

Meopham Parish Council

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A Civility & Respect
Pledge Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 15th October 2024 at 7:00pm at Harvel Village Hall, Harvel, DA13 0DS

Members Present:

Cllr M Adam
Cllr D Bramer
Cllr S Buchanan
Cllr P Crow - Vice-Chairman
Cllr A Evans
Cllr D Fisher
Cllr P Haslam
Cllr D Sims (arrived at 7.17pm)
Cllr G Smith
Cllr B Wade
Cllr P Watson

In Attendance:

L Winter – Clerk
Six members of the public

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

F.C. 104 Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Price (holiday).

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

F.C. 105 There were no declarations of interest received.

Item 3: Minutes of Previous Meetings: To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 17.09.24

F.C. 106 PROPOSED: Cllr Smith. SECONDED: Cllr Evans.
A recorded vote was requested by Cllr Evans.

Cllr M Adam	ABSTAIN
Cllr S Buchanan	ABSTAIN
Cllr P Crow	FOR
Cllr A Evans	FOR
Cllr D Fisher	ABSTAIN
Cllr P Haslam	ABSTAIN
Cllr G Smith	FOR
Cllr B Wade	ABSTAIN
Cllr P Watson	ABSTAIN

Three votes in favour and six abstentions. Cllr Bramer did not vote due to being absent at the meeting on 17.09.24. The minutes of the meeting held on 17.09.2024 were approved.

Cllr D Sims arrived at 7.17pm

Item 4: Public Session & External Reports

4.1 Public Session

F.C. 107 Ian Cleary reported on a number of matters:

He clarified with the Clerk that Costa Coffee had not received any payment for being part of the Community Toilet Scheme. The Clerk confirmed that this was correct. Costa Coffee are required to invoice the parish council, but as explained the head office and the franchise on Camer Parade were at odds with each other and we were in dialogue with them to try and help resolve the issue.

Kent County Council had announced the work to be carried out shortly to the highway at Camer Parade to address the safety concerns raised by Mr Cleary and many others. This was good news to report.

A number of benches on the greens were unusable due to the basal on the trees. The Clerk advised that they would follow up with the contractor, Highview Trees.

He had noticed a substantial increase in vandalism and would address this with PC Jo Hammond.

The phone boxes were also looking unkempt and some had broken doors and smashed panels. Were they needed anymore? It was agreed that the parish council would contact BT, who own and are responsible for the telephone boxes. Mr Holland added that you can request BT to remove them, but that each box had a power supply and telephone cable, so BT would not be quick to do it, but that was not down to the parish council.

Mr Amis had noted from previous meetings and today's lack of attendance by Borough or County Councillors. Had they ever shown any interest in the parish and attended meetings? Councillors advised that they had in the past attended or sent in reports, but agreed that it was disappointing that they were not attending and asked the Clerk to advise the Borough and County Council of our meeting dates and that members of the public would like to see some interest from them.

Mr Holland asked when the toilets at Meopham Green would be reinstated? Councillors advised that a number of things were being carried out as stated following the parish poll. The Clerk advised that we were awaiting the report from a surveyor, as they would have to be reopened to a different standard. Costs had also been requested from our previous service contractor for the opening, shutting and cleaning, to give councillors an idea of the cost implications. Councillors advised that the reason they had been closed was budgetary and the budget had been agreed unanimously with the toilets being closed. The budget has to be there for them to reopen and at this stage we have not made the decision to reopen.

Mr Cleary added that he had saved the parish council money with his contacts to carry out a CCTV drainage inspection at Judson's Recreational Grounds for a fraction of the £12000 quoted. Councillors responded that the village had lost a bus service and many other costs had increased, all these things would have to be considered when the new budget for 2025/2026 was being considered.

4.2 Borough Councillors and County Councillor

F.C. 108 There were no Borough Councillors or County Councillor present.

6.3 Police and Community Warden

F.C. 109 There were no Police and Community Warden present.

