

## MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of Merton Parish Council was held in the Clinton Hall on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at 8pm.

Apologies were received from PCSO Sandra Brown.

Present were Councillors Horner (chair), Papworth, Down, Collins, Malcolm, Brown, Nancekivell and Scantlebury, the clerk Mrs Wendy Askew and 21 parishioners.

Councillor Horner welcomed everyone to the meeting.

13. Minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2014 were signed as a true record, proposed by Councillor Papworth, seconded by Councillor Scantlebury and agreed by all.

14. Councillor Horner then moved onto the 4<sup>th</sup> item on the agenda which was the public speaking time as this meeting was arranged for the beginning to be a public meeting to show plans of the proposed new development in the field behind the Malt Scoop.

Councillor Horner informed those present that there would not be a question and answer format as the Parish Council were only showing the plans to the parishioners prior to them being submitted and the councillors would not be able to answer many questions which might be asked. He also stated that there would be a strict time limit allowed for these plans to be discussed. Parishioners were informed that as soon as the plans have been submitted to TDC everyone would have the opportunity to send in their comments, objections and queries to the planning Dept. at TDC. The Council will post it on the website as soon as plans have been submitted.

Louise, landlady at the Malt Scoop again voiced her concerns about the development being in the field behind the Malt Scoop. She also spoke of the development being built on the “wrong side of the road” to the school. She stated that 33 properties seems to be a lot to be built in one go. She had concerns about the general infrastructure and that she would welcome some development but in a different place. Shirley also of Merton seconded these concerns. Kiz Angell asked how this site was decided on and Councillor Horner explained the discussions held between CDE and the Parish Council on which areas were most suitable and of course which areas the CDE were prepared to release for development. Alan asked if there could be a crossing incorporated in the development to cross the main road for safety reasons.

Other questions asked included will CDE keep some of the properties to rent out, are CDE the developers. Councillor Collins stated that CDE are the developers submitting the application but may not be the actual developers who build the properties. Councillor Brown spoke of the development plan which has had to be put forward for the next 20 years. In this plan there was the facility to put forward the needs of the village and it was identified that more houses were needed in the next 20 years to keep the village alive and keep the facilities in the village such as the pub, post office, school, hall, church and garage. He stated how this wasn't done when the previous development plan for Torridge was made and Merton had no significant growth in that time. It is important that the Council plan ahead for the future generations in the village.

Susannah asked if other sites are still available. Councillor Horner stated that the village is unique in that there is only one main landowner which makes it easier to control building. He stated that this is the best site to develop first. Councillor Collins said that the Parish Councillors have been pushing for development and now there is the opportunity to work with CDE who are wanting to build good quality houses. If they don't take the opportunities when they arise the village will die. Merton is in a good geographical position with transport links and other facilities. It was suggested that when the plans go to TDC for consideration a crossing could be asked for. Councillor Collins declared an interest as his son is a highways planner but would not be dealing with this development. A lady from Dolton stated that the school which is federated with Dolton was getting smaller and if the village loses the school it loses the heart of the village. Louise agreed the village needs to grow but was concerned about lack of work in the area. Councillor Brown stated the need to ensure faster broadband to allow more people to work from home.

CDE will allow work units in the village and suitable sites will be identified.

There was concern that the houses wouldn't sell and would then be sold to a housing association for people outside of the locality. Councillor Collins stated that a housing association wouldn't be able to afford to buy them. It was stated that previously developers had to build 30% affordable houses on each development but this is not the case now. Councillor Brown reiterated that the Parish Council were keen to have a pretty development with no skimping on the building and which fits in with the village.

Councillor Horner closed this part of the meeting and many of the parishioners left the meeting.

15. Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda;

Jubilee Seat/ Sun Dial; this has been unveiled by Lord Clinton on a very sunny morning on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2014. Some members of the Parish Council and parishioners attended.

16. District Councillor speaking time; Councillor Collins spoke of the need to make savings at TDC and that there would be some voluntary redundancies. Budgets are being reduced. He also spoke of the new dog fouling forms which will be available for people to report dog fouling by completing the form with as much information as possible including details of the person in control of the dog and a description of the type of dog. This can then be sent to TDC who will follow up this information and take the necessary steps to eradicate the dog fouling which has become a major problem in the village and elsewhere. He encouraged people to report these offences, which can be reported anonymously.

17. Defibrillator; the defibrillator has been fixed to the wall by the Post Office by kind consent of Mrs Tracey Laughton who has also agreed to supply the electricity to keep the box at an even temperature in the very cold weather. It was unanimously agreed a letter of thanks should be sent to Tracey.

