

Meopham Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 21st January 2025 at 7:00pm at Harvel Village Hall, Harvel, DA13 0DS

Members Present: Cllr D Bramer arrived 7.04pm
Cllr S Buchanan
Cllr P Crow
Cllr A Evans
Cllr D Fisher
Cllr P Haslam
Cllr C Price (Chairman)
Cllr D Sims
Cllr G Smith
Cllr B Wade
Cllr P Watson arrived during item 4

In Attendance: L Winter – Clerk
Twelve members of the public

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

F.C. 178 There were no apologies.

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

F.C. 179 There were no declarations of interest received.

Item 3: Minutes of Previous Meetings: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17.12.24

F.C. 180 PROPOSED: Cllr Smith. SECONDED: Cllr Evans. Agreed by all those in attendance of the December 2024 meeting.

Cllr D Bramer arrived at 7.04pm

Item 4: Officers Report

F.C. 181 The officer's report was noted. A copy will be attached as an appendix to the minutes.

Cllr P Watson arrived during item 4

Item 5: Public Session & External Reports

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5.1 Public Session

- F.C. 182** Members of the public were invited to speak on matters of interest. Several members of the public raised concerns about the decision taken to demolish and replace the Pitfield Green Toilets questioning whether the decision was the right one, whether other options had been considered, whether the community could come together to complete the works and whether the survey upon which the decision had been based was sufficient.

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The Chairman thanked residents for their contributions. Residents were reminded that the public session is not a formal debate, and all matters raised will be considered by the Council as appropriate.

5.2 Borough Councillors and County Councillor

- F.C. 183** There were no Borough Councillors or County Councillor present.

5.3 Police and Community Warden

- F.C. 184** There were no Police and Community Warden present. It was noted that the Community Warden should now be removed from the agenda, as Meopham no longer had one.

Item 6: Planning Applications Working Group – Terms of Reference: To agree the interim terms of reference

- F.C. 185** It was agreed to accept the Planning Applications Working Group terms of reference for the interim period.

Councillors expressed their thanks to Cllr Haslam on his work with the planning applications during the period when officers were unavailable to do the administration.

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

Item 7: Council Governance – Financial Regulations: To review and approve the Council's Financial Regulations for the 2024/2025 municipal year

- F.C. 186** The financial regulations were adopted with the following amendments:

4.2 to read October not November;
4.3 to read October not November;
5.15 £1000 agreed;
6.7 to read: A copy of the schedule of payments will be provided to Full Council each month for approval.
6.9 i. £1000 agreed;
6.9 ii. £2000 agreed;
7.11 clause to remain;

9.1 after 'Clerk' add and Finance and Grants Officer;

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

Item 8: Pavement Signage: To consider funding the Pavement Signage request from Meopham Community Academy

Cllr D Bramer declared a non-pecuniary interest.

F.C. 187 It was agreed to fund £1875 from the Community Engagement Fund subject to:

- the school involving Culverstone Green Primary School;
- receiving approval from Gravesham Borough Council and Kent County Council in terms of placement. On confirmation of this funding would be released.

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

Item 9: Meopham Green: To agree to the request from Meopham Community Academy to use Meopham Green on Tuesday 22nd July 2025 for the year 6 school leavers' event

F.C. 188 It was agreed to authorise the use of Meopham Green subject to the necessary documents including a risk assessment and insurance certificate.

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

Item 10: Financial Matters

10.1 Approval of Payments: To approve the payments made since the last meeting up to 16.01.25

F.C. 189 Members approved the payments up to 16.01.25 as per the report.

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

10.2 Receipts & Payments Report: To note the receipts and payments report up to 16.01.25

F.C. 190 The receipts and payments report up 16.01.25 was noted.

10.3 Bank Statements: To note the Unity, Lloyds and Cambridge bank statements and the supporting bank reconciliation as of 14.01.25

F.C. 191 The bank statements and the supporting bank reconciliation as of 14.01.25 were noted and signed by the Chairman.

10.4 Council Reserves: To note the reserves balance as of 16.01.25

F.C. 192 The council reserves were noted as at 16.01.25

Item 11: **Liaison Councillor Reports: To receive liaison councillor reports for information only**

F.C. 193 Cllr Watson advised that there had been an increase in vehicle thefts, and asked that people report anything suspicious to PC Hammond.

Cllr Wade ran through a list of outstanding issues within the parish. She also advised that Russell Parker had been awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours list for his service as one of the Founders of Meopham Sports and Leisure Association and for services to the community in Meopham. Cllr Wade asked if MPC would consider putting him forward for a community award. All were in favour of doing this.

Cllr Evans reported that the Carols on the Green had been a great success.

Cllr Price gave a brief update on the meeting of Parish Chairmen.

Cllr Bramer stated that MPC had submitted a report some years ago to GBC which mentioned possible sites for development within Meopham.

The meeting closed at 8:20pm

Agenda Item: 4

Title: **Officer's Report**

Prepared By: **Lisa Winter – Clerk and RFO**

Budget/Precept

We have received assurances that a settlement has been reached and a draft grievance agreement has been produced and is close to being signed by all parties. Therefore the budget and precept for 2025/26 is as set out in Budget B as attached to the minutes of 17th December 2024 and the precept of £231,570 was submitted and acknowledged by Gravesham Borough Council on Friday 10th January 2025.

Harvel Pond

Members had asked for some work to be carried out at the Pond. I had asked the current service contractor to do the work on an adhoc basis both verbally and by email on a number of occasions. However, the work has never been carried out and it has been outstanding for more than a year now. I therefore met another contractor at the pond on Monday 13th along with a couple of Harvel residents who have been maintaining as best they can the overhanging vegetation and the strimming. I discussed what needed doing as a matter of urgency including bringing the duck house back into use before Spring and I am awaiting the quote. As this is now very urgent, I will authorise under delegated authority and report back to members. Going forward, Councillors have already agreed for Harvel Pond to be added to the service contract.

Service Contract

The specification has been updated to include Edmund Green and Harvel Pond along with all other amendments agreed by Full Council. The specification will be sent out to three contractors who have expressed an interest and it will also be posted to our website and facebook page. The deadline for the quotes is noon on Tuesday 4th March 2025. Members will then consider them at the March full council meeting.

Cricket Club Trustees

The Chairman and I met with a number of Cricket Club Trustees on Tuesday 14th to discuss the remedial work to the green and the maintenance of the trees at the rear of the pavilion. The meeting proved very successful in establishing a dialogue with the club. An email was sent to the trustees following the meeting as we had identified a number of things within the lease that needed addressing.

Office

We are about to sign a new contract for the office with Meopham Parochial Church for a 3 year term to 31 March 2028.

Annual Parish Meeting

The date for the annual parish meeting has been changed as the venue was double booked. Please make a note of the new date of Wednesday 9th April 2025 at 7pm in St Johns Centre. The website and notice boards have been updated and the invitations have been sent out.

Planning Working Group

From February these meetings will revert back to being attended by a Clerk although they will still be scheduled via teams and an up to date copy of the meeting schedule is attached.

Judsons Recreational Grounds

Correspondence has been sent to the trustees of The Colts to establish what, if anything, they wish to change regarding the lease, as the current lease albeit signed by all parties, was not registered by The Colts, as required in the lease. A number of other things were also raised in the letter and we are awaiting a response.

Recruitment

The job descriptions have been tweaked along with the person specifications and the adverts will be published next week.