

Minutes of Mersham Parish Council
Meeting held on Monday, 19th February 2024 in the Church room at St John the Baptist Church

Present	Gavin Murphy (Chair)	Peter Hawkins
	Donna Pearson	Stewart Ross
	Kenton Stewart	Melanie Wells

In attendance: Tracey Block (Clerk), Borough Councillor Bartlett and 3 members of the public.

To be actioned by:

To receive and approve apologies for absence	
Apologies were received from Cllr McBarnet. These apologies were approved.	
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 meetings held on 15th January 2024	
Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 15 th January 2024 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 to discuss.	
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 highlighted that the new bin service starting on 24/3 may bring with it a change in bin collection day.	
Once the Local Plan Call for sites are published, the PC will be able to discuss the matter with Cllr Bartlett.	
Cllr Bartlett is to be updated about the IBF at the next Joint Transportation Board meeting. Cllr Bartlett will be looking at planting and signage,	
Dover District Council has taken action against DEFRA as the food checks have been moved from Dover site to the Sevington IBF. This will have an effect on the employees taken on for this role.	
The pothole blitz has been announced and Laws Lane, Mersham is to be tackled.	
Public Session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item	
The public session is dealt with under item 9.	
To receive any update regarding the creation of a green buffer zone in High Field/IBF	
There was no further update on the High Field/IBF.	
Parish Council Objectives for this administration	
There was no further update on this.	
The Parish Council will advertise the behind the hedge footpath's existence placing adverts in the pub, shop, The Villager and online on Social media.	

Evolution Power (EPL001) Solar Development

The members of the public in attendance are members of the Support group trying to minimise the impact of the Solar development planned by EPL001.

Cllr Murphy explained that the Parish Council is supportive of the group and has been in discussions with Cllr Bartlett and Cllr Harman from Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council.

Mr Tennant explained that the valley between Aldington and Mersham and the footpath network. This is to be a NSIP (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project) application so will be decided by the Planning Inspectorate rather than the local authority. The Planning Act of 2008 puts weight behind these applications and the guidance on the National Planning Policies is applicant friendly. The Planning Act provides the applicant with compulsory purchase rights.

Roland Mills at Ashford Borough Council (ABC) is the Officer who has been involved with EPL001 as they approached him as part of the pre-application process. ABC are a statutory consultee, the application is expected in late March with a Liaison Panel meeting being offered in April. There is a 28 day period once the application is submitted for the Planning inspectorate to decide whether to accept the application or not.

The Parish support group have submitted a document to ABC and have taken advice from Counsel, it is hoped that further consultation will be provided.

If the application goes to the Planning Inspectorate rather than a further round of consultation, the group would be looking to achieve some mitigation on views and the provision of the community fund.

The Parish Council has previously submitted an objection and will submit views to Roland Mills, identifying the shortfall o key points being addressed in the initial consultations:

- Over-sizing of the scheme
- Managing the dichotomy of the site
- Design and siting of the energy storage
- Quality and lack of visualisations being provided
- Flood risk of surface water on the site

The energy storage facilities are 31 x 40’ storage containers, the Parish Councillors were concerned about the visual impact and safety of this. Visualizations of these are definitely wanted. The whole site will be fenced and there is concern that there will not be any mitigation in place for these.

There has also been no mention of how the panels would be accessed from Laws Lane.

A discussion ensued regarding how to take this forward.

RESOLVED:

The Parish Council will write to Roland Mills and Damian Green MP

The Parish Council will leaflet the village of Mersham

The Parish Council will enquire as to how damage to wildlife will be mitigated against should there be a battery fire.

Parking on Flood Street

Mersham Parish Council approached the Sports Club members regarding the parking issues on flood Street raised by a member of the public. A Planning Application is expected for additional parking and traffic management will be introduced in the meantime.

To receive an update on the Village Hall

Cllr Wells had previously circulated an update on the Village Hall.

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:

Application Number	Address	Application to:
--------------------	---------	-----------------

PA/2024/0064	the Hay Loft, Laws Lane, Mersham	Single storey front extension
PA/2024/0137	Acorn Cottage, Coopers Lane, Mersham	Proposed two storey garden studio/workshop
NOT/2024/0082	1 Chestnut Cottages, the Street	Yew - felling, too close to house and blocks light, Conifer - felling, too large
PA/2024/0087	Cherry Rose, Bower Road, Mersham	Detached garage (retrospective)

Financial matters:

a) To approve the following financial documents:

1. To note the Parish Council's financial position.

The Parish Council has £26553.18 in the bank.

2. To agree that, as the holding trustee, the Parish Council will assist with payments towards the Village Hall renovation until the Old Hall is brought up to standard.

The Parish Council agreed that, as holding trustee, it would continue to assist with payments towards the Village Hall renovation until the Old Hall is brought up to standard.

3. To authorise any payments

Cheque No:	Payee	Amount
OLT	HMRC	£ 90.40
OLT	I King (February salary)	£ 136.50
OLT	T Block (February Salary)	£ 380.43
OLT	Mersham Church	£ 120.00
OLT	Neil Radford (Electrical invoices for the Village Hall)	£ 1,319.42

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

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

Monday 18th March 2024

Monday 15th April 2024