> ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY Held on 23r^d April 2018 @ 7pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllr R Weaver - Chair, Cllr F Lynch-Smith, Cllr R Kipling, Cllr M Nunn and Mrs B Bland, Clerk.

In attendance: Cllr T Dicicco. Attendees list attached for ease of reference.

Chair welcomed attendees and Councillors to the second Annual Parish Assembly, explaining that having trialled this new approach to hosting Annual Parish Meetings last year she hoped attendees would agree it proved to be successful. The parish council also welcomes the opportunity for attendees to give their views to the Parish Council to establish priorities for the next 12 months and suggest ways that the Parish Council may provide assistance.

Cllr Weaver opened the Assembly with the Chairs Annual report 2017-2018:-

This year has been another full year for the Parish Council. We have attempted to move forward several initiatives, again some of which have been more successful than others. Most things we undertake as a Parish Council involve people volunteering their time, so I thank all Parish Councillors who have given their time. We have had several community volunteers especially Sarah Sharland as Tree Warden and Lynn Parker resident rep on the Quarry Liaison Group, and regular attendees Sue and John Edwards, Gerry Russell, Lew Edwards, Sarah Sharland at the Neighbourhood planning group. None of the things we could achieve as a Parish Council would be possible without our parish clerk. A special thank you goes to Barbara Bland for her exemplary hard work, constant support to me and other Councillors, as well as community members.

We have continued to hold Parish Council surgeries with SMBC officers and joint Police surgeries. Unfortunately, these are poorly attended by the community. We will continue to hold them to ensure communication and information sharing continues. This year our external auditors Grant Thornton gave us a clean bill of health and all recommendations from 16/17 audit have been completed.

The PC has had several open exhibitions at local events on the draft Solihull Local Development Plan. Solihull MBC are still working on their draft and should be out in the autumn. The PC are still working towards accreditation to achieve a quality standard in the Local Council Award. Parish Councillors have undertaken individual training on a range of topics and have met twice as a group on Saturday mornings to ensure we can demonstrate that we are a competent parish council. We have upgraded the PC website to meet the improved standard expected of websites and all parish councillors now have a PC email address to comply with the new GDPR legislation.

The parish council are continuing to make good progress with the Neighbourhood Plan. The survey to all households in Meriden proved a good result. We have completed the survey to all local businesses and a summary report has been completed. We were successful again in a 2nd and a 3rd Localities Bid to pay for this and future work for a local survey on housing needs for Meriden residents.

The management plan for Meriden Pool Phase 1 started in March. Phase 2 will be the landscaping works and representatives of all relevant parties will be starting the process of putting together a bid to Suez, formerly SITA Trust. Copies of SMBC's briefing on this is on the PC website.

Meriden's First World War group continues to meet and a big thank you to local historian Doreen Agutter who continues to collect information about Meriden's history and its servicemen during the 1914-18 world war.

The servicemen who lost their lives have been commemorated throughout the year on their anniversary with candlelit vigils. The group has moved a long way in the development of ideas for a lasting poppy memorial on the dedicated Memorial Approach site.

Meriden Sports Park continues to be popular with residents and visitors alike. The play area has had phase two of the playground resurfacing completed in late summer 2017. The demands for usage of the facilities has increased and new holiday sports activity camps have been introduced for children.

Meriden Sports and Recreation Trust has strong partnership working with the sports park directors and the parish council.

The Quarry Liaison Group continues to meet quarterly and attendance by quarry operators has been high. SMBC and Environment Agency officers also attend. Issues raised by both Hampton and Meriden PC are taken seriously and actioned. These meetings have improved communications and information sharing, reduced lorry movements through Meriden Parish and makes better the nuisance, noise, litter, dirt and dust within our local environment.

You will recall in 2016 an issue that affected many residents' especially older people and those with disabilities was the removal of the taxi bus by TfWM (Transport for West Midlands). The PC hosted numerous public meetings and jointly with Hampton in Arden and Catherine de Barnes formally challenged the premise that its removal had taken place. Community residents took up the hard slog of informing people and keeping the pressure on. The outcome was that TfWM decision was to continue with the taxi bus for Meriden and Hampton residents including a weekly service to the Coventry Mobility Centre. A new bus stop will be installed at the surgery in Balsall Common and hopefully at Solihull Hospital.

