



Meriden Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 19th September 2016
Venue: Pavilion, Meriden Sports Park at 7.30 p.m.

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

Cllr Weaver welcomed Members, Cllr Allsopp and members of the public.

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Cllr Barber due to family bereavement, and Cllrs Haque and Bell due to holiday.

2. Public Participation

There were 40 members of the public in attendance.

Cllr Weaver welcomed Andrew Harding from Transport for West Midlands and Dave Stirling, who provided an overview and update on the renewal 89 bus service that replaces the taxi bus.

The taxi bus service has been removed due to the viability of the service; £1.92 per passenger is costed for public transport however the taxi bus is £5.00 per passenger and does not represent value for money. The new service will broaden the base and reach area of transport users; however it was not noted that it will not meet all resident needs. The introduction of the service is being evaluated and a “consultation surgery” has been organised for 4th October between 10.30-12.30 hours at the Pavilion.

It is anticipated that the replacement 89 service will provide roaming zones within 2.5 miles of Meriden centre and where possible can pick up and drop off door to door; and once the driver gets used to the route may provide a collection point at bottom of roads etc. Meanwhile there is a transitional period whereby the taxi bus continues to pick up passengers and transfer to the 89 bus stops. Once the consultation has taken place and user feedback evaluated timetables may be modified to meet need and demand, with a review of routes and how the roaming zones are working.

A Q & A session followed for residents who expressed their frustration at the replacement service, and their request for the continuance of the taxi bus service. The 89 service does not meet the need of disabled residents who rely on public transport to maintain their independence in their everyday lives. Residents also recorded their disappointment with Transport for West Midlands that a decision affecting so many could be made on the basis of financial viability and not on meeting a vulnerable communities needs and without any consultation with users of the taxi bus service.

Signed Chair **Dated**

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A spokesperson for the residents summed up the issues with an impassioned plea for the reinstatement of the taxi bus that enables the access to lunch clubs, friendship groups and other social engagement opportunities; instead of social exclusion and isolation.

Chair invited Cllr Nunn to provide an overview of this recent 82 service survey to Transport for West Midlands. Summarising Cllr Nunn advised that 33% of users are disabled; the 82 bus service is unreliable and infrequent; residents rely on this service to attend health appoints at Solihull hospital, to get to the workplace and college; all of which give rise to levels of stress and anxiety when resulting in late attendance due to unreliability of service. With the 900 service being removed from Millisons Wood, the 82 service is the only public transport available to access Coventry, but not without a mile and quarter walk to nearest bus stop. Cllr Nunn advised he had drafted a letter and invited Members comments with a view to sending this to Diamond Buses, the operator of the 82 service.

Cllr Weaver thanked Cllr Nunn, Transport for West Midlands representatives and residents for attending tonight’s meeting. Valid concerns and issues have been raised on all services with actions to be reported at the consultation surgery on 4th October. Additionally the Parish Council formally invite Transport for West Midlands Director and Mr Harding to return, and attend November’s full council meeting to update Councillors on the evaluation of the 89 service, resident feedback at October’s surgeries, reinstatement of the taxi bus, and/or options for a transport service that will meet the need of Meriden’s senior and vulnerable residents.

Action: The clerk, Cllr Weaver and Cllr Nunn to attend the consultation surgery on 4th October. The clerk to invite Transport for West Midlands representatives to Parish Council meeting on 21st November. The clerk to write to Transport for West Midlands Director to meet with residents and attend October’s surgery and November’s council meeting. Cllr Nunn to send the draft letter to Diamond Buses regarding the 82 service and survey feedback.

There was a five minute break for Messrs Harding and Stirling to leave, along with residents who attended specifically to raise their concerns for the removal of the taxi bus and replacement 89 service.

Chair welcomed Stacey Cooper and Dean Weston from Severn Trent Water who wish to speak to Members regarding access to the Green for the purposes of a mains water supply.

Mr Cooper addressed Members and advised of the current situation being an application to STWA made by the Agent for the old News Express development of three flats and retail premises for a mains water supply to the newly refurbishment accommodation.

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The existing supply does not have sufficient flow for the increased number of flats. Requests have been made to the Parish Council during the last couple of months for access to and permission for the digging of a trench across the Green and laying new pipework to connect into mains located in the layby of Main Road immediately adjacent to the Green. The trench would run between the Cyclists Memorial and the flag pole. The Parish Council owns the Green which is a designated heritage asset (Scheduled Ancient Monument, listed buildings, Conservation Area). On this basis the Parish Council continues to resist any work to the Green that may effect long term disturbance to the Memorial Sites.

