

Meriden Parish Council

The Centre of England

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 20th March 2017
Venue: Pavilion, Meriden Sports Park at 7.30 p.m.

Present:			
Cllr R Weaver	Chair	Cllr M Nunn	<i>Left meeting at 20.30</i>
Cllr F Lynch-Smith		Cllr R Kipling	
Cllr M Lee		Cllr M Haque	
Cllr P Lee		Mrs B Bland	Clerk

Cllr Weaver welcomed Members of the Public and Ward Councillors Bell & Allsopp.

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Cllr Barber due to ill health.

2. Public Participation

There were 3 members of the public in attendance and Chair invited any issues they may have to be raised.

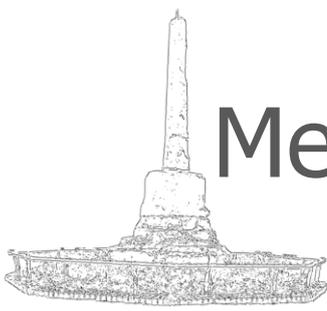
Parents affected by the proposal to terminate the school bus service between Meriden School and Millison's Wood provided an update to Members. The consultation is in the public domain from 13th March until 28th April 2017 and parents urge the local community to get involved. SMBC consider the school bus can be replaced by public transport with children under 7 using the 82 or X1 services without escort. Alternatively parents can support their children using public transport but this is not possible in many cases of working parents. SMBC also suggest the footpaths from Millison's Wood to Fillongley Road are fit for purpose and suitable for youngsters to use. The fact that there is poor lighting on Birmingham Road and the footpath is not wider enough for a mother and child to walk side by side appears irrelevant and the pedestrian access considered a safe environment for under 7's to walk to school, which is 45 minutes.

Hollywood Transport have been contacted and confirm there are only 15 children using the service currently; they have not factored in any new starters for the summer term. Parents suggest there are 20 children who qualify for the bus service and parents will continue to fight to retain the service.

Chair advised that the clerk had complained to SMBC regarding not receiving notification of the consultation and proposal, and added the Parish Council onto the list of statutory consultees. A further request was made for a copy of the Impact Assessment and road safety walks; however neither had been carried out and the clerk asked if it was likely that the assessment would be done prior to the closing date of the consultation. Apparently officers are undertaking "safe walks" and full impact assessment would follow.

Signed Chair **Dated**

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Cllr Allsopp advised that he is not supporting SMBC's proposal to withdraw transport and raised his grievance on behalf of parents. He further stated that there are several good reasons why the school bus remain in service and these are all part of SMBC's criteria within communities in the Local Plan.

Cllr P Lee raised the recent Solihull Observer report that Nick Page, CEO and Ted Rogers, Cabinet Portfolio holder regarding inconsistent and dangerous parking, saying to remove school transport is counterproductive to measures being put in place to reduce school gate parking. Interestingly the photograph used highlighting the issues of school parking was of Meriden School and Fillongley Road.

Cllr Bell added that he had received a reply from Cllr Ken Meeson of which following exert was read to the meeting:-

"In the case of Meriden and children from Millison's Wood, you may recall the resident who constantly wrote some years ago to complain that the footway to Meriden was in such a poor state as to be un-walkable, despite work carried out on footway improvements. Officers have recently inspected and report that it is now possible to walk safely .but have asked the Road Safety Team to do a full assessment. However, irrespective of this, there is now also a public bus service in the morning and afternoon and only 2 of the 20 children currently being transported by the council-funded bus are eligible for travel assistance."

Parents strongly disagreed with this statement, offering to contribute to retain the service and asking where the data has come from to inform that only 2 children are eligible for travel assistance.

Action: Parents to request register of children using the school bus service. Clerk to follow up with SMBC. A formal response to consultation will be made by the Parish Council. On-going support for the school bus to remain in service will provided.

3. Declarations of Interest

3a To declare any personal interests in items on the agenda and their nature.

Nothing to declare.

3b To declare any prejudicial interests in items on the agenda and their nature

Nothing to declare.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 20th February 2017, circulated prior to meeting, were considered. Members approved the minutes as a true record.

IT WAS RESOLVED Cllr R Kipling proposed acceptance of the minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 20th February 2017, seconded by Cllr P Lee.

