item 14: Youth & Community

14.1 Community Grants Scheme: To consider and approve applications received for Community Grants for the 2022-2023 financial year

F.C. 176 Cllr M Bramer PROPOSED an amendment to fund applications GR1 to GR6 and not GR7-GR9. They would be funded in the following amounts:

- GR1: £450.00
- GR2: £200.00
- GR3: £1500.00
- GR4: £100.00
- GR5: £100.00
- GR6: £250.00

SECONDED: Cllr D Bramer. Five votes in favour, five against. The Chairman exercised her casting vote against the amendment. The amendment fell.

F.C. 177 Cllr Green PROPOSED the Clerks recommendations for community grants be accepted, on the condition a proper audit trail is established. Grants were therefore approved for:

Organisation	Grant Amount	Granted under power
Meopham Carers Support Group	£450.00	S.19 of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
Meopham Art Group	£250.00	S.145 of Local Government Act 1972
Elliott Holmes Memorial Fund	£750.00	S.137 of Local Government Act 1972
Harvel Coffee Mornings	£250.00	S.19 of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
Meopham Village Hall	£250.00	S.133 of Local Government Act 1972
Meopham Marquetry	£500.00	S.19 of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
Citizens Advice	£25.00	S.142 of Local Government Act 1972
Victim Support	£25.00	S.137 of Local Government Act 1972
Meopham Medical Centre Community Garden Project	£500.00	S.19 of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. There were five votes in favour, five against. The Chairman exercised her casting vote in favour. The motion was carried.

14.2 Affordable Housing: To consider approving the recommendation of the Parish Council launching a call for sites. This will be prepared by the Clerk, in consultation with the Rural Housing Enabler and English Rural Housing Association

F.C. 178 It was agreed to launch a Call for Sites for potential affordable housing sites, to be prepared by the Clerk in consultation with the Rural Housing Enabler and ERHA. The call for sites will highlight the need for infrastructure issues to be considered by those submitting sites.

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

14.3 Former Police Station site: To consider instructing the Clerk to write to GCHA and GBC to seek formal confirmation that they'll give priority to local connections when future vacancies occur at the site

F.C. 179 It was agreed to write to GCHA and GBC to
to find out what policy and procedures will be put in place to flag up that the rural nomination criteria will be used when a vacancy occurs at Wrotham Road
. The letter would be drafted in consultation with Cllr McTavish.

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

Item 15: Motion from Cllr M Bramer: To request the Cricket Club provides information about its Health, Safety, Fire and Risk Assessments for the Cricket Pavilion and the arrangements made for the public to access and egress the building

F.C. 180 Cllr Green PROPOSED an amendment to state "*To ask the Clerk to ensure that prior to any future meeting he has completed a risk assessment for that meeting which will include asking the organisation hosting the meeting to provide information about its own Health, Safety, Fire and Risk Assessments and the arrangements made for the public to access and egress the building and that all appropriate precautions which the risk assessment suggest are necessary have been undertaken by the host or the Parish Council as appropriate".*

Cllr. M Bramer accepted the amendment which accordingly became the substantive motion. SECONDED: Cllr Price.

There were eight votes in favour and two abstentions. The motion was carried.

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

F.C. 181 These were noted.

Cllr. Price, noting the difficulties facing KCC in carrying out further restoration work at the mill, asked questions of the Council's representatives on the Meopham Windmill Trust concerning the legal ownership of the mill and grounds.

Cllr Price enquired as to how many trustees the Windmill Trust had. It was confirmed there were four at present although the constitution allows for up to five.

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

F.C. 182 The report was noted.

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

F.C. 183 The Progress Tracker was noted.

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

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The Parish Council then entered into closed session.

Item 19: Parish Office

19.1 Parish Office Working Group: To receive an update from the Working Group regarding the future of the parish office and consider its recommendations

F.C. 184 The Working Group report was noted. The following recommendations were approved:

- that the Parish Council recognises the current office is no longer suitable, but that we wish to remain on the Meopham Windmill site.
- The Council requests the Working Group continue conducting further research into the modular building proposal, for presentation to Full Council in November 2022.
- To instruct the Clerk to write to Meopham Windmill Trust regarding the following matters and ask for a response within 21 days:
  a. To formally notify them of the Council's proposal to erect a modular building on the Windmill site and clarify what the Trust's position on this proposal is.
  b. To encourage Meopham Windmill Trust to re-enter discussions with KCC regarding the future management of the site, expressing the Parish Council's desire for the best interest of the Windmill to be considered and for the mill/site to be professionally managed in perpetuity
  c. To decline the Windmill Trust's offer of negotiating a 10–15-year lease of the current office, instead expressing our preference of continuing with the existing one-year licence agreements until alternative accommodation is secured.
  d. To raise concerns about the condition of the access driveway and poor lighting on site, particularly important following the recent incident at the Cricket Pavilion. We would also request a copy of the Windmill Trust risk assessment for the site.

PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. Seven votes in favour, three abstentions. The motion was carried.

19.2 Meeting between KCC, MWT and MPC: To note the minutes of the meeting held

F.C. 185 The draft minutes were noted.

Item 20: Complaint: To consider the Council's response to a complaint received

F.C. 186 The Clerk and Cllr M Bramer withdrew from the meeting.

F.C. 187 The Chairmans report was noted. The following was agreed:

- The complaint be deemed groundless and, in the non-legal sense of "difficult to deal with and causing a lot of anger, worry and argument" , vexatious and therefore is dismissed.
- All councillors and officers should be enrolled upon an appropriate training course covering civility and respect within the workplace.
- MPC will seek advice from KALC/SLCC as to how best officers and councillors can be supported when experiencing issues within the working environment.

PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED: Cllr Green. Seven votes in favour, two abstentions. The motion was carried.

The meeting closed at 10:35pm