



# Meriden Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on  
23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015 at the Pavilion, Meriden Sports Park at 7.30 p.m.

**Present:** Cllr M Lee                      Chair  
                  Cllr R Weaver  
                  Cllr R Kipling  
                  Cllr P Lee  
                  Cllr M Nunn  
                  Cllr F Lynch-Smith  
                  Cllr J Barber  
                  Mrs B Bland                      Clerk

There were 3 members of the public present and Councillor Bell.

Chair welcomed members of the public and noted there were no guest speakers this evening.

**1. Public Participation**

Chair invited any concerns/issues to be raised by members of the public.

Nothing to report.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies received from Cllr Haque (working overseas) and Cllr Allsopp.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Apologies were formally recorded and reason for absence accepted.

**Declarations of Interest**

3a To declare any personal interests in items on the agenda and their nature.  
There was nothing to declare.

3b To declare any prejudicial interests in items on the agenda and their nature  
There was nothing to declare.

**4. Minutes**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 19th October 2015, circulated prior to meeting, were considered and agreed.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Cllr P Lee proposed acceptance of the minutes of Parish Council meeting 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015. Cllr Weaver seconded this proposal.

**Matters/actions arising:** All as per agenda and standing items. However Cllr Kipling raised his concerns and requested these be recorded, regarding the approval of Meriden Sports & Recreational Trust.

**Signed** ..... **Chair**      **Dated** .....

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He stated the Trustees were unelected and there was no mechanism in place to safeguard the legacy for the future of the Parish should those Trustees retire and be replaced. He also stated his concern regarding the decision making process for any grant award and the lack of Parish Council influence to due to “no power of veto” by the Parish Council’s nominated representative.

Cllr Weaver replied that throughout the process the Parish Council have been informed. In terms of unelected Trustees, the Trust is made up of eight Trustees one of whom is a nominated Parish Councillor and at the onset of Trust set up Trustee biopics were included in the Trust proposal for Council approval. The legal process has been followed as set out by Charities Commission and Solicitor Advisors. The Trustees have a role in the Articles and Memorandum of Association. She further advised that the Parish Council has tried to set up a Charity and the application was declined due to the operating Board being Parish Councillors which suggested the accountable body of the Charity would be the Parish Council and on this basis the application was declined and returned. Rules of Engagement and objectives have been clearly identified and included in the Charity Commission application process meeting Charity criteria for registration.

**The Parish Council formally acknowledges and records Cllr Kipling’s concerns raised over “No power of veto over Meriden Sports & Recreational Trust”.**

**5. Finance**

**5.1 Approve November Payments**

Members received payments for Parish Council and Sports Park for approval. Cllr P Lee proposed approval, unanimously seconded by Members.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members approved November payments of £3,103.80 for Parish Council and £5,223.36 for Sports Park.

**5.2 Approve half year to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 I & E Accounts**

The Clerk circulated summarised half year accounts. Chair asked about WW1 grant funding was not included; however the Clerk confirmed the deferred grant funding from 2014-15 had not automatically transferred but was allocated with the balance being deferred into 2016-17 budget

**IT WAS RESOLVED:** Members approved the financial half year summary proposed by Cllr Weaver and seconded by Cllr P Lee.

**5.3 Precept 2015-16**

The Clerk had circulated a draft proposal with a precept recommendation of 1.5% uplift per Band D dwelling. This takes account of the tapered reduction in SMBC’s top up grant and increased services delivered by the Parish Council. Cllr Weaver acknowledged the revised calculations and Clerk’s recommendation however

**Signed ..... Chair Dated .....**

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considered 1.5% was not enough to cover next year's demands on precept budgets including Central Government announcement for National Insurance and Pension provision. The National Association of Local Councils recommendation is not to cut precept budgets but increase in line with inflation on the basis of Local Authority expectation on Towns and Parishes to pick up more of their services. Therefore Cllr Weaver proposed a 3% increase to take account of increased services and new Government legislation. Cllr Kipling seconded the proposal.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Cllr Weaver proposed a 3% precept increase seconded by Cllr Kipling; unanimously approved by Members. The Clerk will liaise with SMBC Corporate Finance.

**Action:** The Clerk will recalculate and advise SMBC Corporate Finance of precept and top up grant request for financial year 2016-17 and confirm indicative budget.

## 5.4 Budget 2016-17

The Clerk advised the budget setting process is required to commence and invited Members and/or Finance Committee to steer process in line with CiLCA recommendations to have a finalised budget for January meeting consideration and approval. Included should be budget increase and justifications, risk management, project planning, management and financial risk and tender process. The tender process should also be included with shortlisting taking place on 14<sup>th</sup> December and interviews and contract award week commencing 21<sup>st</sup> December. Cllr Weaver advised the email recently circulated asking Members to attend an "Away Morning" was linked to this process identifying a more robust project plan and financial management process for short, medium and long term planning. Cllr Weaver recommended a 3% increase in accordance with precept uplift.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members considered, discussed and unanimously approved a 3% budget increase for 2016-17.

- Action:**
- (i) The Clerk will commence outline budget headings and include for a 3% increase.
  - (ii) Members to meet for an "Away Day" on Saturday 09-01-16 from mid-day at the Pavilion for the purposes of project planning and budget setting.
  - (iii) The Finance Committee to meet before Christmas to put together outline proposal.
  - (iv) The Clerk to organise Tender pack to be posted on Parish Council and Sustain websites.
  - (v) Cllr P Lee to set up tender spreadsheets.
  - (vi) Parish Council tender shortlisting will be carried out by Finance Committee.
  - (vii) Sports Park tender shortlisting will be carried out by Finance Committee and Cllrs P Lee and Barber.

**Signed .....** Chair **Dated .....**

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## **6. Progress Reports**

The Clerk requested Members consideration for quarterly written reports for progress reporting areas of responsibility. Cllr Weaver reinforced the request working smarter, tightening up on agendas and providing written reports for monitoring and progress. This would reduce the time and allow for planning issues to be discussed. After some discussion Members requested that consideration of quarterly progress reporting be deferred to next meeting.

### 6.1 Village Hall Management Committee

Cllr Lynch-Smith reported the last of the WW1 funded films “Testament of Youth” had been screened. Film Shows will commence in Spring 2016 with Spectre, Lady in the Van and Brooklyn already booked.

### 6.2 War Memorials

Cllr P Lee reported that a request to the National Memorial Arboretum has been made for Meriden’s War Memorial scrolled plaque to be re-housed there. He stated that the original should remain in the Parish and the Heart of England Club has been contacted to see if they can display it. The Village Hall Committee were not happy having it as it could not be cleaned and a new Memorial Plaque has been made by Richard Tisdale. Cllr P Lee reiterated again his disapproval of the Memorial leaving the Parish Cllr Lynch-Smith, on behalf of Village Hall Committee, gave assurances that nothing would happen to the Memorial Plaque and it is being kept quite safe and secure.

Cllr Lee went on to say that at the recent Remembrance Service, Mr Hurton suggested that a step be cut into the War Memorial which will not cost any money. Members agreed this would be a good idea and Cllr P Lee was asked to follow this up. Cllr P Lee also brought to Members attention his recommendation that a stone/brick sculpture be placed at Memorial Approach and Cllr Weaver suggested that funding is available for this. The Clerk has relevant funding applications from English Heritage to discuss with Cllr Lee and/or committee, potentially via WW1 Committee.

**Action:** Cllr P Lee and the Clerk to arrange meeting.

### 6.3 Meriden Pool

Nothing to report.

### 6.4 Allotments

Nothing to report. Transfer of land and actions will be picked up in agenda item 10.4.

### 6.5 Footpaths/Forum

Nothing to report.

### 6.6 Quarries Liaison Group

The next meeting is to be held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

**Signed** ..... **Chair**      **Dated** .....

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6.7 Solihull Area Committee  
Nothing to report.

6.8 Tree Wardens & TPO List  
Nothing to report.

6.9 Community Surgeries  
The Clerk reported that no one attendance at November's surgery raising concerns over Leys Lane Allotments, Mulberry Gardens and hedgerow reinstatement.

