

MEPAL PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Emma Harris, email: mepalparishcouncil@msn.com tel 07842 499377
Chairman: Mrs Elizabeth Stazicker, email eliz.stazicker@gmail.com, tel 01353 778129

NOTICE OF MEETING: Full Parish Council Meeting
TIME: 19.30
DATE: Monday 13th February, 2017
VENUE: Mepal Village Hall, School Lane, Mepal

All members of the Council are hereby summoned to attend for the purposes of considering and resolving the business to be transacted at the meeting as set out below.

MEMBERS 5
VACANCIES 2
QUORUM 3

Members of the public and press are invited to address the Council at its Open Forum.

MINUTES

019/17 TO RECORD APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

020/17 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Two declarations were made and adjudged to be non-pecuniary:

Elizabeth Stazicker, as Churchwarden of St Mary's church, Mepal and a member of the Parochial Church Council, in respect of a grant application at agenda item (037/17)

Emma Harris, Parish Council Clerk, as Treasurer of Mepal & Witcham PreSchool, in respect of a grant application at agenda item (037/17)

021/17 MEMBERS' REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None

022/17 TO SIGN AND APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF:

a) Full Parish Council Meeting 9th January 2017.

The minutes were signed by Mrs E Stazicker, Chairman

023/17 TO RECEIVE DISTRICT AND/OR COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

- District Councillor Anna Bailey gave an update on the Princess of Wales Hospital, Ely bypass, Ely cinema site, Ely district leisure centre, new commuter car park at Barton Road, Ely and the Community Land Trusts. Anna's report is available upon request.
- District Councillor Mike Bradley gave an update on the internal drainage board and the East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) conference on the 3rd February. Mike's report is available upon request.
- County Councillor Lorna Dupre gave an update on East Cambridgeshire Total Transport Project; Connect minibus service and school buses. Lorna reported that the County Council will be drafting their 2017-18 budget on Tuesday 14th February. Lorna continues to hold monthly 'Meet my Councillor' meetings with the next one being 21st February 2017 at the pavilion at the Brooklands Centre, Sutton 6.30-7.30pm. Lorna's report is available upon request

024/17 OPEN FORUM FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was agreed that comments from the public relating to matters on the agenda should be heard at the commencement of the relevant agenda item. There were no other matters raised by the public.

025/17 RECREATION FIELD MAINTENANCE

At the Parish Council's request and as part of the Cambridgeshire Football Association Pitch Improvement Plan, Cambs FA representative, Rob Bradsaw had visited the recreation ground on 27th January 2017 to inspect, together with Councillor Mr Paul Edmenson and Mr Malcolm Peacock, ~~the Football Clubs' nominee~~ **at his own**

request. The resultant **Pitch Improvement Programme 1st Report** had been circulated to councillors and the Senior Football Club. Further copies were made available to the public at the meeting. Initial comment (**section 3**) was that both the 9x9 and 11x11 pitches were 'In decent condition typical of normal wear and tear'. The summary (**section 4**) noted:

- 'The fields are configured to accommodate pitches for all age ranges. Pitches are at full capacity with either matches or training taking place at weekends and evenings.
- 'An area of concern though has been raised with previous drainage having been installed to the senior pitch, this is causing a severe problem with the playability of the surface and the safety of the players. With depressions of 2/3 inches in varied areas over the surface it's in need of immediate attention.
- 'Soil samples that were taken for visual inspections, Clear indications show shallow rooting which indicate more aeration work needs to be carried out.
- 'Within the soil profile sand has been previously applied along with black fen soil, this will have a detrimental effect on the performance of the surface drainage.'

