MERIDEN PARISH COUNCIL

BUSINESS PLAN
2020/2021

Signed .....Chair Adopted .....Review Date .....

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INTRODUCTION

This business plan sets out how the Parish Council will work towards achieving its strategic goals over the next financial year as identified via publish consultation, NDP, questionnaires and strategic priorities for SMBC.

Working in partnership with other organisations is key for the successful outcomes we hope to achieve. Working closely with SMBC, alongside their key officers will enable completion of some of the tasks ahead. NOTE: WE NEED TO BEAR IN MIND HOW COVID-19 AFFECTS ALL SERVICE DELIVERY AND SMBC AND THE PARISH COUNCIL HAVE TO ABIDE BY GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION.

To see a more detailed picture of the tasks we outline below; including resources, budget, progress and timescales please refer to the Parish Action Plan.

HIGHWAYS PRIORITIES

TRAFFIC CALMING & TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS

1. Working with SMBC Highways officers to achieve a strategy for Meriden to improve traffic calming measures and remove parking restrictions and impose improved parking for residents specifically with access to the shops.
    a. Measures were undertaken to improve this 2019/2020 with the painting of new double yellow lines and putting in place chicanes on the Fillongley road. This was done in partnership with Meriden Church of England Primary School.
2. Phase 1 was completed 30th June 2019 and Phase 2 to be completed 2020/2021.
3. Continue growing speed watch programme
    a. The council plans to increase the number of volunteers
    b. For all new volunteers to undertake the training delivered by West Midlands Police
    c. The overall aim is to increase the number of sessions that take place within the Parish.
4. Civil Enforcement Officer
    a. Improve partnership working with SMBC as well as neighbouring Balsall Common Parish council has enabled us to precept enough funds for increased hours of enforcement for dangerous and inappropriate parking around the Parish.
        i. There have been some major accidents and many minor accidents due to inappropriate parking, especially on double yellow lines.

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b. Meriden Parish Council will receive £25 for any paid tickets which will see funds allocated towards paying for the continuation of the scheme.

    i. Thanks to SMBC match funding us in Year 1, this project was able to get off the ground very quickly. Regular monitoring is undertaken with SMBC's senior highways officer on a regular basis.

c. The intended outcome of this project will be a change in behaviour towards parking in the parish.

GREEN SPACES

MERIDEN POOL

1. Since 2017 there have been substantial enhancements at Meriden Pool. The partnership with SMBC (the owners of the pool) has enabled the pool to be dredged, trees pollarded, the pool banks secured, a new path installed, and landscaping completed.
2. A 'Friends of the Pool' group has been established consisting of local resident volunteers in partnership with SMBC and their Rangers to facilitate a sustainable model of maintenance and programmes of works.
3. For 2020/2021 the Parish Council and Friends working group will explore better disabled access within and around the pool.
4. Working with existing and new communication routes the Parish Council will seek to inform the community on appropriate feeding of the wildlife in the pool.
5. Fundraising has been undertaken by developing a 2020 Calendar with the 'Poster Goose Cecil'. Proceeds from this will enable us to buy tools, gloves and jackets for the group of volunteers. Close links to be made with "I LOVE SOLIHULL".

LEYS LANE PARISH COUNCIL ALLOTMENTS

1. The Parish Council has 14 allotments and have a waiting list in 2019/2020. The Parish Council has attempted for the last 6 years to sort out the land transfer from the developers Taylor Wimpey as agreed in the developments plan.
2. Work will continue to resolve this matter with Taylor Wimpey via SMBC Corporate Legal Team Solicitor.

MERIDEN SPORTS PARK

1. Meriden Sports Park usage by members of the public and booking of the facilities has become a success.
2. It is hoped that the transfer of the Meriden Sports Park site to the Parish Council is completed in the upcoming financial year.

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3. Work will continue to resolve this matter with SMBC.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS

1. Due to the £1700 purchase and installation cost of the Christmas lights to the Oak Tree in the middle of Meriden roundabout in the last financial year the Parish Council will seek to secure local business sponsorship to help continue the existing lights and potentially install more.

HERITAGE

WAR MEMORIAL – BERKSWELL ROAD

1. Since 2017 we have been in discussion with Coventry Diocese and St Laurence Church to transfer the land and war memorial on Berkswell Road to the Parish Council. From early January 2020 it will be in Parish Council ownership.
    a. A partnership with the Queens Head Public House will be established whereby they will fundraise funds for the maintenance.
2. Tree reduction and weed removal has been undertaken in 2019 by the Parish Council and land and environmental surveys are to be undertaken to include in the bid to the Memorial Trust for the immediate repairs and long-term maintenance.
    a. As the site is a listen memorial there are written specification as to what and how these repairs and maintenance can be undertaken.

POPPY MEMORIAL

1. A permanent floral memorial has been designed by John Douglas from PCC St Laurence Church.
    a. The aim is for this to be completed by Spring 2021.
    b. We are looking for continued local sponsorship to enable this memorial to remain in good condition.
2. In 2019 the Parish Council invested in lamppost poppies for Remembrance Sunday. It takes at least three members of the community to volunteer to put these up and remove them. The Parish Council from 2020/2021 precept wil purchase more lamppost poppies to extend coverage of the Parish.

NATIONAL CYCLIST MEMORIAL

1. This memorial is a National cyclist memorial and is frequently visited. There is an annual cyclist service in May and in 2020 it will be a centenary service. A bid to the War Memorial Trust for a specialist clean has been submitted. The Parish Council and the memorial conservators will discuss transfer of this asset to Meriden Parish Council to ensure appropriate maintenance.