STWA proposed two options (i) the digging of a 2m x 3m hole that a pipe may be connected to the carriageway, with costs for reinstatement of the Green or (ii) access from the carriageway via the roundabout and service road. Plans were left with Council for further consideration and decision to resolve the issue presented.

Chair thanked Messrs Cooper and Weston for their attendance advising Council of the situation, and they left the meeting.

Members considered the options without resolution. Neither option was ideal and further advice was needed as to the legal position of digging up a heritage site and Members approved the clerk's recommendation of speaking to Solihull MBC Conservation officers.

Action: The clerk to contact Martin Saunders, SMBC. The clerk to appraise STWA of outcome. The clerk to forward all correspondence to Councillors for their comments.

3. Declarations of Interest

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

Nothing to declare.

Cllr Kipling stated his interest in a recent planning application as the applicant is known to him, and in his capacity as Chair of planning committee all comments will be processed by Vice Chair of Council.

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 18th July 2016, circulated prior to meeting, were considered and agreed.

IT WAS RESOLVED Cllr Kipling proposed acceptance of the minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 18th July 2016, seconded by Cllr P Lee.

Signed Chair Dated

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5. Finance

5.1 Approve September Payments

The clerk circulated September payments for consideration and approval. The following items are added to the approval list:-

- (i) Edge IT Systems Limited £396 for Meriden Parish Council increasing total September payments from £3,521.37 to £3,917.37
- (ii) JSM Window Cleaning £20 for Meriden Sports Park increasing total September payments from £3,786.17 to £3,806.17.

IT WAS RESOLVED Cllr R Kipling proposed approval of September payments of £3,917.37 for Parish Council, seconded by Cllr P Lee. Cllr P Lee proposed approval of September payments of £3,806.17 for Sports Park, seconded by Cllr R Kipling.

5.2 Grant Thornton Audit/Annual Return 2015-16

Cllr Weaver advised there have been some technical issues raised by the auditors that are currently been worked through. The clerk advised that she and Cllr Weaver had met with SMBC solicitors and will be taking legal advice from Wright Hassall.

Action: Cllr Weaver and the clerk will meet with Wright Hassall on 20th September and report back to Members once the audit has been concluded at Council Development Day on 1st October.

5.3 Freehold transfer of Sports Park and VAT

The clerk advised that she and Councillor Weaver had met with Andrew Kinsey and Deborah Merry on 15th September. SMBC are seeking external advice regarding VAT. Until this is resolved the freehold remains with SMBC.

Action: Clerk and Cllr Weaver to work with SMBC and advisors to conclude the matter. An update will be provided at Council Development Day.

5.4 New Financial Regulations/Audit/Transparency/Policies

The clerk reported that this remains a work in progress and is linked to Local Council Award Scheme.

Action: Finance committee to undertake review of all finance policies and regulations in accordance with WALC recommendations for Audit/Transparency policy.

6. Progress Reports

6.1 Village Hall Management Committee

Cllr Lynch Smith reported that all is going well with the latest big picture show being well attended. The next film will be shown on 15th October.

6.2 War Memorials

Cllr P Lee advised that the application for Remembrance Sunday road closure has been submitted. He also reported that Airfields for Britain Conservation Trust have contacted the Parish Council regarding putting a plaque on the sports park as an

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official WW1 airfield. The site is on the sewage works and it may have been used as an emergency landing strip, but this cannot be confirmed. Working with our local historian, the claim is without proof, therefore it is considered a plaque should not be placed in the sports park.

Action: Cllr P Lee will contact the Airfields for Britain Conservation Trust.

6.3 Meriden Pool

Chair advised a couple of positive meetings with Chris Barr resulting in the recommendation Red Kite be appointed by SMBC to undertake a consultancy service proposal for a long term management plan of Meriden Pool. Members were asked to consider a 50/50 split of the quoted £1200 to carry out this work. Historical documentation, plans and drawings have been made available from parish council archives and Alder Mill who have carried out their own investigations and design. Members considered and approved a 50/50 split of consultant costs.

Cllr Kipling stated that he and some residents had historical information and documents that may assist Red Kite in a restoration and management plan.

