

Meopham Parish Council

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A Civility & Respect
Pledge Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd July 2024 at 7:00pm at Judsons Pavilion

Members Present:

CLlr P Crow – Vice-Chairman
CLlr S Buchanan
CLlr A Evans
CLlr D Fisher
CLlr P Haslam
CLlr C Price – Chairman
CLlr G Smith
CLlr B Wade
CLlr P Watson
CLlr M Adam
CLlr D Bramer
CLlr D Sims

In Attendance:

L Winter – Assistant Clerk

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

F.C. 43 None

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

F.C. 44 There were no declarations of interest.

Item 3: Minutes of Previous Meetings: To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 04.06.2024

F.C. 45 The minutes of the meeting held on 04.06.2024 were approved subject to the officer's report (not attached) being circulated.

PROPOSED: CLlr Bramer. SECONDED: CLlr Wade. All in favour.

Item 4: Public Session & External Reports:

4.1 Public Session

F.C. 46 There were 8 Members of the public present.

Ian Cleary raised a number of matters including those raised previously that remained outstanding;

Parking at Camer Parade remains a problem. CLlr Price gave an update on the KCC engineered solution which had fallen at the agreement stage at County due to the estimated costs involved. A reduced scheme was now being worked upon, thanks to CLlr Bryan Sweetland's intervention and work was anticipated to start later in the year.

Zebra Crossings (Neville Parade and Culverstone). Issues about the surface of the crossing at Neville Parade and the lighting at both sites had been raised previously. Cllr Price confirmed that these issues had been raised with KCC but that no response had been received. She committed to contacting KCC Highways and moving things forward.

The field at the rear of Cricketers Drive was raised as activity is taking place by surveyors. Cllr Price confirmed that no confirmation about sites within the Parish included within the GBC Local Plan had been confirmed but that the Parish Council had raised the matter and asked for details at the last Chairman's Meeting. It was agreed by all present that MPC and Parishioners would need to work together to ensure that any development within the Parish is appropriate in terms of scale and location. It was confirmed by Cllr Price that the Planning Committee would be updating work previously carried out by the Parish Council where sites were discussed and it was considered that some development would not be detrimental.

The lack of grass cutting within the parish as a whole was raised. Cllr Price confirmed that GBC and KCC had already been approached and the issue raised at the highest levels.

James Ferrin read a statement covering a number of points including the resignation of the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, The results of the Parish Poll, and urged that the Parish Council do not lose the Planning Committee in the light of the publication of the Local Plan later in the year. He summarised by stating that the perception is that MPC do not listen to parishioners and that the Parish Council now have an opportunity to turn this around.

Richard Akister reminded those present that not all Parishioners partake in social media. He also publicly thanked those responsible for the decoration of The War Memorial.

4.2 Borough Councillors and County Councillor

F.C. 47 There were no Borough Councillors or County Councillor.

4.3 Police and Community Warden

F.C. 48 There were no Police and Community Warden present.

It was noted that the Community Warden had retained her role following the KCC Consultation but that she now covered a larger area. It was noted that the Parish Council was a member of The Refer Kent Scheme and it was agreed that the contact details for the scheme should be published widely.

Item 5: Parish Poll Update: Statement of the Current Position to be provided by the Chairman of the Council

F.C. 49 Cllr Price read a statement regarding the Parish Poll that had taken place. The statement will be published online with the Minutes of this meeting. Once costings and details have been confirmed full information will be provided to parishioners.

Item 6: 2023-24 End-of-Year Financial Matters:

6.1 Annual Governance Statement: To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24, Section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2024

F.C. 50 Cllr Price reported that the internal audit had now been completed and as a result, the AGAR figures had changed. It was noted that the Fixed Asset weren't pulled through from SCRIBE. It was agreed to defer this item.

6.2 Accounting Statements, Bank Reconciliation and Variances: To approve the Accounting Statements for 2023-24, Section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2024 and the supporting Bank Reconciliation as at 31 March 2024 and the explanation of the significant variations from last year (2022-23) to this year (2023-24)

F.C. 51 Deferred.

6.3 Exercise of Public Rights: To note the proposed dates (Thursday 4 July 2024 to Wednesday 14 August 2024) for the Exercise of Public Rights as selected by the Council's Responsible Finance Officer

F.C. 52 Deferred.

Item 7: Financial Matters:

7.1 Approval of Payments: To approve the payments made since the last meeting up to 25.06.24

F.C. 53 It was agreed that the logins to SCRIBE should be resent to all councillors. It was agreed to approve the payments up to 26/06/24.

PROPOSED: Cllr Smith. SECONDED: Cllr Fisher. All in favour.

7.2 Receipts & Payments Report: To note the receipts and payments report up to 26.06.24

F.C. 54 The receipts and payment report up to 26.06.24 was noted.

7.3 Bank Statements: To note the bank statements as of 26.06.24

F.C. 55 The bank statement as of 26.06.24 was noted.

Item 8: Council Administration:

8.1 To appoint the Assistant Clerk as Locum Proper Officer and RFO

F.C. 56 PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Evans . All in favour.

8.2 To delegate discussions surrounding the terms of the appointment to the Personnel Committee

F.C. 57 PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

8.3 To consider cancelling the scheduled Planning Committee meetings for an initial three months period, and consider agreeing that no responses will be provided to applications other than for major or significant applications received, to be determined by the Assistant Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman of Council

F.C. 58 It was agreed that for a period of 3 months, to allow for the reduction in available Officer resource, Planning would operate as a Working Group, to be reviewed in November. Members of the Working Group would provide comments and contentious issues would be circulated to all councillors not just Working Group Members.

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

Item 9: Village Fete: To receive an update from Councillor Evans

F.C. 59 Cllr Evans provided an update on the arrangements for the Meopham Fete to be held on Saturday 20th July 2024.

Item 10: Liaison Councillor Reports: To receive liaison councillor reports for information only

F.C. 60 Liaison Councillor reports were received from the following:

Cllr Wade brought forward a number of items requiring attention. The Grass Cutting on the verges by the Cricket Club. Concrete posts had been knocked over on Meopham Village Green and there was Basal Growth by the seats which was preventing them from being used. It was agreed that works could be carried out and that the question of Grass Cutting was already in hand.

Cllr Bramer spoke about Harvel Pond and the fact that the growth does need cutting back and that the duck house is in need of attention. Discussion followed about whether this could be added to the Green Surveys each year.

The replacement tree for Cllr Buchanan needs planting at Judsons and the lack of watering is an issue. It was agreed that the Assistant Clerk would investigate some sort of watering solution or arrange this with the service contractor. The motion was proposed by Cllr Price and seconded by Cllr Buchanan.

Item 11: Officer's Report: To receive a report of items for information from the Assistant Clerk

F.C. 61 The officer's report was noted. A copy will be attached as an appendix to the minutes.

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 12: Staffing Matters:

12.1 To Receive an Update from the Personnel Committee

F.C. 62 Received.

**12.2 To approve the Recruitment Process and Budget for the Role of
 the Proper Officer and RFO**

F.C. 63 Agreed.

**Item 13: Update from Chairman of Council regarding Correspondence
Received**

F.C. 64 Received.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm