

MEPAL PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Karen Peck, email: clerk@mepalparish.org tel 01353 741066
Chairman: Mr Chairman Brian Rollason, email: brian@mepalparish.org

MEETING: Mepal Parish Council
TIME: 19.00
DATE: Tuesday 12th April 2022
VENUE: Mepal Community Pavilion

Councillors present at the meeting:

Chairman Brian Rollason, Vice Chairman Lorna Williams, Jack Hickman, Samantha Foord

The meeting was opened by Chairman Brian Rollason, when the quorum of three was achieved at 19:10 and Councillor Hickman was in attendance from 19:20

MEMBERS	4
VACANCIES	3
QUORUM	3

MINUTES

120422/1 OPEN FORUM FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (15 minutes)

The Secretary and three members of Mepal Sports were in attendance. No other members of the public were present.

The Secretary of Mepal Sports stated that she was attending with 3 members of Mepal Sports to discuss item 2 on the agenda and that she did not have any other business. Vice Chair Vice Chairman Lorna Williams advised that her second letter received by email to the Parish Clerk that afternoon could not be discussed under item 2, as this item referred to the previous correspondence. The Secretary of Mepal Sport was advised that the football club should use the open forum to raise the points in the newest letter to allow them to be minuted.

A paper copy of latest correspondence had been accessed that afternoon from the clerk's email account by the email administrator and was provided to the councillors at the start of this session, but Chairman Brian Rollason explained that we would not debate the content at this meeting and that we would need to discuss this after today's meeting was closed and when Councillors had had a chance to understand the contents.

The Secretary of Mepal Sports stated that they were under the impression that signing the land lease for the container, at the old football club rate from Container People, to allow the transfer of the container lease when the Parish Council installed their own storage container, committed them to also accepting the published pitch and pavilion rental costs which they feel are unaffordable for them and completely out of line with other pitch providers in East Cambridgeshire.

Vice Chairman Vice Chairman Lorna Williams said this was not the case, and that the Parish Council had decided to lease a new container which was being delivered on 20th April, and that the Parish Council are unwilling to meet the costs for the lease of two containers from 1st May 2022, so a decision was required by 5pm on 14th April if Mepal Sports definitely did not want the container as we would have it removed.

On the basis that Mepal Sports have already previously paid the removal costs, they declared that Mepal Sports would take on the financial and management obligations in relation to the lease of the current container from 1st May 2022 and asked that the Parish Council did not request removal from Container People. Vice Chairman Lorna Williams said she would get the corrected land lease contract form sent the next morning so that The Secretary of Mepal Sport could sign and return to the Clerk by the deadline. If later Mepal Sports decided to return the container, then they would manage this themselves directly with the Container People.

Returning to the subject of the proposed hire fees schedule, it was stated that typical match costs (ie use of the pitch and changing facilities) are a flat rate of £40 or £45 or maybe £50 and that our proposed charges, assuming a 4 hour hire period would be £90 and this is not something that the players can pay on top of referees fees for the match. A £50 charge is the most that could be covered and if it is any more than this then Mepal Sports will not be able to play at Mepal.

It was then also stated that this £45 charge from other providers includes everything, and players turn up and play (just putting up nets) for 3-5 hours use.

The Secretary of Mepal Sport said she had discussed with Cambs FA to seek advice and that they had said that the rates were nowhere near £90 and that they had 4G pitch hire for £40. The Secretary of Mepal Sport said that under M.E.S.S.A.G.E management they were charging the Football Club a more affordable per match fee, but as a charitable trust, in addition to the FIT payments they were able to raise additional funds to subsidise the use which the Parish Council can't do. Never-the-less it was stated that no other football club would be able to pay £90 for a match so this would price the pitch and facilities at Mepal Recreation Field out of the market.

Vice Chairman Lorna Williams again re-iterated that the Pavilion is not a leisure centre and the Parish Council have no other means for raising the funds to cover the costs and the electricity and gas were increasing hugely as everyone was aware of, and therefore the Parish Council had to consider their costs and ensure that rental charges were proportionate.