IT WAS RESOLVED Members approved 50% of consultant costs in preparing a Pool Management Plan.

Action: Clerk to liaise with Cllr Kipling, residents and officers. A meeting with Red Kite to be organised.

6.4 Allotments

The clerk advised the driveway is 50% complete. There are two late payers of allotment rents.

Action: Cllr P Lee and the clerk to review agreement and carry out a site visit to inspect allotments.

6.5 Footpaths/Forum

Cllr Lynch-Smith reported all well with no issues.

6.6 Quarries Liaison Group

The clerk advised that discussion at September's meeting focused on resident complaints regarding dust and debris on Hampton Lane, Birmingham Road and Meriden roundabout, all from HGVs running into Area G, NRS site. A & A Recycling has communicated directly with residents and offered to conduct home visits to understand complaints and explain processes. It was considered unlikely that the Environment Agency would attend site for the purpose of dust monitoring due to there being no breach of licence conditions.

Action: The Clerk to contact complainants to arrange a visit by A & A Recycling.

6.7 Solihull Area Committee

The next meeting will be held on 13th October. Any Councillor may attend.

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6.8 Tree Wardens & TPO List

Cllr Lynch-Smith advised a resident had answered the recent advertisement for volunteer tree wardens. The clerk with contact the applicant providing Cllr Lynch-Smiths email contact so a mutually convenient meeting may be arranged.

Clerk: The Clerk to email applicant and arrange meeting with Cllr Lynch-Smith.

6.9 Community Surgeries

The Clerk and Cllr Weaver hosted a combined community and beat surgery on 8th August in the absence of Bruce Brant. There were no attendees and no representative from the rural Community Police team.

Bruce Brant hosted a surgery on 6th September in the absence of the clerk, but there has been no feedback provided.

Action: The next surgery will be held on 10th October with the Clerk and Mr Brant.

6.10 Community Speed Watch

Cllr Barber was not in attendance however he had sent the following message “he has tried numerous times to contact WPC Smith who continues to be unavailable. There is no other contact and he will keep trying”. Cllr Lynch-Smith wished to record her disappointment that another summer has gone without the opportunity of active speed watch dates. There are also volunteers waiting to be trained.

Action: Cllr Barber to follow up and provide update at next meeting.

6.11 HS2

Chair advised that she and Cllrs Lynch-Smith and M Lee met with Caroline Spelman MP on 10th September. The meeting raised issues in the House of Lords Select Committee Petition for the relocation of the Bickenhill Civic Amenity site to Meriden as set out in the HS2 documentation. The landowner has been speaking to SMBC regarding Area G currently operated by NRS Wastecare. Whilst Caroline Spelman outlined her support and continued petitioning, her recommendation was for the Parish Council to request a meeting with Cllr Ian Courts and District Councillors to discuss Meriden’s issues and options.

Action: The clerk to arrange a meeting with Cllr Courts and District Councillors.

6.12 Meriden Sports Park (quarterly summary only)

Nothing to report.

7. **Clerk’s Report**

The Clerk advised actions are reflected in agenda items.

8. **District and Ward Councillor Reports**

Nothing to report from Cllr Allsopp.

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9. Correspondence & Communication

Chair advised the clerk had circulated emails and other correspondence for information with the following received:-

- Scouts request to use the Green on 16th December for Centenary Celebrations of the scouting movement with 150 young people attending from neighbouring scouting organisations. A promise was made for scouting organisations to gather across the country to commemorate the 1916 Centenary. **In principle approval was given for the Green to be the venue for the District of Meriden however a risk assessment must be undertaken for scout leaders, Hi-Viz worn and orange fencing to be erected for health and safety of attendees.**
- A letter of acknowledge and thanks from ABF The Soldiers Charity regarding WW1 Committee donation.
- A letter and photograph from Brays Special School for the use of the Pavilion and Park for their end of term Teddy Bears Picnic.

10. Meriden Village Matters

10.1 Library Update

Nothing to report.

10.2 Village Commemoration WW1

Cllr M Lee advised that the WW1 Booklet had now been completed and distributed, all as part of the Lottery funding. Chair recorded thanks on behalf of the Parish Council and local community advising so many positive comments had been received on the publication. Also thanks to the team of distributor volunteers and of course the WW1 Committee for an excellent piece of work providing moving historical backgrounds of those lost, their families and village life during the Great War.

