

# MEPAL PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Karen Peck, email: [clerk@mepalparish.org](mailto:clerk@mepalparish.org) tel 01353 741066

Chairman: Mr Brian Rollason, email: [brian@mepalparish.org](mailto:brian@mepalparish.org)

---

**NOTICE OF MEETING:** Mepal Parish Council Meeting  
**TIME:** 19.00  
**DATE:** Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021  
**VENUE:** Mepal Community Pavilion

**If you wish to raise any points within Public Participation, we ask that these are sent to the Parish Clerk 48 hours prior to the meeting.**

**The Parish Council wish to advise that all attendees are required to adhere to social distancing measures set out by the Council including hand washing and sanitisation, social distancing, and masks if indoors, please respect everyone's space.**

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	4
VACANCIES	3
QUORUM	3

---

## MINUTES

- 141221/1 TO RECORD APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies received from SF- work commitments
- 141221/2 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
There were no declarations of interest
- 141221/3 TO SIGN AND APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND RATIFY WORKING PARTY MINUTES AND DECISIONS**  
LW proposed, JH seconded to approve the minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2021 and ratified all decisions made up until 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Motion carried.
- 141221/4 TO RECEIVE DISTRICT AND/OR COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS SINCE LAST MEETING**  
To advise all reports are now published on the Mepal Parish Council website
- 141221/5 OPEN FORUM FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (15 minutes)**  
At the close of this item, members of the public will no longer be permitted to address the Council unless invited to do so by the Chairman  
No members of the public were present.
- 141221/6 MATTERS ARISING (30 minutes)**
1. To ratify response to correspondence received in relation to Dogs on the Recreation Field  
BR proposed, LW seconded to approve and ratify the correspondence. Motion carried.
  2. To ratify response to correspondence received from Mepal Sports in relation to layout and hedge line.  
BR proposed, LW seconded to approve and ratify the correspondence. Motion carried.
  3. To note update on the ongoing field works  
Many of you will be aware of the long-standing past issues with the surface level of the recreation field and the unstable drainage lines. Over the past 2 years the Parish Council have devoted considerable additional time to this project, whilst also trying to get the Pavilion back open and working after a prolonged closure period. At times this feels like a thankless task, but under the terms

of the substantial grant awarded to the Parish Council by the Football Foundation in the past, we have an obligation to meet the commitments for the field for several years to come.

We consulted with several contractors, as well as studying the many past reports over the years from various assessments and photographic evidence and re-read the substantial documented work by previous Parish Councillors.

This work has reached the following conclusions:

- There are some areas of the lines that do not have the full depth of gravel at the bottom, however this does not contribute to shrinkage of the lines, and is only detrimental to drainage (which is not a reported problem)
- The previous so-called 'saucer' in the area between the playpark and old spoils heap used as a holding 'pond' was inadequate to allow water to drain rapidly from the field and away which results in the clay soil holding the excess rainfall and expanding, exacerbating the issue
- Due to the costs, a full programme of verti-draining and compaction of any air pockets generated by the expanding clay was not in place during the initial 5 years after the drainage installation
- The grass coverage over the lines never knitted in properly resulting in continued damage during pitch use and a lack of a carpet of grass over the lines, again emphasising the drop in level further. Following this extensive investigation, in 2020 the Parish Council resolved to use the earmarked reserves that were being held to meet the agreed drainage obligations under the former grant process to carry out the following work:
  - Installation of a proper attenuation Pond
  - Repeated vertidrainage and compaction of lines to level the surface
  - Repeated reseeding, overseeding, weeding and top ups of the lines to properly establish a knitted grass coverage over the lines
  - Target September 2021 to complete the work

Unfortunately, the first Covid lockdown in March 2020 had a major impact on our planned timescales and delayed commencement of the work. Our revised plan had been to carry out a final reseeding in August 2021, having missed the optimum window in March 2021, resulting in poor germination. We revised the date we hoped to finish to January 2022, but unfortunately, issues with contractor's labour and fuel shortages meant that we experienced additional issues that delayed their getting to site to carry out the final element of works.

Our contractors have advised that they "..... have now completed the final top up of soil which has fully alleviated the issues of the sunken drains and making the field safe to play, the bare drain runs are really starting to close up fast, as the grass sward establishes the root system deepens the thatch will naturally thicken and completely cover any remaining bare areas.

