

## **Mendlesham Parish Council**

An Ordinary Parish Council meeting was held in the Old School Room, Mendlesham, Wednesday 6 September 2023 at 7pm.

**Present:** Cllrs A Davey, ( Chairman), P Allen, M Exley, D Foster ( arrived 7.02 pm) , N Foster, C Orton, H Orton, E Ward, S Jones (Clerk) and three members of the public.

**Apologies:** Cllrs S Judd (personal reasons) and D Lummis ( work reasons).

**Acceptance of apologies:** Confirmed.

**The filming statement** was read out.

7.02pm Cllr D Foster arrived

### **2. Declarations of interest:**

**a) To note Councillor's declarations of interest in any of the following agenda items.** None declared. The Clerk asked Cllrs D and N Foster if they wished to declare an interest with regard to agenda item 11 with regard to the 50 50 shop and proximity of their home. They did not.

**b) To agree to any dispensations with regard to declarations of interest.** Not required.

**3. Minutes:** To confirm the following as a true and accurate representation.

**a) Ordinary Meeting 9.8.23.** Pages 2060- 2067 inclusive were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate representation of the meeting, signed and dated by the Chairperson.

7.05pm SCC/D.Cllr Andrew Stringer arrived.

The Chairperson moved to agenda item 6 Mendlesham Green Scout Hut for the benefit of members of the public.

### **6. Mendlesham Green Scout Hut:**

a) To note reply regarding permission for use of allotment land from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Further to our email as follows:

"Please can you confirm if we need to make a formal application for disposal of allotment land for our Scout Hut Project at Mendlesham Green for land owned by Mendlesham Parish Council as per Department for Communities and Local Government Jan 2014 Guidance.

- Since at least 1984, but believed to be earlier late 50's/ early 60's, there has been a Scout Hut on a plot of land registered formally as allotment land registered with possessory title with the Land Registry around 2000, now absolute title.
- The Scout Hut was demolished in 2009 but the land is still used informally by the local Scout Group.

- Planning permission to build a new hall, on the same plot, albeit slightly larger, with a different footprint has been obtained and a new build project has commenced.
- Since 2003 and believed earlier, this land has not been used as a traditional allotment, other than any such activities as the Scouts have or wish to undertake.
- Mendlesham Parish Council has excess allotment land and have had no waiting lists for in excess of twenty years.

Whilst we are prepared to make a formal application, this will involve additional work for us as a small Parish Council and having read paragraph 1.2 question if because there was a building, before registration of our now " statutory allotment land" if a formal application is required?

Perhaps you would advise accordingly ? “

The following reply had been received.

“Allotment disposal – Mendlesham Green Suffolk

I refer to your email of 14 June and to my subsequent reply of 30 July about the proposed disposal of allotment land for a scout hut project at Mendlesham Green.

Section 23 of the Allotments and Smallholdings Act 1908 places a duty on councils to provide allotments where they perceive there is a demand for them. Allotment sites owned by local authorities can be designated as ‘statutory’ or ‘temporary’. While ‘statutory’ sites are subject to some protection under the Allotments Act 1925, ‘temporary’ sites have no security beyond the usual planning system. Statutory sites are those that have been acquired for the specific purpose of allotment gardening and enjoy legal protection – any disposal must be agreed by the Secretary of State.

I am afraid that the Secretary of State is unable to answer the specific question which you ask, as this is essentially a matter for the Parish Council, taking its own legal advice if it thinks disposal consent is or is not appropriate. What the Parish Council will need to consider is whether the land which previously housed a scout hut and is still informally used by the scouts does or does not form part of the statutory allotment site. If it does, then the Parish Council will need to seek consent from the Secretary of State under Section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925.

If the Parish Council decides that it does require Section 8 consent, I will be happy to assist you through the process” .

b) To agree the way forward for the new build project.

After discussion, including that there is no further evidence available other than the contents of our email as above, it was unanimously agreed to contact Birketts and ask if they can to act on behalf of Mendlesham Parish Council and provide brief advice based on our email, if the Scout Hut location is statutory or non statutory land etc and as previously agreed if they can assist with the Heads of Terms and lease. **Action: Clerk.**

c) Report regarding availability from MSDC of new hedging for boundary.

Cllr Exley reported he had requested 80 native hedging plants from Mid Suffolk District Council. It was noted that the Scouts would assist with planting.

d) Any other matters.

