

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 11th April 2007 in the Village Hall at 7.30.

Present

Mr Jones (Chairman), Mrs Eccleston, Mr Goodsir, Mrs Goodsir, Mr Grundy, Mr Kipling and nine members of the public.

Apologies

District Councillor Allsopp.

Minutes of last Annual Parish Meeting.

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting, having been read, were approved and signed as a correct record 24th April 2006.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

None arising.

Information

Since 1st April 2006 the attendance of Parish Councillors at the possible 14 recorded meetings has been 82%. Attendance is shown in brackets after name, Mr Jones(14), Mr Kipling(11), Mrs Eccleston(11), Mrs Goodsir(14), Mr Goodsir(12), Mr Grundy(13), Ms Isham(6) and Mr Robinson(11). Some training sessions have been attended.

57 Planning Matters have been dealt with over the year 2006/2007, of which 39 planning applications have been approved by Solihull MBC, 8 decisions are awaited, 6 applications were refused and 2 refused.

Only 7 of the 16 allotments were let.

Chairman's Report

During the last year, there have been several events which have considerably raised the profile of the village regarding charitable activity.

Last summer, the 'Meriden Festival' included the Motorcycle Mergaride. Some visitors travelled from as far afield as Scotland, to a very successful event enjoyed by all those who attended. The Rotary Club, who organised it, raised over £2500. The Young Farmers tractor pull through the village attracted a lot of interest and the open gardens event raised over £5000.

A new parish council initiative invited local shops and businesses to enter a competition for the best window display, depicting an event or issue related to Meriden. Margaret and Val (editors of the 'Mag') judged 'The Centre' (Heart of England Outreach) to be winners and a cup was duly presented.

At Christmas, the Tree of thought raised over £3000 for Macmillan Cancer Relief. This was a fantastic result considering the event was only in its second year.

The 'Mag' continues to appear quarterly and serves as an excellent means of contact and communication for the community and is now well subscribed to, by advertisers.

During the year, the parish council was approached on behalf of the scouts group, which was in the process of being reformed. In addition to financial support, the parish council advised on alternative funding options and one parish councillor, Bob Kipling, supplied and fitted new windows to the scout hut at cost. There are now new groups of beavers and cubs, which seem to be thriving but there is still a need for more leaders to ensure their long-term survival.

The parish council has continued to support other community projects and groups and in addition has increased the parish precept this year, to provide more play equipment. This is in line with our policy of continued enhancement and improvements to the sporting and playing provisions within the village.

Unfortunately, the tennis club has relinquished its lease, which means that the only functioning sporting group currently in the village is the Cricket Club. The Football Club has not operated for over a year now and sadly shows no imminent sign of re-forming.

The parish council is aware of Solihull MBC's continued intentions to sell, re-locate and develop the site in Maxstoke Lane. In spite of continued opposition and having still not met the requirements of their own planning consent, regarding the requirement of Sport England, we believe that they have now acquired the Hampton Lane site and appear to be carrying on regardless! The public funds wasted in gaining the compulsory purchase order which subsequently lapsed unused would have been better spent on something tangible for the community.

Solihull MBC is constantly claiming to consult communities, but in practice, when faced with unanticipated responses do not react appropriately. Through our involvement with the Solihull Area Committee of the Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils, I have been closely involved with its long struggle (some 8 years) to put in place the Local Council Charter. This document is an agreement between the said bodies designed to improve the working relationship between local parish and town councils and their Unitary Authority. I am pleased to say that SMBC are now finally looking seriously at the impeding adoption of the charter.

The forthcoming election will be contested and I hope that the new council will continue to build on the progress we have made during the last 8 years in improving facilities and strengthening the sense of community in Meriden. This concludes the Chairman's Report as written and read by Chairman.

Mrs Eccleston made comment that the playing field facilities are run down and football club is playing elsewhere.

Mr Grundy replied that the changing rooms had been repaired.

Mr Goodsir remarked that with the present situation it is impossible to apply for grants.

Accounts

Meriden Parish Council Accounts 2005/2006 have been completed and an unqualified opinion has been given by Clement Keys and signed 28th September 2006 in accordance with guidance issued by the Audit Commission. Copies of Accounts are available.

Cash Book figures for Year 2006/2007 (Subject to Audit).

Brought Forward and Income £64450.38 (Decrease of 2.1% on 2005/2006).

Expenditure £39532.47 (Decrease of 2.2% on 2005/2006).

Of remaining money approximately £22,000 is already allocated to various projects.

Any Other Reports.

Copy of Village Hall Management Committee accounts ending 31st December has been received and to be circulated.

Matters Arising from the Public Present

Playing Field and purchase by Solihull MBC of proposed new field.

Increase of precept and new play equipment required for existing field.

Future of toilets on Main Road.

Rats seen around The Pool.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.10 pm.

Chairman **CJ**

Date **23.04.07**