



# Meriden Parish Council

*the centre of england*

Minutes of Meriden Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 24 September 2012 at The Village Hall, Main Road, Meriden. The meeting commenced at 7.30 p.m.

**Present:**

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| Cllr Mrs M Lee         | Chair      |
| Cllr Mr R Kipling      | Vice Chair |
| Cllr Mrs F Lynch-Smith |            |
| Cllr Mr P Lee          |            |
| Cllr M/s R Weaver      |            |
| Cllr Mrs M Haque       |            |
| Mrs B Bland            | Clerk      |

Cllr D Bell and three members of the public were in attendance.

## **1. Community Policing Presentation by PCSO Adam Handley**

PCSO Handley provided an update on recent issues within Meriden Parish. He confirmed that there had been 3 burglaries and one theft with a successful arrest being made.

PCSO Handley shared the Parish Council's concerns regarding increased traffic and speeding in the village and gave assurance that this matter was in process. He further confirmed that a request had been made for a speed monitor and that he had noted resident's concerns during recent Beat Surgeries. Statistics of a recent week long survey carried out in May recording speeds, volume of traffic and peak times was shared with Members and the public.

Questions received from the public asked about Speed Watch, what can be done about speeding on the Fillongley Road and parking at Meriden School?

PCSO Handley informed all present that these issues were currently being resolved. Enforcement Officers are doing spot checks in Meriden Village; a letter is being drafted and a visit is to be made to the Headteacher of Meriden School requesting her support to ensure parents park responsibly and safely; a further survey to record volume of traffic will be undertaken.

PCSO Handley stated that a website link is not possible to Meriden Parish Council website however Members agreed that there is a web link from Parish Council website to the Police.

Members requested PCSO Handley's support for Remembrance Day road closures and Parade; and to have a community presence on Halloween. A letter is to be drafted by the Parish Council reminding shops on the Village Green to decline selling flour and eggs to children/young people for inappropriate use.

PCSO Handley left the meeting at 8 p.m.

## **2. Apologies**

No apologies.



### **3.Declarations of Interest**

Nothing declared by Members.

### **4.Minutes of 25 June & 20 August 2012**

Members agreed that the minutes of meetings held on 25 June and 20 August should be deferred to the next meeting.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members will read the minutes of 25 June meeting and bring any comments/amendments to October meeting. The Clerk will amend Item 11 in accordance with Cllr P Lee's request and present to the October meeting for approval and signing off.

### **5.Matters Arising**

Members noted that all matters arising were included as Agenda items.

### **6.Public Participation**

Cllr Bell confirmed meeting at Community Centre on 25 September regarding use of Centre and Library closure. He asked for representation from the Parish council but unfortunately no-one was available to attend. Please see Item 9.3 Alspath Community Centre below.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Cllr Bell would attend alone report back at next meeting.

### **7.Correspondence & Communication**

- Solihull Conservation & Advisory Group Meeting  
It was noted that papers arrived too late and after the meeting date for attendance. Cllr Weaver had already actioned this and complained about the late notification.
- Solihull Highway Services  
New lay-out was shared with Members. A site visit was undertaken with Mr D Chohan, Engineer. A new pedestrian crossing will not be considered as a new pedestrian island will be made by David Wilson Homes at the completion of Meriden Gate development for the purpose of safe pedestrian crossing to the Village Green which was part of the original planning consent. The centre refuge will be widened to provide adequate mobility scooter/wheelchair access. Members were not happy with this outcome and felt this was now a public safety issue.  
**IT WAS RESOLVED** that Cllr Bell would contact Mr Chris Moreton at Solihull MBC Highways Department and report back at next meeting.
- Solihull MBC Highways Traffic Statistics  
Members noted the survey content and requested a copies be electronically sent so they may peruse and study increased traffic volume. It was further noted that this matter was in process with PCSO Handley and was referred to in his earlier update including Speed Watch.  
**IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Clerk email Members with survey statistics and this issue would continue to be monitored.