Cllr Rosie Weaver continues to be Deputy Chair of SAC and is Deputy Chair of WALC. These groups enable all parish and town councils to share their experiences and good practice and raise issues as a collective. In Solihull, following the Charter guidelines, the Chair and Deputy Chair of SAC meet quarterly with SMBC Chief Executive Nick Page.

Community events were once again successfully organised. Alan Lole continues to raise much needed funds for Macmillan Cancer Support and Marie Curie Hospice Solihull through the Tree of Thought and Fun Day Sunday. The 6th Santa Fun Run organised by The Rotary Club in December was well attended by many ages and sizes of Santas! The Family Picnic in the Park was a success in July.

Meriden Watch website has increased its followers and provides up to date Neighbourhood Watch information and is supported by the police. There is good information sharing between them and the PC. Following a spate of burglaries in Meriden, a group chaired by Annie Dingley is exploring more Neighbourhood Watch options and other initiatives in Meriden.

Cllr Barber has coordinated several Speed Watch sessions. We were limited as to the number of sessions we have been able to do as we need some more volunteers to undergo training. We have asked the police to provide this and are still waiting for some dates. However, we have had to stop doing them as the Police have advised that Speed Watch volunteers nationally are no longer covered by insurance.

So, what have we done from the list we compiled from last year's annual assembly? Quite a lot! Some things of note are:

- the PC met several times with SMBC's Head of Highways to look at the issues of parking, speeding and our views are being incorporated into his review of what can be done in Meriden in the future.
- Exercise for the over 40s -we will hear tonight of plans that have started in the Sports Park
- Forest of Arden Leisure have offered a boot camp in the Sports Park when the weather improves
- Astro-wicket has been replaced and should last another 7 to 10 years
- Footpaths and overgrowth throughout Meriden there has been a major cutting back thanks to SMBC Neighbourhood Coordinator.

Plans for 2018-19 are to include:

- To hold the second Annual Parish Assembly as part of our Engagement Strategy
- Achieve accreditation with the Local Council Award Scheme
- Continue to secure funds and complete the Pool Project
- Continue to update the website and meet the new regulatory codes



- To develop the poppy site for a fitting sustainable memorial
- Conduct a Housing Needs Survey for Meriden to include results in our Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan
- To publish our Neighbourhood Plan and put it forward to a community referendum after pre-submission and submission plans have been examined and approved by SMBC Local Planning Authority
- To continue working with Head of Highways to improve traffic management throughout the Parish.

Rosie Weaver, Chair - April 2018".

Chair thanked attendees and advised this would be on the website for future reference; she invited organisations to provide a 3 minute overview of who they are, what they do and what they need from the Parish Council starting with:-

1. Cllr Dicicco – Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Environment & Housing

- Represented Meriden Ward for 6 years
- Resident of Balsall Common

Issues include Travellers, Local Plan Review, Crime (Meriden) and across Solihull Borough with partnership working with police and other groups.

- Solihull Partnership meet every 2 months to assist residents with crime prevention.
- Responsibility stops with Police; West Midlands Police allocation of rural resources is providing more officers
- The Police & Crime Commissioner is fighting hard for more resources
- Crime statistics are starting to come down with the Police being more pro-active
- Local Plan review no information other than it is taking time to resolve a lot of issue; some controversial with Balsall Common having to absorb quite a big impact including 1100 homes on Barretts Farm. Meriden Ward will be impacted by HS2 and there is a lot of work being undertaken to mitigate damage and impact on traffic, highways, and infrastructure.

2. Annie Dingley and Peter Bramweld

- Meriden is important to residents; new and vulnerable residents have experienced car theft and burglaries to private properties and vehicles.
- This has been the catalyst to establishing and infrastructure for a Neighbourhood Watch for the whole of Meriden Parish.
- Recent stories on Meriden Watch of crime spates had 11,000 hits.
- Security companies have been in touch to offer resources to make it tougher for criminals with bulk purchase for cheaper pricing applied to residents.
- Two meetings have been held well attended and good comments
- The group is working with the Parish Council and the Police.