It was reported that the community engagement meetings with PC Jo Hammond were poorly supported, which in part could be down to them being called at short notice and subject to short notice cancellation. The liaison Councillor stated that as PC Hammond was an active on duty PC, if given orders to be elsewhere, then cancellations were inevitable. However, they would suggest, if possible, more notice be given and perhaps try different times of the day for the meeting. Cllr Adam added that we are a very large parish, and it is incumbent on the police to ensure we have some presence. Councillor Watson agreed to take the matter up with Matthew Scott.

Item 5: Financial Matters

5.1 Approval of Payments: To approve the payments made since the last meeting up to 08.10.24

F.C. 110 Members approved the payments up to 08.10.24 as per the report.

5.2 Receipts & Payments Report: To note the receipts and payments report up to 08.10.24

F.C. 111 The receipts and payments report up 08.10.24 was noted.

5.3 Bank Statements: To note the bank statement for Unity

F.C. 112 The bank statements from Unity for 04.09.24 up to 30.09.24 were noted.

Item 6: Council Administration: To note the date of Tuesday 10th December 2024 for the Full Council (Budget) meeting

F.C. 113 The date was noted.

Item 7: Officer's Report: To receive a report of items for information from the Locum Proper Officer and RFO

F.C. 114 The officer's report was noted. A copy will be attached as an appendix to the minutes.

Item 8: Flagpole: To receive the report and approve the costs of the work.

F.C. 115 It was agreed for the work, as identified in the report following the site survey, to be carried out at a cost of £950 plus VAT.

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

Item 9: Planning Applications: To agree to continue with the current arrangements for Planning Applications until the Annual Council Meeting 2025 to allow for the recruitment process of additional staff as per the staffing review

F.C. 116 It was agreed to continue with the current arrangements for Planning Applications subject to any significant applications being brought to Full Council.

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

Item 10: Community Grants: To consider applications received for the Community Grant Scheme for the 2024-2025 financial year

F.C. 117 It was agreed to make the following community grants. All in favour.

Organisation	Amount	Legal Power
We Are Beams	£500	S137 of Local government Act 1972
Meopham Carers Support Group	£1500	S19 of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) 1976
Meopham Windmill Trust	£500	S133 of Local Government Act 1972
Meopham Village Hall Committee	£250	S133 of Local Government Act 1972
Kent Air Ambulance	£250	S137 of Local Government Act 1972

Item 11: Noticeboards: To agree to replace the noticeboard at Neville Parade

F.C. 118 This item was deferred for other options to be looked into as the costs were significant. It was noted that the noticeboard at Neville Parade was only purchased a few years ago and had not been very robust.

Item 12: Improving Walking & Cycling Routes between Istead Rise and Meopham: To agree the recommendation from the liaison councillors regarding our response as a consultee

F.C. 119 Cllr Bramer and Cllr Wade spoke on the consultation document and why they would advocate option 1b.

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

Item 13: Streetlights: Members are asked to approve the costs of the miscellaneous items identified on the Service Inspection Report

F.C. 120 Councillors approved the costs of the miscellaneous items identified on the Service Inspection Report which totalled £1470 plus VAT.

Item 14: Liaison Councillor Reports: To receive liaison councillor reports for information only

F.C. 121 The following liaison councillor reports were noted:

Cllr Evans had attended an Open Day at Meopham Secondary School and during the course of the evening, spoken to several members of staff. The staff were very positive about collaborating with MPC and the community. The school also talked about a newsletter. A further meeting was arranged to discuss whether this was something that MPC would be able to get involved with, how the distribution would work etc.

Cllr Haslam reported that he was building the specifications for the website and would appreciate any comments.

Cllr Wade asked if we could pursue the Community Pay Back Scheme to address the shrubbery around the wreck at Judsons Recreational Grounds. The playground equipment also needed a wash. Cllr Buchanan added that the dead tree needed removing, as now was the right time to plant the new one.

Cllr Adam reported that the Meopham Medical Centre had been inundated with the number of people interested in being involved with the health and well-being forum, so they had been asked to do a further submission of interest.

The meeting closed at 9:02pm