

Minutes of Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 14th May 2010 in the Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Present

Rosie Weaver, Bob Kipling, Graeme Goodsir, Shirley Goodsir, Melanie Lee, Marilyn Hamilton, District Councillors David Bell and approximately 29 members of the public.

1. Election of Chairman

The Chair called for nominations for Chairman Melanie Lee
Proposed by Rosie Weaver. Seconded by Bob Kipling.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

The Chair called for nominations for Vice-Chairman Bob Kipling
Proposed by Rosie Weaver. Seconded by Melanie Lee.

3. Apologies

Sarah Markham

4. Election of Representatives.

Responsible Finance Officer	Mrs	Hall
(Clerk)		
Internal Auditor		Mr
S Wilcox		
Bank Mandate Signatures	Melanie Lee, Rosie Weaver, Mr Goodsir	
Committee Member for Village Hall Management Committee	Mrs Goodsir	
School Governors for Parish Council		Mrs Goodsir
Committee Member for War Memorial		Mr Markham

Finance	All Councillors and Clerk
Pool	Mr Goodsir, Ms Weaver, Mrs Hall, Mr
Kipling and Mrs Lee.	
Allotment Representative	Mrs Lee and Mr Goodsir
Footpaths / Forum	Mrs Hamilton
Meriden Sands Working Group	Mr Kipling, Mr Markham
Conservation Committee	Ms Weaver
Local Strategic Partnership	Ms Weaver, Mrs Hall
Police Rural Assembly	Mr Goodsir. Ms Weaver.
Solihull Area Committee	Ms Weaver, Mr Kipling, and Mrs Lee
Tree Wardens	Mrs Hamilton
Meriden Parish Action Group	Mrs Lee, Ms Weaver, Mrs Goodsir

Mrs Lee then took the Chair. She thanked Ms Weaver for her time and commitment whilst acting as Chair.

5. Declaration of Interest

The Chair invited members to make declaration of personal and prejudicial interest in respect of items on the agenda of meeting.

Melanie Lee – a personal interest in respect of Allotments.

Will Markham – a personal interest in respect of Planning application 2010/694

6. Minutes of Last Meeting.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting on 26th April 2010, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes

None.

8. Public Participation

8.1 Mr Markham requested that for the next agenda a discussion is had around dealing with emergency situations with a view to agreeing an emergency policy.

8.2 That the following three items are considered by the Parish Council
1) That the parish council agree to support the resolution carried at the recent Public Meeting held by RAID (Residents Against Illegal Development) to ask Solihull MBC to take urgent action over what can be done to affirm residents requests that no further development takes place at the site at Eaves Green Lane during the planning process.

2) RAID urge the Parish Council to oppose the planning application.

3) That the parish council consider whether they can provide resources to fund RAID's campaign and if the resources are not available a reserve is created.

The Chair thanked the resident for their comments and advised they would be addressed at the end of the Public Participation section.

8.3 The parish council was asked why Councillors were not at Eaves Green Lane on Saturday 1st May.

Some councillors responded to this personally. Two councillors did attend as soon as they were available. Other things were going on which had to be attended such as the Football Academy and also councillors had already made arrangements for the bank holiday which were difficult to change.

The parish council were informed Friday evening and acted immediately, continuing to do so over the weekend by trying to obtain factual information and finding out what action the parish council could lawfully take. Ms Weaver had provided a copy of an itinerary of the action the parish council had taken to the Chair of RAID.

Ms Weaver thanked the Clerk for the additional hours which were worked over the bank holiday weekend.

A resident responded saying that all the people that went to the site had plans for the bank holiday weekend and the farmers gave up their weekends. They expected the people they voted for to be there for the village.

A different resident suggested that if people are dissatisfied they should stand at the elections next May.

8.4 It was suggested by a resident that a positive option would be for Meriden residents to offer to purchase the land.

8.5 District Councillor Bell commented that he understood residents views about Saturday 1st May but didn't want this to overshadow the good work the parish council have done. They are a model parish council in this area.

8.6 A thank you to the parish council for helping Meriden School with their raised beds project. Also, for the Saturday morning Football Academy which is a great success.

8.7 Can a Tree Preservation Order be made to protect trees on the site at Eaves Green Lane. Mr Kipling had already made enquiries with Solihull MBC and the parish council need to include this request in their response to the planning application.