- Solihull MBC Highways re. designated parking bays at Village Green shops  
Members considered the request by residents for designated parking bays including disabled parking and Highways response to draw an outline plan for approval. Members felt that with the 1 hr waiting signs and an enforcement officer regularly attending, there was no need to alter the current arrangement as vehicles moved along quite quickly.  
**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members did not approve the proposal and requested the Clerk to notify Solihull MBC Highways not to proceed with drawing an outline plan. Members requested that the Sports Park be promoted as car parking for village shops. Cllr Weaver requested the Clerk to write to Solihull MBC on behalf of the Parish Council highlighting parking restrictions on Birmingham Road, increased traffic including quarry lorry and articulated vehicle movements, congestion at the bus shelter and public safety issues.
- Remembrance Day Parade Application for Road Closure  
Cllr P Lee was concerned that this paperwork had been sent to the previous Clerk's address and was therefore late for a 7<sup>th</sup> September application deadline. He requested a letter of complaint be sent to Solihull.  
**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members agreed that Cllr M Lee completes the application form with a covering letter.

## **8. Code of Conduct**

Members received, completed and duly signed their new Code of Conduct for Councillors. Members further signed identity cards as part of the new framework.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Clerk will file papers and laminate identity badges for circulation at next meeting.

## **9. Meriden Library**

### 9.1 Update

It was acknowledged there was an increase in survey response from 78 to 107. It was noted that Cllr Lynch-Smith had been tireless in her canvassing of residents accessing the Library ensuring they had completed the survey. Cllr Lynch-Smith also stated that many residents were unclear about the Parish Council role in village matters, particularly around Library use. Members agreed a disappointing response to Parish Council efforts of delivering surveys to 970 households within the Parish. Cllr Weaver stated that the Parish Council had made efforts previously in raising the profile and whilst there may be confusion over the title "Parish Council Newsletter" there can be no name change due to the Statute governing the Parish of Meriden.

### 9.2 Outcome of Cabinet Meeting

Cllr Bell informed the meeting that a proposal to move the Library site to Meriden School had gone to Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> September. It had been agreed not to move the Library site to Meriden School.

Cllr M Lee stated she had received communication from Tracey Cox, Solihull MBC Library and Information Services, confirming the outcome and also a reduction in Library opening of 2 hours per week. It was noted that 10 Libraries within the Borough of Solihull would be affected by reduced opening times.



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It was noted that feedback from Ms Cox suggested no-one used Meriden Library between the hours of 18.00-19.00 hours on Mondays and Thursdays. Members agreed that the Village must not lose this community resource. Consultation around co-location and alternatives had been explored. Members stated that requests have been made for the cost of refurbishment and upgrading for the Library to remain in-situ. Members requested costs of reinforcing first floor, damp proofing and new boiler/heating system.

Cllr Lynch-Smith stated that instead of closing at 18.00 hours why not close on Mondays at 17.00 and Thursdays at 19.00 providing greater accessibility for those residents in full time employment who cannot access on Saturday mornings.

Members of the public requested the Library remain on its current site. They believed this to be a central community resource that they did not want to lose or have relocated. The Library was integral to village life and as such should remain in the heart of village convenient for visitors, cyclists, children/young people and residents who regularly use and visit the Village Green.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Cllr Bell to advise Cllr M Lee costs of refurbishment identified above.

## 9.3 Alspath Community Centre

Cllr Bell informed the Members of a meeting regarding future use of the Community Centre including possible re-siting of the Library. As previously stated there would be no representation by Parish Council Members due to capacity, but Cllr Bell would attend and report back at 22 October meeting.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Cllr Bell to attend the Community Centre meeting.

## **10. Leys Lane**

### 10.1 Allotments

Cllr M Lee informed Members that letters had been received by the Clerk and Mr A Gabbitas sent recorded delivery by Taylor Wimpey. The communication informed the expiry of existing tenancy and Taylor Wimpey would be liaising with allotment holders to agree and sign new tenancy agreements.

Mr Gabbitas stated that the allotment holders have lost interest due to the recent uncertainty of development of the allotment site. There are 16 allotments with 7 plots in use, the remainder being overgrown. Mr Gabbitas further stated that the allotment holders did not want to liaise directly with Taylor Wimpey and preferred to have all communication and tenancy via the Parish Council.

Cllr M Lee stated that Taylor Wimpey would be returning 12 allotments for use with those plots lost being used for improvements to the site.

Cllr M Lee also stated that Taylor Wimpey had been invited to Parish Council meetings but declined to attend. Cllr Lee also stated that tenancy would be transferred back to the Parish Council at conclusion of site development and on that basis why change the current arrangement?