The pitch was judged by 14 different tests against 14 Performance Quality Standards (**section 7**), and judgements categorised as satisfactory / improvement needed / immediate action needed. Of these, 10 were adjudged satisfactory. Improvements were needed in the following categories:

- 1 Height at which grass maintained during playing season – currently 40mm, required 25-60mm – improvement needed
- 2 Bare area – current 15%, required max 25%, improvement needed
- 3 Grass root depth – current 60mm required min 50mm, improvement needed

Immediate action was adjudged needed in one area, pitch levels/evenness, where the test 'Are the pitch levels +/- 25mm over a 3m length – Is there any major depressions?' was failed, our pitch adjudged to have '2/3 inch depressions in drain lines'. (NB One inch = 25.4mm)

It was also noted (**section 8**) that 'Groundstaff are recommended to attend the following IOG courses' (see Report for details)

Recommendations (**section 10**) were for immediate action in three facets, with helpful illustrations. Of the three only one was a clear recommendation: that 'existing drainage needs to be examined thoroughly by digging out a small section to identify what the underlying problems are' and included the comment that the imminent topping up 'will always decrease through play if insufficient base has been prepared prior to drainage being completed'. The others, relating to decompaction/aeration and to fertilizer application, were cast as advice, which will need appropriately skilled translation into an action plan. There were also recommendations for short-term measures (6-12months), for weekly maintenance and for maintenance to be undertaken before the beginning of the 2017/18 season.

The Appendix to the report included the names of two recommended suppliers who might be approached to carry out the necessary works. It was noted that one of the two, Mr Mel Pooley, had already offered *pro bono* advice to the Parish Council and Club, and upon the recommendation of Mr Edmenson it was agreed that he should be approached to carry out/advise as to the necessary immediate works. It was noted that the Parish Council has every intention of working (within resource) to ameliorate as soon as possible any underlying problem and to remedy so far as possible the unevenness of the recreation field, in order to render the pitch safe for all users. Other aspects of maintenance relating specifically to football pitch maintenance remained for discussion, based upon the Report's recommendations and (if he be willing to accept our contract) Mr Pooley's advice, and the resource to be found for them decided once initial work had been carried out.

Concern was raised about the potential claw-back provisions in the grant contract between the Football Foundation and the Parish Council, and that the drainage work undertaken at the inception of the project by the Parish Council's FA-nominated consultant (responsible to contract design, tender advice and contractor oversight) had possibly been insufficient or misguided. It was agreed that investigation should be made as to the Council's position and a report made to the next meeting. The Chairman apologised to the Senior Football Club secretary for the delay in providing the information requested in her letter of 16th September 2016 and it was accepted that digital copies of past minutes, now prepared, would constitute a sufficient response.

Concerns were raised about dog fouling on the recreation field, and about the development of pot holes in the entrance to the car park, and it was agreed that the Clerk would look into additional signage, and ask the Parish Handyman to remedy the holes.

026/17 STREET LIGHTING

The Clerk confirmed that she had again contacted Balfour Beatty for an estimate of costs so that the Council could decide the application for the reinstatement of a street light in New Road, removed during the County Council's lighting project as part of the necessary savings there. Agreed that the Clerk continue to press for a response from Balfour Beatty.

TO BE CONSIDERED:**a) EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL PLAN**

As agreed at the last meeting, the Parish Council had produced a leaflet, hand distributed in the parish. The draft plans had also been advertised on the Mepal Parish Council website, Facebook page and other relevant Facebook groups. A number of responses had been received prior to the meeting and would be included in the Parish Council's response to the District Council.

It was noted that the area designated in the draft plan for housing, (Inset Map 28 site MEP H1) though plainly part of Mepal village, at present lay outside the parish boundary, in Sutton parish. The Chairman reported that this had been discussed with the District Council, who had stated their firm intention to apply for the necessary boundary change, and the hope that, in order to make best use of officer time, all the similar cases in other parts of the District could be settled at the same time. The Chairman had however been given an undertaking by the District Councillor responsible for the plan process, Councillor Mrs Coralie Green, that were a planning application for our site to be submitted before the full process was ready, the District Council would take immediate steps to ensure that Mepal's boundary change application was expedited, to ensure that any benefit from CIL or from future council tax fell to Mepal Parish. Members of the public present at the meeting made the following points about the housing development:

- **Site access - the unsuitability of Brick Lane, the northern boundary of the allocated development site, as a general vehicular access to the development, either once the development was complete, or during construction.** There was substantial representation from residents of Brick Lane and from others that the narrow access from Sutton Road (the main road into the village) to Brick Lane, whose width at the junction is constrained by private properties on both sides, made it unsuitable for vehicular access to a development of 50 dwellings, so with potentially an additional 50-100 cars using the junction and the road each day. It was pointed out that 22 family houses, many of them housing children, were at present accessed from the Lane, the majority facing directly onto it, and so great an increase in traffic would be inappropriate and unsafe. The junction with Sutton Road was **itself already dangerous**.
- It was noted that repeated requests made to and through the Parish Council for amelioration of the road and pavements had been unsuccessful, the Highways Officer for the District having adjudged their condition insufficiently poor to make them a priority for budget spend.
- It was suggested that Brick Lane was an 'Un-adopted Road' (a road not maintained by a highway authority as defined by Highways Act 1980), and also that the roadside hedge, abutting the development site, was in some way protected. The Council expressed some surprise at the suggestions and it was agreed that the Clerk should investigate the status of the road and hedge.
- **Effect of development on the already-dangerous Sutton Road, Mepal.** Substantial concern was voiced about the present problem of speeding on Sutton Road, which would only be exacerbated by the additional traffic generated by the new development. Though the site lies at the southern end of the road, it was inevitable that there would be increased vehicular journeys into the village centre, where amenities were situated.
- The Parish Council's application to the Joint Highways Scheme was noted, but it was felt that imaginative access creation, for example a roundabout at the present junction of Sutton and Witham roads at the site corner, could also act to deter speeding further into the village and also along Witcham Road where children cross to the Recreation Field.
- **Effect on the A142 junction.** It was noted that there is already substantial concern in the village at the difficulty of turning out onto the notoriously busy A142 road (by far the most-used route out of the village). Recent fatal accidents at or close to the junction added to the concern. It was noted that the Parish Council had been informed at its last meeting of a safety survey of the Ely-Chatteris stretch of the A142, scheduled to be undertaken in the near future, and the Chairman agreed to ensure that concerns arising from the new development as well as present concerns were made plain to the relevant survey officers.
- It was noted that a number of residents already prefer to leave the village via Witcham, joining the A142 at Witcham Toll. Any addition of traffic through Witcham village resulting from the new development would be unwelcome, and would add to the present potential dangers of the Witcham Toll junction.
- **Effect of the Mepal and Sutton developments (Inset Map 28 MEP.H1 and Inset Map 39 SUT.H1 and H2, and SUT E1) on the A142.** The addition of over 300 houses to the two villages, and additional employment provision at Sutton, though not objectional in themselves, would impact upon the safety and capacity of the A142 Mepal to Ely stretch (especially at Sutton

Roundabout, Witcham Toll, Lancaster Way roundabout, BP garage roundabout) and also on the A10 from Ely to Cambridge.

- **Traffic noise from the A142** It was noted that the Mepal houses built close to the A142 since the new road was built in the mid-1980s suffered badly from traffic noise, for lack of any sort of sound bund. A new development would need to install protection. The present hedge and tree growth along the side of the A142 was not in itself sufficient, and it was felt strongly that such affordable housing as the development provided should not itself be used as part of that protection.
- **Surface water drainage.** The importance as a surface water drain of the ditch alongside Brick Lane needed to be recognised. In addition, the development area, at present in agricultural use, absorbed substantial run-off from the hill to the south, and occasionally lay wet. Arrangements would need to be made to obviate flooding when hard surfaces were imposed. Recurrent difficulties with flooding (surface and foul water) at the property at the west end of Brick Lane were noted, and it was hoped that the opportunity might be taken to solve that problem in the course of the development.
- **Sewering.** There was substantial concern that the present arrangements for sewage disposal from the village were insufficient, as evidenced by the foul-water flooding of the houses built at Bridge Road by Sanctuary Housing relatively recently. It was vital that sewer capacity, apparently already overloaded, be increased to ensure health and safety.
- **Health services.** The majority of villagers use the GP surgery at Priors Field, Sutton, which is already under some pressure. The addition of more than 300 houses to the two villages would require a substantial expansion of capacity. The additional housing development in the District underlined the need for additional and wider capacity at the Princess of Wales Hospital, which it was understood is at present being negotiated. The dangers of the additional demand placed on Addenbrookes and Hinchingsbrooke hospitals were also substantial.
- **Character of the new development.** Residents expressed themselves strongly protective of the village's 'village feel'. The draft Plan's suggestion that the wooded margin of the development area should be preserved were therefore welcomed. The hope was expressed that the new development and any ancillary changes would also reflect our rural village nature, and not create a suburban atmosphere.
- A resident whose home is close to the development expressed concern at being surrounded by taller buildings. Whilst it was hoped that crowding of that sort could be avoided, it was noted that Mepal has enjoyed an excess of bungalow development and that family houses would add better to the local population mix.
- It was felt that there was ample play space within the village and that the new development should not include any additional play area. Thought should be given as to improvement of access to the major play space provided at the Recreation Ground and also to the space on the Meadow Way estate.
- There was concern that the new homes in the proposed development would be unaffordable for local residents and their children.

