

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 18th January 2021
Virtual Meeting via Member Zoom Conferencing commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Present:			
Cllr R Weaver BEM RW	Chair	Cllr M Woollard MW	
Cllr J Barber JB	Vice Chair	Cllr R Kipling RK	
Cllr J Hughes JH		Cllr A Eburne AE	
Mrs B Bland BB	Clerk		

In attendance: Cllr Dicicco

There were 0 members of the public in attendance; meeting streaming live.

1. Welcome & Apologies

Chair welcomed Councillors and invited guest. Apologies received from Cllr Nunn due to his and family ill-health. The meeting was being live streamed and RW thanked all members of the public for logging in.

IT WAS RESOLVED Members accepted apologies from Cllr Nunn.

2. Public Participation

Chair introduced Charley Beaty who will provide an overview of current issues effecting the local farming community. A summary of key issues follows:-

- Dogs off leads around livestock;
- People not sticking to footpaths, who trample crops. Particularly evident around Berkswell;
- Concerns over A45 Fillongley Bridge repairs; movement of heavy machinery around parish during harvesting and silage seasons including harvesting logistics of diversion routes. SMBC not notifying or talking to local farms;
- Great relationship with local community and livestock issues – follows Meriden News and Views;
- Traffic problems specific to Fillongley Road with some near misses with cars/vans overtaking farm vehicles when slowing to make turnings into fields or farmyards. This also includes Hampton Lane (Straight Mile);
- Signage at start of popular footpaths warning to keep dogs on leads and keep to footpaths and off of crops;
- Dog fouling an issue – more awareness needed to pick up dog faeces. This can cause serious disease to the Ewes and Lambs on Strawberry Fields.
- Litter being discarded in fields and along footpaths. Cattle are inquisitive and will nibble causing disease and damage to themselves;

Cllr Dicicco commented that the Fillongley Road Bridge repairs was likely to take 18 months from start to finish.

Signed Chair **Dated**

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He was unaware of the difficulties facing local farms during this time particularly around Maxstoke Lane, Shepherds Lane, Lodge Green Lane and Fillongley Road. He will be raising the issues highlighted with David Keaney to mitigate against the effects; he has noted the turning of combines in and out of Lodge Green Lane and access to Arnold Farm weighbridges needed. He said he is very keen to help as farming is a key area for the local community.

Chair asked for some background on the Beaty farms as follows:-

- Mixed farming including arable, sheep, cereals, potatoes, cattle and beans. Rapeseed is currently on back burner;
- Regenerative farming is programmed integrating animal and arable which makes sustainability possible;
- Diversifying to education and local produce supply i.e. Lamb boxes. Beef boxes trialled from 1st December.
- Education – includes for home schooling a mini farm tour for 20 minutes every 2 weeks live streaming on Facebook Live. With lambing imminent this will be included too along with general agriculture and farm working. See Meriden Farm Page commencing Thursday 17th December.

Cllr Hughes asked about Brexit and effects on exports?

- Lamb goes to local abattoir in Kenilworth with 70-80% being exported under free trade agreement. 150 lambs sold locally to Box Scheme;
- Beef is not fattened and is sold onto farms at 18 months old to be finished;
- Arable – wheat price is very good currently being sold to Warburton for bread. Barley and Oats also strong on prices too;
- Brexit will not make an immediate difference;
- Farmers will lose subsidies including ELM scheme (Environmental Land Management).

Cllr Kipling asked about the Agricultural Policy and who decides what is grown?

- The three crop rule is abolished which has given more scope to farmers to farm land better;
- Farmers are also adapting to climate change;
- Common Agricultural Policy – Government has pledged support payments to 2024 with a cap and phase out by 2028.

Cllr Eburne advised she would put out on social media sites the dangers to live stock of dog fouling and litter, and will look at suitable signage.

Chair asked Charley for a couple of paragraphs for the Meriden Mag highlighting the issues raised this evening.

Signed **Chair** **Dated**

Chair invited any other questions or questions received from members of the public? There were no more questions. She thanked Charley for attending and extended an invitation to return in 3 months' time to give an update which was accepted.

3. Declarations of Interest

3a To declare any personal interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
None.

3b To declare any prejudicial interests in items on the agenda and their nature
None.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting – 14th December 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2020 were agreed as an accurate record. All matters arising are covered in the agenda.

IT WAS RESOLVED The minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2020 were approved; proposed by Cllr Kipling and seconded by Cllr Hughes.