8.8 The shock and ore tactic is being used all around the country and we shouldn't "beat each other up" about it. We need to move forward and make contingencies for the future to protect other vulnerable sites in Meriden.

The Chair revisited the three points made at this section and the Clerk/Chair responded as follows:

- 1) The parish council could ask in their response to the planning application that the next stage decision is made urgently.
- 2) The Clerk commented that her advice to the parish council is that this planning application is dealt with in exactly the same way as any other application making comments on the Material Planning Considerations. That it is considered on the merits of the matters and not on the nature of the applicant.

- 3) The Clerk advised that the parish council have taken advice from the National Association of Local Councils and also Solihull MBC Monitoring Officer. Their advice is that, as a matter of law, the parish council cannot use public money to directly support a political or lobby group.

The Clerk explained that the parish council is governed by statute which set out what it can and cannot spend money on. Under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972 the parish council have £6.15 per elector to spend where it does not have any other power to spend and it is of interest to the area and direct benefit to some or all of the residents. Under the Race Relations Act 1976(s71) the parish council has a duty to encourage equality and good race relations. However, because of the nature of the group, for the parish council to give money directly or indirectly to this group would be a breach of that duty. If the parish council did decide to support the group financially there would be a risk of a judicial review against the parish council to overturn their decision which will cost the parish council immensely as they are unlikely to be successful.

A resident commented that RAID is not a racist group it is against illegal development. The Clerk acknowledged that and advised that upon receipt of the advice above she pointed this out to NALC ie that the group is against inappropriate development and not travellers. However, their comments were that due to the level of publicity, the parish council cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that some objections are racially motivated in at least part. The strong legal advice is that the parish council cannot do anything to assist.

A resident raised the fact that the parish council helped Berkswell financially in their fight against the coal mine. This was acknowledged by the Clerk who pointed out that the Race Relations Act 1976 (71) would not have applied in that situation.

The Clerk commented that the parish council is able to allocate funding to obtaining their own advice if that is necessary for example if the planning application goes to appeal and that will be considered by the parish council at that time.

9. Planning Matters

- 9.1 **2010/694 Eaves Green Lane, Meriden** – Change of use of land to a gypsy site for 14 pitches to site 14 mobile homes, 14 touring caravans and ancillary development including a day room building and vehicle parking on each pitch.

Letter from MPAG (Meriden Parish Action Group) was read out. Councillors made comments individually.

RESOLVED (Mr Kipling proposed the objection and Mr Markham and Mrs Hamilton seconded).

That the parish council object on the basis that the development at Eaves Green Lane constitutes inappropriate development in the greenbelt. They reiterate comments made by MPAG in that it violates certain UDP policies and also the Parish Plan. Also the damage to the environment, increased traffic volume, impact on wildlife and countryside, design and character of the area. There are also national campaigns such as CPRE Keeping Greenbelt which would support the objection. Meriden Greenbelt is one of 14 in the UK. The archaeology of the site is unknown. Clerk to do a response on the basis of the points raised.

At this point members of the public left the room with 3 remaining.

10. Correspondence / Communication

10.1 Email from Johnson Controls : “Share and Care” in the Community.

A company who will shortly be moving into Meriden Business Park. They wonder if the parish council can help with a project their company would like to do in the Community. They have previously cleared children's playing park areas, decorating and very open to any ideas we may have.

AGREED

Picking up the glass and dog muck on a Saturday morning at the playing fields.

10.2 Solihull Soroptomists – Meriden Clean Up

Email from SMBC Environmental Champion Co-ordinator to advise Solihull Soroptomists have carried

out a clean up in Meriden and Eaves Green on Sunday 2nd May. They noticed that Fillongley Road looked particularly littered so she will ask Enterprise to carry out a special cleanse. Thank you sent from the parish council.

