

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020  
Virtual Meeting via Member Zoom Conferencing commencing at 7.30 p.m.

<b>Present:</b>			
Cllr R Weaver BEM RW	Chair	Cllr M Woollard MW	
Cllr J Barber JB	Vice Chair	Cllr R Kipling RK	
Cllr J Hughes JH			
Mrs B Bland BB	Clerk		

**There were 3 members of the public in attendance; meeting streaming live.**

**1. Welcome & Apologies**

Chair welcomed Councillors, invited guests and members of the public. Apologies received from Cllrs Diccico, Allsopp, Howell and Eburne. Cllr Nunn’s non-attendance was noted with no apologies received. Cllr Woollard may leave the meeting at 20.30 due to childcare. The meeting was being live streamed and RW thanked all for logging in.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members accepted apologies from Cllrs Diccico, Allsopp, Howell and Eburne. Cllr Nunn’s absence is recorded as unauthorised.

**2. Public Participation**

Guests Donna Savage (DS), Donna Savage Limited and Charlotte Brace (CB), Stonewater, regarding development of the Land off Maxstoke Lane, adjacent to The Firs, Meriden.

A short document was circulated confidentially to Members prior to the meeting outlining the proposed scheme to deliver up to 25 affordable homes. The site has draft allocation within the Solihull Local Plan Review. The proposal is at an early stage and the purpose of tonight’s attendance is to inform the local community of Stonewater’s intentions, next steps and detailed consultation.

The proposal is for a potential of 25 new affordable homes to be built on the land adjacent to the Firs for rent or shared ownership. The scheme is based on the need identified in the Local Housing Needs Survey and Neighbourhood Plan. Local connection eligibility criteria would apply to all of the homes secured through the planning permission via S106 Legal Agreement. Pre-application discussions with SMBC Planning will commence shortly followed with further survey works and a consultation with residents prior to any planning application submission. Questions were invited:-

- RW stated 40% of any new site has to have green infrastructure.
- CB said she would like to exceed the 40% with good wildlife habitat and infrastructure.*

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

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*DS explained the new draft Local Plan specifies green infrastructure which will be complied with and go beyond the 40% with increased biodiversity.*

*CB stated Stonewater is putting in place one additional tree per property with hedgehog pathways and bat boxes; this regardless of what planning asks to meet ecological requirements.*

- RK advised the Highfield development comprised affordable 2/3 bed homes for local people but over the years extensions to properties have been made which and consequently they are no longer affordable? What guarantee can you give that these homes remain affordable and S106 can impose prevention of extensions?

*CB explained that in perpetuity yes there will be safeguards. Stonewater is working with SMBC and will be conducting their own checks on eligibility and local connections. No property will be rented to anyone outside of the local connection criteria. Stonewater will own the freehold of the properties and will not allow planning for extensions.*

- JH asked if all 25 properties will be let or affordable.

*CB replied that shared ownership will work on a 40% share. There is a need for a mix of both. There will be restrictions placed in S106 conditions. Extra equity may be purchased as and when dependent on criteria and restrictions imposed.*

- RW stated the big issues with access previously discussed. It was difficult to fully support the scheme given the intended access via Maxstoke Lane and representation on behalf of neighbouring residents.

*CB replied that it was a self-contained scheme and you would drive into Stonewater Properties only with no through route. There will be plenty of parking for residents and visitors. Working with a Transport Consultant all avenues have been exhausted in looking to access the site from Birmingham Road. A slight improvement is being considered when entering the site via a filter lane into The Firs via a new link. This is the only option to unlock the site.*

*DS advised that the green corridor will be destroyed if access is made from Birmingham Road. The other 2 fields that make up site 10 are private landowners who are not engaging at this time.*

- RK advised there used to be access from Birmingham Road via a footpath where residents could cut through to bus stop from Maxstoke Lane/Maxstoke Close. This is not evident on proposed plan.

*CB stated she was unaware of this and would look into.*

- Resident asked about connection to services to the site?