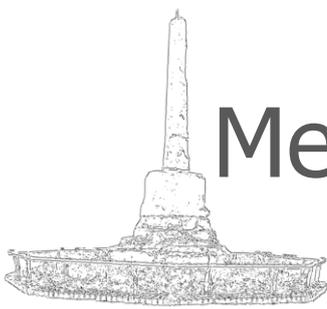
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5. Finance

5.1 Approve March Payments

The clerk circulated March payments for consideration and approval.

- (i) Meriden Parish Council March payments £7808.55. The clerk highlighted an increase in expenditure due to the invoice received for tree removal works of fallen tree from BT exchange. The clerk is currently pursuing BT for reimbursement.

IT WAS RESOLVED Cllr P Lee proposed approval of Meriden Parish Council March payments of £7808.55 seconded by Cllr M Lee.

- (ii) Meriden Sports Park March payments £3,604.64. The clerk advised invoices had not yet been received for Eon, BT, STWA or Fortress and therefore these payments are not included and would be paid by direct debit.

IT WAS RESOLVED Cllr P Lee proposed approval of Meriden Sports Park March payments of £3,604.64 seconded by Cllr M Lee.

5.2 Internal Audit 2016-17

Chair advised the interim internal audit had concluded with the overall comment being good. The full report had been presented to finance committee on 14th March, and recommendations for improvements discussed and actioned. Previously the Parish Council has undertaken one internal audit at year end but on the basis of Grant Thornton's audit report and interim audit was undertaken to ensure internal controls were in place. The report was shared with Members who acknowledged the work the clerk and approved finance committee recommendations.

IT WAS RESOLVED: The interim internal audit report was as approved by Members as per finance committee recommendation. Proposed by Cllr P Lee and seconded by Cllr R Kipling.

5.3 Grant Thornton Audit/Annual Return 2015-16

The clerk had circulated the final response to GT audit report and certificate for Members consideration prior to meeting. Members were impressed with the content and action taken and unanimously approved the Parish Council response. Appendices to be enclosed were available for scrutiny by Members if they so wished. Chair asked Cllrs Bell and Allsopp if they wished to receive a copy of the response and Counsel Opinion for ease of reference and in the event of any questions being asked of them by SMBC officers or general public, both of whom agreed it would be helpful.

IT WAS RESOLVED: Members unanimously approved the Parish Council response to Grant Thornton's 2015-16 audit certificate and report.

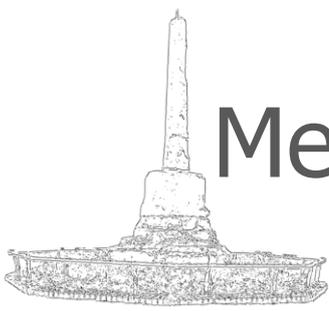
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Action: Clerk to email copy of letter and Counsel Opinion. All financial appendices to be accessed via the Parish Council office.

5.4 Freehold transfer of Sports Park and VAT

The clerk reported a request was made for Andrew Kinsey to provide a letter from SMBC confirming there is no VAT liability to Meriden Parish Council.

Action: Andrew Kinsey to write to Meriden Parish Council confirming no VAT liability on sale of Maxstoke Lane Playing Field.

5.5 New Financial Regulations/Audit/Transparency/Policies

Chair advised that both revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were completed with copies available for Members. The key changes were around internal controls, transparency and governance, Members code of conduct, cheque signatories, e-banking and debit/credit card use. Copies had been before finance committee and whilst acknowledging formatting issues to be corrected, Members gave their unanimous in principle approval subject to minor formatting revisions.

Chair record thanks on behalf of Members for the volunteer administrative assistant input to this task, without whom it would not have been completed.

Action: Clerk to revise formatting issues on Financial Regulations.

IT WAS RESOLVED: Members gave their unanimous in principle approval to the revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations being adopted.

5.6 Reserves Policy

The clerk apologised for the lateness in circulating the Reserves Policy for Member's consideration. The Policy had been reviewed and approved by finance committee on the 14th March 2017 with a recommendation to adopt. Chair advised the main points worthy of note is the designated restricted capital receipt project funding of £20,000 for Meriden Pool, £20,000 for Library 1st floor strengthening works and £20,000 Children's play resurfacing works. Additional general reserve is £87,000 with 6 months contingency to meet staff and contractor costs, together with an emergency fund for unforeseen expenditure. The clerk highlighted that the overage payment received on completion of Meriden Gate development is considered a capital receipt.

IT WAS RESOLVED Members approved use of reserves identified capital projects. Members approved adoption of Reserves Policy. Proposed by Cllr Kipling and seconded by Cllr P Lee.

