

MERIDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 25th June 2012 at The Village Hall, Main Road, Meriden.

Present:

Cllr Mrs M Lee
Cllr B Kipling
Cllr Mrs M Haque
Cllr P Lee
Cllr Mrs Lynch Smith
Cllr Ms R Weaver
Locum Clerk

Chair
Vice Chair

Ward Cllr David Bell
31 members of the public

The Chair welcomed Tracey Cox, Head of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's Library Services and Executive Director, Paul Watson, who were present at the request of the Parish Council to talk to local residents about Meriden Library and to listen to residents' ideas for Meriden Library's future.

Tracey Cox outlined the position with regard to Meriden Library and the recent survey conducted by the Borough Council. A local resident asked Ms Cox if the Borough Council were saying it was not a viable proposition to keep the library open and queried what work was required to keep the Library open. Ms Cox responded that the Borough Council would like to continue with the library service at Meriden, but had to consider the viability of the existing service. She outlined the Library opening hours and attendance figures for the library, including reasons why it was felt the library was not being used to its capacity and alternative measures such as the possibility of the library service moving to the local primary school. The Library was a listed building which required a lot of work, including approximately £30,000 spent on damp proofing. It was not possible for the public or staff to use the first floor because it was not structurally sound. Reference was made to proposals to put a parish council office upstairs a number of years ago, but these proposals had been shelved.

Ms Cox spoke about Knowle Library which was also a listed building. The Borough Council worked in partnership with Knowle Library and the Knowle Society, with the Knowle Society volunteers helping out at the Library, but Ms Cox stated there was a great deal more space at Knowle Library for services to be provided.

A governor with Meriden Primary School queried the Borough Council's proposals for a library service to be provided at the school and the practicalities of this. Discussion continued with looking at the age group who use the library and residents considered that the present premises offered the best location for the service. A local resident said he lived in the village, but he was not aware of the Borough Council's survey until he received a leaflet from the Parish Council informing local residents of this.

Ward Cllr Bell referred to the cost for damp proofing which he felt seemed high, also referring to the cost of £4.50 for each book borrowed. He confirmed that there was no proposal to move the library, but applauded the fact that Ms Cox was looking at a number of options and consulting with the community.

M/s Cox stated that the Borough Council would like to improve access to the library and were looking at how to improve access beyond 21 hours, also the feasibility of increased costs associated with longer opening hours. A local resident stated she had lived in the village for over 40 years and she still used the library. It was very user friendly with lovely staff and the opening hours were convenient for her. Cllr Paul Lee queried the rural library service run by Warwickshire County Council which used to be run at a loss as a service for rural communities.

Reference was made to funds of ¼ million which Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council were due to receive which could be used to enhance the library. Also to the Borough Council selling the playing fields when these could have been retained and made available for the village.

The public stated that they were confused as to the process. The Borough Council were talking about the viability of the library remaining open, but what happens next. Mr Watson stated that there was a budget to run the library, but they were looking at how to use that budget more effectively and considering the options. Reference was made to the work required to the library and were these costs additional to the property services budget.

The Parish Council queried whether the Borough Council was suggesting that the village get the community to work to keep the library open with additional opening hours. Ms Cox stated that the Borough Council would consider any suggestion for volunteers to assist. She stated that the Knowle Operatic Society volunteers provide a service by keeping Knowle Library open on a Saturday morning

Further discussion ensued and proposals were discussed for a further survey on the library service to be undertaken, with the Parish Council to have an input and also an input with regard to the arrangements for a further survey to be distributed.

Ms Cox agreed that she would provide an update following the meeting, together with proposals for a further survey. She stated she would like to run a survey in the September Meriden Magazine and on that basis would put a notice in the Library in the Autumn with an update for the September Issue of the Meriden Magazine.

The Chair thanked Tracey Cox and Paul Watson for attending the Parish Council Meeting to talk to local residents about Meriden Library and the opportunity for residents to discuss its future.

The Chair opened the Meeting, introducing the new Clerk to members.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest

3. Public Participation

There were no further matters raised following on from the presentation.

4. Leys Lane – Public Inquiry – Update

Members considered the additional fee incurred by the Planning Consultant for an additional day's attendance at the Public Inquiry due to an oversight on behalf of the Planning Inspector.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the additional fee included in the invoice of £5,530 presented for payment by Avon Planning Services for attendance at the public inquiry be approved.

5. Queens Diamond Jubilee – celebrations - Update

Members noted that a reconciliation would be circulated when this was available. Cllr P Lee stated that he would like the Parish Council to consider purchasing a portrait of the Queen if there were any Diamond Jubilee funds left. Cllr Kipling advised that there was a portrait of Meriden which belonged to the Parish Council which was in storage.

6. Meriden Library – Update

Following on from the earlier presentation, members discussed distribution of the further survey to be undertaken and it was agreed that this matter would need to be discussed when the update is provided and timescales for the survey are confirmed by the Borough Council.

7. Internal Audit.of Accounts 2011/12

Members considered the Parish Council's accounts following the internal audit.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the Accounting Statements prepared by the RFO be approved prior to being signed by the Chair.

8. Governance and External Audit of Accounts 2011/12

Following consideration and approval of the members, and completion of the Annual Governance Statement for the year 2011/2012

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the Chair and Clerk sign the Annual Governance Statement and the Parish Council's accounts be approved for submission to the External Auditor appointed by the Audit Commission.

The following item was discussed in private

9. Appointment of Clerk – Staffing Panel Recommendations

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the Parish Council endorse the Staffing Panel's recommendation and the appointment of Mrs Barbara Bland as Clerk and RFO to the Council with effect from the 2nd July 2012.

10. Finance

a) Income

£50.00 donation received from Meriden Christian Fellowship towards the Jubilee Celebrations

£225.00 Payment from Solihull Municipal Cricket Club

a) Payments

Cllr Weaver £71.19
Expenditure for Jubilee Celebrations

Cllr Paul Lee £34.25
Reimbursement of expenditure for pavilion

Avon Planning Services £5,530.00
Fee for attendance at public inquiry

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the payments presented be approved.

11. Planning Applications

2012/860 The grove, Fillongley Road, Meriden – erection of detached garage

2012/690 Meriden Reservoir Complex, Birmingham Road, Meriden – Construction of screening blind

2012/872 Land at Maxstoke Lane, Meriden – addition of 2 no. Single garages and relocation of 1 no. Dwelling to approved application 2011/1657

2012/935 – Builders yard, Eaves Green Lane Meriden – Application for lawful development certificate for existing use of the land as a builders yard

Members discussed the above planning applications. The Locum Clerk confirmed that she had her laptop with her if members wished to view the applications online. There were no objections made to the above applications.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 23rd July 2012

13. Any Other Business

The Locum Clerk advised that a lady had contacted her regarding a bench installed by the Parish Council near Millisons Wood in memory of Alf Tustin which was in need of repair and which the Parish Council had agreed to maintain.

Cllr Kipling recalled the Parish Council agreeing to maintain the bench and advised that he would look at the bench to assess its condition and report to the next Parish Council Meeting.

Cllr P Lee raised the issue of vehicles parking on the main road overnight by Manor House Hotel and suggested enquiries be made with regard to the reason for the number of vehicles parking.

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.45 pm.

Chair : _____

Date: _____