

Meriden Parish Council

The Centre of England

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Held on 22nd May 2017 @ 7pm in the Village Hall

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

In attendance: Cllr T Diccio and Cllr D Bell. Attendees list attached for ease of reference.

Chair welcomed attendees and Councillors to the first Annual Parish Assembly, explaining that this was a new approach to the Annual Parish Meeting with a view to community engagement with all the local groups and organisations that deliver services to the residents of Meriden Parish. It is an opportunity to socialise, learn what other groups are going, network and make links. There is also 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 2016-2017:-**

"This year has been a busy year for the Parish Council. We have attempted to move forward a number of initiatives, 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 Rosie Nunn (admin support) and Lynn Parker (Quarry Liaison Group), and regular attendees Sue and John Edwards, Gerry Russell, Lew Edwards at the Neighbourhood planning group. A special thank you goes to Barbara Bland the parish clerk for her unstinting support to me and other Councillors, as well as community members.

We have continued to hold Parish Council surgeries with SMBC officers and also 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 has been a challenge after the Grant Thornton Intermediate audit plus the changes in the Transparency Code for Parish Councils.

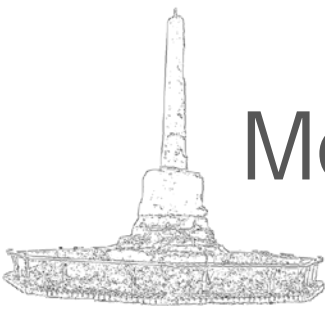
Some of the recommendations from the GT audit have been completed and others we challenged but we have not had a confirmation from them as yet. However, we will be having yet another intermediate audit this year by the same company. As the previous Chair identified last year the Finance committee HAS reviewed all finance policies and regulations in accordance with NALC recommendations for the changes in the Transparency Code for Parish Councils.

The PC has had a number of open sessions on the draft Solihull Local Development Plan. This plan proposed 18 sites within the Borough for the 6150 houses that are needed. Meriden's PC engagement with the community via the Parish Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan and open sessions all confirmed that the old caravan site

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storage and garage was the most suitable site for housing in Meriden. SMBC have accepted this proposal.

The PC achieved the General Power of Competence last year and we have been 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 3 times as a group on Saturday mornings to ensure we can demonstrate that we are a competent parish council. We are upgrading the pc website to meet the improved standard expected of websites.

We have made positive strides forward with the Neighbourhood Plan. The survey to all households in Meriden proved a good result. A big thank you to local businesses for the draw prizes. The next stage is a survey to all local businesses that are on the SMBC database and hopefully we will be successful again in the Localities Bid to pay for this as before. Key issues that have come out of the household survey can be found in our News section on our present website and will have its own section on our new website due to be released shortly.

A management plan for Meriden Pool undertaken by an external company has at last been completed and Chris Barr, Environment Manager (Streetcare, Forestry, Environmental Crime, Parks and Open Spaces) is the confirmed lead officer of this project. Meriden PC welcomes his involvement. Representatives of all relevant parties will be starting the process of putting together a bid to SITA Trust.

Meriden's First World War group continues to meet and has produced an amazing book led by Cllrs Mel and Paul Lee and local historian Doreen Agutter about Meriden's history and its servicemen during the 1914-18 world war. Meriden Sports Park continues to be popular with residents and visitors alike. Adult and Junior football and cricket teams have achieved successes. The play area has had Phase one of resurfacing and Phase two will happen in early summer 2017.

Meriden Sports and Recreation Trust are now a registered Charity and strong partnership working is being developed between the trustees, the sports park directors and the parish council.

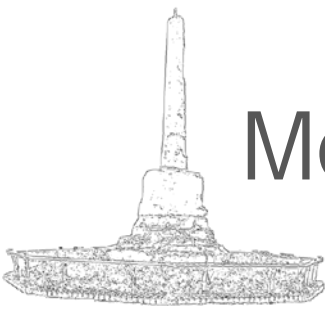
The Quarry Liaison Group continues to meet quarterly and attendance by quarry operators has been high. SMBC and Environment Agency officers also attend. Issues raised by both Hampton and Meriden PC are taken seriously and actioned. These meetings have improved communications and information sharing,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

An issue that has affected many residents' especially older people and those with disabilities is the removal of the taxibus by TfWM. The PC has hosted numerous public meetings and jointly with Hampton in Arden and Catherine de Barnes challenged the premise that its removal has taken place.

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Community residents Jeannette Gray and Pat Mills have taken up the hard slog of informing people and keeping the pressure on. We are not sure of the outcome as yet as discussions are still ongoing but we do know that TfWM are making some concessions to the original plans.

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 meeting quarterly with 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 Funday Sunday. The 5th Santa Fun Run organised by The Rotary Club in December was well attended by many ages and sizes of Santas!