Chairman Brian Rollason stated that we would discuss this outside of the meeting and reply to the latest letter in due course as well as discussing under point 2 of today's agenda. We were pushed for a timescale (ie next week, next month) and we stated that this would be as soon as possible, but that we considered that the time pressure was now less as we have agreed that acceptance of the rates does not relate to ownership of the storage container lease, which Mepal Sports had agreed they would take back.

120422/2 TO RECORD APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence, all Councillors were present from 19:20. Councillors Rollason, Foord and Hickman all apologised for being late due to personal circumstances.

Vice Chairman Lorna Williams was taking minutes as the Clerk was not working today and was extremely busy with the end of year accounts and an additional audit that Mepal Parish Council have been randomly selected for.

120422/3 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

120422/4 TO SIGN AND APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held on 15th February 2022, were proposed as a true and accurate record of the meeting by Vice Chairman Lorna Williams, seconded by Jack Hickman. Motion carried

120422/5 TO RECEIVE DISTRICT AND/OR COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS SINCE LAST MEETING

To advise all reports are now published on the Mepal Parish Council website. Vice Chairman Lorna Williams informed members that the April District Councillors report had only been received by the Clerk today and therefore would not be circulated to Council until the clerk was back in the office.

120422/6 MATTERS ARISING

1. Correspondence from Fiona Wynn. The approved reply had been agreed under delegated power and sent on 22 March 2022. Proposed by Vice Chairman Lorna Williams seconded by Jack Hickman. Motion carried.
2. Correspondence received from Mepal Sports - the formal reply sent on 11th April under delegated powers was proposed by Jack Hickman and seconded by Sam Foord. Motion carried
It was noted that we only had until 5pm Thursday 14th April to confirm whether Container People should remove the old container when the new container was delivered. The earlier verbal agreement in the open forum by Mepal Sports had stated that they would now accept the ground lease agreement and

would take back the financial and management responsibility for the lease of the container until they decided their long-term position.

It was noted that the email administrator had picked up on new email correspondence from Mepal Sports to the clerk received that afternoon and had printed out and circulated.

The Parish Council is in an uncomfortable position. We were required to ensure that the pitch area was playable and have spent the £30,000 earmarked reserves put aside by the previous Parish Council to resolve the issues, by improving drainage with the attenuation pond and regular verti-draining and reseeding and fertilising. Ongoing maintenance this year and basic regular grass cutting require an additional £5000 this year from earmarked reserves to complete the project and then we estimate a minimum £3000 for subsequent years to maintain the field and ensure that the £30,000 initial spend is protected. If we have an FA club playing, then we can ask them to apply for grants towards the additional maintenance each year in addition to grass cutting, which would reduce the costs, but it is recognised that it is not possible to cover these costs with pitch hire fees.

We are a Parish Council with broader responsibilities to all Mepal taxpayers and we are not a leisure centre or a recreation activity provider. We do not intend to offer storage facilities for equipment, goal posts or nets, or to be responsible for any line marking in future. Our responsibility has to stop at providing a suitable area for the pitch, not in managing that pitch.

The rental costs on the hire agreement that will be proposed for approval under item 4 were calculated to account for the increased gas and electricity costs for the pavilion as it is currently rented and the estimated substantial gas, electric and water increase because of shower use. We do not have a caretaker or booking clerk and so we need a simple online booking system that calculates an hourly cost so that once booked it is not available for anyone else to book.

A £20 per hour total facility hire (whole pavilion) plus one-off £10 pitch cost on a 4 hour hire for a football match would cost £90. For the purposes of discussion, for a 20-game league season, we assumed 12 home games (10 in the league, 2 home cup games). This equates to £1080. Any Mepal community group is eligible to apply for the maximum £500 S137 grant each year. Councillor Hickman asked if this has been explained to Mepal Sports and what grants had previously been awarded. In the 2021/22 season, a grant of £450 + pitch hire was approved and a grant of £766.66 was approved for 2022/23.

