

Minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 27th April 2011 in the Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Present

Melanie Lee, Rosie Weaver, Paul Lee, Bob Kipling, Shirley Goodsir, Stephen Hayes of Centro and six members of the public

1. Apologies

Graham Goodsir

Absent Will Markham and Marilyn Hamilton

2. Declaration of Interest

BK declared an interest in item 11.1 of the agenda and RW declared an interest in item 10.5 of the agenda

3. Minutes

3.1 RESOLVED

That the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting on 14th April 2010 and Parish Council meeting on 28th March 2011, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

None

5. Agreed that item 6 on the Agenda would be brought forward - Presentation by Centro

Stephen Hayes of Centro attended and gave a short presentation outlining that since 1985 bus services have been provided commercially without public funding. The 900 is a commercial service. Centro has no control over this service. Centro steps in where there are gaps in the service. Centro is publicly funded so must make sure that it is good value for money. The 82 service fills the gap in service in the area.

Passenger numbers are declining and the 82 service has proved successful with increasing numbers and high spec vehicles. Centro are looking at improving the service provided by the 82.

Centro are looking at extending routes to Berkswell and Meriden but it will all depend on whether this will provide value for money.

Details of the service provided by taxibus were explained. It was highlighted that it was becoming more and more expensive to provide the bus service, concessionary fare schemes had an impact together with increasing petrol prices but the West Midlands was better placed to deal with cutbacks.

Resident advised that the 82 runs every hour and sometimes passengers can wait up to two hours.

SH advised that they were looking at increasing the frequency.

A resident advised that she was very satisfied with the 82 service and level of customer service provided by the drivers.

A resident raised the problem with travelling from Millisons Wood. They can get to Birmingham but cannot get back as the bus stops at the bottom of the hill.

A resident advised that stickers and timetables in bus stops were misleading. It is showing that the 900 will go to Millisons Wood.

SH will investigate this and get the stickers and timetables removed.

Resident provided details of various incidents affected by this misleading information.

SH will ask the question of National Express why they will not make this route, it is only around 4 minutes extra.

SH advised that Centro has no control over National Express but they can keep asking the question.

Concerns were raised regarding the booking system of the taxibus as it required advance booking which was not always ideal.

Chair asked SH if he would provide a short piece for the Meriden Mag to inform residents of what is available. SH agreed to do this and also to return in 6 months to provide an update.

6. Chair's Annual Report – Agreed that this should be adopted as part of the Minutes.

**MERIDEN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 27 APRIL 2011
CHAIR'S REPORT**

This is my first year as chair for Meriden Parish Council which has been very challenging with the various issues and concerns residents have raised throughout the year. It is my duty to present this year's report which is a mixture of some setbacks and some positive progress.

The Parish Plan is now in its third year and Iain Roxburgh who chairs the Action Group with the support of other councillors and residents continues to meet on a regular basis to pursue the actions listed in the plan. However this past year has seen the progress slow down a bit due to diminished numbers of volunteers. In mid-April of 2010, the Parish Council and Parish Plan Action Group started a public display at the Village Green to recruit new volunteers by raising awareness of our initiatives such as Community Speed Watch, the Parish Design Statement, Linking People Project and more. We cut short these displays after the unlawful occupancy of a pasture field in Eaves Green Lane. This occurred on 30 April 2010 and is still occupied despite planning permission being denied. The planning decision has been appealed and a public inquiry is ongoing to be resumed on 11 July 2011. Meriden Parish Council will make a representation at the inquiry to back up the reasons for objecting to this inappropriate development in our green belt.

Sadly, in May 2010, the parish council had to accept the resignation of its clerk, Julie Hall. Julie's commitment went above and beyond her 20 hours a week as Parish Clerk. She was also a volunteer on the Parish Plan Action Group and Community Speed Watch, and she and Cllr Rosie Weaver set up the Football Academy and consulting children and young people over the play and sports equipment they would like to see at the new sports facilities. Also in May, Cllr Sarah Markham resigned, as well, due to the pressures of motherhood and work commitments.

Our involvement continues with Solihull Area Committee of the Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils where representatives from all the Solihull parish and town councils meet. Cllr Rosie Weaver is Chair of this group and this has continued to raise the profile of Meriden. Rosie was involved in organising a presentation at Hampton-in-Arden in June for the Solihull Area Committee to highlight the concerns over the proposed HS2 (High Speed Rail 2) development which will encroach upon our neighbouring parishes. Thereafter, an action group was formed HHAG (Heart of England High Speed 2 Action Group) and they co-opted Rosie to help in distributing information.

Also in June 2010, we invited representatives from National Express and Centro to attend our Parish Council meeting after residents informed us that they had heard rumours that the 900 bus service was soon to be cut. Over 50 residents attended and asked many questions of the two representatives, as well as pointing out the difficulties the cutbacks would cause in getting them to work, to the surgery, to Balsall Common, etc. National Express informed the residents that it was a commercial decision that required no consultation with residents. Centro detailed their 82 bus and Taxibus service could fill the gap. The service was made worse when Solihull Council had to close Showell Lane due to bridge repairs between September 2010 and March 2011. It's been difficult for many residents and some have had to resign from their jobs as they could not physically get to work on time. Centro are here tonight to give us the latest update.

In July 2010, we appointed Shafim Kauser to the post of Parish Clerk. Shafim brings with her valuable legal experience and is committed to undertaking CILCA qualifications to contribute to our status as a Quality Parish Council. We had to go through the formal co-option procedure to replace Sarah and in July, Paul Lee was co-opted as councillor. Paul's previous experience as a volunteer with the Meriden Parish Plan Action Group, Community Speedwatch, and co-ordinator for the Remembrance Sunday road closure was seen as an advantage to the council.

In August 2010, we re-formed the Meriden Sands Working Group when Cllr David Bell alerted us to the proposed sand and mineral extraction site situated between Meriden and Berkswell on the A452 as featured in Solihull Council's Emerging Core Strategy. Residents had also notified the Parish Council that they had received correspondence from UK Coal about the extended works to Daw Mills Colliery that would run through Meriden. We invited Solihull Council to attend our November parish council meeting to discuss their Emerging Core Strategy. Tarmac invited themselves to our February 2011 parish council meeting and have offered to form a working group with the council and Solihull Council over the next phase of sand and mineral extraction due to start soon behind North Warwickshire Golf Club. We will invite UK Coal to attend one of our upcoming meetings in the not too distant future.

We use parish council meetings to invite such guests as part of our communications strategy. We will continue to improve communications by revamping our website and blog. The Meriden Mag is an important communications tool and is very much valued by residents. The pages that they donate to the Parish Council are invaluable to us. When necessary we will produce leaflet updates for door-to-door distribution.

Meriden Pool still needs some extensive work and recently we have been approached by Environmental Dimension Partnership to conduct a survey to establish the presence of natural wildlife. We continue to work with Solihull Council to decide the best means of repair and maintenance.

Last year we had the co-operation of West Midlands Police to work jointly on converting part of the public conveniences to a police office for our Police Community Support Officer. This project was abandoned by the police when their budgets were severely cut by central government. We have now resolved to demolish the public conveniences and negotiated 50% funding from Solihull Council. This should commence soon and will be replaced with attractive landscaping.

Community Speed Watch was very active last summer. This project trains local volunteers to use a speed device. We always need more people and anyone who is interested please come and volunteer. Training is provided by the police and a full risk assessment is done by them to ensure the safety of all volunteers. The last training sessions were in November 2010 and there was no attendance from Meriden volunteers. Speed Watch sessions will still resume from next week, but we will need to monitor the situation if no further volunteers come forward.

Solihull Council was again successful in the 2010 Heart of England in Bloom competition. They picked up a Gold award in the city category, and national winner for the city category and silver gilt award. Meriden achieved third place in the Best Kept Village Competition which Berkswell, Hampton in Arden and Barston also take part in. We've slipped since the previous year's award and with the current construction at the roundabout we are bound not to achieve any better. Judging takes place on 10 May 2011, but watch out in 2012!.

The Football Academy has been a success, and Meriden Rovers has been re-launched for the 4 -8 age group and they have already had friendly matches with other local teams in the borough. The football kit's logo has been chosen by the children and will be promoted in the next issue of the Meriden Mag. Meriden Parish Council is funding the football kit.

The construction of the new sports facilities is progressing well. Children and young people will be able to take part in football, cricket, tennis, basketball and net ball, as well as adults! A petanque pitch is also to feature. Our football coach, Paul Jayes, is qualified to train in all of these sports as well as sports for disabled children and young people. He is keen to set up training sessions for children and young people in the summer. It is anticipated the facilities will open mid to late July. There will be an official opening ceremony with sporting celebrities in attendance and the winner of the naming of the sports facilities, a competition up and running with Meriden. Entries from all children and young people are welcome which can be sent to the Parish Clerk or at Meriden C. of E. Primary School.

We are now focusing on setting up a 'company by limited guarantee' to run the sports facilities. We have had interest from residents wishing to sit as Directors on this company already. We're working closely with Solihull Council to ensure the sports facilities are managed well, once opened.

Cllr Rosie Weaver successfully negotiated a local housing allocation policy with Solihull Council to ensure Meriden residents had a fair representation when applying for the social housing on the new Maxstoke Lane housing development.

The Remembrance Day service road closures had to be organised locally again by volunteers this year and was done very successfully. Thank you to Cllr Paul Lee for the time and effort he always puts into this with the support from resident volunteers. This will continue in future years.

An exhibition in January 2011 was held at the Village Hall for residents to view the pros and cons of the High Speed 2 Rail development. There was good attendance of over 150 and a petition saw 142 signatures against and 5 for.

Community surgeries continue to be held once a month at the library. Any member of the public can come and talk to the police representative and the Neighbourhood Coordinator from Solihull Council.

All of the allotment, bar one, have been let this year and we still have one of the lowest rents around! The Parish Council negotiated with Solihull Council to improve the roundabout's floral display when the roses suffered blight. A new planting scheme was put in place earlier this year. We have also recruited local businesses to sponsor a flower hanging basket to be placed along the shop fronts by the Village Green and this should be in place soon.

The Meriden Festival will feature both the Megaride, this year at the Queen's Head, and Jazz on the Lawn at Meriden Hall in June.

The Parish Plan Action Group decided to focus on one issue this year, the Parish Design Statement and we have consulted with residents and received a healthy response to the questionnaire which is now being analysed by Iain Roxburgh so as to present to Solihull Council and get it formally adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

Alan Lole again organised The Meriden Tree of Thought, the sixth special Village tree, in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support where people could dedicate a light in memory of a friend or loved one. Once again, Alan achieved a beautiful feature on the Village Green over the Christmas period, raising money to a worthwhile cause. We continue to support Alan with insurance and safety aspects to the installation of the tree.

On behalf of the parish council, I would like to express our sympathies to Cllrs Graeme and Shirley Goodsir who both lost their mothers within a month of each other. As well, Cllr Marilyn Hamilton has been caring for her mother who took seriously ill last month, and has now returned from hospital. This has been a hard time for Graeme, Shirley and Marilyn and has curtailed their activities for the council, quite understandably.

On a personal level, I want to thank Cllr Rosie Weaver for guiding me and Shafim through our first year in new posts. Rosie has helped me understand the role of chair which she took on for the previous 3 years. I will never be as good as Rosie, but thanks to her, I have learnt a lot. I also would like to thank Cllr Bob Kipling for his support this year. And finally, a thank you to District Cllrs David Bell and Dr Peter Lea who continue to support this parish council through very difficult times.

Melanie Lee
Chair
2010

7. Public participation

Resident raised issue with heavy trucks passing through the Village and going through millions Wood and Eaves Green Lane. It was believed that these were coming from Bannersbrook estate.

Resident was informed that the Parish Council were aware that this was happening and they were collecting evidence. Response received from neighbourhood co-ordinator was passed onto resident.

Another resident raised concern over hedges along the footpath on Showell Lane from the bridge. These are overgrown. It was agreed that SMBC would be notified of the overgrowth.

Public participation closed.

8. Correspondence and Communication

8.1 Solihull Match Funding Scheme – Invitation to take part in Solihull in Bloom Match Funding Scheme

8.2 SMBC – Results of uncontested Poll

8.3 Big Lottery Fund – Grant confirmation

8.4 Clement Keys – Notice of Annual Audit

9. Receive Reports

It was agreed that there would be no reports provided at this meeting. PL asked for it to be noted that a Community Speedwatch session this weekend at 11am.

9.1 Committee Member for Village Hall Management Committee

9.2 School Governors for Parish Council

9.3 Committee Member for War Memorial

- 9.4 Pool
- 9.5 Allotment Representative
- 9.6 Footpaths/Forum
- 9.7 Meriden Sands Working Group
- 9.8 Conservation Committee
- 9.9 Local Strategic Partnership
- 9.10 Police Rural Assembly
- 9.11 Solihull Area Committee
- 9.12 Tree Wardens
- 9.13 Parish Plan
- 9.14 Community Surgery
- 9.15 Joint Councillor Surgery
- 9.16 Community Speed Watch
- 9.17 Fusion Football Sessions – Wednesday evenings and Paul Jayes Football Academy – Meriden Rovers – Saturday Mornings.

10. Village Matters

- 10.1 **Pool** – Clerk confirmed that surveys being carried out by EDP
- 10.2 **Pedestrian Crossing** – This is in the process of being built
- 10.3 **Maxstoke Lane/Hampton Lane development**

10.3.1 Naming of Roads – We have provided suggested road names to SMBC who have confirmed with Developer that we will be proposing names. No agreement yet as to names. A quarterly meeting is scheduled with the Developer and SMBC

10.3.2 Warranties for playing fields from Wicksteed, Regal Plumbing and structural engineers – These have been referred to our legal advisors for approval

RESOLVED That is approval is given, the warranties may be

10.3.3 To agree signing client care letter for supplemental report

RESOLVED That the client care letter is signed

10.3.4 Update of sports facilities from SMBC meeting on 26 April was provided. It was agreed that the Parish Council were not happy with the changes proposed

RESOLVED To take legal advice regarding the agreement with SMBC concerning the new playing fields

10.4 **Public Conveniences** – An update was provided regarding the recent events that had occurred and issues regarding the Contractor Sandford Building Services.

RESOLVED That Priority Builders are instructed to carry out the works

10.5 **HS2 – Consultation** – It was urged that people should respond individually. Consultation period ends in July

10.6 **Elections** – Clerk confirmed that ML, RW, BK and PL are elected as officers. We are advertising for individuals to be co-opted onto Parish Council. To agree payment of the cost of producing leaflet for co-option

RESOLVED That the matter is placed on the Agenda in June. Applications to be considered in July. The cost of producing co-option leaflet is agreed.

10.7 **Consultations** - Fairer Contribution policy and Charges for Social Care Services. Warwickshire waste core strategy. Future of Local Public Audit

10.8 **Millisons Wood Kiosk** – This has now been adopted. Consideration was given as to its use.

10.9 **Parish Design Statement** –To agree payment of cost of consultation leaflet

RESOLVED The Parish Council agrees to pay the cost of the consultation leaflet.

10.10 **Allotments** – To agree rent for the forthcoming year and update regarding tenancies

RESOLVED The Parish Council agrees that rents shall remain the same for the forthcoming year.

10.11 **Millisons Wood Nature Trail** – The Funding has been confirmed and a meeting took place with the designer to produce boards. To agree instructing designer to produce boards and other professionals to undertake work in accordance with lottery bid

RESOLVED The Parish Council agrees to instruct the designer and other professionals in accordance with the lottery bid

10.12 **History Books** - It was confirmed that Doreen Agutter the historian wishes to produce book 3

RESOLVED That DA is instructed to produce the book and the Parish Council shall pay out of its contingency fund. Clerk to write to DA to confirm decision.

10.13 **Councillors Register of Interests** – SMBC have requested details from Councillors to be provided direct to SMBC

10.14 **Donations** – War Memorial Committee and Graveyard Maintenance – Request made by Parochial Church Council – Clerk to make enquiries and ascertain what the money is to be used for.

10.15 **Best Kept Village Awards** – It was confirmed that Judges will be visiting on 10th May 2011

10.16 **Meriden Mag** – Deadline for next issue is 6th May 2011

10.17 **Heart of England Way Association** – To agree renewal of annual membership

RESOLVED The Parish Council agrees to renew membership and pay annual subscription

11. Planning Matters

11.1 2011/446 - Heart of England Club, Berkswell Road, Meriden, CV7 7LB - Retrospective application for replacement of 10 lighting poles with 8 new lighting poles 5m high

Comments: The Parish Council questions what is the spread of light? Is the height of the pole important? What is the practice SMBC use in terms of lighting? There is an issue in the Parish Plan about light. Can the Social Club promise to turn lights on and off to make sure they are not left on all night?

11.2 2011/462 - Meriden Shafts BPS Showell Lane, Solihull- Non-material amendment to planning application 2009/1980. The GRP kiosk has 2Nr external ventilation ducts fitted with end cowls. These ducts protrude through the external walls and turn 90 degrees to reach a height of 1m above roof level

Comments: No Comment

11.3 2011/500 - Maxstoke, Hampton Lane, Meriden CV7 7JR - Non-material amendment to approved planning application 2009/490 to enlarge previously approved porch.

Comments: Neighbour notification. The porch needs to integrate with the style and character of the existing dwelling using matching materials and fenestration detail

11.4 2011/476 - Grange Farm, Fillongley Road, Meriden- Conversion of existing barns into 2 No. dwellings (Resub of 2009/2063)

Comments:- No objection

12. Accounts & Governance

RESOLVED

That the accounts are approved for payment.

11. **Date of Next Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting is on Wednesday 11th May 2011 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Chair: _____

Date: _____