

# 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)

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**NOTICE OF MEETING:** Annual Meeting of Mepal Parish Council  
**TIME:** 19.00  
**DATE:** Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2022  
**VENUE:** Mepal Community Pavilion

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

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## MINUTES

Attendees: Cllr Rollason (BR), Cllr Williams (LW), Cllr Hickman (JH)

**200522/1 TO ELECT CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND RECEIVE THE CHAIRMANS DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

LW proposes, JH seconded to appoint BR as Chairman for the coming year. Motion carried

**200522/2 TO ELECT A VICE CHAIR AND TO RECEIVE THE VICE CHAIRS DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

BR proposes, JH seconded to appoint LW as Vice Chairman for the coming year. Motion carried

**200522/3 TO RECORD APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Foord (SM) sent apologies- work commitments. Apologies accepted

**200522/4 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest

**200522/5 TO SIGN AND APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF:**

The Full Parish Council Meeting Minutes from 12<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were proposed by BR, seconded by LW as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Motion carried

**200522/6 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. Three members of the public were present. All represented the Mepal Sports Football Club.

A statement was read out by the Secretary of the Club who was in attendance.

The Secretary of the football club stated that their current £45 charge is for a match and not per hour. It was further stated that Little Downham charges £35 per match and this includes pitch, changing rooms, and kitchen. The FA have been consulted confirmed that this is the case and that charging a home team £20 per hour will put the facilities out of reach.

The Parish Council were asked directly how they could justify the proposed costs on the basis of the Football Foundation grant offer terms and conditions that the Parish Council signed and agreed to. The Secretary of the Football Club further reminded the Council that the grant is still in claw back period and it is not yet Mepal Parishes Pavilion to do with as they wish.

Specifically in the terms and conditions which Mepal Parish Council accepted in 2005, Clause 5.1 states that the facilities are to be used in accordance with grant application which means the football comes first. Clause 5.3.1 further states that fees are not to increase beyond the RPI unless the Football Foundation has given prior consent and Clause 11.1(c) and 11.1.3 state that within the 21-year clawback period (from the date that the grant acceptance offer) the fees cannot be increased beyond the RPI.

The Parish Council were reminded by the Secretary of the Football Club that if we do not meet the T&C then the grant must be fully paid within the clawback period and that in their opinion the Parish Council has failed to meet the terms and conditions of the grant from the start.

Little Downham's match charges are £35 per game, and it was stated that Mepal Sports cannot agree to the current charges as it is not viewed as fair on the club and not according to the terms and conditions the Parish Council have agreed to. LW was given a written copy of the statement and a copy of the email confirming the Little Downham charges.

It was stated that the football club want to pay £500 to use the facilities for a year and not hire on a per hour basis. LW explained that this is difficult to manage. They want this to be £500 for any number of matches and they also want exclusive use on the Saturday in case any changes to matches occur due to other pitches being unplayable. It was stated that surely having this annual income is better than having nothing and if we do not meet the T&C of the grant then this means that the £160,000 will have to be repaid.

JH stated that this is not £500 income if it costs us more than that for the actual use by the football club and LBW added that any surplus costs would need to be passed on to Mepal residents through a precept increase. The Secretary of the Football Club asked about the FIT payments and the loan and LBW stated that the loan would run until the end of next year and the net 'income' is £300 until then (£1200 FIT payments minus £900 loan repayment). There was some confusion about why we still receive FIT payments if there is extra electricity costs and LBW stated that the hot water is not electric and is gas so the two are not related. BR also stated that FIT payments are not based on whether the electricity is used but is on an estimate of use and generation by the electric company. LW stated that the FIT payments are on a separate account to the electricity supply.

