

MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting was held in the Clinton Hall on Thursday 17th September 2009 at 7.30pm.

Present were Councillor Horner (chair) Councillors Laughton, Collins, Sharpe, Down, Scantlebury, Phillips and Nancekivell. There were also twelve parishioners.

Councillor Horner welcomed the parishioners and councillors and said it would be nice to see parishioners at more council meetings.

The minutes were signed as a true record having been previously circulated.

Matters Arising:

35. Water at Tythecombe Lake: This had not been addressed and it was suggested by Councillor Collins that the clerk should contact either David Wines or Joe Deacy to ask for a site meeting. Councillor Nancekivell suggested that if the water tables down Limers Lane were cleared this might help the situation.

36. Public speaking Time: Mr Robin Julian prospective candidate for UKIP spoke on behalf of many of the parishioners present on the subject of the additional bus stop. He put the case for those who felt it was too far to walk to the designated bus stops at the village square. The suggested place for a new bus stop would be further up the road alongside Tanglewood. Mr Ted Gosden also put his views forward suggesting that as the parishioners aged the bus would be needed more and an additional bus stop further up the village would be required.

Mr Tony Hunt put forward the road safety issue which would mean road users either waiting behind the bus while it picked up passengers or taking risks by pulling out into the paths to possible oncoming vehicles. He pointed out that if the bus stopped at the designated bus stop at the square it is only a short distance before it would have to pull in again to pick up passengers, which may frustrate road users and cause them to take unnecessary risks. This completed the public speaking time and the meeting continued.

37. Funding for the Square: The clerk had obtained some information should the council wish to borrow money to repair and enhance the square. Possible loan of £40,000 would cost £2329 half yearly. It was suggested doing the square in parts. Councillor Phillips reported that possible funding applications would not allow for any project to be started so this might not be possible however it was suggested getting quotes for essential maintenance.

38. Churchyard: A letter was read complaining of the state of the top part of the churchyard. It was noted there had been other verbal complaints. Councillor Collins reported that since the early 1980's the management of the churchyard had altered; this was then altered again leaving the top part of the churchyard left for wild flowers etc and not to be cut until they had seeded. An income of £700-£800 is realised each year. David Rabey is cutting the bottom half of churchyard and this looks good. The committee agreed to maintain the top half differently. Councillor Nancekivell reported there had been letters of compliment at leaving the area to grow with wild flowers etc. It was suggested that the churchyard committee held a public meeting.

39. Village Entrances a site meeting had taken place between councillors and the highways and councillors are awaiting plans.

40. General Monck Monument: It has been decided with permission from the Highways department to erect the monument on the grass verge at the entrance to the Clinton Hall. Councillor Collins left the meeting while this was discussed due to prejudicial interest as

chair of the Monck Committee; Councillor Nancekivell also declared an interest as a committee member of the Monck celebrations. The site was agreed by all present.

41. Bus Stop: a letter was read from parishioners objecting to the proposed site of a new bus stop outside Tanglewood. They suggested an ideal site which would benefit many at the top of the village would be at the grass verge above the garage at the entrance to Trefusis Terrace and Clinton Gardens. After much discussion it was proposed by Councillor Collins seconded by Councillor Scantlebury all agreed to ask Mike Newcombe from Devon Highways to come out to a site meeting. It was also suggested to invite the bus companies involved and the police. The councillors want an opinion on the feasibility of the proposed sites and the safety issue, also whether a second bus stop would be required exactly opposite.

42. Parish Plan: It was agreed that the review of the Parish Plan had been covered in other items on the agenda.

43. Grants for local organisations: The amount had been decided at the end of last year but it was now possible to divide it between those who had applied. A proposal that no grants be given was not seconded. Councillor Collins proposed the same as last year which was seconded by Councillor Scantlebury; this was agreed by seven councillors with one abstention. The £600 allotted was divided as Churchyard Fund £200, Clinton Hall £200, Merton FC £80, Rainbow Pre-school £50, Friends of the Clinton School £50 and the Friendship Club £20. It was decided to have a fundamental review of grants when the next precept is discussed.

44. A letter received awhile ago requesting a donation to the Youth Group which incorporates Merton, Petrockstowe and Little Torrington was discussed, it was decided to give a one off donation of £15 as encouragement for this group. Councillor Collins declared a prejudicial interest as son belongs to this group and left the room.

45. A letter was received from BT Payphones inviting the Council to adopt the phone box in the square. The telephony at this box will be removed. The Councillors expressed their concern at this and asked the clerk to write to Mr Lewis Andrews at the planning office at TDC for advice on how to retain the box. It was pointed out that this box although not used often was used by passengers contacting their lifts from the bus. The mobile signal in the village is very poor.

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46. Councillor Laughton enquired about the Church Bells and when they would be ringing but no information was available.

47. Councillor Sharpe reported on the Play Equipment as she was present when it was last inspected by Torridge District Council. Some of the poles are beginning to show signs of wear and tear.

48. Councillor Nancekivell asked for the water tables in the byroads to be cleared. It was suggested that a site meeting was arranged with highways to discuss the various items outstanding.

49. Councillor Collins wished it to be recorded that an old minutes book has been returned to the archives and a receipt for this was given to the clerk for the records.

Cheques were signed for the grants and the donation.

It was decided not to set a date for the next meeting yet as previous meetings have had to be rearranged. The clerk will contact the chairman when enough business is to hand and a date will then be arranged.

Everyone was thanked for coming and the meeting ended at 9.25pm.