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.

We would like to thank our new volunteer Tree Warden, Sarah Sharland, for doing an excellent job. She has revised Meriden's tree database, continues to gather information and records, and attends Solihull Tree Warden meetings.

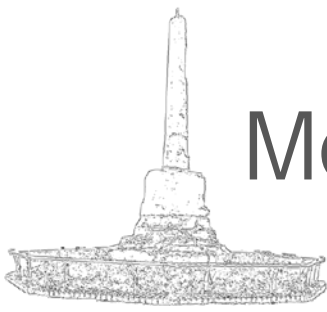
Cllr Barber has coordinated several Speedwatch sessions. We are limited as to the number of sessions we have been able to do as we need some more volunteers to undergo training. We have asked the police to provide this and are still waiting for some dates.

Solihull are ditching Neighbourhoods in Bloom this year and recommending Communities enter Heart of England in Bloom instead. Due to the lack of volunteers, Meriden will not be entering Heart of England in Bloom due to the level of work required. Bloomers however, will continue to provide flowers and colourful displays of planters and baskets around the village.

Plans for 2017-18 are to include:

- 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.*
- To hold the first revamped Annual Parish Assembly as part of our Engagement Strategy.*

Rosie Weaver, Chair - May 2017".



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Chair thanked attendees and 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. Lewis Edwards - Neighbourhood Planning Group

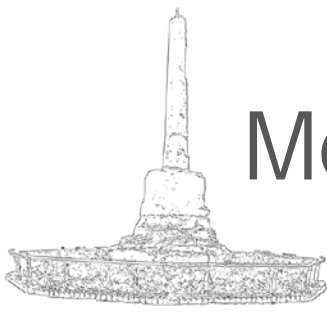
- A group of volunteers who are planning a sustainable future for Meriden
- Localism Act, old Parish Plan and Visual Design Statement following on from
- Designated area accepted
- Professional support from planning consultant
- Locality Funding secured and new application being submitted for 2017-18 to further plan development
- It is a complex process but will add more weight how Meriden is developed in the future
- Areas covered include protection of open space, flood/drainage, historical and sites of interest, conservation, prevention, renewable energy, housing allocation.
- Working group comprises 12 members.
- Household survey – published results
- Public engagement including questionnaires, attending community events
- Business Survey to be sent to local businesses and consultation is moving along
- Appealing for volunteers and local residents to get involved

2. Richard Tisdale and Chris Copper – Village Hall Management Committee

- Village Hall important to residents
- Average age 75
- Passionate about Village Hall and continues to be managed under the radar
- Aggrieved small grant has been withdrawn by Parish Council; it is run by Management Committee as a small business and gone are the days when Village Hall was run in an amateur way
- As an employer we are under immense pressure
- We are looking to welcome new members to join committee
- New chairs are needed; if Village Hall ceased to continue who would pick up pieces?
- 5 years ago secure Village Hall for generations to come including land, building and right of way
- Spent upwards of 5-6K legal fees to secure land
- The boiler needs replacing

3. Iain Roxburgh – Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust

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- Trust set up to promote and support sport and recreation in the village
- Manage endowment fund established by old playing field sale supporting Meriden Sports Park in perpetuity
- Started in February 2016 but only fully operational 1st April 2017
- Priority is to work with Meriden Sports Park to support business plan
- Launch small grants scheme for other organisations in Parish engaged in sport and recreation activities. The first round will finish on 1st June 2017 awarding grants soon afterwards.
- Other rounds will be announced in due course
- Produced annual report on Trust website and can be viewed on www.meridensrt.org.uk
- Sharing what we are doing whilst developing own organisation and providing opportunities for other organisations in the village to apply for funding. All attendees here tonight come under that category.

4. Frances Lynch-Smith – Meriden Rotary Club & Meriden Parish Council

- From 1st July 2017 she will be the incoming President
- Events organised include Santa Fun Run, Santa's Sleigh, Golf Day at Maxstoke, Megaride 25/6/17.
- President chooses Charity to support for next 12 months
- Parish Councillor serves on planning and speed watch sub committees
- Meriden Tree Warden supported by Volunteer, logging notable trees and TPOs.
- Attends Tree Warden meetings
- Responsible for footpaths and will cut back if needed
- Volunteers needed to walk around assisting with trees and footpath recording

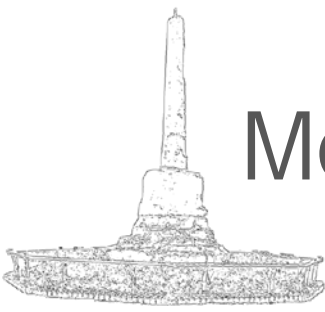
5. Malcolm Eggar – Meriden Sports Park & Associated Activities

- Volunteer management committee that form Board of Directors for the operational running of park
- Directors meet monthly and quarterly.
- Current issues usage and hire of pitches
- Teams using the pitches include cricket, weekend/20:20/league; youth football, Meriden Rovers, St Johns Rangers
- Co-op sponsor kits
- Coventry City Ladies and Burton Sils rate the pitch as quality but as they have progressed into higher divisions, the pitch does not meet league criteria with dug outs etc.
- The maintenance and sustainability is a lot to do on a voluntary basis. There is great support from parents and supporters together with Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust and long may it continue.

