

# Menston Community Association

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 4 December 2013

**Present:** [Committee] Steve Ellams (SE) – Chair, Alan Elsegood (Acting Sec’y), Glyn Martill (GM), David Manson (DM), Quentin Mackenzie (QM), Lillas McCulloch (LM), John Houlihan (JH), Cllr. Dale Smith (DS), Chris Hartley (CH).

Members of the public: Graham Booth, Sue Rix, David Rhodes, Philip Moore, Roger Livesey (Website), plus 6 other attenders.

**Apologies:** Peter Ward (PW), Cath Tully (CT).

## 1. Welcome and apologies

Following posting of the Agenda (on the website) there was increased interest on behalf of residents, and all attenders were thanked for participating. Apologies as above.

## 2. Minutes of last meeting and Matters Arising

Published on the website. Agreed as a true record.

## 3. Correspondence

A letter has been received by Peter Finlay from Cllr. Warburton on behalf of BMDC Planning in reply to the Parish Council’s expression of concern (its Duty of Care to current and potential residents) about flooding and drainage, and related insurability issues, re. Bingley Road & Derry Hill. The letter was curt and dismissive. It has been published on the “unofficial Menston website” and can be viewed at ([www.menstonvillagewharfedale.com](http://www.menstonvillagewharfedale.com)). This letter has also been copied to Philip Davies MP, who has also had independent complaints about BMDC’s “contempt for Menston” and “breach of procedures” from Menston residents. Philip Davies has initiated a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman and the Dept. for Communities & Local Government, and has also sent a complaint to the Chief Exec. of Bradford Council (Tony Reeves). He is seeking an opportunity for an Adjournment Debate in the House of Commons to bring these matters to attention (see Item 7 below).

MCA was aware that a letter from BRAID (Baildon Residents Against Inappropriate Development) had been submitted to the Telegraph & Argus, but sections of it, critical of BMDC, had been omitted. It was acknowledged that the Editor of any news medium has discretion to edit correspondence.

## 4. Parish Council Report

ADE summarised the recent Parish Council meeting (reported on the [www.menston.org](http://www.menston.org) website) and his review was approved. Comment followed about the seeming lack of concern about accidents on Menston’s roads and the fact that these were not recorded unless there was a reported injury. This meant that Highways Dept. was uninformed about the hazards in and around Menston when there was no injury but, perhaps, potential for serious accidents. GB indicated that he was unhappy about the lack of reportage of accidents to property etc., resulting from accidents, and he proposed to write with a Freedom of Information Request on this subject. PM noted that Menston’s representative bodies had submitted an Appendix to the Planning Applications for Bingley Road and Derry Hill because BMDC have not implemented the recommendations for roads and highways.

Noting the threat to survival of the Children’s Centre, was the MCA planning to do anything to protest and/or support the Centre? SE stated that we would encourage people to make representations. It was also observed that there were two petitions active: a manuscript petition and an *e-petition*. We did not, at this stage, know whether there was scope, or we would be able to find the resources to run the Children’s Centre as a community facility.

## **5. Menston in Bloom**

QM commented that we had entered the “quiet period” of the year, so there was little to report and the only recent activity had been the winter planting and tidying up of the planters and beds.

## **6. Update on meeting with BMDC re. flooding & drainage**

A meeting had taken place during the last week of November between Menston representatives (David Rhodes, Dale Smith, Philip Moore) and BMDC Officers (Tony Poole and Stewart Currie). Considered to have been a useful meeting, but a shock to learn that neither of the Officers had read the Menston flooding & drainage report. Documents were delivered to the Officers concerning the variation of the drainage condition. The point was made and agreed that the variation did not nullify the original Condition 10 re. Bingley Road proposed development site: that still stands. A note was delivered to the Officers outlining the legal position and of the MCA’s options.

BMDC have been strongly advised to do the Flood Risk Assessment for Bingley Road and Derry Hill properly. This was proposed by the Environment Agency and, thus far, has been ignored by BMDC. It was noted that the Section 106 Agreement for Derry Hill had now been signed. Surprising that this has been done with the current conditions in place. It would be unlawful to divert the watercourse which runs through Derry Hill fields via Moorfield Avenue, but BMDC is asking the developer to do exactly that. To redirect the swales into that watercourse would also be unlawful. We must await BMDC’s consideration of these issues. Meanwhile, Prof. Rhodes plans to commission a professional catchment survey to illustrate that the sites are unsuitable by reason of drainage and flood risk.