**Action:** The Clerk will liaise with Mr Brant and Taylor Wimpey to action.

6.10 Community Speed Watch  
Cllr Barber advised that he had been in communication with WPC Smith who will be suggesting available dates for follow up training to complete the process. Once this has been achieved then we are up and going. He will advise Councillors of dates and to arrange sessions.

**Action:** Cllr Barber to arrange final training sessions for speed watch.

6.11 Meriden Sports Park (quarterly summary only)  
Nothing to report.

## 7. Clerk's Report

The Clerk's actions were circulated prior to meeting and reflect items of agenda.

## 8. District and Ward Councillor Reports

Cllr Bell reported:-

- That the proposed application for M42 Motorway Service Area at Hampton-in-Arden will be considered in February 2016. The main mitigation for Meriden is to keep traffic out of the village. Other consideration is the position of the MSA in relation to junction 6 which is already congested with NEC and Airport traffic.
- The proposed Biomass Facility on Meriden Quarry raises questions of increased traffic during construction and when operation commences. Mitigation for Meriden to include traffic management. **Action:** The Clerk to forward Parish Council response to planning application for comments.
- Local Plan Review: there is pressure on SMBC for 2-3,000 more houses within Borough. Land is identified that does not include Meriden. There will be consultation commencing December with briefings being organised on 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> December.

## 9. Correspondence & Communication

- Letter received from St Laurence Church regarding Christmas Tree Festival.  
**Action:** Cllrs Weaver and Lynch-Smith will decorate tree and attend on 28/11.

Signed ..... Chair Dated .....

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Theme will be Meriden’s achievements during 2015.

- Poster regarding Santa Fun Run to be held on 6/12.
- Letter advising of dedication for Tree of Thought and PTA Christmas Fayre at Meriden School on 4/12. **Action:** Cllr P Lee advised the gazebo has been offered for the event. The Manor Hotel are providing refreshments.
- Press Release from SMBC regarding approval of the Combined Authority “devolution agreement reached to become West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

## 10. Meriden Village Matters

### 10.1 Library Update

Nothing to report.

### 10.2 Village Commemoration WW1

Chair advised the last event of this year will be the vigil for Lance Corporal Stanley Cooke on 28<sup>th</sup> November, who froze to death at Gallipoli. A candle will be lit in a lantern and will remain on the site of the War Memorial for 100 minutes. St Laurence Church bell will toll 100 times. Overall everything has gone quite well with commemorative football and cricket matches, facebook, vigils; Doreen Agutter is on the mend and plans for the Meriden in the Great War Talk is being arranged for April 2016. The Great War Society will be staging a re-enactment and camping out behind the Queens Head the weekend of 23/24 April 2016.

### 10.3 Meriden Gate

The Chair read the following received from David Waterson prior to the meeting:-

*“I am pleased to hear of the donation of two trees, and I hope they thrive at Meriden Gate. I am continuing to pursue David Wilson Homes to deal with the rectification of defects at Meriden Gate, and I have been advised that a meeting was scheduled to take place on 12<sup>th</sup> November to review the condition of the landscaping including the open space and balancing ponds. I will check whether this meeting went ahead as planned and let you have an update as soon as possible. As you know, the creation of the wildflower meadow cannot take place until the land has been transferred to the Council, but I agree that it would be sensible to start investigating what could be included in this to maximise the benefit for the community.”*

- Freehold Transfer

The matter remains with legal teams to conclude.

**Action:** The Clerk to continue pursuing a satisfactory conclusion to all outstanding issues.

### 10.4 Taylor Wimpey (Transfer of Allotments)

Nothing to report at the time; however the Clerk has sent a follow up email requesting an update on water supply, planting and reinstatement of hedgerows and signage emailed on 9<sup>th</sup> November to Rachel Jones at Taylor Wimpey Homes.

**Signed** ..... **Chair**      **Dated** .....

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**Action:** The Clerk to chase Taylor Wimpey for updates.

10.5 Highways  
Nothing to report.

10.5(i) Santa Fun Run  
Notices posted; road closure signs set up.