- Street CCTV has been discussed
- Group wishes to create a community where all residents are looking out for one another.
- The next meeting is arranged for 24th May 2018 at 7.30pm at Stonebridge Golf.
- Help required for networking of groups and local business sponsorship.

3. <u>Rachel Platt – Little Angels Mother & Toddler Group/Sports Camps</u>

- Established Mother & Toddler Group in Meriden in 2015
- Currently meets on a Wednesday morning at the Pavilion
- Help out Methodist Group with the odd Tuesday session bringing together a network of support for young mums who feel housebound.
- Solihull Engagement Team in Family Plus Centres
- Health Visitors attend groups for weening and potty training
- Community Bronze Award achieved.
- In February 2017 working with Barbara, Rosie and Jon re-introducing Sports Camps for 5-11 year olds at Pavilion which is gradually getting busier
- Initially sports but recently introduced craft activities. All staff DBS checked and going well.
- Continuing to work with community and going through Ofsted registration.

4. Alan Gabbitas – Leys Lane Allotments

- Commented that the wildflower meadow and the daffodils on Meriden Hill were spectacular.
- All allotments are occupied
- Due to wet winter there has been pools of water and it has been impossible to work but allotment holders have now got started
- Gravel path has been completed however it is very loose gravel and difficult to wheelbarrow from allotment to car park
- Tenancy agreement requests allotment holders to manage their boundary hedges but the hedge size is far too big and professional help is requested from Highways/SMBC/contractors.

Methodist Church

- Jane apologies for not being here tonight.
- Church celebrated its 50th Anniversary; the previous Chapel and a row of cottages was replaced in 1967.
- Easter Sunday Day Service was led by the Chairman of Birmingham District with a Baptism, the first in 15 years!
- Minister Jane was fully ordained on 1st July 2017 at Derby Baptist Chapel
- In November 2017 a group of crazy enthusiasts did a "get as far away from Meriden" event in 24 hours; the next one will be held on 16th November 2018.
 180 people took part with distances covered 99.7 miles and 130 miles.
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Meriden Charities

- There are 9 Trustees and a Clerk
- The Charity meets 3 times per year
- The purpose is to manage investments/endowments
- The original criteria was widows/people in need/bread/clothing/the teaching of poor girls/given to Church for the Vicar.
- Available financial assistance for Heart of England, Meriden Primary Schools to make life easier.
- Make written application to Clerk and leave at Meriden Library.
- Anyone wishing to leave a legacy to the Charity, will make good use of it.

5. lain Roxburgh – Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust

- Chair of Trustees
- 2nd year of Trust being set up and now well established
- Providing long term core funding for Meriden Sports Park and other leisure/recreation activities
- Small grants applications for those living within Parish
- In operation since 2016 last year 2017 set up grant application process for small grants
- Agreement signed off for Trust, Parish Council and Sports Park
- Trust has 3 jobs Stewardship of Endowment Fund (Maxstoke Playing Field); Support core operating costs for Sports Park; and Small Grants Programme.
- Valuation £1.6M
- Maintenance of capital value long term support to Meriden Sports Park providing revenue support. Investment strategy to improve capital investment plus small grants plus core costs.
- 55K agreed for sports park core costs last year with same sum agreed for 2018 with fund increase by 30% in first year
- Being cautious in projections
- Small Grants programme relaunching Spring 2018 with invitations to submit applications for sports, leisure and recreational activities
- To date 2 grants have been given to Scouts and Firebird Singers in 2017
- Application forms available that need to meet the charitable criteria of the Trust
- There are 7 Trustees all serving a fixed term with 2 Trustees retiring this year. Gerry Russell is one replacement and one vacancy remains with two more Trustees retiring in 2019. Anyone interested please contact the Chair.

