Meopham Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Tuesday 21st November 2023 at 7:00pm
at Judsons Pavilion

Members Present:
Cllr M Adam ***(arrived 7:05pm)***
Cllr D Bramer
Cllr S Buchanan – Vice-Chairman
Cllr A Evans
Cllr P Haslam
Cllr C Price – Chairman
Cllr D Sims
Cllr B Wade
Cllr P Watson

In Attendance:
S Fishenden – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
G Duffort – Assistant Clerk
Six members of the public

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

F.C. 172 There were no apologies for absence.

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

F.C. 173 Cllr Price declared a non-pecuniary interest in one of the candidates due to them serving as a fellow councillor at Luddesdown Parish Council

Item 3: **To approve minutes of the previous Full Council meeting: 30.10.23**

F.C. 174 It was agreed to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 30.10.23.

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

Item 4: **Councillor Vacancies: To consider applications received and co-opt any candidate deemed suitable. The Council currently has two vacancies in Nurstead and Hook Green ward**

F.C. 175 The meeting was adjourned to enable the candidates to give a brief statement and for them to take questions from councillors.

F.C. 176 It was agreed to co-opt David Fisher and Peter Crow to Nurstead and Hook Green ward. They would sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office form prior to the next meeting.

Item 5: **Public Session & External Reports**

5.1 Public Session

F.C. 177 No members of the public wished to speak in the public session

5.2 Borough Councillors and County Councillor

F.C. 178 There were no Borough or County Councillor’s present.

5.3 Police and Community Warden

F.C. 179 The Assistant Clerk read a verbal report in the absence of the Community Warden. A copy of the report is attached as an appendix to the minutes.

Item 6: Officer's Report: To receive a report of items for information from the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Administrative Officer

F.C. 180 The Clerk provided a verbal report, a copy of which is provided as an appendix to these minutes.

Item 7: Financial Matters

7.1 Approval of Payments: To approve the payments made since the last meeting up to 14.11.23

F.C. 181 This item was deferred until the next meeting due to officers focusing on the upcoming interim audit

7.2 Receipts & Payments Report: To note the receipts and payments report up to 14.11.23

F.C. 182 This item was deferred until the next meeting due to officers focusing on the upcoming interim audit

7.3 Bank Statements: To note the bank statements as of 14.11.23

F.C. 183 This item was deferred until the next meeting due to officers focusing on the upcoming interim audit

7.4 Council Reserves: To note the reserves balance as of 14.11.23

F.C. 184 This item was deferred until the next meeting due to officers focusing on the upcoming interim audit

Item 8: Council Services

8.1 Edmund Green – Complaint: To receive the recommendations from the Complaints Committee and authorise any expenditure for tree works

F.C. 185 It was agreed to adopt the recommendations of work suggested by the Complaints Committee:

- Felling of T9
- Felling of T1 (holly) tree
- Crown lift of T3-T8 in accordance with the recommended amounts per metre as listed in the aerial survey report

It was also agreed to authorise the quote received from NPC Tree Surgery at a cost of £4400 + VAT. The Clerk would instruct the contractor upon receipt of permission for the works from Gravesham Borough Council.

PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Sims.
There were six votes in favour, two against and one abstention. The motion was carried.

8.2 Judsons Recreation Ground – Deed of Gift: To consider the recommendations of the report from the Clerk on the deed of gift for the Recreation Ground

F.C. 186 It was agreed to adopt the following recommendations:

- To instruct Roger Taylor at Wellers Hedley to resolve the deed of gift issue and assist with a Fields of Trust registration.
- To carry out a virement to create a delegated budget of £1200 for this work to be completed, to be vired from the 'Venue Hire for Meetings' cost code and placed into 'Professional Fees'

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

8.3 Streetlights – LED Conversion: To consider the quote received for converting the remainder of the streetlights to LED

F.C. 187 It was agreed to approve the quote received to convert the 49 remaining streetlights awaiting conversion to LED, at a total cost of £15,128.75 + VAT.

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

8.4 Village Green Surveys: To note survey responses received and consider any works that need to be planned and budgeted for

F.C. 188 The summary of responses report was noted. It was noted that actions that could be completed under delegated authority (e.g. through the existing service contract) will be implemented immediately.

Those areas requiring more extensive works, quotes will be sought and factored into the budget setting process.

8.5 Pitfield Green Toilets – Future: To consider options for the future of the public toilet block

F.C. 189 It was agreed to defer consideration of this item to be included in the budget-setting meeting, to enable research to be completed into possible grant opportunities.

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

Item 9: Strategic Plan Development: To consider the quote received from 'Council HR and Governance Support' for producing a Strategic Plan

F.C. 190 It was agreed to instruct Council HR & Governance Support to assist the council with producing a strategic plan on the basis of the following costs:

- £500 + reasonable expenses to hold a visioning day
- £1200 to prepare a post-visioning day report
- Up to £2000 to produce a draft strategic plan for the council's consideration

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

Item 10: Carols on the Green: To consider arrangements for the Carols on the Green event in December 2023

F.C. 191 Cllr Wade will liaise with Cllr Evans to make arrangements for the event and confirm a date, once a date has been confirmed the office will be notified so publicity can be produced

Item 11: **Community Governance Course - Request: To consider the request from the Clerk to enrol on the Community Governance Level 4 course at a cost of £3250 per annum for a two-year period**

F.C. 192 It was agreed to authorise the request to fund the Community Governance Level 4 course for the Clerk at a cost of £3250 per annum, for a two-year period.

The Clerk would be asked to sign a repayment agreement for twelve months, so that if he leaves the employment of the council, the fees will be reimbursed to the council.

PROPOSED: Cllr Adam. SECONDED: Cllr Price.
There were seven votes in favour and two against. The motion was carried.

Item 12: **Items for Information: To receive verbal reports from all councillors for information only**

F.C. 193 The following reports were received:

- Cllr Buchanan reported the Village Hall Committee had not been able to appoint a new trustee so far.
- Cllr Bramer had attended a Climate Change session

Item 13: **Progress Tracker: To note the progress tracker of council decisions**

F.C. 194 The progress tracker was noted. The Clerk will add outcomes to the tracker document going forwards.

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

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Item 14: **Staffing Review: To consider the recommendations of the independent staffing review carried out by LGRC**

F.C. 195 It was agreed to defer consideration of this item until the next meeting due to time constraints.

Item 15: **KALC Community Award 2024: To consider a nominee for the KALC Community Award 2024**

F.C. 196 A nomination was agreed for the KALC Community Award 2024, their name is recorded in a confidential memorandum ***F.C. 196 - KALC.***

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

Item 16: **Investigation: To receive a verbal report from the Chairman of the Personnel Committee on the progress of the investigation by WorkNest**

F.C. 197 It was agreed to defer consideration of this item until the next meeting due to time constraints.

The meeting closed at 9:45pm