Community Engagement Policy

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Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Parish Council's Community Engagement Policy is to develop:

- A vibrant and engaged community that understands the activity and value the Parish Council can offer
- A community environment that works to benefits and enriches residents' lives
- An inclusive community where all residents feel welcome and able to be involved and represented by the Parish Council.

We will deliver our aims through:

- The support and availability of community facilities
- Two-way communication with residents
- Harnessing a free and open environment to communicate with the Parish Council
- Regular monthly public meetings with time allocated time for residents to interact with the Parish Council
- An engaged group of elected Council members.

The Community and its Facilities

The parish of Meriden covers an area that includes the village of Meriden, Millison's Wood, Fillongley Road, Eaves Green, Church Lane, Harvest Hill, Four Oaks (Back Lane and Cornets End Lane). The parish is broadly bounded by the A45 by-pass to the north, by a tributary of the river Blythe to the east, by another tributary of the Blythe to the south and the A452 by-pass to the west. Extensive sand and gravel workings lie to the south of the application site, forming those parts of the Meriden Quarry complex that are accessed from Cornets End Lane. A large water-filled former quarry also known as the 'Meriden Sandcap', lies north of Hampton Lane; to the north-east there are also dwellings fronting the south side of Hampton Lane together with the existing Meriden Sports Park and Parish Council Office. To the west are the grounds, buildings and car park of the North Warwickshire Golf Club and to the east there is a large field and, beyond that, the house and grounds of Meriden Hall, including a park home development with more than 60 single story mobile homes.
The wider surrounding landscape, beyond the quarry complex and Meriden Village, includes the Stonebridge Golf Course to the north-west, and Packington Hall and Park to the north, and classic Ancient Arden/Arden Parklands farmland to the south, west and east. Other nearby settlements include Millisons Wood (1.25 miles north-east), Hampton in Arden (1.8 miles south-west), Berkswell (3.15 miles south) and Coventry (centered 6.5 miles south-east).

Community facilities:

- A Post Office
- A library
- A Doctor's surgery

- A village hall
- Places of worship
- A primary school
- A sport park and Pavilion
- A play area
- Sports fields/grounds
- Recreational footpaths, linked to Heart of England Way and Millenium Way
- Public transport with links to wider surrounding areas
- Village shops and eateries
- Allotments
- Village green

The Community comprises of:

- All those living in, working in, and visiting the Parish and/or using its facilities
- Businesses and employers in the Parish
- Voluntary organisations working for the benefit of the community.

Provision of Community Information

- A Meriden Parish Council website - meridenparishcouncil.gov.uk – providing:
    - All meetings minutes and agendas
    - Information about the elected Council members
    - Payments information
    - Contact details
    - The opportunity to subscribe to a electronic newsletter
    - Information about the community and surrounding areas
    - A meeting and events calendar
    - Council policy and procedures
    - Details and links to County/District/Borough Council
- Monthly meetings of committees and full Council
    - Split between the Planning, Transport, Environment and Climate Change committee, the Finance, Governance and Personnel committee, and the ordinary Parish Council meetings
- Public noticeboards are kept up-to-date with meeting dates and key information
- A excerpt in the quarterly Meriden Mag magazine
- Hard copies of minutes, agendas, finance reports and documents available upon request
- A monthly electronic email newsletter
- Social media (Facebook) account with real time updates and information on meetings, local news, and events.

Opportunities for Community Involvement

Meriden Parish Council encourages the involvement of residents and community organisations in its activities. In particular:

- A period during every council and committee meeting that is set aside for public participation, which enables residents and representatives of community organisations to speak and ask questions to elected Councillors
- A weekly 'Warm Hub' where residents can interact with Councillors and staff members from the Parish Council office
- An annual Assembly where residents have the opportunity to learn about the work of the Parish Council and raise concerns or ask questions
- A contact opportunity on the website
- Engagement with the Parish Council's Facebook page where Councillors and the Clerk can interact with residents
- Community organisations can hold stalls and display stands at events such as the Picnic In The Park and Annual Parish Council Assembly.

Meriden Parish Council encourages active citizens that are engaged in delivering a vibrant community through:

- Grant opportunities for non-profit organisations working for the benefit of the community in Meriden
- Offering a Warm Hub, with volunteers, for any member of the community to attend
- Promoting community events through social media and notices.

Involvement in Partnerships

Meriden Parish Council is represented in the following partnerships:

- Meriden Village Hall Management Committee
- Country Association of Local Councils
- Local Quarry Liaison Group
- Parish Council's Solihull Area Meetings.

The Parish Council also works in partnership with:

- Meriden Sports Park Management Company
- Meriden Sports and Recreation Trust
- St. Laurence PCC
- Meriden Methodist Church
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- West Midlands Police PCSOs.

Role of Council Members and Officers

Members Of Meriden Parish Council should:

- Attend Council and committee meetings where there is opportunity for public participation
- Discuss all business at Council and committee meetings in public unless there is good reason to exclude the public by reason of the confidential nature of the business
- Represent the Council on community organisations
- Be available to be contacted by residents and community organisations.

The Parish Council Clerk should:

- Be available to the public when the Parish Council Office is open to the public
- Receive letters, phone calls, emails and website comments and pass them on to members as appropriate
- Keep the website and noticeboards up to date, in particular publicising matters of community interest
- Provide information to members of the public under the Freedom of Information Act.

Specific Areas for Community Involvement

Meriden Parish Council will consult fully on any major projects, in particular:

- The identification of sites for affordable housing
- Neighbourhood Development Plan
- The development of older people's housing
- Engagement with any future developers to ensure community needs are met
- Meriden Pool

Scope for Meriden Parish Council to Improve Community Engagement

Meriden Parish Council will seek to continue to improve its engagement with all sectors of the community. The Parish Council will consider in particular how to engage with:

- Youth groups
- Older people
- Minority groups
- Disability groups
- People with caring responsibilities.

Incentives for Engagement

Meriden Parish Council may provide incentives to encourage residents to engage in community activities. This may include small grants awarded to community organisations operating in Meriden, tea, coffee and biscuits at events, as well as gifts to community groups, dependent upon budget availability.