It was noted that there has been a brand-new Planning Application for housing on Bingley Road, close to the junction with Main Street.

## **7. Questions in ‘the House’**

Our MP, Philip Davies, had raised the issues relating to the Bingley Road & Derry Hill applications with the Minister, and had been recommended to raise matters via an Adjournment Debate. Concern was expressed that conflating the planning issues with the controversy surrounding Cllr. Rev. Paul Flowers (who held the Planning Portfolio in BMDC at relevant times) might not be productive. Philip Davies is obviously interested in both issues, but how he raises the matter is at his discretion.

## **8. Tour de France**

The route of the Tour will obviously impact on the village, esp. with the intended closure of the A65, but (unlike Burley in Wharfedale) it is not clear that Menston has much to gain, as the route goes along the Burley Bypass and not through Menston. We may encounter problems with people trying to park in Menston to walk or ride down to the route of the Tour. The date is 5 July 2014. There is likely to be more information available before the event and a website is accessible at [www.ikley.org/letour](http://www.ikley.org/letour). The hours (on the day) have not yet been specified. MCA can’t see a role in this matter other than warning about likely issues via the Menston News and website.

## **9. Youth Project**

SE and Roger Livesey considering a project to get younger people in the village to introduce older residents to IT and mobile systems, for improved contact/communication. This is a project which Roger has initiated elsewhere, and could have widespread benefits for all participants. An outline of the idea has been put to Apple (computers) to see whether they would be interested in sponsoring or supporting it. There are some willing young trainers. Progressing.

## **10. Engagement of other local organisations**

Currently, most village groups are operating independently and information is not being shared, so that events etc., are not publicised to everybody. Ideas are being put together with a view to publicity on the “unofficial” website and other means. One of the objectives would be to publicise events and groups so that more younger people can participate, including in MCA activities. One new idea proposed would be to put up additional notice boards, as not everybody finds it convenient to go to Kirklands to look at that single Notice Board (which carries the Parish Council’s information primarily). It might also be helpful to bring visitors and trade to the village if we could advertise its facilities.

It was noted (but not widely known) that a Duke of Edinburgh Award group meets on Fridays at Kirklands.

## **11. Update on the “official” Menston website**

Unfortunately, Cath Tully, who has volunteered to provide information to the website was unable to attend the meeting. She will contribute to the Menston website on behalf of MCA in conjunction with Catriona Hanson (Parish Clerk) on behalf of Parish Council. Cath’s material will also be available for publication on the “unofficial” site, which is open for comment and which offers a valuable second channel for news, events and publicity about the village.

## **12. Any other business**

- (a) The Planning Application for a wind turbine on the moorside above High Royds and adjacent to Hawksworth Quarry had been rejected following strong objections. The proposal had been referred-back because required investigations had not been carried out. The lobby group objecting to this Planning Application thanked Menston residents via MCA for their support.
- (b) A reduction had been announced by BMDC in the numbers of houses for development in Menston and elsewhere in the Wharfe Valley on the ground of proximity to Rombalds Moor which was a site recognised as having special environmental and wildlife habitat significance. The number had been reduced from 900 to 400, but several matters were still unclear and 400 new houses in Menston still had the danger of overwhelming the drainage and infrastructure. Following-up.
- (c) A petition is to be presented to BMDC on Tuesday 10 December, carrying 1,500 signatures, and objecting to plans for development on Green Belt and green fields until and unless all brownfield sites had been developed and there was shown to be a real need for housing on green land. SE would present the petition with a speech to Full Council.
- (d) A question was raised about the future of Menston Post Office. DS commented that, as with other facilities in the village, it was a matter of “use it or risk losing it”.
- (e) Could Menston Arts group consider getting involved in the project to save Manor House Museum in Otley? Again, the MCA had no information about this and it wasn’t for the MCA to comment.
- (f) DM mentioned that the deadline for material to go into the Menston News (January issue) would be the end of December. He suggested we might review the cost of advertising to encourage businesses to publicise themselves in Menston News. Current charges might be a deterrent. The idea was worth looking at, but ADE suggested the Parish Council should be consulted as it had become the norm for the Parish Council to meet the printing costs.
- (g) The Chairman wished all Committee and public participants an enjoyable festive season.

## **13. Next meeting**

**Committee: Wednesday 8 January 2014, 7.30pm at Menston Methodist Church Hall**

**REMINDER: In the interest of openness, Committee Meetings are open to the public**