6. <u>Gerry Russell & Becky Billingsley – 1st Meriden Scout Group</u>

- Going for almost 50 years and part of 5th Section Network
- Scout hut behind Village Hall built mid 1970's

- 4 sections of young people both boys and girls
- Beaver scouts 6-8 years
- Cubs 8-10¹/₂ years
- Scouts 10¹/₂-14 years
- Explorers 14-18 years
- All above age groups meet weekly on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays to take part in different activities with 70 regular attendees
- 2017 Scouts & Explorers camped in cardboard boxes on the Village Green; experience of worldwide events of loss of homes, refugees etc., raising money for shelterbox which provides boxes of essential items to be sent out to people.
- Lots of camping activities are held
- St Laurence Church Christmas Tree competition, making shoe boxes, presents for Bablake House and Carol Singing
- Meriden Scouts Group official flag raiser of flags on Village Green
- December 2017 3 Explorers to represent UK in Royal Jamboree 2019
- March Quiz Night raised £500
- Other donations received from Firebird Singers, Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust and support from others.
- All leaders are volunteers and DBS checked with training standards up to date. Leaders need supporters and volunteers are needed.
- A huge thank you to leaders for their commitment. Voluntary organisations for Community Impact Award – Meriden received 1st Award

Becky & Michelle

- There are 3 leaders for 6-8 year olds; 20 in the group and a waiting list.
- Runs Monday nights 6.30 7.30
- Badges to be achieved includes Animal; Cook; Collector; Space; Disability; Remembrance Day Service/Parade; Sikh Temple; Fire Station; Hiking; Gardening; Annual party and water fight.

7. Centre of England Arts – Gerry Russell

- Julie Hyde set up charity 10 years ago
- Gerry Russell Chair
- Originally set up in Village Hall now has own Studio set up at Patrick Farm Barns for learning, practice and doing!
- Lots of people attend open classes for all sorts of photograph and art. Second studio on same site for a range of painting, glass work, jewellery and pottery
- 4 sessions run on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Friday is an open day for free art and weekends host a variety of workshops.
- Centre of England Arts has a good reputation as an Art Centre.

8. <u>WI – Joan Russell</u>

- Celebrating Centenary with knitted bunting which is displayed in Library; joined by National Chain
- Established in 1918 at end of WW1 for food shortages by women in society.
- Education/supporting each other in the community; combating loneliness by sit and chat gatherings
- Womens Refuge and social events
- In 1948 there were 100 members; 2000's 50 members and 2018 considerably smaller with those most active wanting quieter lives.
- Wanting new members for the next generation of W1 and volunteers.

9. Barbara Bland – Meriden Sports Park

- We have had another busy year with the park proving popular with the local community and the many sports users who include Football teams St Johns, Coleshill Rangers, Mosaic; Cricket Dunlop Stars, Meriden, Last Man Standing, Berkswell, Fillongley; H of E CC (cricket) who unfortunately will not be returning for 2018 season; Little Angels Parent & Toddler Group; Holiday Sports/Activity Camps; JLR (Team Building Rounders); Junior Tennis Coaching
- Other regular hirers of the Pavilion include Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust Cameo Three Churches Drop In Cafe WW1 Steering group Quarry Liaison group Solihull Area Committee
- New activities/initiatives for 2018 include WildCats (An FA programme for Girls Football)
- Health at Heart which Steve Padmore will/has talk/talked about
- We are currently in discussion with a supplier of table tennis outdoor tables and associated accessible installation works to be sited on petanque pit......so watch this space!
- On the business side and away from the many park activities
 The Parish Council continue to work with SMBC legal team
 to conclude the freehold land transfer of the park, and
 to draft a lease agreement between the parish council and sports park directors.
- SMBC have agreed to assist with the defunct rain harvesting unit that failed in 2016 with a commitment to undertake a site visit and check the tank, and tanker out any stagnant water that has collected.
- We have been given a clean bill of health with play equipment and outdoor gym apparatus inspections being carried out.

- Specialist grounds work maintenance consisting of sand slitting and seeding is programmed for May so please bear with us if the field is not looking its best!
- And lastly Sports Park Directors acknowledge and value the close partnership with Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust with an agreement to meet the park's core operating costs.

