

Minutes of Mersham Parish Council
Meeting held on Monday, 21st November 2022 in the Church room at St John the Baptist Church

Present	Peter Turley (Chair) Gavin Murphy Melanie Wells	Peter Hawkin Kenton Stewart
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In attendance: Cllr Bartlett, 1 member of the public and Tracey Block (Clerk)

To be actioned by:

To receive and approve apologies for absence. Apologies had been received from Cllrs Fletcher and Stewart.	
To receive declarations of interest (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests). The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. Cllr Wells noted a personal interest in the Inland Border facility as a family member works on the site and a personal interest in the Village Hall.	
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2022 Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 10 th October 2022 were approved as a true record and were signed accordingly.	
To discuss matters arising from previous minutes not covered by the agenda. There were no matters arising from the agenda.	
To receive report from Borough Councillor A detailed report had been circulated; a copy can be found on the website: http://www.mershampc.org.uk/community/mersham-parish-council-18392/borough-cllr-reports/ Cllr Bartlett reported that he had met with Roland Mills regarding the Stone Street Solar Project. This is an NSIP (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project) application, to be determined by the Planning Inspectorate. The PC must respond by 29 th November 2022. Cllr Bartlett had circulated his comments. The Mersham based issues are: There has been no viewing assessment from Colliers Hill and it is believed that this view will be impacted. There has been no assessment of the Mersham Conservation Area. ABC will not be able to respond until 8 th December and they have been granted an extension. Cllr Bartlett has also started a conversation between the Church Commissioners and Stone Street Solar re: proposed footpath/cycleway.	
To receive an update regarding the creation of a green buffer zone in Highfield and the current situation at the Inland Border Facility Lots of diggers have arrived on the Highfield site. Planting is to be undertaken in January. There was a light switch off at the IBF on 12 th November. The A2070 works are due to be completed in the 3 rd week of January.	
To receive an update on Highways Issues (Including the Highways Improvement Plan) The Clerk had spoken with the new team and is awaiting an update fro Kieran. The School railings have been removed by a tractor, Cllr Turley wondered if this might be something for the Highways Improvement Plan. The Clerk had put the Headteacher in touch with Judith at Amey.	
Update on Broadband The Clerk had heard from Mark Davies at OpenReach to confirm that the houses near the new builds will be able to obtain Fibre to the property.	TB

Update on the JPF

The Parish Council has met with Bryony Heaven and Georgina Strutt from Strutt and Parker, asking for a new lease to be negotiated on a minimum of 10 + years.
It was noted that the Caterpillar has been removed.

To receive an update on the Village Hall

Cllr Wells provided an update on the Village Hall.
The Parish Council will support the purchase of some items for the Village Hall.
The Council requested demonstration that the hall is robust before a grant might be considered.

Planning matters: to authorise a response to any application(s) and to note any recent planning decisions by Ashford Borough Council or any correspondence on planning matters.**a) The following applications required comments:**

PA/2022/2686

Stonegreen Farm, Flood Street, Mersham
Installation of 22 ground mounted solar panels.

No objections raised

The Evolution Power NSIP application - The application fails to meet the Borough Councillor objectives of: Approx. 20% of the proposed land is categorised as best and most valuable agricultural land. Loss of this land category to solar farms is not acceptable.

There should be a biodiversity gain.

There should be a 5m gap between the solar array

The viewing issues and visual impact has not been assessed from Colliers Hill or the Mersham Conservation Area

The panels must be minimum of 90cm from the ground.

The site should be limited to 30 years.

The £40K funding is inadequate across the 4 affected parishes.

Resolved: The Parish Council is against this application and Cllr Murphy is to draft a response from Mersham PC.

GM

Succession Planning

3 Councillors present will definitely stand again. The current Councillors are to encourage more people to come forward.

Financial matters:**a) To note the Parish Council's financial position.**

The financial position was noted as at 31st October 2022

b) To authorise any payments

Cheque No:	Payee	Amount
502237	I King (November salary)	£ 130.00
502238	HMRC	£ 70.00
502239	T Block (November salary)	£ 518.64
502240	I King (December salary)	£ 170.00
502241	HMRC	£ 38.60
502242	T Block (December salary)	£ 409.94

A copy of the budget v expenditure was distributed to all Councillors.

c) To agree the budget for 2023-24

The Parish Council discussed the proposed budget at length. The Clerk had prepared 3 options and ultimately Cllr Stewart proposed and Cllr Wells seconded that the Parish Council choose Option C for the budget for 2023-24.

Resolved: to accept Option C for the budget for 2023-24.

<p>d) To agree the precept for 2023-24 The Parish Council agreed to precept for £23,350.00 for 2023-24</p>					
<p>Any Other Business (for information purposes only): The caretaker had his trailer stolen on Friday 11th November at approx. 21:30 from the Dennes site. The solar lights on the footpath are reported as working although they are rather dull at this time of year. Cllr Stewart is to ask if a Christmas tree and lights can be placed on the frontage near the bakery. Update on the Tithe Barn – Cllr Turley had circulated the letter he had received in the summer. The Clerk had contacted the Planning Officer, Ms Dee but was yet to receive a reply. The Clerk is to chase this. The appeal regarding the height of the building on the same site was discussed, the appellant had been told to replace the windows with wooden windows.</p>	TB				
<p>Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council. <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Monday 16th January 2023</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Monday 20th February 2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Monday 20th March 2023</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Monday 17th April 2023</td> </tr> </table> </p>	Monday 16th January 2023	Monday 20th February 2023	Monday 20th March 2023	Monday 17th April 2023	All
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<p>The meeting closed at 9.00pm</p>					