



## **MERTON PRIORY TRUST**

**Notes of the meeting held in the Chapter House  
Wednesday 8 September 2010 at 5 pm**

### **1. PRESENT:**

Marcus Beale (MB - Chair), Cllr Richard Chellew (RC), Cllr Geraldine Stanford (GS), Cllr Nick Draper (ND), Vicki Carroll (VC), Dennis Turner, David Saxby (DS), Nicholas Hart (NH), Mary Hart (MH), Cyril Maidment (CM), Dave Roberts (DR), Su Assinen, John Hawks (JH)

### **2. APOLOGIES:**

Terry Buckland (TB), Jane Sidell (JS), Jill Tyndale, Caroline Kearey

### **3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:**

While noting the odd literal, meeting agreed these to be a true and correct record.

### **4. MATTERS ARISING:**

#### **4.1. Land Transfer**

The Trust was grateful for the invitation to NH to attend a meeting with Merton Legal Department, on which he briefly reported. It was clear from this that Legal Department had not previously been aware of the various operational issues that would need to be settled prior to the transfer, nor (in the case of the Pizza Hut) that the actual building did not correspond accurately with the Section 106 plan. These points had been raised by NH and it had been promised they would be taken into consideration. NH had also requested that an interim licence should be in place to allow for the time between the transfer to LBM and the granting of the lease to MPT. NH would continue to monitor the situation. **[NH]**

#### **4.2 Events**

(See 5. below)

#### **4.3 Improvements**

There had been no time or resources to commit to any improvements during the summer, but JH tabled a paper detailing the suggested priorities (see 7.2 below), and would be meeting JS soon to discuss method and possible funding sources. **[JH, JS]**

#### **4.4 World Heritage Site**

A private application had been made for the Priory to be considered for selection as a possible World Heritage site - RC reported that the candidate list would be finalised in June 2011. Whatever the outcome of this might be, it had generated considerable publicity, including features on BBC Radio 4 PM Programme and BBC TV web magazine, two local BBC broadcasts, a large article in the Evening Standard, and others in the local Guardian, Post and Time and Leisure.

#### **4.5 Future Activities**

(see 6. below)

#### **4.6 Papal Visit**

ND was pursuing the possible attentions/attendance of the Nuncio, who however was believed to be ill at present. **[ND]**

#### **4.7 Friends of Merton Priory**

MB and JS had attempted to have a meeting with the Friends but they had insisted upon preconditions which the Meeting agreed were unreasonable (e.g. that nothing should be exhibited that was later than 1538!). It was agreed that for the present no further contact would be made; however the annual Nones service would presumably recur as an issue in 2011. Meeting agreed this was still a desirable and appropriate event, but that MPT's conditions of use would have to be observed. Meeting also supported MB's view that there should be no statement of dissociation posted on our website.

#### **4.8 Access and Use**

The locks had been changed as agreed and restricted keys issued - JH had prepared an interim agreement and method statement for temporary use, storage (of theatrical props etc.) and loan of keys; he would finalise this and circulate for final comment. [JH]

#### **4.9 Financial Report**

DR reported that the bank account had not yet been transferred, but that he would now proceed with this as a priority. [DR]

### **5. REVIEW OF EVENTS**

NH, MH, DS and JH had opened The Chapter House to the public as usual on June 5th/6th for the Wandle Valley Festival and on August 1st for the Festival of British Archaeology. Both events had attracted large numbers and healthy book sales (though the book stock was provided by Wandle Heritage). An exhibition of Gothic film memorabilia had been held on September 4/5, as part of Merton Abbey Mills' "Dark Mills Festival" - this had been well attended and had provided some strikingly effective ideas for inexpensive lighting and display. NH was circulating photographs illustrating this.

### **6. UPCOMING EVENTS**

The Chapter House would once again be open for London Open House Weekend September 18/19. VC suggested the "Story of London" was another possible topical opportunity - JH/NH to investigate. It was agreed the website should be updated to announce future activities, to provide simple historical information, and to encourage public participation and contact - MB and JH would meet soon to action this. [JH, MB]

### **7. CURRENT STATUS**

#### **7.1 Future Potential**

RC gave the meeting a presentation he had made to senior contacts in the City and local government concerning the Priory's role at the heart of the proposed Wandle Valley Regional Park. He felt the Trust's objectives could only be fully realised as part of the larger entity, which widened the appeal and audience from merely the fabric of the Chapter House and its immediate environs. The aims should include major initiatives (such as removal of the pylons), and to attract investment on a similar scale to the Lea Valley, which at present was benefiting from an exclusive levy from all London Boroughs including Merton. He reported that, as part of his campaign to attract major investors, essential documentation such as copies of Magna Carta and The Statutes of Merton were being obtained.

#### **7.2 Immediate Action**

JH had circulated a paper which listed priorities (including sand removal, display improvements, etc.), as well as reviewing the possible alternative uses of the "dowry". This was discussed - immediate activities were broadly agreed, and the future options suggested would be considered in more detail.

### **8. FINANCES**

The Trust's promised dowry (£300,000, plus interest but less the possible

costs of upgrading the underpass) could not be accessed until the land transfer, neither could any income be derived from parking, as generously offered by TB. With this stalemate continuing for the foreseeable future and less than £100 in the bank, such costs as there were continued to be met at Trustees' own expense. In order to provide funds for priority activities MB offered an immediate gift of £1,000 from Marcus Beale Architects Ltd., which the Meeting gratefully accepted. **[MB]**

Meeting discussed possible other funding sources; Sainsbury's (DS had a current contact who suggested that Lord Sainsbury could be receptive) and other major companies with local interest (Merton Priory Homes?), heritage grants (especially for small projects, e.g. displays, sand removal etc.), sponsorships (e.g. for paving), voluntary labour, Art and IT Colleges, Sixth Forms, Community Project grants etc. GS particularly suggested waste companies such as SITA, who had financed recent improvements in the Colour House Theatre. Fund-raising was obviously a hugely time-consuming process, but these would continue to be pursued by all concerned as and when possible. Organisations like the National Trust, Museum of London etc., were not likely sources, and but Bridge House Trust was a possibility - MB to speak to John Merivale. **[MB]**

## **9. AOB**

### **9.1 Circulation**

It was noted that Terry Buckland and Peter Hopkins had unaccountably dropped off the list and must be included. **[MB]**

### **9.2 Cllr Richard Chellew**

RC was warmly thanked for his presentation and for the great enthusiasm and effort he was putting into the project. MB proposed he be invited to join the group as an Observer, seconded by JH and approved.

### **9.3 Sheridan Road**

NH reported on negotiations he was having with a local resident, which could result in two Victorian stained glass panels being offered for display in the Chapter House, to which the Meeting agreed. **[NH]**

### **9.4 Outline Maps**

CM presented a draft map for consideration showing the Chapter House enclosure relative to its surroundings. NH agreed to have a go at combining/overlaying the various plans. **[NH]**

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

5 pm on Wednesday 1st December at the trust's registered office :  
The Old Post Office, 1 Compton Road, SW19 7QA.

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Notes by JH and MB. Any comments or corrections to [info@mertonpriory.org](mailto:info@mertonpriory.org)

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