5.7 Finance Committee Recommendations

Chair advised that finance committee had approved the Investment Policy in accordance with investment gift of endowment fund and capital receipt monies to

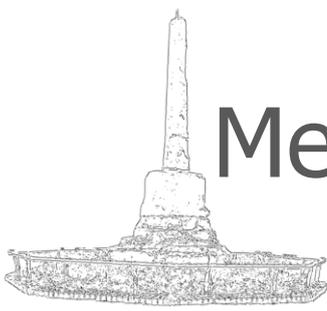
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Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust. The Policy also reflects the property and land investment identified as Meriden Sports Park, Parish Council community asset.

IT WAS RESOLVED Members approved adopting the Investment Policy; proposed by Cllr R Kipling and seconded by Cllr P Lee.

6. Progress Reports

6.1 Village Hall Management Committee

Cllr Lynch-Smith reported that all is going well particularly the big picture show, with the next film scheduled 8th April being A Street Cat Named Bob.

6.2 War Memorials

Nothing to report.

6.2(i) Heritage Monuments & Memorial Funding

Cllr P Lee advised that he is arranging a meeting with St Laurence PCC.

Action: Cllr P Lee to arrange a meeting with St Laurence PCC.

6.3 Meriden Pool

Chair advised no update and we await the Red Kite Management Plan from SMBC.

Action: Chair and clerk to liaise with Chris Barr for update.

6.4 Allotments

Nothing to report.

6.5 Footpaths/Forum

Nothing to report.

6.6 Quarries Liaison Group

Chair advised meeting held on 6th March with maximum attendance by Operators.

Also attending for the first time was representative from the Environment Agency.

Discussion and issues raised included:-

- Outcome of Operators meeting held 31st January 2017 regarding cleansing of highways, use of wheel wash and road sweeper. A rota has been drawn up for each operator to take responsibility for highway cleansing daily.
- Wheel washes on Cornets End and Birmingham Road confirmed in on site and operable.
- Action for Paul Tovey to contact Highways England and North Warwickshire for A45 and Birmingham Road slip cleansing.
- Highways issues including potholes, highway break up, gullies blocked, footpaths need cleaning, site entrances to be cleansed.
- Dust monitoring and air quality controls. All operators have their own monitoring and recording processes in place in accordance with licence conditions. The clerk to contact Warwick University with outline specification for environmental science department to assist with air quality monitoring.

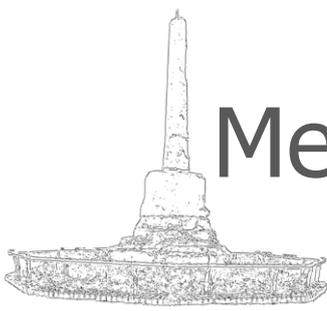
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- A & A advised NRS had not completed bund works and therefore there is no dust suppression water jets working nor litter screens. All litter has been cleared from footpaths after storm Doris and the site was closed during the storm.
- Beechwood update all on schedule for June operational trials.
- Environment Agency will not undertake dust monitoring re wood dust complaints unless there is a breach of licence conditions.

Action: Clerk to follow up with Warwick University and outline specification.

6.7 Solihull Area Committee

Nothing to report, next meeting arranged for 20th April 2017.

6.8 Tree Wardens & TPO List

Cllr Lynch-Smith advised the new Tree Warden volunteer is doing well and when she has information up to date she will address Council.

Action: Cllr Lynch-Smith to monitor.

6.9 Community Surgeries

The clerk advised that due to internal audit the surgery was hosted by Bruce Brant, Neighbourhood Co-ordinator, with no attendees.

6.10 Community Speed Watch

Cllr M Lee advised speed watch was carried out with 455 vehicles recorded of which 20 were recorded speeding and letters will be sent. Cllr Kipling asked if the group were mobile and could move after 15 minutes to other hot spots. Cllr Lee replied probably not as West Midlands Police need an hour to gather evidence and PC to complete documentation for return to Police. Cllr Lynch-Smith asked about more training as she has some volunteers who are willing to undergo training and join the speed watch team.

Action: Cllr Barber to arrange further training sessions.

6.11 HS2

Nothing to report.

6.12 Meriden Sports Park (quarterly summary only)

The next update is scheduled for April 2017. Cllr Nunn asked about First Aiders for sports camps and events, and volunteered his willingness to undergo first aid training.

6.13 Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust Update

Chair advised that she and the clerk continue working with SMBC Solicitor and Trustees to complete an Agreement as per Counsel Opinion. Chair further stated the initial Red Kite draft business plan remains a work in progress with the consultant.