In a typical year this means that a £500 S137 grant can be applied for to subsidise hire costs and take the £1080 down to £580 or £48.33 per game. This does not seem unreasonable given the huge, predicted increase in costs we are facing. It was accepted that this price structure may discourage other non-Mepal renters using the changing rooms. It was again noted that we were not a leisure centre and did not have a bookings clerk or a caretaker and if the rental income is less than the actual costs to us to hire the facility then it is not financially viable to rent the facility. We simply do not have the resources to manage a huge increase in hirers and the likely increased maintenance that will result.

A vote was taken, and no councillor was prepared to accept an increase in the precept to cover the costs from increased use of the changing room half of the Pavilion to subsidise the proposed charges above that provided by the S137 grants. This was proposed by Chairman Brian Rollason and seconded by Jack Hickman. Motion Carried

A copy of these minutes will be sent to Mepal Sports explaining our position. This was proposed by Chairman Brian Rollason and seconded by Vice Chairman Lorna Williams. Motion Carried

3. Pavilion Access and Report. Vice Chairman Lorna Williams explained that after some concerns after a recent safety inspection, the Building Control Officer for ECDC visited the Pavilion to inspect the premises. We have a list of actions to bring the pavilion back into compliance, mainly related to accessibility. We have been informed that the doors installed in the social room are the wrong doors (should not have thresholds) and he expressed surprise that the building passed the final inspection because this is not a new requirement. We have a list of the minimum actions necessary and have been advised that it is OK to continue to use the Pavilion but that these issues need to be sorted out. An initial scoping quote has come out a lot more than hoped (£6795 + VAT), and so we are now looking at possible grants to be able to do the work this year. We will look for a temporary level-access solution. Jack Hickman suggested that perhaps he could help to build something to reduce cost but that we needed to establish exactly what is needed. No budget was agreed for the any work.

4. Hire agreement. The agreement was proposed by Vice Chairman Lorna Williams and seconded by Samantha Foord. Motion carried
5. Neighbourhood Plan Update. We are progressing with the project, and as soon as we get the quote from Neighbourhoodplan.co.uk we can submit a grant application.
6. To appoint Internal Auditor. Chairman Brian Rollason proposed appointing SJ Accounting as internal auditor, and this was seconded by Jack Hickman. Motion carried.
7. To approve printer purchase. Vice Chairman Lorna Williams explained that it was proposed to get a WIFI printer for the pavilion that can be accessed remotely so that the Clerk can send the meeting documents to the printer to minimise travel costs. Vice Chairman Lorna Williams was trying to establish a suitable model that does not require a PC connection, but this was not straightforward. Councillor Rollason indicated that he was not intending to use any printer in the Pavilion as he did not have a computer and would not be willing to use a computer at home and would continue to use his phone to access documents rather than printing them out. Councillors Hickman and Foord said they all have their own printer and so it was easier to print out the documents at home if required. In the context of the notices for the noticeboard on the field, Councillor Hickman said he was able to print the notices and would take responsibility for putting them up. It was proposed by Vice Chairman Lorna Williams that we would not purchase a WIFI printer, and this was seconded by Jack Hickman. Motion carried.
8. To approve Councillor Responsibilities for next 6 months

Brian Rollason	Play Park, Allotments
Lorna Williams	Finance, Website, Field
Jack Hickman	5-year plan and Recreation Field noticeboard
Samantha Foord	Brangehill Drove & Lilibet Woods
NHP	All
Pavilion & Other Noticeboards	All

The above responsibilities were proposed by Jack Hickman and seconded by Vice Chairman Lorna Williams. Motion carried.

It was proposed previously that a monthly rota be established to manage the Pavilion, with a specified Councillor being on duty and holding the duty phone to deal with any issues and call outs with hirers. Samantha Foord asked for clarification of how this would operate, as if she was at work then she would not have any phone access and so this would be an issue. Vice Chairman Lorna Williams said that at present we don't have more than a couple of hirers each month so this should be manageable and that the councillors could work together based on their work schedules to try to help each other when one was unavailable. If the system does not work then we will have to re-assess, but as we do not have full time staffing or a building caretaker this is the only solution to the management of the building now. It was acknowledged that Vice Chairman Lorna Williams cannot continue to be the only councillor dealing with pavilion issues and that the Clerk and Maintenance manager were similarly time constrained. It was requested that useful phone contact numbers could be added to the phone for emergency callouts (plumber, electrician etc).

