

Meopham Parish Council

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Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Tuesday 21st February 2023 at 7:00pm at Meopham Village Hall

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

In Attendance: C Collings – Assistant Clerk
M Cason – Community Warden

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

F.C. 358 Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr D Bramer (prior commitment), Cllr M Bramer (illness), Cllr Rose (prior commitment), Cllr Sims (prior commitment) and Cllr Moss (illness).

The Clerk; S Fishenden had also sent his apologies due to a prior commitment.

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

F.C. 359 Cllr Green declared a non-pecuniary interest in any matters relating to Meopham Windmill Trust as trustee of the Windmill Trust.

Cllr Price declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 9.4 as a member of Harvel Village Hall Committee.

Item 3: To approve the minutes of previous meetings:

3.1 Minutes of Full Council – 17.01.23: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17.01.23

F.C.360 The minutes of the meeting held on 17.01.23 were approved.
PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden DL. All in favour

3.2 Minutes of Extra-ordinary Full Council – 17.02.23: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17.02.23

F.C. 361 Cllr Ogden DL PROPOSED an amendment to the minutes, to amend F.C. 346 to read “new term” instead of a “new four-year term”. SECONDED: Cllr Price. All in favour.

Cllr Green PROPOSED an amendment to the minutes, to amend F.C. 346 to remove the sentence “*Cllr M Bramer and Cllr Green also undertook to resign as council-nominated trustees at the appointment of new Parish Council nominees following the selection process mentioned below*” and replace it with “*The Council made it clear it expected Cllr M Bramer and Cllr*

Green would resign as council-nominated trustees upon the appointment of new council-nominated trustees". SECONDED: Cllr Price. All in favour.

Cllr Wade PROPOSED an amendment to the minutes, to amend F.C. 354 to add "The Council expected there would be a break clause in the licence agreement. The Clerk confirmed there would be". SECONDED: Cllr McTavish. All in favour.

As a matter arising from the discussion of item 4.1, Cllr Price circulated a paper showing why the current Parish office is clearly deficient to accommodate two staff and commented that in any event the current condition of the office is not suitable for employees. Cllr Green suggested as a procedural point that the council could formally note the receipt of the paper. SECONDED: Cllr McTavish. All in favour.

After these amendments had been made, the minutes of 17.02.23 were then approved. PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr McTavish. All in favour.

Item 4: Public Session & External Reports

4.1 Public Session

F.C. 362 There were no members of the public present

4.2 Borough Councillors and County Councillor

F.C. 363 There were no Borough Councillors or the County Councillor present.

F.C. 364 It was agreed that due to lack of information from Borough and County Councillors, the Clerk would be asked to request higher-tier authority Councillors provide a written report if they are unable to attend meetings.

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

4.3 PCSO and Community Warden

F.C. 365 The Community Warden updated Council on the recent tasks that they have been working on. These include:

- A pedestrian crossing sign has been installed at the junction of Erskine Road/Harvel Road. An additional sign for the other side of the road has been requested
- Assisting residents with securing grant funding for new boilers
- Liaising with KCC regarding the sleepers on Wrotham Road opposite the George pub
- Conducting referrals for assistance to Imago, Kent Fire and Rescue, social services, and sustainable warmth grant scheme.

The Warden expressed concerns over the dangerous parking on Wrotham Road outside the new development and on the bend. In addition, she raised concerns about the poor road surface and potholes along the A227.

F.C. 366 It was agreed that the Clerk should urgently write to Kent County Council and Borough Councillors regarding the road surface and potholes on the A227 by Nash Bank, Longfield Road and Green Lane

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

F.C. 367 It was also agreed that the Clerk should write to the Chief Executive Officer at GBC to confirm whether pavement parking was prohibited in the Borough and if a restriction isn't in place whether it would be possible for one to be introduced.

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

It was agreed to ask KCC Highways to upgrade the single yellow line on the junction of Nursery Road/Norwood Road to double yellow lines to increase safety on the junction.

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

4.4 Co-op Member Pioneer

F.C. 368 There was no Co-op Member Pioneer present.

Item 5: Clerk's Report: To note the report of items for information from the Clerk

F.C. 369 The Clerk's Report was noted.

Item 6: Finance & Governance

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

F.C. 370 The expenses claim from the Clerk of £367.15 was approved.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Price. All in favour.

6.2 Schedule of Payments: To approve the schedule of payments awaiting authorisation up to 13.02.23

F.C. 371 This item was deferred until the March 2023 meeting as the Clerk was awaiting the book-keepers next visit to update the Schedule of Payments.

6.3 Receipts and Payments Report: To note the report up to 13.02.23

F.C. 372 The receipts and payments report up to 13.02.23 were noted.