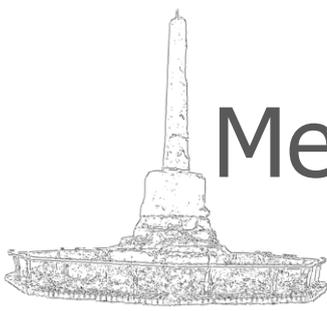
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Action: Chair and clerk to continue working with Red Kite to finalise business plan for Trustees.

7. Clerk's Report

The clerk circulated report to Members prior to meeting. There were no questions.

8. District and Ward Councillor Reports

Nothing to report.

9. Correspondence & Communication

All correspondence has been circulated to Members via email prior to the meeting, to which Members acknowledged receipt. Additional items as follows:-

(1)Email from Sgt Lloyd regarding recent break-ins of Fillongley Road sheds and allotments. In answer to resident concerns raised with the Parish Council and Caroline Spelman MP, the following:-

"I am Mick Lloyd your local neighbourhoods team Sgt responsible for your area. Firstly I would like to thank you for you contact e mail as attached on the below thread and the track through from councillors through to my senior Command Team. I would like to respond as I am particularly aware of the incidences of crime on the `Rurals`

I would like to inform you that your local team are aware of the incidents that you have noted and I am sorry for the inconvenience caused to residents and other community members. As a result of the recent break ins, patrols in the rural areas are being targeted at areas of concern and you may see the presence of police officers from your Neighbourhood team more evident than normal, we as always have to balance our utilisation to other parishes and locations and commitments within the Solihull area where household burglary's and theft and anti-social behaviour have been occurring.

I note your sentiments that that there are no longer police premises in the parish, and as you will know more recently the Police Shop in Balsall Common was closed back in December 2016 with the increased challenges this created of maintaining police presence across the rural areas. However I am pleased to inform you that your local team are still responsible for your area and have remained relatively unchanged in staff levels, in fact over the past few weeks have seen an increase in staff with the addition of PCSO Toni Rheeston who will be covering Meriden as well as PCSO Abigail Atkins who will gravitate towards Dorridge one of the other areas we cover. Your local officer PC Simon Harrison is aware of the incidents which have occurred and I have asked him to make contact with you to discuss how we can best help you and our residents to protect their property with of course the addition of access to WMNOW which will be providing useful updates and such alerts that you

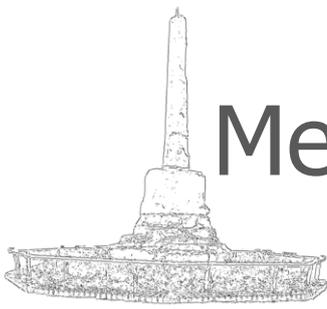
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have flagged. Simon will be able to provide you this information which will be of great value to yourself as well as other allotment users.

Please be assured that Solihull Police hold the village of Meriden and other parishes on the `Rurals` in high regard and we will always strive to provide the best police service possible with the available resources.

Please feel free to contact me on the below number, however could I ask that you provide a contact telephone number for yours self so that both me and Simon can progress your concerns further."

- (2) Caroline Spelman MP referral email in response to resident.
- (3) SMBC Asset of Community Value Nomination for Oddfellows Allotment site.
- (4) 1st Meriden Scout Group acknowledging receipt of cheque.
- (5) Michelle Kingston BT Facilities Manager regarding claim and reimbursement of fallen tree from Meriden Exchange.

10. Meriden Village Matters

10.1 Library Update
Nothing to report.

10.2 Village Commemoration WW1
10.2(i) WW1 Poppy Memorial Site
Action: Cllr M Lee to arrange meeting for April.

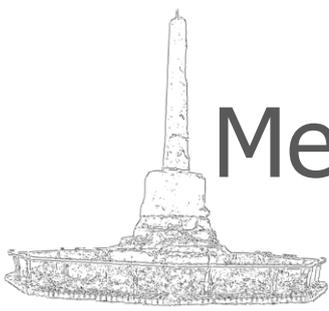
10.3 Meriden Gate
|
No update. Cllr Allsopp confirmed this issue has been referred to planning for enforcement.
Action: SMBC to liaise with developer Barratt David Wilson Homes to resolve the situation.

