Meriden
PARISH COUNCIL
the historic centre of England

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

2021 and the start of 2022 has certainly been a challenge for many people including the parish council. With government guidelines changing frequently the parish council has been able to continue its business and meet via zoom and more recently in person, with members of the public being protected and zooming in to the meeting virtually or by phone. Most of our meetings have been live streamed onto Facebook so others unable to attend could access it. At this point the parish council could not have been so effective without the Clerk's support so big thanks to Barbara Bland for coping with yet another difficult but successful year.

As a PC we have achieved many things that were in the Business Plan. Of note we achieved a majority YES vote for the NDP that went to referendum in May 2021. This is now a formal planning document.

We have had two causal vacancies this year and both have been filled through advertising widely in the community. We welcome Cllr Carmen Smith and more recently Cllr Malcom Eggar to the team. We wish to thank Bob Kipling who has resigned from office. He has given 30 years of service to the community of Meriden. His knowledge of the history of Meriden and knowledge of the countryside in and around Meriden has been invaluable over the years. He will be a very hard act to follow.

The PC would also like to thank Packington Estate, NRS, A&A and HD Ricketts for their sponsorship of Meriden's Christmas Lights. Another big thank you is to Emma West-Eggar who has given her time freely to run defibrillator and first aid courses – we now have another 30 people trained. A fantastic community response to undertake the training.

Another brilliant response and a big thank you is to the litter picking volunteers who join the community group under the auspices "I love Solihull" or who litter pick whilst out walking. So much rubbish has been collected this year! Other community groups – Speedwatch and Streetwatch are now operational again following COVID restrictions being lifted. We hope more people will sign up to these initiatives.

A big congratulations to Doreen Agutter Meriden's historian for her well-deserved MBE. Her contributions to our NDP and the Meriden Mag ensures Meriden's history will never be forgotten.

It was very sad when we heard Alan Lole had passed away. His contributions to maintaining The Tree of Thought and raising thousands of pounds for Marie Curie Hospice and Macmillan Cancer support since 2005 which provided support in difficult times for many people. The Parish Council will continue to support The Tree of Thought.

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The PC was successful in securing a grant from the War Memorials Trust and restoration and maintenance work has been completed on the Memorial on Berkswell Road. Another pre-application for a structural survey has been submitted for further works to stabilise the wood structure.

The 100th Anniversary of the National Cyclists Memorial Service was held on 5th September 2021 supported by the Parish Council. The "Ride with a Veteran" RBLI Cycle Ride on 17th July 2021 – supported by the PC who welcomed over 50 riders into Meriden to lay wreaths at the Cyclists Memorial, attended by our MP. Cycling UK funding was secured for maintenance and cleaning of the National Cyclist's Memorial and this work starts this week.

The Parish Council and the Sports Park Directors listened to local community requests for improved accessibility. A thank you to residents/visitors for their patience as an extended pathway has been added together with an inclusive Swirl roundabout for the enjoyment of disabled and non-disabled children. The funding for this was secured via a successful Lottery Community funding bid.

The transfer of the Sports Park from SMBC to the Parish Council seems to stall frequently and remains a work in progress. However, the Allotments have now been transferred at last from Taylor Wimpey to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council proactively works with quarry partners to alleviate/reduce nuisance of HGVS through the Parish. It does seem like a full-time job at times for us! Fillongley Road Bridge replacement, Eastern Green developments, the new A45 road layout, HS2, new motorways services, all significantly impact Meriden. The Parish Council continue to mitigate and engage with all contractors and SMBC to minimise impact in a rural community.

We continue to liaise with SMBC Highways for traffic calming measures and residents 'suggestions to us in the last 12 months have helped develop the wider plan to include disabled parking bays, parking restrictions and the reduction to 20mph through the village centre. The new cycle lanes will continue to be a contentious issue and we are monitoring the situation.

Meriden's new Warm Hub on Tuesdays 10.30 to 12.30 in the Pavilion is proving to be successful - where anyone can drop in for a chat and a cuppa following the social isolation, we have all felt during lockdowns.

Meriden's Helpline coordinated by the PC and run by volunteers has received approx. 900 calls in the last 2 years. We will continue it and would welcome any new volunteers to help keep it going. A HUGE thank you to those volunteers who answer the calls and shop, collect prescriptions and be a listening ear. As someone who used this service told me – "its' not just a helpline it's been a lifeline".

Cllr Rosie Weaver BEM
Chair

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