*CB replied that no investigations had been undertaken yet but gave reassurance that the 25 houses would not be accessing services from private land.*

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*DS reported that in the SMBC Masterplan there was potential 70/80 McCarthy & Stone units plus The Firs. Additional work is to be undertaken including tree surveys and numbers of dwellings allocated to site 10 development. It is considered 100 homes will not fit allowing 40% green infrastructure.*

RW thanked Donna Savage and Charlotte Brace for attending tonight providing an overview of the proposed scheme. The documents provided are all good and the summary is concise. If there are any questions please email Charlotte Brace via the clerk.

**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 – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 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 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 were approved; proposed by Cllr Kipling and seconded by Cllr Hughes.

**5. Finance**

The Clerk circulated finance committee minutes of 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 a copy of which may be accessed on the website.

**5.1 December Payments**

Parish Council December payments amounting to £3860.51 had been circulated for Member’s approval. An additional amount of £16.29 had been included in the payments for Covid volunteer reimbursement. Clerk advised due to the early meeting outstanding invoices may be required to be cleared prior to 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2020 Christmas holiday.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members approved £3860.51 for December. Proposed by Cllr Hughes and seconded by Cllr Barber.

Sports Park December payments amounting to £3688.57 had been circulated for Members approval. An additional amount of £401.88 had been included in the payments for Fleet Line Marking Limited. Clerk advised due to the early meeting outstanding invoices may be required to be cleared prior to 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2020 Christmas holiday.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members approved £3688.57 for December. Proposed by Cllr Hughes and seconded by Cllr Woollard.

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

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5.2 Finance Committee

RW reported the finance committee met on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and made the following recommendations for full council approval.

- Cllr Woollard to come off of finance committee due to taking over as Chair of Planning committee. Cllr Hughes agreed to come onto finance committee with immediate effect. The finance meetings will revert back to evenings commencing at 17.30.
- Apprenticeship Scheme  
This required further discussion and the inclusion of full council; with suggestion of an open debate reviewing parish council infrastructure and future requirements. Councilors' confirmed their availability for Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2021 between 10-12.00 hours.
- Review of Infrastructure  
Working on Business Plan post 2021; quotation received for zoom/virtual world to enable improved communications and participation by the local community to parish meetings.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Cllr Hughes and Cllr Barber proposed and seconded all above be approved.

- Precept  
Chair invited clerk to talk through the proposed precept increase as discussed and recommended by finance committee.

<b>TABLE 1</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>
Precept 10%	<b>£57,880</b>
Increase p.a.	<b>+ £5,297</b>
Increase	<b>£45.90</b>
Per Band D p.a.	<b>+ £4.17</b>
Based on previous year	<b>1260</b>
Support Grant	<b>0</b>
New Indicative Tax Base per Band D	<b>1261</b>
Indicative Increase to Band D	<b>1</b>
Increase per Band D dwelling p.a.	<b>£4.17p/annum 0.0801p/week</b>

Clerk suggested an increase of 10%. There is no longer a support grant from SMBC which finished at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. Therefore we need to make provision for this shortfall and currently there is no cap for precept increase. Additional service delivery to the community is highlighted in the Business Plan which includes Youth Council, Climate Emergency, and Infrastructure review including Apprentice/Trainee. Members agreed that a 10% increase to precept would be prudent at this time and makes a sensible provision of additional expenditure to current community service delivery provided by the parish council. Please see table 1 outlining what it means to Band D households.

**IT WAS RESOLVED:** Finance committee recommend to full Council an increase to precept of 10% per band D dwelling from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Proposed by Cllr Kipling and seconded by Cllr Hughes.

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



**Action: BB to forward indicative budget for precept increase to Mr. Lund, SMBC, by 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021.**

RW recorded the following:-

- Application to Western Power completed and an award received of £500 for support to vulnerable residents and Christmas via Emergency Action Team;
- Food boxes being put together for those affected by Covid;
- Using local shops to provide groceries and boxes being made up;
- A resident is making cakes and liaising with Environmental Health regarding allergy advice, to be included in food hampers/Christmas boxes.
- Packington Estate written to clerk offering sponsorship of Christmas Lights for 2021. A letter written accepting generous offer.