The initial suggested rota below was proposed by Chairman Brian Rollason and seconded by Vice Chairman Lorna Williams:

June	Vice Chairman Lorna Williams
July	Chairman Brian Rollason
August	Jack Hickman
September	Samantha Foord

After this date this procedure will be reviewed.

9. To note bollards and signage on Laurel Close Green. Proposed by Jack Hickman Seconded by Chairman Brian Rollason. Motion carried.
10. To ratify cycle parking locations on parish owned land only. The two locations are to the left of the entrance to the Playpark and at the intersection of the new path with the car park at the top of the car park. Proposed by Samantha Foord and seconded by Jack Hickman. Motion carried.
11. To approve CIL Report for 2021-22. Proposed by Jack Hickman Seconded by Chairman Brian Rollason. Motion carried
12. To discuss and adopt internal communication policy, Ground Use Policy, and revised Grant Policy. Proposed by Sam Foord Seconded by Vice Chairman Lorna Williams. Motion carried.
13. To review and approve all Policies and procedures. Proposed by Vice Chairman Lorna Williams Seconded by Chairman Brian Rollason. Motion carried. It was suggested that individual policies could be assigned to a specific councillor in future and then annual review becomes simpler.

120422/7

PLANNING (10 minutes)

TO DISCUSS:

21/01216/F3M Mepal Outdoor Centre

Amendment to Flood Risk Assessment for re consultation – No comment

22/00189/Ful Land North West to 7 Bridge Road, Mepal

One detached dwelling, detached carport and new access – No Comment

UPDATES: None

120422/8

FINANCE

1. To informally approve payments and Bank Reconciliation up to 31st March 2022

a) Online Payments:

HMRC, Wages and Expenses	£2661.03 BACS
Container People	£39.78 BACS
Wave – water	£56.53 BACS
CPD Electric – Pavilion works services, cleaning	
Subscription, Emergency lighting repair	£547.00BACS
Amazon – stationary, signage and Puncture Kit	£132.37 OC
WM Morrisons Fuel	£39.27 OC
Optimum – card fee	£1.99 OC
March	
East Cambs Trading – Tree Survey and Works	£685.88 BACS
Red Shoes Accounting – payroll services	£57.60 BACS
HMRC, Wages and Expenses	£3166.57 BACS
Paradise Sports – Pitch hire	£315.00 BACS
Container People	£39.78 BACS
CJC Cleaning – pavilion	£180.00 BACS
K Prance – Boiler Service	£85.00 BACS
CGM Group – Park Hedge	£444.00 BACS

b) Direct Debits Made:

EE – Broadband and Phone	£39.79 DD
N Power- Street Light Energy	£46.24 DD
British Gas	£64.94 DD

c) Income

Caroline Osborne – Pavilion Hire	£75.00 BACS
Ely and District Training – Hire	£120.00 BACS

Ratification of payments was proposed by Chairman Brian Rollason and seconded by Jack Hickman. Motion carried.

120422/9

DIARY DATES – Next Full Parish Council Friday 20th May 2022 (Annual Parish Meeting 6.30pm followed by Annual Meeting of the Parish Council at 7pm).

Vice Chairman Lorna Williams reminded all Councillors that the dates of the meeting were on the website in advance and that it was important that due to our low numbers and a statutory requirement to have at least 3 councillors present at all meetings that if Councillors became unavailable or could not make any meeting date that they needed to immediately advise the Clerk as we may need to cancel the meeting. If we must cancel meetings, this could mean we are not able to meet our statutory obligations.

Reminder of remaining dates for 2022:

Tuesday 14th June 7pm Mepal Pavilion

Tuesday 13th September 7pm Mepal Pavilion

Tuesday 8th November 7pm Mepal Pavilion

120422/10

CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR. The applicant was unable to attend tonight’s meeting.

Meeting closed at 21:05

.....
K Peck

Karen Peck
Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
Mepal Parish Council
20th May 2022

.....
B Rollason

Chairman Brian Rollason
Chairman
Mepal Parish Council