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NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. Since 2015 the Parish Council and members of the community sit on the NDP Steering Group. A lot of work with local businesses, the community, environmentalists, planning experts and housing specialists has been undertaken to look at Meriden's future needs and aspirations. The NDP must reflect SMBC's Local Plan and mirror their strategic interests.
2. Regulation 14 Consultation went live in September 2019 and Regulation 16 consultation commenced July 2020 and closed August 2020. Revisions have been added and external examiner appointed. We aim for referendum in May 2021.
3. It is envisaged that the referendum will be completed in 2021.
4. The NDP Steering Group has been successful in completing five bids to the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government so to date there has been little demand on MPC's budget.
5. This will continue to be the biggest piece of work involving the whole of the parish that Meriden will see for a number of years. There has been extensive public engagement at each stage of its development.

COMMUNITY ASSETS

MERIDEN LIBRARY

1. This has been a slow development over the last 5 years. In order to preserve a valued community asset and for the library to be used by more members of the community there needs to be long term investment in the structure of the listed building.
    a. It has been agreed that the first floor strengthening works as well as new floors and decoration will enable the Parish Council to have their office in the library with a community meeting room located upstairs.
    b. Meriden Parish Council has contributed to SMBC via use of the precept £20,000 over the last 4 years to enable this project to be undertaken.
2. It is interesting to note that unfortunately Meriden Library is one of the least used libraries in the whole Borough with low footfall.

DIGITAL

GDPR

1. Continue working with our Data Protection Officer to ensure compliance.

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THE PUBLIC SECTOR BODIES (WEBSITES AND MOBILE APPLICATIONS) (NO. 2) ACCESSIBILITY REGULATIONS 2018

1. To work with external providers to ensure the website is fully accessible and complaint with the legislation.

SOCIAL MEDIA

1. To streamline and improve our social media accounts in order to improve communication with residents.

WEBSITE

1. Work will be undertaken to upgrade the website to meet NALC Gold standards and serve as a useful and informative platform for residents.
    a. This work will be undertaken in 2020.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

COMMUNITY WATCH

1. To actively recruit new members to the recently establish Street Watch scheme.
2. The council will produce a plan on how to tackle climate change at the parish level involving all members of the community
    a. Task groups will be established to help implement any changes introduced.

OTHER ITEMS

ELECTIONS

1. The next election will be held in 2023 and Parish Councils have a responsibility to pay for any contested Parish/Town Council elections. We will start accruing into reserves for 2023.
2. There remains a vacant seat for the Parish Council. The council will co-opt a new member in 2020, following the legal process.

PARTNERSHIPS

1. It is part of our vision that we will continue to work with our existing partnerships but also build new partners and third sector organisations to continue to deliver a value for money service for Meriden.

YOUTH PARISH COUNCIL

1. As an elected democratic body, it is important that we are engaging all the groups that live in our community. For young people their situation is unique, whilst members of our community who are aged 18+have the opportunity to engage with the parish council in the form of elections every 4 years, the

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community who are younger than this have little direct influence over the council and how we work.

2. In order to increase the influence of young people in our decision making we will:
    a. Identify young talent in the community in order to future proofing the Parish Council,
    b. Ensure the council is both delivering a good service with young people at the forefront of its decision making,
    c. Incorporate young people into the decision-making process within their community, giving young people a voice on issues important to them,
    d. Equip young people in the parish with the skills, infrastructure and resources to better their future in an increasingly complex and competitive world.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

1. Recognising the enormous challenges that Climate Change presents both immediately and in the near future the Parish Council will declare a Climate Emergency.

2. In Declaring this climate emergency – Meriden Parish Council agrees to:

    a. Commit to an accelerated reduction of our carbon emissions with the aspiration to become a carbon neutral community by 2050 at the latest in accordance with CCC recommendations.
    b. To work with local partners to produce a carbon reduction plan and an action plan covering all relevant council strategies within the next two years.
    c. Create a task force to establish a green agenda in Meriden.
    d. To work with our local community to enable them to take all possible measures to match or better our efforts, and to support our community at both an individual and business level to demonstrate, inspire and share best practice – within the Parish and further afield.
    e. To work towards our community buildings only using 100% renewable energy and lowest carbon where not possible.
    f. To focus on local key issues, including public and community transport, recycling, management of our own open spaces to protect and enhance biodiversity, and other areas where we have a positive role to play.
    g. To strongly encourage SMBC, and departments within it, to act in accordance with wider international agreements relating to climate as an absolute minimum. For example – planning conditions for all new developments in Solihull, both residential and commercial, should be as close to zero carbon or passive house standards and include renewable provision.
    h. To help provide the necessary resources to deliver on this carbon reduction commitment, and to monitor and report annually on our progress.

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APPRENTICESHIP/TRAINEE SCHEME

1. Meriden Parish Council continues to strive to deliver more for the community and residents it represents and as such workload has over time increased, with it being expected to increase further. Recruiting Clerks with the necessary skills is becoming harder across the board and there is a clear benefit to being able to bring a new employee in and offer them the training to develop the skills needed to undertake the role of a Clerk.

2. It is important for any organisation, whether it be in the Private or Public sector, to future proof itself if key members of staff should leave. Bringing in someone now leaves the council with the opportunity to minimise the risk of losing the skills and knowledge held by the current Clerk, should they decide to leave in the near future. Further to this it will also allow the council to offer more high-quality services as manpower is increased, as well as bringing in another employee with ideas on how to support Councillors to adapt and modernise the Council as the national and local landscape changes rapidly.

3. Ensuring the proper running of the council is a complex time-consuming role, creating an Apprentice Deputy Clerk would allow both members of staff time to undertake new projects, improve community and stakeholder relations as well as innovating ways in which the council can operate.

This Plan will be reviewed at the end of 2020 and updated and amended where necessary due to COVID-19 restrictions on some of these actions.

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