We had initially hoped this would occur quickly and well in advance of the January deadline.

Regrettably we would like to push the handover date back to April, we feel with the investment made and being so close to complete rectification of the drainage system and grass establishment, it may be too much of a risk damaging the early germinating grass sward and undoing all the good work."

We are disappointed that this further delay causes several problems to those wanting to use the field and that further comments made by one of the contractors ground staff has only exaggerated the issue, when regrettably he is not able to speak on their behalf and his opinion is that of his own and without consequence!

We recently received this written confirmation from the contractor of previous verbal advice:

"I believe the best outcome would be to hold out a few more months allowing for complete coverage and ensuring the playing surface will remain in top condition for years to come."

It is based on this advice that the Councillors advised the Clerk that under delegated powers we were not willing to jeopardise the success of the work and risk wasting the large expenditure already committed. The decision was therefore that the field would not be in a guaranteed condition to avoid damage if played on weekly from January as this would be less than 8 weeks from the date of seeding.

4. To discuss emergency funding for Mepal Sports for 2022-22 Season as a result in facilities not being available

An emergency application has been submitted by Mepal Sports due to the PC decision not to allow play on the pitch from January 2022. Mepal Sports have played all their away matches before Christmas under an arrangement with the FA, and we had intended that the work on the field would be successfully completed by Christmas, allowing all their home matches to be played on the Recreation Field from January. Without a home pitch, 10 games must be played on a rented pitch in 2022. There is no possibility to raise the normal funds from the sale of refreshments at home games so emergency funding for the £450 is requested.

Proposal: £450 to be paid in December/January from 2021-2022 emergency reserves.

Proposed BR, seconded LW. Motion carried

5. To ratify response to Mepal Sports in relation to field usage  
BR proposed, LW seconded to approve and ratify the correspondence. Motion carried.
6. To agree the Council will draft a new usage agreement for Sports Hire and a separate agreement for Community usage  
BR proposed, LW seconded to approve. Motion carried. Clerk to send drafts to all Councillors
7. To ratify response to correspondence received from Mepal Sports in relation to container usage. To note correspondence received back from Mepal Sports - no longer wishing to take back ownership of container at this time.  
BR proposed, LW seconded to approve and ratify the correspondence. Motion carried.
8. To discuss and approve annual field works, costs and incorporate into the budget  
BR proposed, LW seconded to approve works needed. Motion carried.
9. To discuss and decide Grant Applications received for 2022-23 – circulated before the meeting  
Applications 2022-23 a £3500 grant funding pot is available to minimise any increase in the precept. The two groups that the Parish Council feel they have an obligation to provide full funding for 2022-23 would be Mepal Youth Club and Mepal Sports. Due to the grant funding pot suggested limit of £3500, there will need to be a grant cap of £500 per application outside these two groups.

Mepal Sports Seniors	£766.66
Youth Club	£1420
Remaining applications:	
Archive Group	£100
Village Hall	£500 (max cap) of the £750
Mepal Makers	£500 (max cap) of the £1350
Friendship Group	£250
CAMS SAR	£0
Friends of Mepal and Witcham School	£0
Jubilee Event	£0 – application withdrawn
Total Grants awarded:	£3536.66

The application from CAMS SAR was outside of the policy criteria. The grant for Friends of Mepal and Witcham School was to fund transport for school trips for each class £1600, reduced to £1152 after the Parish Council requested a pupil breakdown.

The Parish Council feel that their contribution to Mepal Youth Club which caters for the younger community (from reception age to Secondary) is a large and generous contribution covering this same age range and therefore the Council was, unfortunately, unable to approve a grant for these school related activities.

The Council feel the grants allocated are split fairly through the age dynamic of the parish and were not willing to exceed the grant pot which would result in the precept increasing further.