10. Mary Warr – Cancer Research UK

- Running over 40 years with 440K raised as a Cancer National Group
- Least raised has been 7K most raised 16K
- Run events throughout the year even outdoors in the rain!
- Spring is Music Night a free evening
- Summer is Open Gardens on the 1st July 2018. Grace Tuckey will provide a programme and map and number of gardens this is a community event
- October is Breast Cancer month with a Pink and Blue night (Pink Breast and Blue Prostate) and Sex & The Tudors
- Fundraising through car boots, table top sales
- New people needed for committee and volunteers. I have being doing this for 29 years and am desperate to retire!

11. Mary Warr – Meriden Flower Club

- The club has been running for 55 years in the Village Hall
- Steady membership but it is not very supported by Meriden residents
- There are three practice classes
- There is a Christmas Fayre in December

12. <u>Val Martin – Editor Meriden Mag</u>

- Four issues per year the previous 3 issues included Summer 2017 Opening of Peace Garden; Autumn the Wildflower Meadow; and December was the Award.
- It is considered that it "glues" the Village together
- Relies on volunteers for treasury, proof reading and distribution
- It is a not for profit organisation run by volunteers
- Local advertisers get involved
- Deadline for content of next edition 1st May 2018 Annie and Peter to feature.

13. John Bentick

• Chair of Firebird Singers supported by Julia, Anna and Val. Formed in 2010 by founder members operating from a broom cupboard in the Royal Working Mans Club, Coventry.

- Base is now the Village Hill and the choir are very much part of the local community.
- A mixed voice choir with over 60 members between 14 90 years old.
- Like to call it the "friendly choir" turning no one away
- Primary aim is to raise money for charity whilst having fun
- Venues played to include local Churches, Manor Hotel, Blue Coat School Coventry.
- Successful Disney Concert in March raised 4K for Motor Neurone Disease.
- Will be singing at Megaride
- All concerns have raised 19K
- Donations to Scouts and Village Hall for new lighting
- The next concert is arranged for 7th July 2018.

14. Richard Olive

- Meriden Gate Neighbourhood Watch
- First year saw car crime and decided to set up a Neighbourhood Watch group to target car crime
- Recently met with Police and Bromford Housing regarding ASB, drug dealing, burglaries and car crimes
- Scheme updates with David Wilson Homes is that there are security issues as it has been discovered that builders did not fit good locks!

15. Dr Adam Boddison – Chair of Governors, Meriden CE Primary School

- Village school under the Church of England Diocese of Coventry
- Numbers have increased significantly with all classes being above the average number in classes with 221 pupils
- All positive with Ofsted good/outstanding features and supporting other schools in Borough by Senior Leadership Team focusing on love of reading and improving standards of progress and attainments
- Profile of pupils mixed at school with percentage of SEN rising, complexity of need rising along with Dyspraxia and ADHD.
- Some pupils require additional support because they are high achievers.
- Implementation of GDPR watching brief and applying to the complexity of school life with the Local Authority providing services and support to level of detail.
- Funding always an issue due to major cuts.

16. Doreen Agutter – Great War Committee

- Established 2013 for the purpose of creating emphasis Great War Commemoration in the Village
- 5 committee meetings held to discuss 2017,2018 and 2019 events

- Since 2015 each of the fallen 100 years anniversary has been commemorated with a service of remembrance and symbolic lighting of a candle and 100 minute vigil at Memorial. The being Private Russell 13th April and Private Jeffcott – buried in the churchyard who died of wounds in Worcester.
- Five men were killed from the Village in 2018.
- The Meriden in the Great War Evening 1917 1921 raised £200 for Mrs Banks gravestone refurbishment. She was the owner of Meriden Hall, and Founder Member of the WI in 2018 and VAD in Berkswell. She died in 1953. In 1951 she hosted the Festival of Britain at Meriden Hall
- The committee are organising Remembrance Sunday which actually falls on Armistice Day so extra things are being suggested
- Memorial Approach the Parish Council to assist with funding towards a permanent Memorial
- There are several War Memorials in Meriden commemorating 850 people; Wayside Memorial (Berkswell Road), St Laurence Church Stained Glass Window and Cyclists Memorial is unique and Meriden is honoured to have this.
- The Committee have approached the Parish Council to assist with the War Memorial Trust. Working hard to get content to enhance the bid.
- History of the Village WI are to finance the noticeboard