## **6. Progress Reports**

### 6.1 Village Hall Management Committee

JH advised he had spoken to Mr Russell but the committee was currently not meeting.

### 6.2(i) Heritage Monuments & Memorial Funding

Nothing to report.

### 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

Nothing to report.

### 6.7 Solihull Area Committee

RW reported the next meeting will be held 14th January 2021.

### 6.8 Tree Warden & TPO List

Nothing to report.

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6.9 “Tea & Talk”

Clerk reported the rebranding of the community surgeries as “Tea & Talk” sessions now led by Cllrs Hughes and Woollard. The community development officer was interested in learning more and she has offered to support; also she would like to link Meriden to Marie Curie counselling/advice team for debt, mental health and wellbeing, health difficulties. Cllr Hughes confirmed he was keen to organise a meeting for January bringing all interested parties together including PCSO’s.

**Action: Cllr Woollard and 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

Please see latest updates on website.

6.12 Meriden Sports Park

Chair advised at the Director’s meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 items discussed included:-

- Tier 3, what it means for users including review of Risk Assessment for park, children’s play, outdoor gym and wider park users;
- Year End Accounts for 2019-2020 with Accountant for Companies House submission.
- VAT Return retrospectively completed for 4 years refund;
- Budget setting to commence January for 2021-2022;
- Loss of income from hire of pitches/pavilion due to Covid;
- Update required to Marketing Plan and Rolling Programme due to Covid;
- Park operations from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 are out for tender with closing date 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and interviews first week January 2021.
- Identify large budget costs for replacement equipment 3-5 years planning including fencing, pathway/track, block paving, tree removal.

**Action: Cllr Barber/Cllr Weaver/Clerk.**

6.13 Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust

Cllr Hughes advised the Trustees met last month. Discussion was around governance of Trust. On behalf of the parish council Cllr Hughes formally recorded thanks to Mr & Mrs Roxburgh for their commitment during their term of office and wished them well in their retirement. Directors to meet with Trustees in the New Year.

**7. Clerk’s Report**

Clerk reported all matters included in Agenda.

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

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**8. District and Ward Councillor Reports**

Nothing to report.

**9. Correspondence & Communication**

Clerk reported:-

- A letter from Mr Gilroy requesting an update on the donation given to Meriden School from CIL in January 2020.  
**Action: Clerk to reply to Mr Gilroy**
- Mrs Anderton, Headteacher Meriden School, letter providing update on what the financial contribution from the parish council had achieved regarding review and upgrading of Library resources.

**10. Meriden Village Matters**

10.1 Meriden Library

Clerk advised she has requested an update from Library Services regarding the commissioned report from Property Services to include specification, budget and programme of works for funders identified by Saqib Bhatti MP's office who is supporting the parish council with funding applications. Clerk has zoom meeting scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 10am.

**Action: RW/Clerk.**

10.2 Village Commemoration

10.2(i) VE75

Deferred to 2021.

10.2(ii) Platinum Jubilee 2022

Deferred to 2021.

10.3 Meriden Gate

Nothing to report.

10.4 Taylor Wimpey (Transfer of Allotments/freehold land)

Work is progressing with solicitor and TWH legal team to conclude transfer. Clerk reported water supply has been found with a stop cock and cover fitted to raised pipework. The transfer is nearing completion for early January 2021.

**Action: Clerk/Solicitor.**

10.5 Highways

Clerk circulated email from Mr Keaney, Highways, and requesting comments on the 20mph scheme through the Village centre. Only 2 responses received to date. Members are requested to email their thoughts on its success and continuation to the clerk by end of this week (18<sup>th</sup> December).