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6. Gerry Russell – 1st Meriden Scout Group

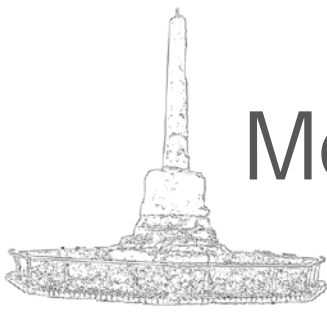
- Started in 1970 going for 47 years
- Scout hut beginning to show its age
- Beaver scouts 6-8 years
- Colts 9-10½ years – Cub Pack
- Scouts 10½-14 years
- Explorers 15-18 years
- All above age groups meet weekly to take part in different activities which includes Ackers tonight; Snowden walking
- Run totally by volunteers
- Offer training programmes
- First Aid and DBS checks
- HQ showing its age and looking around for support to maintain the buildings; scouts own land
- Young People help to develop and become better citizens. Good leaders for Meriden support – more volunteers needed – Queen Scout!

7. Alan Gabbitas – Leys Lane Allotment Association

- Allotment holder for last 40 years
- Never ceases to be surprised by God's garden
- Lots of enthusiasm from allotment holders but must keep on top of weeds
- Taylor Wimpey not delivered what they said i.e. water stand pipes as promised from initial meetings
- However pleased to say allotments looking good with 14 plots
- Water supply is not good and without method of collection water butts supplied by Taylor Wimpey useless
- Secure storage is a wooden 6'x8' shed but until Parish Council and Taylor Wimpey resolve issues, Taylor Wimpey keep the key so storage not accessible.
- Parish Council continue to extend driveway to serve all allotment plots.

8. Eleanor Willis – Parent Toddler Group & PTA

- Runs group with Vanessa Florey
- Tuesday mornings at Methodist Church hall
- Looking for volunteers
- PTA fundraising £8982.56 realised
- Summer & Christmas Fayres organised with Cake Hall, Ladies Indulgence evenings at Manor Hotel, various other events for Mother's and Father's Days.



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- Funds supporting Matching kits for football/netball; Year 2 new beanbags/Reception mats; Art supplies including paper/paint; Roman Workshop re-enactment; Year 6 Panto visit & ice creams; Trim Trial at school, Greenhouse, Year 6 First Aid Course.
- Volunteers and support needed.

9. Rachel Platt – Little Angels Parent Toddler Group & Meriden Sports Camps

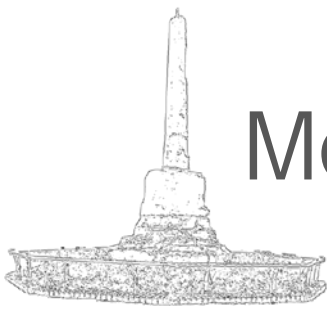
- Set up 2 businesses
- Little Angels Parent & Toddler Group Wednesday and Friday mornings at the Pavilion inviting new mums and family to baby and pre-school play sessions including coffee/toast
- Play Group at Meriden School
- Parent & Toddler group at Balsall Common
- Background trained as qualified nursery nurse
- Meriden Sports Camps for 4-12 year olds
- Sports activities between 09.30 and 3pm daily during school holidays
- 3rd time sports camps delivered at half term and all went very well
- Building business up slowly with connections with Rugby Clubs, coaches offering taster sessions.

10. Richard Marsh – Manor Hotel

- Introduced himself as new General Manager
- Welcome residents to use the Manor Hotel and develop a good relationship
- Already supporting Village activities and would love to host the Assembly
- Refurbishing Manor to include Marco Pierre White restaurant
- Provide resident discounts for community to use Manor bar and restaurant
- Keen to work with Meriden Archery providing taster sessions to guests
- Keen to work with Parish Council
- Mobile Mast exploration to increase better signal
- Local employer and currently recruiting new staff
- Community meetings

11. Rob Plenderleith – Meriden Archery Club

- Not to be confused with Arden Men
- Permanent grounds, small gated padlocked entrance with lighting to shoot at night
- 24/7 with targets up all the time
- Long Bow Olympic compound
- Do not support cross bows as there is no demand
- Affiliated to Archery GB



