

Minutes of the 120th MEOPHAM Annual Parish Meeting
held on Tuesday 6th May 2014, at 6.00 pm
at the St Johns Centre, Wrotham Road, Meopham.

In the Chair:

Cllr D Powell, Chairman, Meopham Parish Council.

Also Present:

Cllr Derek Sales (Mayor of Gravesham) and Mrs Pam Sales (Mayoress of Gravesham), County Cllr B Sweetland, Borough Cllrs Mrs L Boycott, Mrs J Burgoyne, J Cubitt and D Shelbrooke, Cllr A Rowe (Cobham Parish Council), 12 members of Meopham Parish Council, PCSOs J Hartley, Community Wardens Mrs M Cason and Mrs J Fuller, Mr K Dare and Mrs G Willsher (Meopham and District Footpaths Group) and 60 representatives of local organisations, other invited guests, electors and members of the public.

Invited speaker: Mrs C Drury, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Protect Kent.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from the following: Mr and Mrs G Knief (Meopham Historical Society), Mrs D Peck (Press Correspondent), Mr P Harding (MEPARA), Mr and Mrs B Edwards (U3A), Cllr J Papadopoulos (Higham Parish Council).

2. Chairman's Welcome to guests, electors, members of the public and the Press

The Chairman welcomed the Mayor and Mayoress of Gravesham along with other distinguished guests and parishioners of Meopham. The Chairman invited the Mayor to address the meeting and he spoke with regard to his role as Mayor and his chosen charities over the past year which were the House of Mercy (a charity for homeless people in Gravesend) and Cancer Research. His role was to promote the Borough and had hosted visitors from both the USA and Germany as part of town twinning as well as visiting the USA.

County Cllr B Sweetland, Borough Cllrs J Cubitt and D Shelbrooke spoke on matters of interest both county and borough wide.

The Chairman paid tribute to Cllr Hugh Marshall who sadly passed away on 31st October 2013. He would be truly missed by all who knew him. The Chairman thanked all the members of the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk for their support over the last year. He also congratulated the service contractor who ensured the village greens were regularly tended and all the clubs and associations within the parish that offered a wide range of services, sport and leisure for both young and old alike.

3. Minutes of the previous (119th) Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the 119th Annual Parish Meeting held on 28th May 2013 were confirmed.

4. Address by Mrs C Drury, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Protect Kent

Mrs Drury outlined the formation and history of CPRE and their role in protecting the County from development pressures. The Chairman thanked Mrs Drury for her very well received presentation.

6. Questions from the Public

Cllr Peter Hasler on behalf of the Kent Association of Local Councils Gravesham Committee presented an award to Mr Paul Giles who was the Manager of the Cricketers Inn during the three day loss of power over Christmas 2013. Mr Giles was commended and received the award for inviting all those who had Christmas dinner bookings at the Cricketers Inn together with residents of the Meopham Green area to a lunch at the St John's Centre for which he made no charge. A true show of community spirit.

The Chairman invited questions from parishioners. The following were raised in relation to the proposed redevelopment of Judsons Pavilion:

- Concerns that the proposed redevelopment of the pavilion would take away business from other venues – the Chairman assured other venues that this was not the intention of the Parish Council.
- How would the redevelopment be funded – the Chairman stated this would be through grants, donations and fund raising.
- Concern that the official planning notices were not appropriately displayed – the Chairman noted that this was the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority (Gravesham Borough Council).
- Did the Deed of Gift allow the Parish Council to have an office at Judsons, had the Windmill Trust or the Judsons family been consulted? - the Chairman stated that no decision had been made by the Parish Council to move the Parish Office from the Windmill.
- A representative from the Windmill Trust noted the excellent relationship with the Parish Council but expressed concerns if the Parish Office was relocated from the Windmill.

A member of the public Mrs Pat Butler called for a parish poll on the following question: “

“Should Meopham Parish Council cancel all planned proposals for new Council buildings and other non-recreational developments at Judsons Recreation Ground and simply refurbish the existing facilities for sport and recreation in line with the wishes of the late Mr Frederick Judson.”

The Chairman advised the meeting that the costs of the poll (approximately £3,000) would be borne by the Parish Council and the results of a poll were not legally binding. The wording was not rejected by the Chairman and the signed documentation was passed to the Parish Clerk.

The Chairman thanked the Mayor and Mayoress of Gravesham, distinguished guests and parishioners, for attending the 119th Annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting closed at 07.20 pm.