10.6 Land Registry & Ownership  
Nothing to report.

10.7 Public Convenience Site Transfer  
The Chair read the following communication from David Waterson as follows:-

*“Finally with regard to the Public Convenience, I understand that the Council’s Legal Services team issued the draft letter to Wright Hassall last Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November, so hopefully we are making some progress on this matter now!”*

**Action:** The Clerk to follow up.

10.8 Solihull Neighbourhoods in Bloom & Heart of England in Bloom 2016  
The Clerk reported that planning has started for 2016. Bloom features in the Meriden Mag with pictures of 2015 achievements. Adverts for the Community Allotment and Gardening Club feature in the Meriden Mag. The next meeting will be 15<sup>th</sup> November.

10.9 Litter  
Nothing to report.

10.10 Co-Op  
Cllr Weaver reported her disappointment that the Regional Manager did not write anything for Meriden Mag inclusion as promised.

10.11 Mobile Mast Update  
Nothing to report.

10.12 Local Council Award Scheme  
Cllr Weaver advised she had sent an email to Members regarding an away morning and the preferred date is Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and Members agreed 12 noon to 14.00 hours. She went on to confirm the purpose being (i) business planning, (ii) budget setting (iii) review competence of Council and (vi) demonstrate to LA and community we are operating as a competent Council in line with Quality Council criteria.

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**Action:** The Clerk will circulate papers prior to meeting including General Power of Competence and Local Council Award Scheme and Quality Award criteria.

## 11. Solihull Partnership Forum

Cllr Weaver advised the next meeting will be held in December.

## 12. Planning Matters

### 12.1 Neighbourhood Planning Update

Cllr Weaver advised that task and finish groups are not set up; the Heart of England school is supporting a young person engagement assembly with Meriden attendees in January 2016. Registration has been confirmed with My Community Locality funding and she and the Clerk are working through the application process. Emma Tinsley-Evans is following up questions raised regarding SMBC receipt of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) monies instead of S106, who decides how much and allocation. Additionally Cllr Weaver reported working with Bromford Housing reviewing the allocations policy for social housing ensuring Meriden residents meeting the criteria can gain accommodation within their local community subject to them being on the housing list. Any new development will comprise 40% social housing and the revision will create better opportunity and flexibility for Meriden residents to occupy properties at Meriden Gate, Winspear Close and Mulberry Gardens.

**Action:** Cllr Weaver and the Clerk will continue working through process.

Cllr P Lee raised his concerns regarding Mulberry Gardens S106 monies to the value of £330K has not been used to benefit the community other than providing a new bus stop, dropped curbs and filling in of Memorial Approach lay-by. Cllr Bell to investigate and report back.

**Action:** Cllr Bell to investigate and provide future update.

### 12.2 To receive update and status on Neighbourhood Planning Applications

The Clerk circulated planning application update schedule prior to meeting. She reported the notification received from Cllr Jo Hooke regarding Daw Mill site to have been declined. Concerns were raised over the proposed application made by 3 Leymere Close which has been referred to Solihull Community Housing as they own part of the land and the disappointment with planning colleagues for the approval of Becks Grove. Chair read the latest communication from SMBC Strategic Land as follows:-

*“With regard to Leymere Close, I can confirm that pond is partly owned by the three residents whose houses face towards the pond (Nos. 1-3 Leymere Close), and partly by the Council (the northern end). I can confirm that there is a s.106 Agreement relating to the management of the pond by the three residential owners, and therefore I referred the matter to the Council’s Planning Enforcement section for investigation.*

**Signed** ..... **Chair**      **Dated** .....

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As a result, my colleague Dean Biddle (copied into this email) inspected the site on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, and is of the opinion that the pond area does not appear to be overgrown to an extent that would require action at this time, the pond itself appears to be in good condition and supporting various life forms, fish, frogs and ducks. Pond weed appears to be at a minimum with small elements of water lily clusters. Dean has also spoken with the Council's Ecologist and Planning Enforcement Manager, who both agreed with his findings as above. Dean advises that at this time of year the majority of growth will be dormant, but he would be happy to re-visit the site in the Spring and take action if necessary. If you have any queries please could you contact Dean directly, quoting reference number: EN/2015/50348/VAR"

**Action:** The Clerk to work with SMBC and SCH to resolve concerns of pond and footpath maintenance.

Cllr Weaver advised that at the last Solihull Area Committee (SAC) meeting the new Principal Planning Officer, James Carpenter, attended to address the many issues of Parish & Town Councils. The Parish Council also needs to consider how we get planning onto the website in the future.