Mr Gabbitas asked for confirmation of the proposed improvements including loss of 3 allotments for car parking and loss of one allotment for a narrow footpath.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Clerk would write to Taylor Wimpey on behalf of the Parish Council and Allotment holders confirming the views of the Parish Council and Allotment holders specifically stating (i) no change to tenancy arrangements, (ii) all communication should be made via the Parish Council and (iii) confirmation of the loss of 4 allotments and the improvements this will provide. The Clerk was also instructed to determine a schedule of works for seasonal planting.

## 10.2 Development

Cllr M Lee informed Members that she had spoken with Neil Pearson, Planning Consultant and Ian Roxburgh, Chair of Parish Plan and Resident Representative regarding the five year plan for new housing and the proposed new development. Please see correspondence emailed to Members on 04 September from Neil Pearson confirming the negative outcome of the appeal even though it was confirmed Meriden was limited to provide for future affordable housing. Cllr M Lee stated that the outcome will only be known when Taylor Wimpey has submitted their final plans.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** that the situation be monitored.

## **11.Receive Reports**

### 11.1 **Village Hall**

Nothing to report.

### 11.2 **Meriden School**

Cllr Weaver reported that a welcome back to Governors meeting had taken place to showcase the completion of building works.

### 11.3 **War Memorial**

Cllr P Lee reported that the Committee was due to meet on 29 September. He further stated that Peter Wright, St Laurence Church, would be applying for a grant from the War Memorial Trust to maintain the Memorial site.

### 11.4 **Pool**

The Clerk has not had a response to Parish Council's request for replanting of trees and would report back at next meeting.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Clerk to contact Darren Parkin, Solihull MBC Tree Officer for update.

### 11.5 **Allotments**

Please refer to item 10.1 under Leys Lane.

### 11.6 **Footpaths**

Members noted that Enterprise had cut back shrubs, trees and verges along Meriden Mile.





Public attendees complained of overgrown footpaths along Maxstoke Lane running parallel with A45.

Members discussed the problem of keeping up with footpaths and suggested an electronic form for access via Parish Council website could be used by members of the public to submit to the Clerk for action. Cllr Weaver informed the meeting such a form already exists.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Clerk would process request for footpath to be cleared. Cllr M Lee and Cllr R Weaver would check previous documents as a form had been developed previously for this purpose. Cllr M Lee would ensure form is put on website with an automatic submission button.

#### 11.7 **Mining & Minerals**

The Clerk informed that Members had not responded to emails asking for comments within the 21 day consultation period. A request for an extension had been made and this was confirmed for the Parish Council to respond by 26 September.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Clerk would include Member's comments in a letter to David Wigfield to meet 26 September deadline.

#### 11.8 **Local Strategic Partnership**

Nothing to report.

#### 10.9 **Solihull Area Committee**

Cllr Weaver informed that meeting dates had changed and there was nothing further to report.

#### 11.10 **Tree Wardens**

Nothing to report.

#### 11.11 **Community Surgeries**

Residents raised concerns as follows:-

- Corner parking and vehicle turnarounds in Highfield specifically school drop off and pick up times at Meriden School.
- Poor cutting of grass verges and no follow up sweeper of debris/cuttings.
- Damage to Winspear road sign.
- Parking at Village shops – designated parking bays and disabled bays enabling vehicles to park without difficulty.
- Removal of parking restriction of one hour to 2 hours to allow for hairdressers/beauty salon access.
- Parking of vehicles on double yellow lines along Fillongley Road and Main Road when unable to park at Village Green.
- Maintenance and appearance of roundabouts coming into Village specifically Kenilworth Road.
- Reinstatement of dog bins along Birmingham Road, Millisons Wood.
- Overgrown footpaths, specifically narrow width at Millisons Wood.



- Quarry traffic and use of Fillongley Road as cut through.
- Speeding particularly Fillongley Road.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Clerk has all actions in process with on-going liaison with Neighbourhood Co-ordinator, Highways, WM Police, Parks/Enterprise.

### 11.12 **Community Speed Watch**

Reinstate due to resident complaints of increase in heavy vehicles and speeding traffic. Public attendees were asked if they would be interested in becoming volunteers and undergoing training. There was a negative response due to being known within the village.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** PCSO Handley was working to reduce the speed of vehicles via traffic survey, monitoring and enforcement. Members were also reinstating speed watch and were asking or volunteers to attend training at Shirley Police Station on 27 September at 18.00-20.00 hours.