**Action: All**

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

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Cllr Kipling recommended better traffic calming measures required for Main and Birmingham Roads. Apart from the roundabout at Showell Lane there are no measures in place to reduce speed. Signs are not effective; we need physical impact i.e. table tops. If money is to be spent then it should be well spent. There have been many near misses around the Green during Covid with delivery vehicles parking on the service road the wrong way round and reversing out.

**10.6 Land Registry & Ownership**

Nothing to report.

**10.7 Local Council Award Scheme**

Continues as a work in progress. Cllr Hughes advised he and the clerk had had a quick chat regarding grant funding available for mobile devices to improve parish council communications and access for the local community. He will follow up and source required mobile devices with data as not all households have Wi-Fi connectivity. Also discussed touchpoint in Village. Chair advised she is supporting WI with accessing information using mobile devices.

**Action: JH/JB/Clerk**

**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**

Deferred to New Year.

**10.10 Business Network**

Cllr Hughes reported there is a drive to support local businesses but no-one has called for assistance. Up to date information from SMBC is put onto business page of website for access.

**10.11 Millison's Wood Telephone Box & Emergency Response (Defibrillator)**

Clerk advised the defibrillator and heated box has been delivered and is currently stored at Pavilion until we can get contractor organised to install. Painting of telephone box to be completed inside and outside before install and completion of painting.

**Action: Clerk to arrange installation.**

**11. Planning Matters**

**11.1 Neighbourhood Planning Update**

Chair advised an independent examiner is appointed and undertaking a review of the draft document.

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



**Action: NDP Steering Group and SMBC.**

11.1(i) Locality Funding Bid  
Nothing to report.

**11.2 Planning Application Status Updates**

Cllr Woollard apologised for late circulation of updates. She reported Berryfields and Marshalls applications were approved. Remaining quarry applications for Morton Cement and Lynch Construction are awaiting decision. The variation of license for Strawberry Bank is due before full Committee 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

**Action: Planning Committee**

**11.3 Parish Action Plan & Business Plan**

Chair advised the precept increase will need to be reflected in both.

**Action: RW/Clerk.**

**11.4 Solihull Local Plan Review**

The consultation period expired today being 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020. The parish council response had been submitted with SMBC acknowledgement of safe receipt.

**12. Climate Change**

Cllr Hughes advised nothing to report and interested residents to come forward including representatives from the business community.

**Action: Cllr Hughes**

**13. Youth Council**

Cllr Hughes advised nothing to report and he will reach out to Heart of England in the New Year.

**Action: Cllr Hughes**

**14. Council Development Day**

This has been arranged for Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2021 10-12.00 hours via zoom.

**14.1 Apprenticeship/Trainee Scheme**

To be discussed, considered and reviewed as part of development day agenda.

**Action: All**

**15. Annual Parish Assembly**

Chair reported the parish council is looking at ways of hosting this event using methods of virtual participation and accessible platforms for community inclusion. To be discussed at Development Day 16<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

**Action: Cllr Weaver/Cllr Hughes**

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

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**16. Casual Vacancy (Co-Option)**

Chair advised there was a vacancy for a co-opted Parish Councillor and this would be advertised in the New Year.

To be discussed at Development Day 16<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

**Action: Clerk**

**17. Community Champions**

Chair advised she and clerk are attending weekly briefings with SMBC.

**17.1 COVID-19**

Chair advised numbers are reducing but there are concerns numbers will rise again in January. SMBC pleading for people to consider what they do and they meet. Emergency line will continue over Christmas for shopping and meds collections.

**Action: Cllr Weaver/Clerk**

**18. Councillor's reports and items for future agenda**

- Platinum Jubilee 2022
- Apprentice/Trainee Scheme

**19. Date of Next Meeting**

The next **Parish Council meeting** will be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 19.30 hours via Zoom Conferencing.

Chair closed the meeting wishing all attendees a Happy Christmas and New Year and to stay safe. Thank you for your support over the last year and see you in 2021.

The meeting closed at 21.02 hours.

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

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