17. Rev Lynda Lilley – St Laurence Church

- Hatch, Match & Despatch
- Children's Prayer Service and safe environment for children
- A popular wedding venue plus the Manor
- Funerals popular too with Meriden Churchyard being a beautiful resting place but there is not much space left
- Working with the Parish Council to maintain Centre and valued area of graveyard; however wall is falling down, there are access issues and trees need work.
- Churchyard needs regeneration programme to include recreational area for peace/tranquillity/memories.
- In conjunction with MCF/Methodist/St Laurence (Churches Together Café) provide a drop in meeting place monthly to address loneliness. Donation for tea and cake. Identified a need to bring housebound people to Pavilion once a month.

18. <u>Pam Cooper – CAMEO</u>

• Started in 2003 by St Laurence and Methodist Churches providing an interesting programme of chat and making new friends, run on voluntary contributions for tea and cake; included has been St Laurence Christmas Tree competition and a visit to Meriden School

- A group for Over 50's who meet monthly for tea & cake
- Members mostly in their 80's and 90's
- Run by volunteers, all in their 70's with voluntary contributions that provide room hire, Birthday booklets and cards
- Advice provider from Speakers including Police, Help the Aged, Hospice, Fire and Community Housing
- Guests have included Wounded Soldiers QE, Fishermen's Mission, Talks on Holidays, Vicar from local Church, Musical groups including 4 in Harmony, pub lunch in Fillongley
- Any problems with crockery, Pavilion hire or other, all sorted by Barbara and any issue addressed.

19. Chris Copper – Village Hall Management Committee

- Charitable Trust
- Users of the Village Hall are represented on Committee
- 70th Anniversary in 2018
- Average age of Trustees in 70 and would welcome input from younger people
- Meriden Mag say they are the glue that holds the Village together; the Village Hall is also part of that glue for all residents to use. There are not many days when it is not occupied
- Film evenings started 4 years ago in conjunction with Live & Local Warwickshire. So important for people who cannot access cities with an eclectic mix of films chosen. Very grateful to District Councillor as cost rises and it is helpful to balance the books with SMBC support
- More committee members needed.
- Trying to get grants for maintenance/repairs

20. Peter Moss – Readers Circle

- Why do people join?
- Choose democratically an author and subject
- Monthly meetings
- Lots of laughter with new members welcome
- Read some lovely authors
- Donna and Library staff helpful with their choice of books and assistance

21. Frances Lynch-Smith – Rotary Club of Meriden

- The Great Picture Show is a great success
- Meets at the Manor Hotel every Tuesday
- Speakers have included SENCO, ECHP and Leader of SMBC
- Rotary club events support four charities

- Santa Fun Run and Santa Sleigh, Coleshill Round Table Sleigh, Golf Day Kids Day Out, Woodland School and Drayton Manor
- Megaride 24th June Air Ambulance and include the Rev Paul Sinclair, Motorcyle Hut Company, Scouts, Heart of England
- Sending four children on holiday
- Charity Auction
- Car Boot Sales

Cllr Weaver thanked everyone for their presentations and information sharing; it has been a fascinating insight into the excellent work being delivered in the local community by the many organisations and groups represented here tonight.

To conclude she advised the parish council would co-ordinate an advertisement for the Meriden Mag calling for volunteers as the common theme from tonight is there is a need for volunteers to come forward to continue to valuable contribution being made to the local community by the organisations present tonight.

Additionally the parish council will be going to a contested election for May 2019 and asked for any interested residents to have a chat and take the "Being a Parish Councillor" booklet with them.

Cllr Weaver said refreshments are available and invited networking opportunities to share and link. She directed attendees to the stickies' on the tables and the Neighbourhood Planning display with the request to put comments/views on stickies and post onto boards; she further added that anyone interested in becoming a Parish Councillor and sustaining the Parish Council for the future, can take the information leaflet displayed on the Parish Council display.

Chair closed the evening thanking everyone for attending summing up a "very positive experience".

The Annual Parish Assembly closed at 21.00 hours.