The meeting also discussed the list of infrastructure and community facilities development proposals to be included in the draft plan (Plan para 7.24.3 Box Mepal 2). Mrs King suggested that these could best be ascertained by a new village survey, which was overdue. Her request was noted for future consideration; the Chairman however emphasised that it was necessary for the Council to respond to the draft plan consultation immediately, and it was therefore vital that those present put forward any views they had on the current list, and possible additions. Items to be included were agreed as

- improvements to the (Diocesan Academy) School and privately run PreSchool facilities
- improvements and extension to the village hall
- provision of leisure pedestrian and cycle ways including a route across the Washes to facilitate access to existing routes along the Old Bedford bank and potentially to the intended nature reserve at Block Fen
- improved crossing routes over Sutton Road to and from the School and PreSchool and from and to the new development into the village centre, which would also serve to calm traffic.
- It was agreed that there was not current demand for a cricket pitch, or enthusiasm sufficient to provide the necessary volunteer maintenance. However, the provision of hard surface cricket nets would be advantageous.

The Council agreed that the proposals made in relation both to the projected developments in Mepal and Sutton and to the infrastructure and community facilities list, and asked the Chairman and Clerk to compose a response to the consultation to be sent by the deadline of 22nd February.

- The adoption by East Cambridgeshire District Council of the County Council's Flood and Water Subsidiary Planning Document was noted.
- b) **MICK GEORGE LTD: Witcham Meadlands Quarry** – consider responses following public consultation meeting arranged by Mick George Ltd, 22nd February 2017, 7pm at Mepal Village Hall. It was noted that the Block Fen/Langwood Fen Supplementary Planning Document had been circulated to Councillors before the meeting, and was available on the County Council website, and that Mick George's application, which relates to part of the area, was due to be submitted in early March. The Parish Council thanked Mick George for consulting in this manner, and looked forward to reading the application
- c) **APPLICATION 17/00032/FUL -34 New Road, Mepal CB6 2AP**
Side extension and relocated vehicular access. Plans received. Agreed extension for comment 14th February 2017.
No Comments.
- d) **APPLICATION 17/00066/TPO – St Mary's Lodge, 7 Bridge Road Mepal**
T1 & T2 WILLOWS x2 - Fell due to subsidence (to be replaced with 2 Maple Trees).
No Comments.

PLANNING UPDATES:

- a) **APPLICATION 13/00799/DISA – Manor Farm, Mepal – update**
The Parish Council agreed to contacting the developers for an update. The Chairman requested that Councillor Peter Durose looked into the energy element of the final condition of the planning application.
- b) **16/01740/CLE – 15 High Street, Mepal**
Erection of prefabricated wooden garage – certificate of lawfulness of existing use granted.
- c) **16/01024/FUL- Paradise Cottage, Engine Bank, Mepal**
Erection of Garden Store – additional drawings and documents received and planning approved.

028/17 SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE

The Chairman gave an update on the recent drainage work near the river at Bridge Road and explained that the County Council are the contact for drainage issues.