11. Receive Reports.

- 11.1 Committee Member for Village Hall Management Committee** – Next meeting is the beginning of June.
- 11.2 School Governors for Parish Council** – New head appointed. New deputy will also be starting in September. There is a new shelter outside school which covers part of the playground.
- 11.3 Committee Member for War Memorial** – no meeting.
- 11.4 Pool** – Clerk attended a meeting on 10th May at the Bulls Head with John Coote and Barry Gardner from SMBC Drainage Department, Susan East the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator from SMBC, Stuart Nelmes from BWB Consulting and also a Tony Walsh a resident who has helped us with this project. Tony presented his idea that a pipe be put inside the large concrete pipe which runs under the road from the top of Meriden Hill down to the pond. The inserted pipe then feeds directly into the pond. No pump would be required as it will have gravity feed due to the fall in height from the top of the pipe. The culvert system which runs around the back of the houses on Meriden Hill can be done away with thus making a considerable financial saving. BWB / SMBC liked the idea and BWB will provide details of works needed in order that the PC can obtain a quote.
- 11.5 Allotment Representative** – no report.
- 11.6 Footpaths / Forum** – no report.
- 11.7 Meriden Sands Working group** – Meeting 25th May, it is not MSWG but there is still some money in the kitty from when the coal mine campaign and Berkswell want to access it for use against the proposed High Speed Rail.
- 11.8 Conservation Committee** – no report.
- 11.9 Local Strategic Partnership** – New local forums are now being promoted and there will be a presentation at the next Solihull Area Committee Meeting.
- 11.10 Police Rural Assembly** – no report.
- 11.11 Solihull Area Committee** – See 11.9 above. Also the proposed high speed rail will affect a lot of Parish and Town Councils in the area. It has all party support. For the Exceptional Hardship Scheme comments need to be in by 20th May. SAC are holding a Public Information Meeting on June 1st at 7.30pm in Fentham Hall.
- 11.12 Tree Warden** – no report.
- 11.13 Meriden Parish Action Group/Village Design Statement Group** – Need more volunteers.
- 11.14 Community Surgery** – Clerk and Mr Goodsir attended. No residents.
- 11.15 Paul Jayes Football Coaching** – this is going really well 13-15 boys/girl attending.
- 11.16 Fusion Football Sessions** – Wednesday evenings – again this is being well attended. Youth Services attending with their community bus.
- 11.17 Display outside library** - cancelled the last one.
- 11.18 Best Kept Village Competition** – Shirley and Clerk took judges around today. Awaiting results.
- 11.19 Clerks visit to assembly at Meriden School** – Clerk attended and spoke at school assembly on 7th May. Explained where the parish council fit into local government and went through some of the things which the children have helped us with from the parish plan ie playing fields equipment, pool project etc.

12. Village Matters.

- 12.1 Bus Shelter Information Cases**
Centro can install new cases in all of the shelters. The parish council will need to notify Centro of any maintenance required to the cases. The cases are all standard metal with a blue frame.
RESOLVED
That Centro can install information to each of the shelters. That the parish council will notify Centro of any maintenance required to the cases.
- 12.2 Bus Shelter adjacent to 175 Main Road, Meriden.**
This is a cantilever type shelter. On the site visit referred to above, it was pointed out that the corner struts could be a health and safety issue as somebody could walk into them. Clerk suggests putting reflectors on them.

RESOLVED

No incidents have ever been reported and therefore no action to be taken.

12.3 Solihull in Bloom 2010

AGREED

Not to enter this years' competition as category is Community Involvement and community volunteers do not look after the green.

13. Governance and Accounts

- a) Notices to be posted end of May on Noticeboards displaying Audit Date 12th July 2010 with a summary of electors rights.
- d) HM Revenue & Customs returns for 2009/2010 to be sent online by 19th May.
- c) Year End Accounts 2009/2010 have been prepared by the Clerk in the same form as previous years, Income and Expenditure Account and they have now been approved by the internal auditor. Internal Auditor Report signed.
- g) Notice of Audit Date 12th July has been received from Clement Keys along with form for Annual Return for year ending 31st March 2009. The council has not been selected this year as part of the 5% sample of local councils each year for intermediate audit.

RESOLVED

- a) Annual Return for year ending 31st March 2010 approved (subject to external audit).
- b) Statement of assurance approved (subject to external audit).

Payments received

13.01 HM Revenue and Customs VAT return £867.33

Accounts for payment

RESOLVED

That the accounts are approved for payment.

14. Clerks Position.

In view of the personal nature of the business about to be discussed, the public were asked to be excluded from this part of the meeting.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next Meeting is 28th June and on 9th June there is the next Joint Surgery. There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Chair _____

Date _____