10.4 Taylor Wimpey (Transfer of Allotments/freehold land)
Nothing to report.

10.5 Highways
The clerk advised that highways, neighbourhood and tree officers have been contacted regarding tree debris, block gullies and drains between Manor Hotel and Darlaston Court. Awaiting SMBC action. Photographic evidence taken and forwarded to SMBC.
Action: Clerk to monitor.

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10.6 Land Registry & Ownership
Nothing to report.

10.7 Solihull Neighbourhoods in Bloom 2017
Nothing to report.

10.8 Litter
Nothing to report.

10.9 Mobile Mast Update
Nothing to report and deferred to next meeting.

10.10 Local Council Award Scheme
Nothing to report.

10.11 Meriden Public Transport
Chair referred to public participation and issues covered regarding school transport from Millisons Wood proposal to cease in July 2017 and subsequent consultation.

10.11(i) 89 Service Replacing Taxibus
Cllr Nunn reported that another positive outcome had been achieved from the last public meeting held on 16th March, with an extra day being agreed for the feeder bus to be used for those residents who cannot use the 89 service. Further consideration is being given for the feeder bus to be used to transport residents to the Barracks Shop Mobility Centre in Coventry. A meeting is to be arranged with David Bermingham, CEO of Ring & Ride, together with Transport for West Midlands, and representatives from Meriden and Hampton PCs, Catherine De Barnes and Meriden Residents Groups and the Hampton Society to discuss the Ring & Ride service to replace the 89 service. This has been referred to in TfWM's Impact Assessment as being considered in 2018 with a view to implementation for 2019. Consideration also to be given to the transportation of residents to Balsall Common surgery via the 89 service, currently not provided for.

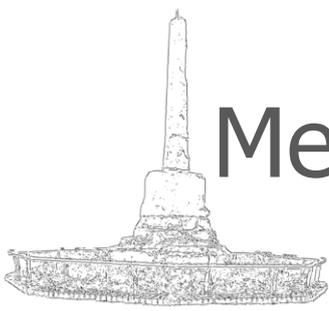
Cllr Allsopp agreed it was a positive meeting with a good outcome; all parties continue talking and the issues surrounding the 89 service being a "school bus" at the beginning and end of each school day needs addressing. Consideration is being given to not stopping in Gypsy Lane outside Heart of England School, but a more convenient point at a bus stop serving Balsall Common shops.

Action: The clerk to arrange a meeting with Ring & Ride. Cllr Nunn to liaise with Meriden Action Group to provide on-going support.

10.12 Street Association Project
Nothing to report.

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10.13 Fun Day Sunday

Chair advised copies of risk assessment and liability insurance of stall holders required. This event is covered as an annual event in Parish Council insurance.

The new sports camp provider is interested in resurrecting family picnic in the park that will include Vintage Teas and sports taster sessions. Dates to avoid are Fun day Sunday 4th June and Megaride 25th June. The first week of July summer holiday to be considered.

Action: Chair and Cllr Barber to support provider in putting on this event. Volunteers required.

11. Solihull Partnership Forum

The next meeting is 28th March, and the will feature Transport for West Midlands as guest speakers. Cllr Nunn and the clerk will be attending.

Action: Cllr Nunn and the clerk to attend on behalf of Meriden.

12. Planning Matters

12.1 Neighbourhood Planning Update

Cllr M Lee reported that the focus of discussion at 16th March meeting was the business survey/questionnaire. Maurice Barlow, SMBC officer, has agreed to assist with access to the business rate register from SMBC. The next meeting will be held on 27th April 2017 at the Pavilion.

12.1(i) Locality Funding Bid

Cllr M Lee advised that an expression of interest will be registered for the next round of funding available from 1st April 2017. A maximum of £3,444.00 is available for the Neighbourhood Planning Group to apply for. The funding must be spent within 6 months or by 31st December 2017 whichever is sooner.

Action: Cllr M Lee to register expression of interest and down load funding application.

12.2 Neighbourhoods Community Action Plan

Chair reported that she and the clerk had met with Planning Officers, Kim Allen and Sheron French. It was a good meeting and there is a willingness to work with the Parish Council. Training has been offered for the planning portal. Discussion also surrounded engagement with developers to ensure local needs are met such as single storey dwellings, over 55's development and mixed market share. Bruce Brant and Kath Hemmings were also in attendance. The next meeting to be arranged is with street cleansing teams.

Action: Clerk to send some dates to Sheron French for evening availability for planning portal training session.

12.2(i) Evidence Base Highways Restriction Review (TRO)

Chair reported that this remains a work in progress.

Action: Chair, Cllr Nunn and Clerk. Cllr Nunn to gather photographic evidence.