029/17 HIGHWAYS MATTERS

- a) **High Street 'no entry' signs**
The Chairman reminded the Council that the Parish Council had been unsuccessful in the funding application to move the no entry signs. The Parish Council had previously agreed to pay for this work and the Chairman explained that the Highways team at the Cambridge County Council had been chased 2 weeks previous as to when work will commence.
- b) **Reinstatement of double yellow lines**
The Parish Council had been informed by the Highways team at the Cambridgeshire County Council that according to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) the yellow lines outside no.21 High Street were incomplete and would need repainting. Concern was highlighted by the public that the reinstatement would cause more parking problems on the High Street. It was requested the Clerk find out what the TRO actually states about this section of the High Street and the procedures in requesting an amendment to the order which may be out of date. The Chairman mentioned that this issue could be dealt with alongside the moving of the no entry signs (a).
- c) **Sutton Road Speed Controls**
The Parish Council are waiting to hear if their grant application for the Highways improvement plan has been successful and should hear middle of March 2017.

030/17 CORPORATE ENERGY STRATEGY FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The Chairman explained the Corporate Energy Strategy and it was discussed that public buildings; the village hall and the school could benefit from funding for energy efficient strategies. The Parish Council responded to this for the deadline of the 31st January.

031/17 DOG POO BIN NEXT TO THE WASTE BIN NEAR THE RIVER

The request and quote of £218+ VAT was discussed and it was agreed that it was not necessary for an additional bin to be installed near the river and that residents would be able to dispose of dog waste in the refuse bin in that area.

It was mentioned that there are 2 dog bins in need of repair; one near the graveyard and one on Bridge Road. It was agreed that the Clerk arrange repair of these bins.

032/17 DOG FOULING AT FOOTPATH BEHIND MEADOW WAY

The Parish Council has received a complaint about the amount of dog fouling on the footpath behind Meadow Way. Concerns about dog fouling in this area was supported by a member of public in the meeting. It was agreed that the Parish Council will install a new dog bin on the footpath. It agreed that the Clerk arrange installation of a new bin.

033/17 LILIBET WOOD – MAINTENANCE

The Parish Council thanked the contractor for the clearing and removal of overgrown brambles and trees on the 24th January 2017. The future maintenance was discussed and it was agreed that the Clerk would ask the contractor for a quote to clear and remove similar bramble growth from the area north of the footpath bridge. It was noted that this may have to be delayed to protect nesting birds.

034/17 FINANCE

a) INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2016-17 QUARTER 3 UPDATE

The Clerk presented the Income & Expenditure 2016-17 Quarter 3 report for April 2016-December 2016. The report showed that Income was up from budgeted figure of £40,468 to £43,503 due to an unexpected grant of £2,905 for Rural Services Grant which is going to go towards the one way system improvement (564/16 13/6/16). The VAT reimbursement figure is more than originally expected as it found that previous years VAT reimbursements could be claimed for. The FIT payments for the solar panels had not been received yet but the clerk informed the Parish Council that the FIT reading was taken at the end of January and submitted.

Expenditure is split into 4 categories; **Administration** which was budgeted at £6,250 for the year and is currently £4,776 at Q3. **Parish Maintenance** was budgeted at £37,130 and is currently £7,371 at Q3. This huge surplus is due to large budgeted amounts not being spent yet; £2,500 for play area improvements, £1,000 for pavilion maintenance, £1,000 for highways improvement, £1,600 for open space maintenance and £20,000 for parish facilities and maintenance. The Parish Council are still expecting an invoice for £3,730 for the A142 highways improvement. **Grants** was originally budgeted at £6,740 but is down at £4,074 due to not providing any grants towards the youth club for 16/17. **Wages** for 16/17 was budgeted at £11,500 but is currently standing at £6,305 at Q3.

b) NEW DRAFT BUDGET 2017-18

The Clerk presented the Draft Budget for 2017-18. Income is expected to be very similar to the current financial year. Expenditure is expected to increase due to an increased amount of training to be sourced and provided to the new clerk and the parish team.

c) ELECTRICAL SUPPLY CONTRACT - The Parish Council's contract with SSE for the electrical supply to the Pavilion ended at the end of January. The Chairman thanked Mr Catley who kindly assessed value against other providers and in consultation with other councillors decided that a new contract be arranged with SSE to commence on the 1st February for 24 months.