### 11.13 **HS2**

Cllr Lynch-Smith informed the meeting there was nothing new to report. There is talk about a tunnel and Forum members have asked for maps. There will be an HS2 Information Day at Kenilworth School on 20 October 2012, 10.00-16.00 hours with invitations to attend to all local action groups. There will be a presentation of computer graphics and a box bridge; there is on-going work on sound with a week of measuring trains reaching 195 decibels; with temporary disruption of up to 5 years.

Cllr Bell indicated closely monitoring outcome and reports available and will feed back but mentioned it is a different Solihull representative attending meetings each time.

Cllr Weaver asked if Caroline Spelman MP had joined the working party? Cllr Bell confirmed she had and there was to be a meeting with the previous Secretary of State who was moved and Leader of the Council; a new date for this meeting is to be arranged. More information was requested by Members for consultation on the final draft of the Code of Construction which has been presented as a draft and final draft with no further comments being added until completion in February 2013.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Cllr Lynch-Smith would monitor and update Members accordingly.

## **12.Meriden Sports Park**

### 12.1 Summer Activities & Update

Members were informed that the recent Sports Camps raised a profit of £800 and were well supported.

*Farm Watch Surgery* – Nothing to report.

*Tennis* – Due to success of pilot sessions, a 5 week training programme commences on 30 September to 28 October.



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**Football** – Continues to be well supported by parents with the season underway. The Clerk had made contact with Solihull News to raise the profile of Meriden Rovers and its sponsors. The Sports Coach gave an interview which was included in 21<sup>st</sup> September edition of the paper.

## 12.2 Snagging

*(DWH = David Wilson Homes)*

Cllr M Lee reported that at a meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September it was confirmed that six items remained outstanding. DWH and John Shaw attended the meeting to conclude a plan of action for the remaining specialist and non specialist works to be completed. Cllr M Lee stated that the delay with Wicksteed was that DWH had delayed making contact as instructed at 20<sup>th</sup> July meeting and DWH have been slow in their response to John Shaw's requests. Members requested the Clerk to follow up proposals from Solihull Property Services and Russells to take on the service contracts for an interim period at the Pavilion. The Clerk was also requested to speak with John Shaw for him to pre-empt a schedule of works for 2013-14.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Clerk was to be on site on 27<sup>th</sup> September to provide access to Russells, Regal and DWH to carry out work.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** That Kevin Wills, DWH, liaises with Wicksteed regarding the T-Cup and Matrix in Children's Playing Area.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Clerk will contact John Shaw and request a Schedule of Planned Works for 2013-14.

## 12.3 Complaint & Response

The Clerk had scanned and circulated Solihull's reply to the Parish Council's letter of complaint. It was noted that whilst the letter did not provide an answer, Solihull MBC Senior Officers had made contact with DWH senior management team. Cllr P Lee stated his disappointment, unhappiness and frustration with the situation, and requested this be included in the minutes.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Cllr P Lee's comments are duly noted.

## 12.4 Storage Facility

Cllr M Lee informed Members that the storage facility build has commenced and anticipated finish will be October 2012.

## 12.5 David Wilson Homes Sales Update

The Clerk shared with Members that there are 87 private and housing association homes being built, of which 61 are currently sold. The prices are between £195,000 and £575,000. It is anticipated that two thirds of the site will be completed by the end of December with a planned finish date of June 2013.

## **13.Planning Matters**

13.1 The Clerk informed Members she had once again contacted Solihull Planners who are undergoing a review of their process for notifying Town and Parish Councils of Neighbourhood Applications. Access to current planning applications is limited. There was only one neighbourhood notification for consideration as follows:-





- *the felling of one Ash tree in the front garden of 10 Leymere Close, Meriden.*

**IT WAS RESOLVED** There were no objections to this application. The Clerk was requested to obtain a TPO list under the Freedom of Information Act.

### 13.2 Ownership of Land

Cllr Lynch-Smith had been able to determine a list of ownership of land in and around Parish of Meriden. It was further reported that an update was required on the ownership of the bridleway adjacent to Sports Park.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Cllr Weaver will write a letter to Mike Swallow, Solihull MBC, requesting a review meeting to include play area at Meriden Gate, storage unit and container at Sports Park and three items of play equipment.