**Action:** Chair, Cllr Weaver and Clerk to update website.

### 12.2(i) To consider Retainer for Planning Consultant

Chair suggested Members consider the use of a planning consultant to assist with the planning workload that is becoming increasingly weighted towards the National Planning Framework. The arrangement to be on a retained basis that the Clerk can call upon his services for support; recent examples of need are Meriden Quarry, Pertemps Appeal and Eaves Green Lane. Members discussed the merits of this arrangement and after consideration recommended that this arrangement be revisited in 2016. Cllr P Lee suggested the Clerk should have authority to commit up to a maximum of £2,500 to be used at her discretion for planning support. Cllr Lynch-Smith advised how this is to be monitored and to safeguard all parties this sum should be acknowledged within Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

**Action:** The Clerk to amend Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for the purpose of discretionary planning commitments.

### 12.2(ii) Planning Committee

Cllr Weaver expanded on the current planning pressures faced by the Clerk and reiterated the comments at the beginning of item 6 Progress Reports to consider quarterly reporting to accommodate a planning committee meeting at the beginning of each Parish Council meeting. Members debated the practicality of having a pre-Council dedicated planning meeting.

**Signed** ..... **Chair**      **Dated** .....

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Whilst Members agreed it was a good idea to have a planning committee with it came a formal procedural process for public notices, minute taking and committee administration support to make it effective which could prove onerous. Cllr Kipling proposed a monthly meeting and this was seconded by Cllr Weaver; however Members requested a deferment until 9<sup>th</sup> January 2016 to come up with a solution.

**Action:** Members to consider solutions and bring to 9<sup>th</sup> January meeting.

12.3 Update of Old Garage & Caravan Storage Site, Birmingham Road  
Nothing to report.

12.4 Unlawful Caravan Storage Site  
This item remains with Secretary of State for Appeal Hearing.

12.5 Land for Burial – Cllr Lynch-Smith  
Cllr Lynch-Smith advised that she has an appointment with Reverend Lilley for an informal chat prior to any arrangement being made for a further joint meeting.

**Action:** Cllr Lynch-Smith to update at next meeting.

12.6 Planning Application Copse & Bridleway – change of use from greenbelt to public open space

The Clerk advised that she had written to SMBC regarding the situation and the following has been received from David Waterson and reads:-

*“With regard to your email of 18<sup>th</sup> November, by copy of this email I will ask Mike to confirm whether he has received anything further from the Council’s Landscape Architects team yet. The Assets of Community Value/Community Right to Bid process is managed by my colleague Jim Butler. Jim can be contacted directly on 0121 704 6870 or email: [righttobid@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:righttobid@solihull.gov.uk) Hopefully Jim can be of assistance with any queries you may have with regard to this matter.”*

Cllr Weaver and the Clerk will carry out a site visit on 28<sup>th</sup> November in line with SMBC recommendation to photograph evidence. The Parish Council contractors will commence work in the next couple of weeks. A Community Asset application will be completed and a meeting arranged with David Keaney regarding footpath registration and public right of way. It should be noted that No.47’s has been approved by planners for change of use from unused land to garden.

Cllr P Lee requested the following be recorded; SMBC have not delivered the conditions of Meriden Sports Park development, footprint and land holding and reserves the right to challenge “no-one owns it”.

**Signed** ..... **Chair**      **Dated** .....

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**Action:** The Clerk to contact Jim Butler; meet with David Keaney and follow up with David Waterson regarding freehold transfer and community asset registration as part of Sports Park.

## 12.7 Community Right to Bid

The Clerk reported that under the Localism Act 2011 the opportunity to declare a community right to bid and register community assets may be used for the protection of designated “open green spaces” and “local green spaces”. This links to identifying a Parish Community Asset Register that sits alongside the Neighbourhood Plan where areas may be identified as having structural landscaping value.

## 13. Councillor’s reports and items for future agenda

Members to consider open space, buildings, common land, parks, woodland, community assets to be registered.

## 14. Date of Next Meeting

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

The meeting closed at 21.30

Signed ..... Chair Dated .....

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