6.4 Bank Statements: To receive the bank statements as of 13.02.23

F.C. 373 The bank statements up to 13.02.23 were noted.

6.5 SLCC Membership: To authorise the renewal of the Clerk's and Assistant Clerk's memberships to the SLCC at a cost of £291.00 and £187.00, to be drawn from the Subscriptions budget

F.C. 374 It was agreed to renew the Clerk and Assistant Clerk's memberships at a total cost of £478.00, to be drawn from the Subscriptions budget.

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

6.6 Scribe Subscription: To authorise the renewal of the Scribe accounting software for 2023-24 at a cost of £648.00+VAT, to be drawn from the Accounting Software budget

F.C. 375 It was agreed to authorise the renewal of the Scribe accounting software for the 2023-2024 financial year at a cost of £648.00+VAT.

As a condition of the renewal, it was agreed to ask the Clerk to prepare a report for the March 2023 meeting about how the Council should use Scribe to its full potential.

PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden DL. All in favour.

Item 7: Policy Reviews

7.1 Whistleblowing Policy: To consider adopting the draft whistleblowing policy

F.C. 376 It was agreed to adopt the whistleblowing policy subject to the following amendments:

- To add the word 'Councillors' to the section entitled 'Scope'
- To add the following sentence in paragraph 2 of the section titled 'Raising a Concern' - *"If the concerns are about the Clerk, those concerns should be raised with the Chairman of the Parish Council"*

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

7.2 Compassionate Leave Policy: To review the compassionate leave policy

F.C. 377 It was agreed to defer review of this policy until the March 2023 meeting. PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

7.3 Public Participation Policy: To review the public participation policy

F.C. 378 It was agreed to defer review of this policy until the March 2023 meeting. PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

7.4 Data Protection and Retention Policy: To review the Data Protection and Retention Policy

F.C. 379 It was agreed to adopt the revised Data Protection and Retention Policy. PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

Item 8: Environment & Amenities

8.1 Tree Works – Southdown Shaw: To consider quotes received for tree works at Southdown Shaw

F.C. 380 It was noted that as these works were identified as high priority in the arboricultural survey.

F.C. 381 It was agreed to delegate to the Clerk to follow-up for the quote we are awaited. If it is not received by 28.02.23, then the Council instructs the Clerk to proceed with the quote provided by Down to Earth at a cost of £1770 + VAT.

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

8.2 Tree Works – Edmund Close: To consider quotes received for tree works at Edmund Close

F.C. 382 It was agreed that council officers would continue to seek additional quotes for this work. In the absence of any further quotes being received by 21.03.23 the quote from Down to Earth is accepted at a cost of £7200 + VAT.

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

8.3 Tree Work – Meopham Green: To consider quotes received for removal of dead tree at Meopham Green.

F.C. 383 It was agreed to accept the quote from Down to Earth for felling the diseased tree at a cost of £1490 + VAT.

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

8.4 Allotments – Rent Review: As per the allotment agreement, to agree to increase the Allotment Association rent by the CPI rate of 10.5%, thereby increasing the rent from £396.00 to £437.58, effective from 1st April 2023

F.C. 384 It was agreed to increase the Allotment Association rent by the CPI rate to £437.58, effective from 1st April 2023.

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

8.5 Judsons – Issues raised by Colts: To consider the issues raised by Meopham Colts

F.C. 385 It was agreed to adopt the Clerk's recommendation for Issue 1: Container Proposal - *To request the Colts provide further details as to sizing and height of the container along with drawings to show proposed location, before Full Council will consider this item.*

It was agreed for Issue 2: Car Park Fencing – *To inform Meopham Colts that they are responsible under the terms of the lease for the replacement defective car park fencing at their expense but that they could consider applying for the Council's Community Grant Scheme later in the year for help with defraying that cost.*

It was agreed for Issue 3: Garage Floor – *It was confirmed this was the tenant's responsibility to deal with, as set out in the lease. The Clerk would advise them of this.*

It was agreed for Issue 4: Patio Extension – *The Clerk would restate the existing position that the Council approves the proposal in principle but would expect the costs to be reimbursed by the tenants and would expect a legal agreement to be drawn up to confirm no additional rights are being granted.*

Item 9: Youth & Community

9.1 Southfield Shaw Defibrillator: To agree to delegate to the Clerk, in consultation with Cllr McTavish, to pursue the project if sufficient grant funding can be achieved. If funding is not secured by 31 July 2023, it will be referred back to Full Council for a further decision on whether to continue.

F.C. 386 It was agreed to delegate to the Clerk, in consultation with Cllr McTavish, to pursue the project if sufficient grant funding can be achieved. If funding is not secured by 31 July 2023, it will be referred back to Full Council for a further decision.

PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED: Cllr Ogden DL. All in favour.

9.2 Kings Coronation – Tea Party: To consider delegating a budget of £350 from the Festivities budget to the Clerk, to arrange a Coronation Tea Party for the Over 80s. £120 of this would be issued to the Women's Institute to provide catering. The remaining funds would be used for venue hire and other costs incurred.

F.C. 387 This item was withdrawn as the Women's Institute no longer had sufficient volunteers to provide catering at the event. The event would no longer take place.

9.3 Kings Coronation – Other Celebrations: To consider other celebrations that can be arranged

F.C. 388 It was agreed not to hold an event due to insufficient volunteers and many residents already having personal commitments/other events to attend.

The Council's previously agreed Coronation Garden design competition has already commenced.

F.C. 389 It was agreed to also celebrate the Coronation by replacing the felled trees at Meopham Green with two commemorative trees. Officers would seek quotes for council to make a decision at the March 2023 meeting.

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

9.4 Harvel Green – Event Requests: To consider approving the requests from Harvel 5 and Harvel Village Hall Committee to be allowed to use Harvel Green for their events. All necessary paperwork (insurance and risk assessments) has been supplied.

F.C. 390 The requests by Harvel 5 and Harvel Village Hall Committee to use Harvel Green for their events were approved.

PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. Six votes in favour and one abstention due to declared interest. The motion was carried.

9.5 Meopham Green – Request by Meopham Medical Centre: To consider authorising use of Meopham Green for a 'Keep Fit' group on a weekday to be confirmed, up to twice a month from 12 noon until 1pm, to be run by Meopham Medical Centre Champions Group

F.C. 391 It was agreed to authorise the use of Meopham Green for a Keep Fit group up to twice a month, subject to the Champions Group liaising with Meopham Cricket Club regarding match and training days.

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

9.6 Easter Family Fun Day: To consider increasing the previously delegated budget for a family fun day from £500 (*Minute Ref: F.C. 256*) to £1000

F.C. 392 It was agreed to increase the delegated budget to the Clerk for the Family Fun Day from £500 to £1000.

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

Item 10: Highways & Transport

10.1 308/306 Bus Route: To consider making representations to KCC about the 308/306 bus service

F.C. 393 KCC have made their final decision about reducing the 308/306 Bus Route with the new timetable coming into action on 1st April 2023. The Parish Council expressed its regret at the reduction in service.

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

10.2 Culverstone Valley - Road Repairs: To consider the request for a donation to the Culverstone Valley Road Repairs group

F.C. 394 It was agreed the Council would not make a donation.
PROPOSED: Cllr Green. SECONDED: Cllr Price. All in favour.

Item 11: KCC Community Services Consultation: To consider the Council's response to the Community Services Consultation.

F.C. 395 It was agreed to delegate to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council to provide a response to Community Services consultation.

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

Item 12: Liaison Councillor Reports: To receive reports from Liaison Councillors

F.C. 396 The Chairman of Council reminded all councillors to submit written reports prior to the meetings. Some verbal reports were given and are summarised below:

- Cllr Price reported that the council credit card should now finally be received as all the necessary paperwork had been signed.
- Cllr McTavish on the Mens Shed visit her and Cllr Moss had made.

Item 13: Parish Representatives on External Bodies: To note the reports received

F.C. 397 Cllr Ogden DL had a meeting with Meopham Colts which had been addressed by Item 8.5

Cllr Price provided an update on the meeting of the Harvel Village Hall Committee held 2nd February 2023.

There is concern about the non-gritting situation of Harvel Road and Whitehill Road as they are not classified as priority routes. The question of diversionary routes (when traffic flow on the A227 is compromised) has been discussed at FC and it is expected that the Whitehill Road loop from

the school end of Meopham out to the A227 via Vigo Road will form part of any long term solutions put in place allowing the classification of these roads to be included within the discussions.

Item 14: Progress Tracker: To note the progress tracker of council decisions

F.C. 398 It was noted the Clerk would be circulating the latest Progress Tracker after the meeting.

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 15: Social Media & Communications Officer Role: To consider the proposal to create a social media and communications officer role and if appropriate, set the terms of employment

F.C. 399 It was agreed to accept the Clerk's recommendations of:

- Creating a new role of Social Media and Communications Officer for three hours per week and the salary set at SCP10. The terms of employment will be set using the NALC model contract.
- To delegate to the Clerk, in consultation with the Personnel Committee, to appoint a suitable candidate to the role

The role will be created on an initial twelve month fixed-term contract commencing on 1st April 2023, to allow the Council to review the role in twelve months prior to deciding whether to make it permanent.

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

The meeting closed at 9.05pm