It was agreed that in future contract ending dates would be noted and time given to gather quotes in line with Parish Council policy.

d) PAYMENTS made since last meeting

- Simon Batchelor – wages for January £126.48 BACS
- Emma Harris – wages for January £552.43 BACS

e) DIRECT DEBITS paid:

- E.on – Street Lighting 01/12/16-31/12/16 £22.81 (DD 11/1/17)
- Opus Energy – Gas at Pavilion 19/12/16-18/1/17 £10.94 (DD 03/2/17)

f) PAYMENTS to be made:

- Anglian Water – Water & Sewerage at Pavilion 29/10/16-18/1/17 £48.71 (DD 15/2/17)
- Anglian Water – Water at Recreation Ground 22/10/16-18/1/17 £14.37 (DD 15/2/17)
- David J Richards Ltd – Printing of Mepal People Feb/Mar (#10273) £112.16 BACS
- City of Ely Council – Play Area Routine Inspection Course for SB 9/2/17 £264.00 BACS
- CAPALC – New Clerks Training for EH 16/3/17 & 23/3/17 £200.00 BACS
- Emma Harris – Expenses for January £16.00 BACS

- Simon Batchelor – Expenses for January £16.20 BACS
- Sutton Tree Services £420.00 BACS
- HMRC – Payroll Liabilities for Nov 16, Dec 16 & Jan 17 (credit note) £20.60 BACS

g) **PARISH CLERK'S OVERTIME** – It has been necessary for the Clerk to work extra hours during January. It was discussed and agreed that the Parish Council will pay the overtime through the usual payroll facility.

035/17 POWER SOCKET TO BE ADDED TO COLUMN FOR CHRISTMAS TREET LIGHTING

The quote was discussed and it was agreed that the Clerk arrange for the power socket to be installed as per quote.

036/17 BUS SHELTER REPAIR, BRIDGE ROAD

The quote was discussed and the it was agreed that the Clerk arrange for the bus shelter to be repaired as soon as possible as per quote.

037/17 APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS FROM LOCAL GROUPS/ORGANISATIONS.

Applications for grants were advertised in the Mepal People Feb/Mar edition with a deadline of 10th February 2017. The Parish Council received 9 grant applications. Each grant application was discussed at the meeting and the following was agreed;

Mepal Parochial Church Council (St Marys Church)	£500
Mepal Village Hall Management Hall Committee	£575
Mepal & Witcham PreSchool	£200
Mepal Archive Group (CCAN)	£55
Mepal Friendship Club	£150
Mepal Garden Club	£150
Mepal Good Companions	£100
Mepal WI	£150

A grant application was also received from the Mepal Neighbourhood Watch Group. The Parish Council were not clear on how the funds would be spent so it was requested that the Clerk would contact the Neighbourhood watch and ask for a more detailed breakdown of budgeted expenditure over the next year so that the Parish Council can make a more informed decision.

It was agreed that the Clerk write to every applicate confirming what they Parish Council had agreed, request payment details, confirm payment arrangements and ask the group to report back to the Parish Council on how the money was spent.

038/17 MEPAL PEOPLE

The Chairman thanked Diana Bray for her help in compiling the recent edition of Mepal People. The Chairman explained that there have been no offers of editors for the Mepal People.

038/17 ACTIONS completed and outstanding (report for information)

- **GRANT APPLICATION (007/17) – Highways improvement plan.** Waiting to hear if application successful.
- **COUNCILLOR VACANCIES AND TRAINING (016/17) –** It was previously agreed to advertise for new councillors and look into what training is available to current councillors. It was agreed that the Clerk would look into training available for councillors and that new councillors would be invited to apply for the positions as soon as possible.

039/17 DIARY DATES

- **To note that the next Full Council Meeting will be held on Monday 13th March 2017 at 7.30pm.**
- **To note that the next Mepal Litter Picking will be held on Saturday 11th March 2017 at 10am.**

The meeting closed at 21.52

..... 13th March 2017
Emma Harris, Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

..... 13th March 2017
Elizabeth Stazicker, Chairman