Proposed JH, seconded LW. Motion carried
10. To update the call for new Councillors to fill the three current vacancies. We have only one application to date, making the Neighbourhood plan not viable at this point due to low Councillor numbers.
11. To ratify the previous decision that CGM Group were selected from the three quotations sought for Park Hedge works and the acceptance was given to proceed using delegated powers last month. £370 plus VAT  
Proposed JH, seconded LW. Motion carried
12. To ratify Parish Council acceptance of the ECDC Tree Survey quotation, for Council land only – circulated before the meeting, taking place in December 2021.  
Proposed BR, seconded LW. Motion carried. Cost £350 plus vat
13. To ratify the Parish Council Insurance Renewal  
Proposed BR, seconded LW. Motion carried – Cost £1897.52
14. To note the Conclusion of Audit  
Proposed BR, seconded LW. Motion carried
15. To adopt new Code of Conduct  
Proposed BR, seconded LW. Motion carried
16. To ratify Memorial Wreath laid by the Chairman on behalf of the Parish Council  
Proposed BR, seconded LW. Motion carried
17. To note donation from former Gardening Club for planting at village sign in the spring  
A donation of £56.00 had been received with thanks.

18. To update Lilibet Woods management project. This project now on hold until Councillor numbers increase
19. To note Brangehill Drove Works, Ongoing Issues and approve annual maintenance costs for ditch clearance

### **Maintenance of public access Byway between Brick Lane and Brangehill Drove**

Mepal Parish Council owns the freehold land edged in red seen in the extract from the title deed. The blue area marked as public access is to be kept accessible. The red area, which is where the drainage ditch sits, was overgrown in places due to a lack of maintenance since December 2011. Last year CCC carried out some maintenance work for us to improve the access, but in October 2021, we carried out work to the ditch to open the access and to start to remove some of the fly tipped rubbish. To maintain this area, it will be necessary to carry out annual maintenance of the entire drove to prevent a deterioration and regrowth of brambles. Separately we also arranged a visit from Kathryn Reading from the CCC Flood team. We were concerned about the maintenance of the ditch and wanted to understand our responsibilities and any impacts on the flood protection. Although we had received information from previous councillors that the ditch was no longer 'in operation', it nevertheless acts as a holding ditch for excess rainwater and in places it is doing that. There is some asbestos containing roof tile dumped along the drove, a lot of rubble as well as a considerable amount of vegetation from gardens backing onto Brick Lane. Kathryn also confirmed that under riparian rights, householders along the ditch have a joint responsibility to maintain the area to halfway into the ditch. Kathryn advised that we should write a joint letter to all householders explaining the work carried out and the ongoing commitment needed. There are also some areas (notably the pedestrian bridge through from Meadow Way) that would benefit from further digging out. Kathryn was going to see if she could speak to highways to find out when the new culvert was installed (Brick Lane end) to understand the working function of the current ditch. The builder's road material at the Brangehill Lane end also needs to be removed, and there is concern that the outlets to the ditch at the back of the new bungalows is not in compliance and so Kathryn would be liaising with ECDC to deal with the builder. Kathryn was very impressed with the work, although suggested that we need to stay on top of the situation, safely remove the asbestos waste and rubble and make sure that an annual maintenance programme is carried out (ensuring the residents were aware that they also need to keep the area from their fence/hedge to the middle of the ditch clear. She said we needed to offer to work with them if they were not able to do it themselves.

20. Update on Brangehill Drove – circulated to all before the meeting  
Covered in item 19
21. To ratify quotation for emergency Rubbish Clearance Works of newly cleared Brangehill Drove and to note the Parish Council will be monitoring the area weekly due to large amounts of fly tipping in the area.  
Ongoing removal taking place current cost is £150. It was also noted some properties backing on to the Drove are still fly tipping over the boundary fences, the Council will be writing to these addresses and working in conjunction with Enforcement at East Cambs District Council.
22. To approve removals of advertising from Mepal Matters with immediate effect  
LW proposed, JH seconded. Motion carried.
23. To approve agreement to work with Witcham Parish Council to form a Complaints Appeal Board.  
LW proposed, BR seconded. Motion carried to work in conjunction with Witcham Parish
24. To note Pavilion failings and agree a budget to bring the facility to a usable standard for sports and community use.

Due to low quality fittings and a lack of maintenance in some areas, the Parish Council have been working over the last 2 years to replace the sub-standard or non-functional fixtures and fittings. We are now looking at the remaining issues to try to complete this project before the financial year end (31<sup>st</sup> March 2022).

The extractors in the changing rooms must be fixed as this is a H&S issue and there is no purge ventilation (windows). To be able to use the showers we must have the extractors working. We had agreed not to do this last year, but had previously agreed to get them fixed in time for the return of football.

The Council discussed the requirement for additional security to cover the new defibrillator (once received) and field.

The Council also discussed the recent feedback on the communal room decoration and agreed a more neutral décor would be more inviting for hirers.