5. Finance

The Clerk circulated finance committee minutes of 11th January 2020 a copy of which may be accessed on the website and payments.

5.1 January Payments

Parish Council December payments amounting to £4407.84 had been circulated for Member's approval.

IT WAS RESOLVED Members approved £4407.84 for January. Proposed by Cllr Kipling and seconded by Cllr Hughes.

Sports Park January payments amounting to £3937.82 had been circulated for Members approval.

IT WAS RESOLVED Members approved £3937.82 for January. Proposed by Cllr Barber and seconded by Cllr Woollard.

5.2 Finance Committee

Chair reported the finance committee met on 11th January 2021. There are no recommendations for full council approval. Chair gave the following summary of main matters arising:-

- Internal controls including risk register review.
- Internal Auditor – a suggestion was made that it is good practice to have a new internal auditor appointed every 3 years. Clerk is currently obtaining preferred auditors from WALC for February's meeting.
- Budget 2021-2022
- Review I & E in line with new tenders. Draft justifications/comments for next meeting.
- Review Parish Action Plan in line with Covid and revise.
- Finalise Business Plan with revisions, approve and put onto website.

Signed Chair **Dated**



Action: Clerk for next finance committee meeting 15th February 2021.

6. Progress Reports

6.1 Village Hall Management Committee

Nothing to report.

6.2(i) Heritage Monuments & Memorial Funding

BB reported the Title Deed had finally been received from Land Registry via Solicitor.

6.3 Meriden Pool

Nothing to report.

6.3(i) Friends Group

Nothing to report.

6.3(ii) Management & Funding

Nothing to report.

6.4 Allotments

Nothing to report.

6.5 Footpaths/Forum

Nothing to report.

6.6 Quarries Liaison Group

Cllr Hughes advised the new Head of Planning attended the last SAC meeting. He raised the lack of planning conditions relative to the many operators on the Quarry site with the Head of Planning who has committed to attend the next quarry liaison meeting.

Cllr Kipling recorded the mud/debris on Birmingham Road all the way from Area G entrance to Stonebridge. Clearly the road sweeper/wheel wash is not fit for purpose. Cllr Hughes said this had been raised at Quarry Liaison meeting. He also advised that at the last meeting Highways reported weighbridge tickets were not being checked against number of vehicles on the highway v. planning approval conditions for maximum capacity. Cllr Kipling said it was up to SMBC to police and enforce. Clerk advised this had been called into Connect along with the operators requesting a highway cleanse. Cllr Diccico said he would follow up.

Action: Cllr Diccico to follow up with Highways and Planning.

6.7 Solihull Area Committee

Chair and Cllr Hughes are Meriden representatives on Area Committee. Cllr Hughes advised he had met Stronger Communities team; Age UK are working with older people and he will send out the link on social media sites, parish council website and

Signed Chair Dated



Meriden Mag. Contacting Age UK will allow residents to raise concerns and discuss issues. Chair added that she was supporting WI in accessing information channels when no mobile devices are in use and this link would be shared.

Action: Cllr Hughes to send link to social media sites and website. Chair to send link to WI.

6.8 Tree Warden & TPO List

Chair suggested an email be sent for update for Meriden Mag.

Action: Clerk/Meriden Mag

6.9 “Tea & Talk”

Cllr Hughes reported he will be booking a meeting for a February evening; Police colleagues to be invited. To be confirmed.

Action: Cllr Hughes.

6.10 Community Speed Watch

JB reported speed watch sessions are currently on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions. The police team have continued carrying out roadside surveillance sessions and more are planned.

Action: Cllr Barber, PCSO Harkin and PCSO Murdoch.

6.11 HS2

Chair advised an invitation to be sent to the community engagement team to attend next meeting to provide update. All information received on overnight works, road closures and construction works are uploaded to social media and web sites.

Action: Clerk

6.12 Meriden Sports Park

Chair advised this was reported to at last meeting and the next quarterly update will be March 2021.

6.13 Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust

The next Trustees meeting will be 8th February 2021.

7. Clerk’s Report

Clerk reported all matters included in Agenda.

8. District and Ward Councillor Reports

Cllr Diccio advised not much going on. SMBC’s energy is on Covid and Vaccination programme roll out. Balsall Common surgery is the designated rural surgery. The process is going very well with numbers starting to reduce. There has been great impact on the council staff teams with reduced staff numbers due to isolation etc., specifically the impact on street cleansing, parks and refuse teams. All programmes of works are affected by staff testing positive and self-isolation guidance.