Cllr N Foster asked why there was no agreement with regard to phasing of the Scout Hut building project in the minutes of the meeting 9.8.23. The Clerk reported this was because whilst Cllr Foster had indicated his support this was then not developed into a decision at the meeting, possibly because the Council wanted further information from the Scouts as minuted.

Cllr Allen queried items around the Mendlesham Green village sign and asked if tidy up was required. The Scouts confirmed they would review and report accordingly.

7.30pm Two members of the public left

**4. Police report:** A report had been received and circulated. It was noted that the current Stowmarket Officer was moving to a new role and it was not known when or if further reports would be received.

**SCC/MSDC Cllr Stringer:** See County and District report as appended to these minutes.

Questions relating to undersea electricity cabling and costs, verge trims and Gypsy and Traveller site allocations were asked.

**Public forum:** No questions from the remaining member of the public and nothing had been received prior to this meeting.

7.41pm Cllr Stringer and the member of the public left.

## **5. Planning matters:**

a) Applications:

**DC/23/03727 Land North of, Mill Road, Mendlesham, Suffolk:** Full Planning Application – Change of use of land for the stationing of a temporary mobile home for use by agricultural/horticultural worker.

It was unanimously agreed to support this application subject to the following:

Support the comments from the Economic Team and request that this application for accommodation to support the horticultural business is tied to the business and that should this use cease, then the residential dwelling is removed from the site.

Concerns about:

The volumes of water required for the business and caravan occupants.

The proposal regarding foul water

The numbers of persons at any one time who may be residing in the caravan

The impact of lighting for the site and caravan .

b) Results:None

c) Correspondence:

i) To note request from signatories on behalf of Chapel and Hill Chorton, Maer and Aston and Whtimore NDP to write to our MP. To agree or otherwise.It was agreed not to contact our MP.

ii) Any other correspondence:None.

d) Any other planning matters: None

## **8. Reports**

a) Clerks report & delegated decisions

**Allotments:** Inspection carried out by Cllr H Orton and Clerk 17.8.23. A couple of actions agreed re untidy plots. A multiple plot holder had asked to relinquish two plots. The area concerned was agreed and new tenancy arrangements and associated fees payable information sent. There had been an anomaly re fees payable per plot carried forward for many years which has now been re adjusted under reference to Cllr Orton.

**Clerk Handover:** Electronic clean up for documents, currently completed and backed up, except NP and Community Centre Future documents  
Paper documents clean up in process.

**NP files** : see report 31.8.23 re conversation with MSDC officer. (*Clerks note: it was agreed the Clerk had discretion to delete files as considered applicable*).

**Mendlesham Green Hay:** in process of being cut, was not cut when weather permitted , early June as wildflowers still present.

**Delegated decisions:** none

**Correspondence:**

Suffolk On Board: Notification Bus no 457 will not stop at Mendlesham Green wef 7.9.23.

Mendlesham Community Charity:

Email regarding Mendlesham Summer Festival 22.6.24.( *Clerks note:booking date confirmed, hire fee to be agreed closer to the time with more confirmed information regarding the event*).

Email regarding 50 50 shop. ( *Clerks note: draft email reply confirmed*).

St Joseph's Centre: reply received further to request for contact details for Trustees for public use.

Playing Field hedge resident report of hops.

Stowmarket Striders Running Club: potential half marathon near Mendlesham . ( *Clerks note confirmed*).

b) Other organisation reports. None

c) Chairs report: Nothing to report that is not an agenda item.

d) Questions to the Chair: None

**9. Mendlesham Parish Council: Financial matters**

a) To confirm payment of invoices

Payment of the following were unanimously confirmed.

OL	1198.17	August administration
DD	93.19	Nest August 2023
OL	161.00	August Street Cleaning
DD	9.20	Google docs monthly fee
OL	130.00	Mendlesham Educational Foundation Old School Room fees April -June 2023
OL	229.20	Playquip UK Ltd t/a Playquip Leisure Replacement cradle seat @ Mendlesham Green.
OL	378.00	PKF Littlejohn LLP external audit ye 31.3.23 Page 2072

OL	12.00	B Gardiner repairs to Woodland tractor tyre
OL	172.22	Mid Suffolk District Council Parish Election 4.5.23 uncontested charge
OL	31.64	B Gardiner lawnmower fuel
001005	30.00	Mendlesham URC Chapel- hire 7.9.23 meeting

b) To note receipt of External Auditors report for the year ending 31.3.23. Noted.

