

MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting was held in the Clinton Hall on Wednesday 18th November 2009 at 8.00pm

Present were Councillor Horner (chair) Councillors Laughton, Nancekivell, Sharpe, Down, Phillips and Collins. There were also ten parishioners and PCSO Sandra Brown.

Apologies were received from Councillor Scantlebury.

Councillor Horner welcomed the parishioners, PCSO Brown and councillors

The minutes were signed as a true record having been previously circulated. Proposed by Councillor Phillips and seconded by Councillor Laughton all agreed.

Matters Arising:

50. Play Equipment – It was reported that some money has been raised by the Harvest Supper to be put aside for repairs or replacement of any play equipment as it becomes necessary. It was suggested a site meeting should be arranged with Torrridge District Council to see if anything requires attention now. Councillor Laughton would be available for this.

51. Public Speaking – Mr Robin Julian spoke on the safety aspects of the proposed new bus stop. It was decided at the discretion of the chairman to ask the Councillors to discuss the issues of a new bus stop and then Mr Julian would be allowed to speak on behalf of the parishioners present once this discussion had taken place.

52. Bus Stop - A site meeting had taken place between Councillors, Mr Mike Newcombe Devon Highways and PCSO Sandra Brown to see the viability of a new bus stop outside Tanglewood. A letter was read from Mr Mike Newcombe setting out the safety aspects of a bus stop. He also reported on the possibility of providing a footpath from Clinton Terrace to the village via the grass verge and a bus stop in a dedicated pull in by the entrance to Trefusis Terrace/ Clinton Gardens. This could be investigated further when the proposed affordable houses are built in this area. He reported that it could be possible to have a bus stop at Tanglewood on the way into Torrington but the bus stop on the opposite side of the road would need to be further down the road for safety reasons. It was pointed out that the distance from the existing bus stop to a new bus stop would be 240 metres in the Torrington direction and 170 metres in the opposite direction. He reported that the resulting signage and road markings would affect the rural nature of the village. There is also the possibility of extra bus shelters in the future. The councillors discussed all these points in great detail and they also put forward their concerns on safety if the bus stop was too near the entrance to Back Lane, this had been classed as a safe area to cross when the school did a travel plan. Concerns were also raised at the cars parked along the main road which may encroach on the bus stop area or push car parking nearer the corner at the top of the road. PCSO Brown was invited to speak, but felt unable to comment on the road safety issues as this was a matter for highways. She asked if parishioners were aware of the ring and ride service.

Mr Julian was then asked to speak on behalf of the parishioners. He spoke of the need for this additional bus stop due to passengers' inability to walk to the existing one. Reference was also made to the car parking on the road. He felt that the Councillors were not taking all the aspects into consideration and did not feel there would be safety aspects of the bus stopping and vehicles overtaking.

A proposition was then made by Councillor Laughton that the village does not need an extra bus stop at this present time. This was seconded by Councillor Nancekivell and all councillors present agreed. A counter proposition by Councillor Sharpe for a bus stop with a proper lay-by at the end of the road to Trefusis Terrace was not seconded. It was suggested this was a consideration for the future.

53.PCSO Sandra Brown spoke to those present on the crime rates and how best to get hold of the police. It was also noted that the Neighbour Hood Watch was not active at the moment.

Mr Jeff Craythorne has offered to take over the running of this and the officer will liaise with him. PCSO Brown left the meeting at 8.55pm. Many of the parishioners also left the meeting.

54. Village Square – a) Land Registry -Councillor Collins reported on the Land Registry issue in which a small discrepancy needs to be resolved on the exact boundary of the square. He will follow this matter through with the solicitors. A refund of £10 was received for the Land Registry fee. Cheque issued for £50, fee only £40. This will be banked in the Parish Council account.

b). Enhancement – This is still ongoing, discussions with Highways, and further investigations into costs etc will be made.

55. Affordable Housing -Outline drawings from Clinton Devon Estates of six affordable houses and three open market plots were discussed. The affordable houses were given full support by six of the councillors present and one abstained. Councillor Phillips and Councillor Sharpe declared their prejudicial interest and left the room. The open market plots were discussed and were given full support of four of the remaining councillors with one abstention. Councillors Phillips and Sharpe returned to the meeting. It was unanimously agreed to send a letter of support to the Clinton Devon Estate.

56. Telephone Box – Correspondence had been received from BT after a misunderstanding on their part it was reported that the Council wished for the telephone box to remain with its working telephony in tact. The usage will be monitored by BT.

57. Bonfires – Correspondence had been received from Mr Brian Bunn concerning bonfires in the village. He reported that a clause in his insurance had pointed out the liability of residents to ensure bonfires are not lit within 100 metres of a thatched property. This was discussed fully and Councillors felt that an article should be put into the Merton Monthly asking for parishioners to show common sense and consideration when lighting bonfires especially near thatched properties. This was proposed by Councillor Laughton seconded by Councillor Phillips and all agreed.

58. Correspondence had been received from Devon County Council on issues raised by a site meeting with Councillor Collins. It was reported that erosion of ground at Tythecombe Lake was the landowners' responsibility. It was reported that the Lengthsman would be asked to clear debris from the side of the road in this area to help prevent flooding of the road. The curb stones along the houses up from the Malt Scoop will be raised when funds available. The Highways Dept. will see if they can deal with the wash off from Bounsells Lane and also investigate if the fall of the highway at the bottom end of the lane would lend itself to extra drainage being installed when funds are available. The Highways Authority is responsible for the horizontal surface of the footpath from the village to the sawmills. This can include any structural issues or obstructions in the form of overgrown hedges, leaves etc. Any concerns must be passed to the highways dept. so that they can investigate and take the appropriate action

59. A planning application had been discussed outside of normal council meeting for extension to 12 Meadow Vale. Councillors were concerned for neighbours privacy and the project not in keeping with rest of bungalows. This was passed to the planning department.

60. Councillor Down reported a complaint of overgrowth on the hedges outside Clinton Terrace. The clerk was asked to write to Clinton Devon Estates.

Councillor Down left the meeting at 9.50.

61. Precept – After much discussion it was proposed by Councillor Nancekivell to keep the precept to £4000 this was seconded by Councillor Sharpe all agreed. It was proposed by Councillor Phillips and seconded by Councillor Collins all agreed that £1500 from the present

budget should be moved from the current account to the savings account to build up a sum for repairs to the square.

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62. Councillor Collins spoke of his wish to arrange regular meetings with Devon Highways and the local Parish Councils to discuss the many concerns Councillors have of the state of the roads etc. It was agreed to write to Mr Joe Deacy to get this arranged. Councillor Collins is happy to co-ordinate these meetings which could be held in various venues within the Clinton Ward.

63. There were no cheques for signature and no further business to discuss.

The next meeting date was set for Thursday 28th January at 8pm.

Councillor Horner thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10.15pm