Signed Chair **Dated**

HS2 continues with road closures affecting A452. A meeting 2/3 weeks ago approved Schedule 17 for temporary greenways.

9. Correspondence & Communication

Clerk reported all emails circulated to Members from officers. Cards and letters of thanks received from residents for Christmas grocery boxes.

10. Meriden Village Matters

10.1 Meriden Library

Clerk advised she received an email dated 17th December 2020 from Library Services advising that the documents required for a full appraisal of the works including a detailed programme of works, budget required and the surveyors recommendations would not be completed until the end of February. Clerk added she has written a letter of complaint dated 21st December 2020 conveying the parish council's disappointment and disillusionment of SMBC's support of this project. The external funders identified and their submission deadlines will not be met.

Cllr Diccio asked what we needed him to do to assist; clerk suggested an update from property services to understand why the delay and why the appraisal work had not been undertaken up to now. He will speak to Martyn Sargeant (Libraries) and Wayne Plant (Property Services). He suggests a zoom meeting for all parties to thrash this out be arranged.

Cllr Diccio confirmed he had sent his letter in support of the parish council for external funders and the Clerk acknowledged receipt. He also asked about external funders and if it was a joint bid to HS2 and Heritage Lottery? Clerk confirmed that to be the case.

Action: Cllr Diccio to contact Library and Property Services and update. RW/Clerk to arrange a meeting. Clerk to continue with funding applications.

10.2 Village Commemoration

10.2(i) VE75

Deferred to 2022.

10.2(ii) Platinum Jubilee 2022

Deferred to 2022.

10.3 Meriden Gate

Clerk reported she had received an email from the Solicitor proposing a rate of £64.00 per hour with an estimated final invoice at the upper level of £1280.00. Once the parish council has confirmed this to be acceptable and Members approve, a letter of engagement will be drafted and sent out to the parish council for signature.

Signed Chair Dated

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Cllr Kipling stated his unhappiness in accepting these terms; his feeling is that it is SMBC's land and significant costs have already been paid on legal fees. Chair explained that this is a legal transaction and each party must have legal representation. Chair asked for a show of hands to approve the Solicitors proposal as above. There were 5 votes approving the proposal. There was one abstention. Chair confirmed the proposal is agreed. Clerk to advise SMBC legal team.

IT WAS RESOLVED Chair asked for a show of hands approving the proposal to accept a rate of £64.00 per hour with an estimated final invoice at the upper level of £1280.00 for the legal work to conclude the transfer of Meriden Sports Park from Solihull MBC to the Parish Council. Clerk recorded 5 Members votes in favour of the proposal (Cllrs Weaver, Barber, Hughes, Eburne and Woollard); and 1 Member abstention (Cllr Kipling).

Action: Clerk to advise SMBC Legal Team of parish council approval.

10.4 Taylor Wimpey (Transfer of Allotments/freehold land)

Clerk reported the work is now concluded. The Deed of Transfer requires the signature of the Chair and this will be executed in the morning and sent back to the Solicitor at SMBC recorded delivery.

Action: Clerk/Chair/Solicitor.

10.5 Highways

Nothing to report. Highways to be invited to provide update at February or March parish council meetings.

Action: Clerk.

10.6 Land Registry & Ownership

Chair reported this continues a work in progress.

10.7 Local Council Award Scheme

Chair reported this continues a work in progress.

Action: See Development Day update item 14.

10.7(i) Website

The review continues.

Action: JB/RW/JH/BB.

10.8 Meriden Public & Community Transport

Nothing to report.

10.9 Dementia Friends/First Aiders/Dementia & Autism Training

Nothing to report.

Signed Chair **Dated**

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10.10 Business Network
Nothing to report.

10.11 Millison's Wood Telephone Box & Emergency Response (Defibrillator)
Clerk advised equipment all delivered and arrangements to be confirmed with contractor for installation.

Action: Clerk to arrange installation date.

11. Planning Matters

11.1 Neighbourhood Planning Update

Chair advised an independent examiner is appointed and undertaking a review of the draft document. He has come back with a number of queries to be answered jointly by SMBC and the parish council. If all answers are accepted then it will go to a May referendum.

Action: RW/BB and SMBC.

11.1(i) Locality Funding Bid
Nothing to report.