- LW proposed, JH seconded to approve a spend of £5200 to cover all the above works.
25. To note green waste fly tipping in play area, situation to be monitored  
The Council noted fly tipping of any kind is illegal and will continue to monitor all areas and make the relevant reports to East Cambs District Council.
26. To note the Clerk had sourced another Defibrillator for the Parish. It will be installed at the Pavilion once the casing unit is received.  
It was noted due to manufactural delays relating to material and import, the unit is still to be delivered.
27. To note the Council will erect two further Noticeboards at each Bus Shelter in the New Year.  
Remedial work following vandalism to the School Lane bus shelter has resulted in this being delayed.

141221/8

**PLANNING (10 minutes)**

**TO DISCUSS:**

**21/01216/F3M Mepal Outdoor Centre, Chatteris Road, Ely**

Construction of a crematorium and associated service and administration building, function building, memorial garden, natural burial areas, pet cemetery, car parking, new vehicular access from the A142 north of the site and landscaping

Responses logged

**21/01184/FUL Broadmead Boarding Kennels, Witcham Road**

Single Storey side extension (revised scheme for previously approved 21/00960/FUL) - No Objection response made - APPROVED

**CCC/20/052/FUL Mepal Reservoir, Land Off Blaby's Drove, Sutton Gault**

Construction of irrigation reservoir by the extraction and export of sand and gravel - No objection response logged

**21/01483/OUT Horticultural site between 8 and 14 Bridge Road, Mepal**

Outline planning with all matters reserved to establish the acceptability in principle the subdivision of the site into three Plots and allocating these plots for three self/custom built dwellings

Response logged

**21/01536/Construction of residential dwelling | Low Bank Farm Low Bank Mepal - No objection response logged**

**UPDATES:**

**21/00960/FUL Broadmead Boarding Kennels, Witcham Road, Mepal**

Single Storey side extension - APPROVED

**21/00676/VAR Manor Farm, School Lane, Mepal**

To vary Condition 1 (Approved Plans) of previously approved 19/00566/VAR for To vary Condition 1 (Approved Plans) of previously approved 13/00799/FUL for Conversion of existing barns to two dwellings and garaging. Erection of three detached houses and 2 no. bungalows. Erection of 2 no. garage buildings. Change of use of paddock to amenity space for barn conversions. New access  
VARIATION INCLUDES - A new revision to the drawings, adding a single storey extension.

**21/00999/FUL 38 River Close, Mepal**

Single Storey rear and side extension - APPROVED

**21/00370/FUL 6B New Road, Mepal**

Proposed single storey side and rear extension to create an annexe for elderly parents, side extension for a new utility and replacement garage - AMENDMENT involves clarification of parking details and an interconnecting door between the proposed annex and host dwelling has also been proved following comments from the case officer. - APPROVED

**21/00230/FUL Site South of 15 Bridge Road, Mepal**

Install ultrasonic gauging system and kiosk for gauging purposes - APPROVED

**21/00804/OUT Land North of The Old Barn 13 Bridge Road, Mepal**

Outline planning for appearance, scale and layout for construction of chalet style dwelling - REFUSED

**21/00969/RMA Horticultural Site Between 8 and 14 Bridge Road, Mepal**

Reserved matters for appearance, landscaping and scale relating to Plot 2 of previously approved - 19/00799/OUT (construction of 2no. detached dwellings) - APPROVED

**21/01184/FUL Broadmead Boarding Kennels, Witcham Road**

Single Storey side extension (revised scheme for previously approved 21/00960/FUL) - No Objection response made - APPROVED

**21/01208/FUL Land at Mepal Engine Bank, Mepal**

Change of use of reservoir, woodland and open space to private recreational use, and construction of outbuildings - Retrospective

Response logged – APPROVED

**21/01483/OUT Horticultural site between 8 and 14 Bridge Road, Mepal**

Outline planning with all matters reserved to establish the acceptability in principle the subdivision of the site into three Plots and allocating these plots for three self/custom built dwellings - REFUSED

21/01312/RMA The Granary Whitegate Farm, Witcham Road, Mepal

Reserves Matters - APPROVED

141221/9

**FINANCE**

1. To approve payments and Bank Reconciliation up to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021  
BR proposed, LW seconded. Motion carried to approve
2. To discuss and approve budget and Precept for 2022-23  
The Council discussed the budget and precept for 2022-23 and it was agreed to set the budget at £38792.00. The provisional 2022/23 budget on which the precept is based together with the Precept statement will be made available on the Financial section of the website. LW proposed, JH seconded. Motion carried.