### 13.3 Lay-by Closure Hampton Lane

The Clerk had been contacted by the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator regarding Packington Estate's request for this lay-by to be closed on the grounds of security and public accessibility. A period of consultation was currently being worked through by the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator and the Parish Council had been asked for their response.

Members consulted with residents, the community policing team, and requested evidence of recent thefts and burglaries associated with the layby. At the start of the meeting PCSO Handley provided an overview of recent policing issues affecting the Village. There was no evidence of the lay-by being used for illicit purposes and no incidences had been logged. Therefore on this basis Members did not agree with the proposed closure request.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Clerk would formally notify the Neighbourhood Coordinator of Meriden Parish Council's consultation outcome for the lay-by on Hampton Lane to remain open.

### 13.4 The Firs

Cllr M Lee informed Members of an outline proposal for The Firs and a Jephson Housing Association to develop more homes for older people in the Village on the site of the old garage on Birmingham Road including gardens for Firs residents.

The development would be in line with the Parish Plan and Jephson Housing Association is an established, well thought of organisation that would provide a 2-storey build that would be well maintained.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Parish Council would meet informally prior to a public meeting being arranged. The Clerk will write to Jephson Housing Association with an invitation to attend November's Parish Council meeting.

## **14.Finance**

### 14.1 Payments

A schedule of payments was presented to Members for their approval.



**IT WAS RESOLVED** that payment be made to all suppliers listed on the attached schedule for September.

#### 14.2 Income

The Clerk informed Members that the final precept payment of £20,000 had been received via BACS transfer to Barclays Bank. The Clerk further advised that she had still to reconcile income received from Summer Camps against receipts for consumables.

#### 14.3 Private & Confidential Enclosure

The Clerk circulated details of salaries and expenses for approval.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** that payment be approved for staff payroll and expenses.

#### 14.4 Year End Accounts 2011-12

The Clerk reported that the Auditor had returned the accounts with an “unqualified” outcome and requested two minor amendments which the Clerk had made prior to completing the Conclusion of Audit Notice.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Clerk post the notices for residents/public to access accounts should they wish.

#### 14.5 Accounts 2012-13

The Clerk informed Members that she was working with Edge Finance systems to set up accounts for this financial year and is undergoing training to operate the system.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Clerk continues with process and training.

#### 14.6 SLCC Subscription

The Clerk advised that this subscription had not been renewed.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Clerk complete paperwork, raise cheque and renew membership.

#### 14.8 HRMC

The Clerk advised Members that she had attended free training for VAT and PAYE.

### **15. Birmingham Airport**

The Clerk provided an update from the Consultation Group Forum on runway extension and re-routing of flight path. *Please see notes provided to members attached.* Cllr Haque also provided an update together with graphics from her laptop regarding the new designs of runway extension and A45 road layouts as part of the phase 1 development.

The information is still not for public scrutiny however Members may share informally with residents prior to formal road shows time lined for December 2012.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Clerk continues attending Forum meetings as a representative of Meriden Parish Council.



**16. Heart of England in Bloom**

The Clerk provided feedback from the meeting she attended regarding Best Village in Bloom and Heart of England in Bloom. New criteria is being written which will re-categorise Heart of England villages into small, medium and large villages, and small, medium and large towns. Each will have the same score to achieve but will be based on category. The RHS will forward new entry criteria when finalised.

The Clerk informed the meeting that through this network she had made contact with the Environmental Champion who has put Meriden forward to receive volunteer support from Lloyds TSB. The Clerk has also been given 500 daffodil bulbs and 10 bags of soil improver for the village planters. Meriden School children have so far assisted in planting daffodil bulbs at Alspath Community Centre and the Library planter.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The Clerk will liaise with the Environmental Champion and continue the links with RHS and Heart of England in Bloom.

**15.Any Other Business**

There were several items for Members attention, however it was requested that these items be deferred to next meeting and this heading be removed from all future agendas on the basis that no item may be brought to a meeting for a resolution without formally being an agenda item.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** That the Clerk will remove this heading from all future agendas.

**16.Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Monday 22 October 2012 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

Cllr Bell and Members of the Public left the meeting at 9.30 p.m.

Cllr F Lynch-Smith left the meeting at 9.35 p.m.

Cllr R Kipling left the meeting at 9.40 p.m.

The meeting closed at 10.15 p.m.

Chair : \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_