11.2 Planning Application Status Updates

Cllr Kipling reported the storage/builders yard on Birmingham slip road accessing A45 towards Stonebridge Island. Cllr Kipling raises concerns around future planning permissions for a building, porta cabin or ANother to be placed on this site. He requests the clerk look into the matter to confirm land ownership.

Action: Clerk

Cllr Woollard apologised for late circulation of updates. She reported

- Strawberry Bank approved with conditions;
- 127 Fillongley Road approved;
- 157 Main Road approved;
- Meriden Quarry Permanent retention of dry silo mortar plant approved;
- The Coplow approved;
- 3 Daytona Drive approved.

Cllr Kipling stated that it does not matter how much we talk about the protection of Meriden Gap, SMBC is not doing anything in support of this as there is an impact from inappropriate developments and expansion of Quarries. Cllr Dicicco replied that he and other councilors are passionate about the Meriden Gap and its retention but there is not much support from our neighbours. He replied that he is trying to get Andy Street on board; he also added that development could be a lot worse with more houses and SMBC is holding the line. Cllr Kipling stated that Coventry is one side and Solihull the other. We are already impacted by the Eastern Green development which has been approved. He asks what work is being done by Solihull/Coventry highways to mitigate the impact to Meriden.

Signed Chair **Dated**



Cllr Diccico assured Members there was dialogue between both Council highways and the West Midlands Combined Authority.

Action: Planning Committee

11.3 Parish Action Plan & Business Plan

Chair advised some revisions to be made taking account of the pandemic and what has/has not been delivered to.

Action: RW/Clerk.

11.4 Solihull Local Plan Review

The consultation period expired 14th December 2020.

12. Climate Change

Nothing to report.

Action: Cllr Hughes

13. Youth Council

Nothing to report.

Action: Cllr Hughes

14. Council Development Day

Chair provided a summary of discussions:-

- Reformatting of meeting agenda? Members considered with mixed comments but agreed to leave as is for now. Clerk to undertake a peer review with Gold Quality Standard parish council and report at next meeting.
- Future proofing 2023 and appointment of Assistant Clerk/Trainee/Apprentice – recommendation to not recruit until end of lockdown and pandemic.
- Purchase of mobile devices for councillors to access remotely meetings and for residents to be included in parish meetings. An external funder has been sourced and clerk to complete application once two further quotations have been secured.
- Councillor vacancy – an advertisement to be drafted; the monitoring officer to be contacted for appropriate wording. Put into Meriden Mag.
- LCAS – Policies missing and a review of standing orders and financial regulations to be undertaken v. new NALC/WALC model templates.
- Update of gallery and community pages of website including Covid food banks etc.
- Annual Assembly to be arranged for end February 2021.

Action: RW/JH/Clerk

14.1 Apprenticeship/Trainee Scheme

Deferred to end of current lockdown.

Action: All

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15. Annual Parish Assembly

Chair reported the parish council will be hosting the Assembly towards end of February 2021.

Action: Cllr Weaver/Cllr Hughes

16. Casual Vacancy (Co-Option)

Chair advised Clerk will be putting an advertisement together and speaking to Monitoring Officer.

Action: Clerk

17. Community Champions

Chair advised there are 4 sites providing vaccinations roll out. The rural site is Balsall Common surgery. Some residents have received invitations to attend Millenium Point. If a resident chooses not to attend their appointment at Millenium Point then they will be picked up by their surgery. Thus far a good positive response to those receiving vaccinations; care homes and O-80's completed and now O-70's to be rolled out. All homebound residents will receive a home visit by community/university hospital teams. The briefings continue every Wednesday.

Action: Cllr Weaver/Clerk

17.1 COVID-19

Chair advised the action team helpline is operating 8am-8pm. Meriden received a plug on Coventry and Warwick Radio by our Lead Volunteer regarding collection of shopping and scripts for Meriden only. Volunteers in the community will help and the pharmacy and GP surgery have numbers.

Action: Cllr Weaver

18. Councillor's reports and items for future agenda

- Litter on the A45 including fly tipping in laybys – Cllr Kipling

Action: Clerk to check with Highways/Street Cleansing to confirm programme of works.

19. Date of Next Meeting

The next **Parish Council meeting** will be held on Monday 22nd February 2021 at 19.30 hours via Zoom Conferencing.

Chair closed the meeting thanking Members for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 21.03 hours.

Signed Chair **Dated**

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