



MERTON PRIORY TRUST [MPT]

Minutes of meeting held in the Chapter House 18th May 2010

Present: Marcus Beale [MB] (chair), Jane Sidell [JS] (English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments for London, observing), Cllr Geraldine Stanford [GS], Cllr Nick Draper [ND], Cllr Richard Chellew [RC], Cllr Maurice Groves [MG], Vicki Carroll [VC], Nicholas Hart [NH], Mary Hart [MH], Su Assinen [SA], Cyril Maidment [CM], John Hawks [JH].

1. Apologies: Dave Roberts [DR] Treasurer, Dave Saxby [DR], Caroline Kearey [CK].

2. Last Meeting: Minutes of the meeting of 27 June 2009 were agreed, save that VC is 'involved with' but not, as was stated, 'a member of' the Wandle Valley Regional Park Steering Group. The minutes were amended to reflect this and approved.

3. Matters Arising: Cllr MG is looking into the S.106 covenants, see below.

4. Events: The usual activities on London Open House weekend (September 2009) had been a great success. Nones on May 2nd had been the only other event since the last meeting.

5. Land Transfer: MB tabled update received 6th April from Helen White (LBM Legal), which indicated that, with the co-operation of those involved, the transfer might complete within 2-3 months. However this co-operation cannot be assumed, and it may be that the Council will have to take legal action to enforce this. We have not seen the draft agreement, so such practical matters as the site curtilage and drainage may not be correct. LBM legal have not let MPT have sight of this document for reasons of 'commercial confidentiality'. Agreed NH would draft as soon as possible a summary of the legal issues in which the Trust could assist, and a formal letter to LBM for the Trust to have sight of and be able to comment on the draft transfer would be sent to the cabinet member responsible after the Council's formation of their new cabinet on 26 May 2010. The meeting were surprised that commercial confidentiality is seen as an issue, unless the Council expect the matter to come to court. NH advised that an interim licence should be prepared in advance of the transfer, since the lease between LBM and MPT would take some time. **[Action: NH, MB]**

6. Policy/Preparation for Improvements: Overall aims and policies are set out in the Conservation and Management Plan, but the Trust should now prepare a plan for priority short-term activity, e.g. sand removal, drainage and flood prevention, security, electricity. Dave Saxby will prepare a list of urgent items for conservation, and Jane Sidell will discuss EH's requirements with him. **[Action: DS, JS]**

7. World Heritage Site Application: RC outlined the status of LBM's application. It is expected that the application for World Heritage Site Status will be made in early June 2010, when the details, which include wider proposals for the area, will be made public. The Trust expressed thanks for the way his involvement had moved the discussion of the site onto a higher level. JS advised that the issue of outstanding universal value is paramount to success of such an application.

8. Future Activities: The Chapter House will be open again for the Wandle Valley Festival June 5th/6th 2010 and London Open House September 18th/19th 2010. (The two successful Wimbledon Bookfest events had now been moved to other venues because of the cold in October!) Re possible parish use, MB reported that Rev. Gilly Pawson was no longer the incumbent in the parish, and the post was yet to be filled.

8.2. Suggested Papal Visit: NH's suggestion that the Pope should visit had produced a courteous negative response, but the Papal Nuncio will visit at a time to be confirmed. **[Action: NH to advise once date is known.]**

8.3. JH requested the meeting's approval for the Chapter House's continued use for educational, worship, drama and related activities (including rehearsal and much-needed storage of scenery and materials), which was given. MG reminded that any materials kept in the Chapter House must be tidily stored. Jane Sidell was in favour of these activities: provided there is no damage to the monument, uses such as this are welcomed since they involve the community. A brief method statement should be prepared for such uses and sent to her. **[Action: DS]**

8.4. JH/NH/DS had also discussed urgent improvements to the Chapter House display (hopefully in time for London Open House, which needed a coherent narrative). This would require some expenditure, which Jane Sidell suggested could be grant funded - JH to discuss further with her. **[Action: JH, JS.]**

9. Friends of Merton Priory: A campaign of complaints is being waged by the FMP, with letters and emails being sent to all sorts of inappropriate people. This is causing considerable nuisance and waste of EH officers time. Jane Sidell, English Heritage's Inspector of Ancient Monuments for London, has attempted to engage with them without success. MB will formally invite FMP to meet with EH and MPT, to clarify the FMP position, and to try to encourage their energies into more positive directions. FMP organise the annual celebration of Nones, which is much appreciated, but they have a different agenda from the Trust. RC reminded the Trust that its primary responsibility is to preserve the monument, MPT should make it clear that they have no formal connection with FMP, which is an unincorporated body. **[Action: MB,JS.]**

10. Access and Use of the Chapter House. It was agreed that:

- The Trust should draw up a key holders policy. **[Action: JH, NH.]**
- the Trust will prepare a key holder/users agreement, which sets out the rules to be observed in using the space. **[Action: DS to draft and forward to JS for comment.]**
- the Trust will change locks and reissue keys as appropriate based on the above. **[Action: JH.]**

11. Financial Report: The draft accounts for year to 2009 were tabled and unanimously approved. MB, DR will sign the final accounts and DR will file. There are currently funds of less than £100. The account is to be moved to another bank, a specialist charitable bank might be appropriate **[Action: DR.]**

12. Other Business: The meeting thanked Jane Sidell for attending on EH's behalf.

Date of Next Meeting: 5 pm Wednesday 8th September at the Chapter House.

Notes by John Hawkes and Marcus Beale 20 May 2010.
Any comments or corrections please to info@mertonpriory.org