There was debate about how 15 minutes of hot water and some lighting for the changing rooms equates to the proposed charges and LBW explained that the water system is not instant hot water and is large immersion boosted storage tanks so the gas usage will be a lot more once the showers are used. As a business energy user, we are not protected by any price cap and so Councillors are very concerned that the increased use is going to have to be passed to all Mepal residents on the precept if we cannot get the pricing structure right. It had been suggested that the Parish Council grant awarded to the Football Club could be used to offset the costs. BR confirmed that the grant payment had been authorised for payment that day and we could review the pricing structure in November, but the Football Club are not willing to commit to the season on this basis and risk losing their £45 match booking at the Paradise Centre. For this £45 they do not have to mark the pitch themselves which is another cost to play on the 'home' pitch that the club has to manage.

The Secretary of the Football Club stated that they will not agree to our proposals so as it stands, they will not be coming back to Mepal.

JH suggested that perhaps we could do an assessment of the actual increased hot water use? LW stated that we potentially have a problem as our standing orders do not allow us to discuss reviewing the rates for 6 months if we proceed with agenda item 200522/16. We were asked to clarify what we meant by this, and LBW stated that Parish Councils are bound by their approved Standing Orders which set out how Councillors have to run the Council, we are not free to keep making changes to agreed motions and proposals and this is something that is not in our control.

BR pointed out that we had already given the Football Club a huge amount of leeway during this open forum specifically because we do want to support the club and we do want football matches to return to the village, but we did not feel it was right to expect residents to subsidise the costs of that return.

The Secretary of the Football Club stated that it is vital that we are aware of what the previous Parish Council had agreed to when they accepted the grant and that the Football Foundation are currently aware of the issues and support Mepal Sports position that the proposed pricing is too high.

BR thanked the Football Club for bringing these matters to our attention and said that within the rules we would respond accordingly.

The Members of the public all left the meeting after the close of the Open Forum.

- 200522/7 TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE STANDING ORDERS**  
JH drew attention to a mistake in clause 11 where some text was duplicated. Therefore, this was amended and standing orders revised accordingly. BR proposed, LW seconded to approve and adopt the Councils Standing Orders. Motion carried and LW will send the Clerk the final copy.
- 200522/8 TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROLS DOCUMENTS**  
BR proposed, LW seconded to approve and adopt the Councils Financial Regulations and Internal Financial Controls. Motion carried
- 200522/9 TO APPROVE THE COUNCIL'S POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
BR proposed, LW seconded to approve and adopt the Councils Policies and Procedures. Motion carried
- 200522/10 TO APPROVE THE STANDARDS AND CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS**  
BR proposed, LW seconded to approve and adopt the Councils Standards and Code of Conduct. Motion carried
- 200522/11 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2021/22 TO BE ACCEPTED AND APPROVED**  
JH proposed, LW seconded to approve the Internal Audit Report 2021-22. Motion carried
- 200522/12 INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW 2021/22**  
Comment actioned
- 200522/13 AGAR 21/22: ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT TO BE APPROVED**  
BR proposed, LW seconded to approve the AGAR 21/22 Annual Governance Statement. Motion carried
- 200522/14 AGAR 21/22: ANNUAL ACCOUNTING STATEMENT TO BE APPROVED**  
BR proposed, LW seconded to approve the AGAR 21/22 Annual Accounting Statement. Motion carried
- 200522/15 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR 2022/23**  
LW proposed, JH seconded to appoint S&J Accounting for the coming year. Motion carried
- 200522/16 COUNCIL BUSINESS**
- a) Amendment to Pavilion Hire Agreement motion called by LW and seconded by BR  
In light of the extensive discussion during the public forum this motion was withdrawn by LW as she was not clear what the correct way to proceed was. As the contention is that Mepal Parish Council would be failing to abide by the terms and conditions in the original acceptance of the Football Federation grant if we impose the costs structure as proposed, it is clear that all Councillors and the Clerk, none of whom were in position in 2005, need to look at the specific clauses cited to make sure that we are not liable for £160,000 claw back.
  - b) To discuss and formally approve response to correspondence (various) received from Mepal Sports.  
Following the withdrawal of the motion to amend the Pavilion Hire Agreement, the agreed draft response sent to Mepal Sports could not be the final response until the Parish Council are clear on the issues raised regarding non-compliance with the FF grant. We felt that the final response must not put the Council at risk of the £160,000 clawback clause. This was proposed by JH and seconded by BR. Motion carried.
  - c) To ratify response to correspondence, receive from Amanda Cox on behalf of the Village Hall Committee. This motion was approved by LW and seconded by JH. Motion carried.
  - d) To discuss quotation received for Neighbourhood Plan and agree to apply for funding