c) To confirm any actions required. The PKF notification regarding the change in the Practitioners Guide 2023 which is now mandatory for the 2023/2024 period was noted. " Paragraph 1.26 relates to the requirements in relation to Assertion 3 and states 'Email management - every authority should have an email account that belongs to the council and to which the council has access – this ideally would be a .gov.uk or .org.uk address or could be an address linked to the council website.' In order to answer yes to Assertion 3 in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement the local authority should ensure that it has an email address that complies with this requirement and if it does not already it should do so urgently". .

d) To agree way forward re change of title for parish emails/website. It was agreed Cllr Davey would report decision options at the next meeting.  
**Action Cllr Davey and Clerk.**

e) To confirm length of time the Conclusion of Audit Report should be published on Parish notice boards. It was noted the Conclusion of Audit reports had been displayed on the notice boards since 21 August and should remain until 30 September 2023.

f) To confirm Michael Roshier is trained and authorised to use Parish Council owned equipment. Unanimously confirmed.

f) Any other financial matters: none.

## **10. Playing fields:**

a) Report : Clerk reported MUGA block bookings on Weds and Thurs. Salvation Army have also asked for another team block booking on a Wednesday but times clashed with existing booking -have advised alternative evenings/times. Hire agreement forms for those wishing to use football pitches , hire prices etc have been sent out and chased as required under instruction from Cllr Lummis.

b) Report re Mendlesham Green football goals and nets. Cllr Lummis had identified equipment to replace existing. Both Cllr Lummis and Mr Nunn had offered help to accept delivery, install and remove. Vertus had quoted but only one set of equipment held by the supplier at time of quote.

c) Proposal to purchase a set of 9v 9 goals, net and net support. Estimated cost £ 2,000 including delivery. Unanimously agreed, noting that the price may increase if existing stock is no longer available. To be funded from Ear Marked Reserve 328 Renewal of Play equipment. **Action: Clerk.**

d) Any other playing field matters:

Resident email regarding hops was noted and agreed no further action was required.

Autumn hedge cutting: It was agreed to ask Mr Nunn. **Action: Clerk.**

Fireworks event: It was agreed to confirm set up arrangements as required, noting that any football hire would need to accommodate the set up arrangements which may lead to loss of a hire fee. **Action Clerk. Cllr Lummis** to note.

Cllr D Foster requested an agenda item at the next meeting regarding the current policy for dogs at Mendlesham Playing Fields. **Action: Cllr D Foster and Clerk.**

#### **11. 50 50 Shop:**

a) To note the Asbestos report undertaken by Cllr Exley August 2023. Noted, including the need for external decoration. **Action: Cllr Exley** to cost.

b) Any other actions required. The need for a formal management plan was noted. **Action Cllr Davey** to report at October meeting.

#### **12. MSDC Pride in your place:**

a) To agree any proposals and application. After discussion it was agreed to apply for funding towards two projects:

1. Mess Free Mendlesham path weed clearance including £59pa brown compost bins x 2 and 2 warning signs £100.
2. 50 50 building repaint

**Action: Clerk**

**13. Any other business:** matters of report and future agenda items. A Community Centre Charity meeting 27 September was confirmed.

The meeting then went into camera, to the commercial sensitivity of agenda item 14 and Confidential staff matter of agenda item 15. There were no members of the public present to leave the meeting.

#### **14. Mendlesham's Woodland**

a) To appoint a contractor to cut down diseased tree. Two quotes had been obtained. It was agreed to appoint a contractor accordingly.

8.33 pm The Clerk left the meeting.

#### **15. Recruitment**

Candidates CV had been circulated prior to the meeting.

a) Report from the Finance and General Purposes Advisory committee: Noted.

b) F & GP proposal re appointment of a new Clerk and RFO. It was unanimously agreed not to appoint this candidate. **Action: Cllr Davey** to write and advise.

It was unanimously agreed that the F&GP committee should start recruitment again. **Action : F & GP**

c) To agree handover arrangements (F & GP). Nothing to discuss at this stage.

d) To agree any required terms of reference for the F & GP. It was unanimously agreed for the F&GP to continue under the existing terms of reference. Next F&GP meeting date to be arranged by email.

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Meeting closed at 8.48pm