

MEPAL PARISH COUNCIL

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES TO 31ST JANUARY 2010

Councillors: Mr Mike Stacey (Chairman), Mrs Elizabeth Stazicker (Vice-Chairman), Mr Ron Slough, Mr Mark Newstead, Mr Glenn Drew, Mr Tony Pleasance, Mr Allen Sallis

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Quality Status Parish Council: the Parish Council are delighted to inform you that their application for Quality Status was approved by the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel and will be recommended to the National Association for receipt of the Quality Parish Council Award. The Parish Council was tested on ten areas of their work including "Communication & Community Engagement", "Council Meetings", "Accountability" and "Training."

Speedwatch Scheme: at the January meeting, the Parish Council received an update from Mr Alan Roffey about the Speedwatch Scheme. Mr Roffey has taken over, in a voluntary role, the running of the scheme and is organising training sessions for volunteers before the equipment can be put to use to monitor the speed of vehicles within the village. Mepal currently has seven volunteers registered for the scheme. Anyone interested in joining the scheme should contact Mike Stacey (Parish Council Chairman) on 07777 688890.

New Play Facilities for Mepal Recreation Field: work is progressing well with this project. The initial stages of the landscaping were completed before the Christmas holidays and, at the time of writing, installation of the play equipment is scheduled for late January. Once the equipment is in place, the landscapers will return to complete their work. The play area will remain closed until all of the work is complete and the play equipment has been safety inspected.

Parish Maintenance: Further remedial work was undertaken over the Christmas period to rectify the further sinkage of the drainage lines on the recreation field. An inspection has been undertaken by a representative of Cambridgeshire Football Association who has confirmed that the pitches are once again safe for football use. Further topping up and reseeding of the drain lines will be undertaken at the end of the football season.

The Parish Council has received a schedule and costings from Truelink Ltd for the grass cutting for the 2010 season. These were approved by the Council at the Full Council meeting in January. Notification has been received that East Cambridgeshire District Council will be undertaking the grass cutting of the River Close greens for this season and they will therefore not be included in the contract with Truelink. The District Council have assured the Parish Council that the River Close greens will continue to be cut on a fortnightly rota, as at present.

Paths: improvements to the network of paths around the village are being undertaken as a result of the Parish Council's membership of the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme with Cambridgeshire County Council. Six old stiles are due to be replaced by kissing gates or 2-in-1 gates in various locations around the village including the popular route around the Gault Holes. This should vastly improve accessibility for all. The Parish Council will be rejoining the scheme for 2010/11 in the hope of securing a small grant towards some equipment to help local volunteers continue their work in keeping the paths clear where possible.

Highways: the Parish Council was disappointed that their recent bid to the Jointly Funded Minor Highway Improvement Scheme for speed reduction measures in Sutton Road was not successful. A further bid will be submitted to the next round of this scheme when it is hoped that evidence from the Speedwatch Scheme will further support the application.

Consultations: over the last two months, the Parish Council has responded to the following consultations; Cambridgeshire County Council - Draft Countywide Advisory Freight Map; East Cambridgeshire District Council - Draft Waste Services Enforcement Strategy; East Cambridgeshire District Council - Draft Shop Front Design Guide. Copies of the responses are available from the Clerk.

Setting of the Precept for 2010/11: at the January meeting, the Parish Council resolved to set the final precept figure at £28,845 for 2010/11. This is £300 higher than previously reported and will equate to an increase of 79p per instalment on the Council Tax of a Band D property.

The next meeting of Mepal Parish Council will be on Monday 8th February 2010 at 19:30 in Mepal Village Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend and should you have any items of local concern then you may address the Council at the Open Forum.