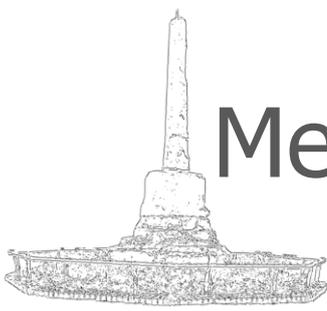
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12.3 Solihull Local Plan Review & Meriden Sites

Chair advised nothing to report. Consultation deadline of 17th February was met and the Parish Council is waiting to hear outcome.

12.4 Planning Application Status Updates

There was no planning schedule available for March.

Cllr Kipling advised that there had only been two planning applications received; (i) Area G – opposed on grounds of dust suppression and extra traffic; (ii) Co-Op – opposed on grounds of light nuisance, extra deliveries and parking.

Cllr Kipling further requested that Councillor replies would be helpful if they provided a description as to why an application was being objected to or supported. He further stated that any training provided by SMBC planning officers would be of great value and assistance to planning committee Members.

Action: Cllr Kipling and clerk to arrange training dates.

Planning Committee Members debated the need for meetings and whether a continuance of emailed comments to Planning Committee Chair would suffice as meetings to date have been difficult to schedule. It was agreed email was probably the more efficient as long as there was a paper trail of application and comments logged printed off and filed.

Action: Cllr Kipling to co-ordinate email comments and submit to SMBC via Planning Portal, printing an office copy for future reference and public record.

12.5 Community Asset/Right to Bid

A list of 10 priority sites has been provided to Avon Planning for process.

Action: Cllr M Lee to monitor via Neighbourhood Planning Group.

12.5(i) Register Grade II Listed buildings not included in Heritage Listings for Green Conservation

Clerk advised that the florists and extended jacket potato outlet are not registered. Cllr M Lee stated she would contact Hannah Robson, Avon Planning.

Action: Cllr M Lee to liaise with Avon Planning.

12.5(ii) Fields in Trust

Cllr M Lee advised that Avon Planning had been notified of clerk’s meeting with Angela Lewis confirming:-

1. Woods owned by Solihull – MPC to approach Solihull, but it may be difficult.

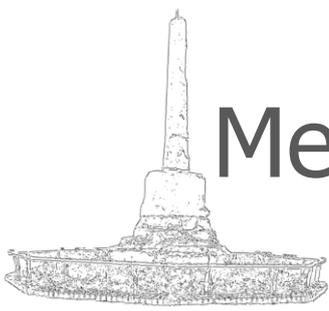
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2. Barratts' Field (Meriden Gate POS) – this would be eligible for the Centenary Fields programme as long as it is transferred to the Parish Council in advance of November 2018 when the programme closes.
3. The Sports Park – this is eligible for Fields in Trust protection, probably using a tripartite Deed which Fields in Trust, the Parish Council and the Sports Park Company signed.
4. The Village Green – this is eligible for the Centenary Fields programme.
5. The Pool – this would be eligible for Fields in Trust protection when the time is right.

Action: Clerk to complete application process to Fields in Trust Programme.

13. Parish Council Development Day

The next Development Day is arranged for Saturday 6th May 2017.

14. New Website

Cllr M Lee advised she had contacted Real Point who is now clear on actions required to get the website completed and live. The timeline being worked to is end of March. Training will be provided for the Parish Council to manage

Action: Cllr M Lee and Real Point to liaise and finish website.

15. Councillor's reports and items for future agenda

Chair advised that she had attended a workshop at WALC's Annual Briefing event on Annual Parish meetings and community engagement strategies. She would like to trial a new way of presenting the Annual Parish meeting rebranded as the Annual Assembly with invitations extended to local community groups to come along and give a 3 minute presentation of who they are, what they do and what support they need. The Annual Assembly is in Statute and should not be Parish Council lead, should be arranged between March and June and held after 6pm. Information received can also inform the Neighbourhood Plan.

Action: Volunteers required; clerk to explore Village Hall availability for Mondays in May. April's meeting will be replaced with Parish Council meeting, with Annual Assembly to be held in May. Chair to draft invitations. Cllr Haque volunteered to co-ordinate invitations and rsvps.

16. Date of Next Meeting

The next Meeting of Meriden Parish Council is to be held on Monday 24th April 2017 at 7.30 pm venue Pavilion, Meriden Sports Park.

The Chair closed the meeting at 21.10 hours.

Signed Chair Dated

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