3.

**a) Online Payments:**

ECO Green – Dispenser Station	£156.00 BACS
Mogodirect – Tables and Chairs for Pavilion	£1800.00 BACS
Noticeboard Online – 2 smaller boards	£1740.00 BACS
HMRC, Wages and Expenses	£3314.51 BACS
Newflame – Annual Maintenance Fire Extinguishers	£70.50 BACS
Container People	£39.78 BACS
Scribe Annual Booking System	£561.60 BACS
Eibe – Zip Wire Refurbishment	£1875.98 BACS
Redact - Domain Renewal and Web Hosting	£503.88 BACS
Amazon – Hose, Grease and Grease Gun	£70.38 OC
September	
Came and Company – Insurance	£89.60 BACS
Expenses, Wages and HMRC	£2440.69 BACS
PKF Littlejohn – Audit Fee	£480.00 BACS
CGM Group – Field Grass Cutting	£156.00 BACS
Wave - water	£13.53 BACS
Wave – water refund	-£489.88 BACS
Container People	£39.78 BACS
October	
CJC Cleaning – Pavilion	£120.00 BACS
October	
Expenses, HMRC, Wages	£2721.51 BACS
CGM - Field Grass Cutting	£471.60 BACS
Redshoes – payroll	£57.60 BACS
CJC Cleaning	£210.00 BACS
Container People	£39.78 BACS
Amazon - Stationary	£62.42 OC
November	
HMRC, Wages and Expenses	£2604.81 BACS
CGM – Brangehill Clearance	£8700.00 BACS
ALD – field works	£8555.28 BACS
Scribe – Accounts Package	£561.60 BACS
SP Clearance – Fly tipping removal Brangehill	£130.00 BACS
Wave – water	£16.63 BACS
CPD – Pat Testing and Fire Alarm call point replacement	£102.30 BACS
Container People	£39.78 BACS
ACRE Renewal of Membership	£57.00 BACS
Amazon – Pavilion items and Stationery	£313.76 OC
MFG Witcham Toll- Fuel	£29.01 OC
Optimum	£1.99 OC

**b) Direct Debits Made:**

Eon – Street Light Energy	£25.61 DD
---------------------------	-----------

British Gas – pavilion	£18.83 DD
EE – Phone and Broadband	£35.62 DD
September	
Eon	£25.61 DD
EE	£35.52 DD
British Gas	£27.96 DD
October	
EE	£35.52 DD
SSE	£56.53 DD
Eon	£28.49 DD
British Gas	£31.75 DD
November	
Eon	£29.43 DD
EE	£35.52 DD
British Gas	£57.48 DD
<b>c) Income</b>	
Cambridgeshire County Council – Contribution	£814.66 BACS
September	
ECDC -2nd Instalment of Precept	£18650.00 BACS
November	
Allotment Fees – Harris/Rutterford	£60.00 BACS
C Osbourne – Pavilion Hire	£45.00 BACS
ECDC – CIL	£11156.83 BACS
LW proposed, JH seconded to ratify and approve all payments and income as stated above.	
Motion carried.	

**141221/10**

**DELEGATION SCHEME**

To reinstate delegation scheme as per Appendix One in the event the council cannot meet in person  
LW proposed, BR seconded to approve if a majority decision was made by the Council.

**141221/11**

**DIARY DATES** – Next Full Parish Council Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 7pm venue to be confirmed.

**141221/12**

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL SESSION**

To discuss staffing and training matter

To consider in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted under item 141221/12, that the public and press be temporarily excluded from this meeting.

The Council discussed the need to defer the Co-option until January 2022 – covid

The Council agreed to fund the Clerks training.

**141221/13**

**COOPTION OF PARISH COUNCILLOR**

Deferred to January 2022

**141221/14**

**DIARY DATES** – Next Full Parish Council Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 7pm venue to be confirmed.

Meeting closed 20.03

.....  
*K Peck*

**Karen Peck**

**Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer**

**Mepal Parish Council**

.....  
*B Rollason*

**Brian Rollason**

**Chairman**

11<sup>th</sup> January 2022