Meriden Parish Appraisal Steering Group

Minutes of meeting held 27 November 2007 at Heart of England Club

Present: Iain Roxburgh, Tessa Roxburgh, Sharon Tuersley, Ian Tuersley, Clive Jones, Mel Lee, Paul Lee, Lynn Hunt, Kevin Hunt, Will Markham, Lis Willis, Julie Hall, Angela Edkins, Mick Watkinson, Joanne Hope, Michael Dawkins, Peter Lee, Bob Kipling, Paul Watson (SMBC), Dave Simpson (SMBC)

Apologies:

1. Welcome
Ian welcomed and introduced Paul Watson and Dave Simpson from Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

2. The future development of Meriden and it impact on the Parish Appraisal and Plan
Paul Watson welcomed the preparation of the Village Appraisal. He stated that it shows commitment from the residents and it's important for the council because it enables them to understand the opportunities, services, character etc. so that they can respond to residents' needs. SMBC are supporting the Appraisal scheme throughout the borough and are awarding each parish council £3,500 from the Planning Delivery Tax budget from Central Government not from Council Tax.
Paul provided a brief historical overview of the development and stressed the point that it is a Housing and Recreation plan; one can't happen without the other. He stated that currently there are 6 developers that have come forward, their proposed schemes for the development will be submitted in January and a selection made on 11 February 2008.
He concluded by passing the marketing brief and the map of the proposed development amongst the group and highlighted some key points:

- 40% affordable housing of which 70% will be social rent 30% will be shared ownership
- Access will be via Maxstoke Lane

3. Specific questions requiring answers/or ongoing dialogue

3.1 Social Housing: Bob Kipling asked if the council would put restraints on right-to-buy issues. SMBC responded that the social housing would be administrated by Housing Associations and the developer would be required to work with them directly. It was also pointed out that Right-to-Buy is a central Government issue and as such SMBC could not supersede this.

Dr Kam asked whether social housing meant unattractive housing.
SMBC stressed the high quality and design requests in the marketing brief. Any schemes proposed by the developer would be tested through Planning Development Control. Moreover, the developer would be able to hear local views and amend if necessary. This is a commitment of the pre-application process.

3.2 Traffic Access
Ian Tuersley raised the issue of traffic problems on Maxstoke Lane, very narrow lane, possibility of 150-200 cars during peak times which could have the potential to gridlock the Village by the roundabout.

SMBC stated that during the detailed planning stage there will be a comprehensive traffic assessment document and planners will have to be satisfied that the propensity for safety, queuing etc. is realistic. If this couldn't be satisfied then planning would be refused and the recreation development would be halted too.

3.3 Loss of Green Field sites
Bob Kipling raised the issue of future loss of Green Field Sites.

SMBC replied that in the latest UDP no Green Field sites had been identified for development.

3.4 Conflict of Interests
Ian Tuersley asked how SMBC could address conflict of interests issue, i.e. they gain financially from the development of the playing fields.

SMBC stated that the decision was made by a Regulatory Committee and councillors involved in the planning could not be part of the Committee.

3.5 Flooding
SMBC confirmed that there would be a full Flood Risk Assessment report and that the Environmental Agency would need to be completely satisfied of the results.

3.6 Change of site for housing development
Lis Willis suggested that SMBC consider building on the proposed recreational development and maintaining the current playing field site. It would be more sensible in view of traffic problems etc. After a lengthy discussion regarding the positioning of various proposed developments SMBC stated that it would depend on any restraints that were made on the sale of the land identified for the recreational development.

3.7 Decision making process
Will Markham asked how the residents can be assured that we can raise our issues, receive answers and receive support from SMBC.

SMBC assured the residents that our concerns will be addressed and our views listened to. Paul Watson reiterated that the developer will be selected on 11 February 2008. The developer will be required to organise a public consultation exercise and it is vital at this stage for us to voice our concerns.

Iain Roxburgh asked how we could do this. Paul suggested writing to the developer and ensuring that we copy him on any correspondence.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding SMBC's position in supporting the residents in this and their position as an intermediary. Paul Watson reiterated that we must voice our concerns to the developer and that all technical data for surveys, reports etc. will be made available, either at the council offices or on the website. He will let us know as soon as he can after February 11 which developer has been selected (possibly 6 days) so that we can begin our dialogue with them. Paul will also ensure that the exhibition for the recreational development is remounted in the Library between November and Christmas.

3.8 Sustainability
Iain Roxburgh wanted to confirm the standard of sustainability. Iain has contacted power companies to ascertain their input into developments of this nature. They confirmed that they are working in this area but they were only prepared to do so if the 'passive' house was a level 3. SMBC stated that the industry standard is a level 2.

3.9 Density
Iain Roxburgh asked why the density of housing had risen since the original proposal. Paul Watson stated that the density is based on a normal 20-30 houses per hectare.

3.10 Village Character
Iain Roxburgh raised the issue of Meriden's village character. Paul Watson stated that this was the importance of the village Appraisal because it would help to identify and establish what that character was.

3.11 Impact on the school
The residents were concerned about the impact of the development on the school.
SMBC confirmed that in principal the impact was accepted and a financial intervention will be considered. The quantity cannot be ascertained until the developer provides their plans.

3.12 Impact on the Surgery
A similar issue to 3.11 and issues such as restricted surgery space should be highlighted in the village Appraisal.

3.13 Continuing the dialogue
Paul Watson confirmed that the plans at pre- and deposit stage will be put in the library and he will actively see if SMBC can fund longer library opening hours to ensure that people have access to them.
He will also look at other issues such as meetings with the developers etc.
The residents thanked SMBC for their time and for listening to their concerns.

4. Meriden Mag
Iain R needs 2 or 3 people to help analyse the results from the WI focus group, Meriden Mag and the school session. Lis will ask Mark Street from the school if he will analyse the children's results. **Iain/Lis**

5. School Visit
Lis Willis and Will Markham will attend the school assembly and use the Meriden Mag answer sheet format. Mel Lee will email it to Lis.
Mel/Lis/Will

6. School Fete
The fete opens between 1-3pm but the stand, maps and promotional material needs to be set up. Mel, Angela and Tessa volunteered. **Mel/Tessa/Angela**

7. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 13 December at 7:30pm, Heart of England Club