



**Monday 6th October at 1000hrs**  
Shropshire Seniors on Town Walls

## Minutes

- **Introduction**

Vivienne and Phil sent their apologies. In Vivienne's absence, Harold kindly offered to be the discussion host.

- **Matters Arising**

Harold read the email from Barbara Phillips regarding the 'Valuing Women' project and Libby expanded on the matter. For those (women only) interested in the project, Libby's email address is: [libusaep@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:libusaep@hotmail.co.uk)

- **Discussion Topics**

A short summary of the subjects and discussions follows:

**What will be the impact of the Scottish referendum?**

- It was felt that the UK shows confusion and contradiction in encouraging Scotland to remain part of the state and yet wanting the UK to be independent from the European Union.
- It was noted that regional problems are not necessarily addressed by annexing or becoming independent. The splitting of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were mentioned as examples of this.
- Some members of the group were of the opinion that Scotland already promotes its own identity thanks to different legal system, religious practices and general atmosphere of pride.
- It was pointed out that many regions have prospered due to merges over the last 100 years like the Italian Peninsula (finalised in 1918) and East and West Germany (1990).
- In general, the group believed that an independent Scotland would be a regressive step.

**Is home education a good thing?**

- Some members of the group were quite passionate that home education remains an available option in certain cases although the general consensus was that the practise of going to school is a vital part of growing up.
- Circumstances where a child has unusual learning patterns, a child has special physical or mental needs and a child absolutely detests a school environment were given as reasonable cases for warranting home education.
- Examples of things a child might miss out on due to home education were given – extra curriculum activities, sports, local and foreign school trips and the proper provision of teaching resources.

- The group believed that parents are rarely able to offer the all-round knowledge, time and financial security required to make home education a reasonable alternative. It was also pointed out that a routine of home education might damage or destroy a normal relationship between a child and the parents.
- It was felt that the learning of academic subjects was just a portion of the benefits of school education – social interaction, group experience and indeed individual survival were mentioned as examples.

#### **Should we discourage surrogate babies with or without money changing hands?**

- Although the group believed there are enough unwanted babies in our society it was acknowledged that surrogacy was a necessary option on medical grounds.
- The group agreed that a surrogate mother should receive expenses and some members thought it was reasonable for such mothers to be paid as though they were working.
- It was generally felt that there needs to be more legislation governing the practise of surrogacy as the process is currently open to exploitation.
- The group recognised that there is a great deal of pressure to have children (and even grandchildren) in our society – perhaps it would be more constructive to encourage those without children to pursue their own fulfilments.
- The group was comforted to be reminded that the topic was not a new concern as the Virgin Mary was the first surrogate mother.

#### **What do we do about cyclists on the pavements?**

- Harold explained the legal intricacies of riding bicycles on pavements. It is illegal to ride on a pavement (by the side of a road) unless there are bicycle lane markings. It is not illegal to ride on a general footpath (not by the side of a road).
- It was also believed that it is compulsory for cyclists to have a bell and that flashing lights are not permissible.
- No matter of the laws regarding cyclists, the group felt that the rules are not enforced by the (local) police.
- The group didn't reach a united opinion about cyclists with some members feeling that cyclists show little regards to other road users whilst other members had no problem with cyclists using pavements as long as they give way and priority to pedestrians.
- The group pondered the prospect of cyclists being forced to take out liability insurance and whether insurance companies might spearhead such an initiative.
- On the way home, members of the group were nervously on the lookout for a 'lady cyclist with dark, curly hair' who has a bit of a local reputation.

- **Future Discussion Topics**

The following topic remains in the 'to be discussed' tray:

- **If we ran a newspaper, what would its values be?**

And a new topic was thrown in for next time:

- **How should we respond to ISUS?**

- **Date of Next Meeting**

There was a mistake in the recent email regarding the date of the next meeting (not Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November). The next meeting will be held on **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014 at 1000hrs** at Shropshire Seniors on Town Walls