- This motion was proposed by JH and seconded by LE. Motion carried.
- e) To ratify the planting of a tree for the Jubilee (replacing and old dead tree at recreation ground)  
This proposal was approved by LW and seconded by BR. Motion carried.
  - f) To approve purchase of a whiteboard. This was proposed by LW and seconded by JH. Motion carried.
  - g) Pavilion Ramp. It is proposed that a decking area is installed outside the double door at the end of the building to comply with fire regulations for level access to exit the building. A budget of £1000 was proposed by LW and seconded by JH. Motion carried.
  - h) Jubilee Event Donation of monies raised. As the guides group has now disbanded, it was proposed that any donations on the day were given to the Community first responders. This was proposed by LW and seconded by JH. Motion carried.
  - i) To discuss the Annual Play Area Inspection and works required (if any). It was proposed that a budget of £500 for up to 3 bulk bags of bark was set to deal with the safety issues. This was proposed by LW and seconded by BH. Motion carried.  
It was also discussed that additional benches for the play area should be considered this year. The recycled plastic benches on the field were felt to be the best , if there is a picnic bench version. To be added to the next agenda.
  - j) Pavilion Maintenance Update and new Defib  
The repainting is complete, and the installation of the defibrillator has been delayed by a lack of installation instructions. The Pavilion is ready for reopening apart from the full installation of the new key code box

**200522/17 COUNCILLOR FORUM**  
No matters were raised

**200522/18 PLANNING (10 minutes)**  
**TO DISCUSS:**

22/00516/LBC 8 High Street, Mepal – Internal Alterations – The Parish Council had no objection  
22/01216/F3M Mepal Outdoor Centre Amendment – Red line The Parish Council had no objection, has been amended to exclude part of the northern site boundary not within the applicant ownership -

**UPDATES:**

22/00189/FUL Land Northwest to 7 Bridge Road, Mepal - Approved

**200522/19 FINANCE**

1. To approve payments and Bank Reconciliation up to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**a) Online Payments:**

HMRC, Wages and Expenses	£2909.59 BACS
Scribe – Annual License	£561.60 BACS
Container People – Hire old container	£39.78 BACS
Container People – Haulage of New Container	£456.00 BACS
Tom Parish – Service	£48.00 BACS
Paradise Centre- Pitch Hire	£90.00 BACS
ELA Active – Pitch Hire (no authorised ground)	£60.00 BACS
Amazon – Signage, cleaning materials, phone	£255.96 OC
Optimum Fees	£6.99 OC
ECDC – SBRR	£0.00
Amazon Lock, Masks and materials for maintenance	£29.91 OC
Robert Dyas – Keycode Lock	£149.99 OC

**b) Direct Debits Made:**

SSE – Electric Pavilion	£148.89 DD
British Gas – Gas Pavilion	£62.45 DD
EE – Phone and Broadband	£38.36 DD
N Power – Street Light Energy Jan-April	£127.88 DD

**c) Income**

Precept 1 <sup>st</sup> Instalment	£19396.00 BACS
Ely Cycling Club – Hire of Pavilion	£60.00 BACS
Mepal Sports	£12.00 BACS

BR proposed, LW seconded to approve all bank reconciliations, payments, and income. Motion carried

200522/20      **DIARY DATES - 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 7pm**

**Meeting closed at 20.51**

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K Peck  
**Karen Peck**  
**Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer**  
**Mepal Parish Council**

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B Rollason  
**Brian Rollason**  
**Chairman**  
**Mepal Parish Council**

**12<sup>th</sup> July 2022**