10.3 Meriden Gate (transfer of freehold of land known as Meriden Sports Park)

Nothing to report.

10.4 Taylor Wimpey (Transfer of Allotments/freehold land)

Nothing to report.

10.5 Highways

The clerk advised that the Fillongley Road Crossing petition had been delivered to Cllr Bell who had forwarded to Cllr Ted Richards, Portfolio and Cabinet holder for Transport and Highways. The latest update is that this will go before the Transport and Highways Cabinet Decision Session on 6th October and the outcome will be advised thereafter. The named officer is Mr Davinder Chohan.

Action: Clerk to monitor and liaise with Mr Chohan.

10.6 Land Registry & Ownership

Nothing to report.

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10.7 Solihull Neighbourhoods in Bloom & Heart of England in Bloom 2016

The Clerk advised an invitation had been received to attend the Bloom Presentation on 3rd October. Cllr Lynch Smith will be attending and suggested wildflowers be planted along the verges in Millisons Wood.

Action: The clerk to liaise with Rangers and Parks regarding wildflower planting.

10.8 Litter

This item is referred to Tammy Rowley and Bruce Brant who have requested all residents call the Connect number 0121 704 6000 who will log the call with street cleansing and the number of calls/incidents may be tracked.

Action: The clerk to put this onto website for resident information.

10.9 Mobile Mast Update

Nothing to report.

10.10 Local Council Award Scheme

Nothing to report.

10.11 82 Bus Route & Failure of Service

This item is covered in item 2 public participation; please refer Cllr Nunn actions.

10.12 Street Association Project

Nothing to report.

11. Solihull Partnership Forum

The next meeting will be held on 28th September and Cllr Weaver will be attending.

12. Planning Matters

12.1 Neighbourhood Planning Update

Cllr M Lee reported that the call for sites survey and draft report has been analysed by the planning consultant with independent technical assessments of all sites identified in the draft report being undertaken. This has included additional sites identified by the Parish Council as part of the neighbourhood plan exercise. The consultant will be conducting an opinion poll on the call for sites but the outcome will not mean those identified sites will be developed. The technical assessment will be provided to SMBC when sites have been chosen. A public consultation event is arranged for 24th September in the Village Hall. Cllrs Weaver, M Lee and the planning consultant will attend together with Caroline Spelman MP; the consultant will provide Q and A opportunities.

Recent communication from Gary Palmer, SMBC, suggests their technical assessment will be completed until end Autumn and will be reported at next Area Committee meeting.

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Cllr Allsopp stated that SMBC’s technical assessments will go before Cabinet prior to any public consultation. He further added that Balsall Common and Berkswell had run a successful event that included landowners and developers.

Action: Cllrs M Lee and Weaver will continue working with the Neighbourhood Planning Group and Consultant; the clerk will pull together maps, materials and other resources needed for public consultation event.

12.2 Planning Application Status Updates

Cllr Kipling reported that all planning applications forwarded to planning committee have been processed with comments put onto MBC planning portal.

12.3 Update of Old Garage & Caravan Storage Site, Birmingham Road

Nothing to report.

12.4 Unlawful Caravan Storage Site

Caravans have started to be removed from the site. There have been reports of damage and property missing.

12.5 Land for Burial – Cllr Lynch-Smith

Nothing to report.

12.6 Copse & Bridleway

Nothing to report.

12.7 Community Asset/Right to Bid

The clerk is in receipt of the application to register Oddfellows Allotments from the planning consultant, to complete the formal application process.

Action: The clerk will complete application process and submit to SMBC.

12.8 Enforcement Notice Register

Nothing to report.

13. Parish Council Development Day

The next development day is Saturday 1st October. An invitation to James Carpenter to attend for the purposes of providing a planning briefing has been declined for the second time.

14. New Website

Cllr M Lee advised that only four pen-portraits and Member profiles have been received. The new logo has been revised and Members considered their approval of the re-brand and approved with the strap line remaining as “The Centre of England.

Action: Cllr M Lee to continue collating new branding, gallery and Member information.

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IT WAS RESOLVED Members approved the refreshed Parish Council logo and branding.

15. Councillor's reports and items for future agenda

All items to be sent to the clerk.

16. Date of Next Meeting

The next Meeting of Meriden Parish Council is to be held on Monday 17th October 2016.

The Chair closed the meeting at 10.05.

Signed Chair Dated

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