18. Tarka Trail; No further news on the Tarka Trail put on the agenda for the next meeting.

19. Grass cutting; Councillor Collins had maps showing the grass areas which need cutting in the village. He spoke to John Adams at TDC but his dept is only responsible for cutting the grass at the play equipment. DCC are responsible for the rest of the grass. The schedule is 4 cuts between April and October. There was a major problem with the entrance to Clinton

Gardens being so overgrown causing a safety hazard when coming out onto the main road. This was eventually resolved but not before many complaints had been made by parishioners and the Parish Council. Councillor Horner suggested a working party to identify the problem areas and maybe get volunteers to cut some of these areas. The Parish Council need to know the dates when DCC plan to cut areas.

Councillor Malcom reported the tree on the grass verge by the entrance to Clinton Gardens has become overgrown and is obscuring the road sign and the visibility to the main road. Councillor Horner agreed to deal with this.

Councillor Collins will ask Paul, the gardener at Huish for advice.

The clerk reported that the planters at the top of the village were getting in disrepair and suggested using large tyres as planters instead. Councillor Nancekivell offered to supply two large tyres when the planters are next planted up with the winter plants. He was thanked for that.

20. WW1 Remembrance; Councillor Collins has researched the men who fought in the First World War from the village. He has traced one man who came back from the war but died during the war in the village. He has been buried elsewhere but Councillor Collins asked if the Parish Council would consider sponsoring the restoration of the head stone. It is a slate head stone with lettering. Councillor Collins is still trying to trace any relatives. Councillor Collins was asked to get a price for the work and then it will be considered.

21. Broadband survey; Councillor Horner is organising a survey of the speeds of broadband in the village. Councillor Collins spoke of a meeting to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> September at Langtree from 6-9 pm for Councillors and clerks. Andrew Leadbetter will attend to discuss broadband. Also in attendance will be Kate Little and Highways Dept. to discuss the state of the roads. Councillor Collins suggested erecting something on the church tower which picks up through infra-red signals from church tower to church tower. If there are 3 or more people who want this the company would go ahead. It would generate an income of £300 for the church but will cost individuals £100 to set up and £25 per month. It was decided a finer detailed map was required to define areas of better broadband this has been promised by Connecting Devon and Somerset, who are in charge of the roll out of faster broadband.

It was also reported that mobile phone signals are not always very good.

22. Community composting; Councillor Collins spoke of the great cost to collect green waste. When TDC make cuts this might be one of the areas affected. It was discussed but decided community composting might be expensive to set up and run. It was queried if there are any grants available for this. It was decided to leave for the time being.

23. Torridge Plan is now on line for consultation and comments. The clerk was asked to send the link to the councillors for them to view and make comments to Councillor Horner who will pass on to TDC. The consultation ends on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2014 so comments and recommendations need to be back to Councillor Horner by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014.

Councillor Collins commented on the fact that redundant farm buildings can now be converted into residences for local needs.

24. Development in Merton; there is no further details on the date when the planning application will be submitted.

25. Planning application; The planning application for a house at Rosehill Merton was discussed. It was proposed by Councillor Collins, seconded by Councillor Malcom and agreed by all that the application be approved in principle but there are concerns about the safety on the road. It was suggested there should be traffic calming incorporated as the road is small and near the school.

The plans for an agricultural building at Yeory Farm agreed on line by the councillors were shown.

26. Correspondence;

1). A letter of complaint was received from a parishioner about the new bus service which fails to stop at the bus stops and has left passengers behind on numerous occasions. It was agreed to write to the bus company with a copy to DCC pointing out these complaints and asking for bus stop signs to be erected and the bus drivers to be instructed on where the bus stops are. Councillor Horner has cut back some of the hedge by the wooden bus shelter to make it more visible.

2). A letter was received from the Head of the Clinton School. Apologising for not being able to attend the meeting but pointing out the need for more children for the school and support for the development plans.

3). A report was received from Sandra Brown PCSO of incidents which have occurred in the last 30days. There were 2 domestic violence calls logged and 1 sudden death call logged.

27. Financial matters;

The Audit forms have been returned and approved by the auditors with no negative observations noted.

Cheques were signed for Steve Jennings for work around the village, AMB Electricals for installation of the Defibrillator at the Post Office and Steve Papworth for plants for Jubilee Seat.

Councillor Horner asked for permission to get a cheque issued when an invoice is produced by John Simmons for printing the large copies of the plans; this was agreed.

28. Councillor Collins spoke of the road to Merton Mill dropping away and is in disrepair. He has reported this to the Highways Dept.

29. Councillor Scantlebury asked about the rights for the DVD of the Coldstream Guards Freedom of the village. This will be investigated.

30. Items for the next meeting to include "Chapter 8 Training – the clerk was asked to investigate this more before the next meeting. Salt Store, Tarka Trail.

The next meeting date will be Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 at 8pm, subject to nothing urgent needing to be dealt with before this date.

There being no further business to discuss everyone was thanked for attending and the meeting closed at 9.25pm.