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- WCC – Sand Archery with 3 beginners courses each year and 2 hrs safety course running over 6 weeks.
- Running have a go sessions putting on a BBQ with coaches showing people how to shoot
- Members represent County, National and World Cup Teams
- Tournaments all around the County
- Coached Paralympic team

12. June Brown – Meriden Floral Society

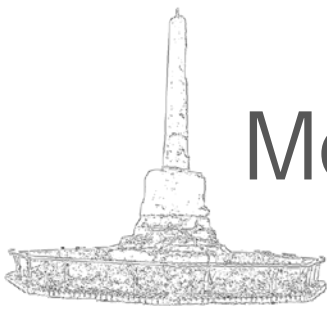
- 3rd Monday of the month
- Posters advertise events
- Evenings consist of a demonstration of flowers.
- Raffle tickets sold
- NAFFAS affiliated
- Twice a year there is a “practice class” competition
- Very careful financially and have to raise fees to NAFFAS.
- High quality of demonstrators
- Members include outlying villages – not all Meriden members.

13. Martin Graham – Street Association

- Meriden trialled as part of Street Association initiative as part of community spirit for hard to reach communities
- It has been interesting with good attendance initially and then frustrating as it was not sustained.
- Fairfield Rise and Alspatch Road targeted with 20% being lonely, an average of 9 residents were real friends, with other neighbours not known to one another, 60% thought there was no community spirit.
- The initiative started with a street BBQ with 45 residents attending.
- 23 names and addresses were taken with high spirits of sustaining but participants dropped off. About 14 stalwarts kept going.
- About 30 people attended a bring and share picnic, Halloween and Christmas Party.
- A disappointing outcome, but some real friendships have been formed.

14. Andrew Livingston – Heart of England School

- To connect with local community
- 18 months in Balsall Common as part of NDP committee (separate Berkswell) connecting with children, young people and parents.
- PC did some NP stakeholder survey work with HoE pupils from Meriden
- Sports Committee



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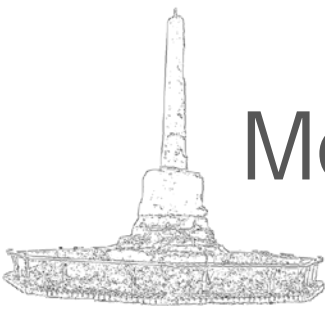
- Charity Mount Trust – direct monies to allow school to be proactive and support senior resident parties.
- All pupils part of Balsall Common Lions fundraising activities including mural for Balsall Common bonfire.
- More than happy to connect with PC and other community groups.
- Ideas: Scouts, take on challenge of Duke of Edinburgh Trust, licensed centre for bronze/silver awards for good business model; all volunteers, community leaders unpaid for role.
- PC role – any contribution towards £200 for silver award and set up kit.

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
- Profile of pupils increased 30% above national average of 14%
- Additional support is needed as there are SEN, vulnerable youngsters, domestic violence and other social family demographic
- Want to extend family support with family liaison.
- Before and After school provision – school developing dedicated events
- Ofsted good – aiming for outstanding by next inspection 2018
- Internationally recognised as anti-bullying with whole school approval and training being offered.
- A host to lots of groups
- Challenging times to securing long term future

16. Val Martin & Margarete Argyle – Meriden Mag

- In the 1990's Meriden Mag stopped
- In 1998 children voted and the WI helped to get a community mag started again.
- An advert in 2001 asking for help and Margarete and Val took over the Meriden Mag from a 2 side information sheet to what it is today.
- It is run by volunteers with all advertising costs going towards the printing and publication.
- There is a small voluntary team of Co-editors, Treasurer, Distribution and webpage.
- Its content includes village news, calendar of events, advertising, local companies start up, "by the community for the community".
- 4 good quality issues produced
- Basically it is a closed unit that works really well.
- Help the PC can provide is financial sustainability and new computer(s).



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17. Val Martin – Firebird Singers

- Treasurer of Group
- 60 Members
- Village Hall for rehearsals
- Charity support this year is Alzheimer's Society
- Christmas Concert a great success and sold out with 260 people attending at Meriden Manor.

18. Pam Cooper – CAMEO & Churches Together

- 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
- Church members always ending in prayer
- Guest speakers include local police officer, charities including wounded soldiers and hospice, every new Vicar attends and also Salvation Army.
- Outings include Strawberry Tea, At Home, Christmas Lunch, Lunch
- Since Community Centre closed base has been Pavilion which is central and a lovely park with easy access, but limited on space and sometimes we have to move out to Village Hall during school holidays.
- Thanks to Barbara Bland who ensures access, chairs/tables are set out, cutlery and crockery issues are resolved.
- A Tea Party was held as a community outreach event with class 5 providing tea, cake and chat which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

19. Cllr David Bell – Meriden United Charities & Ward Councillor

- Trustee for 17 years
- A wonderful charity going back hundreds of years.
- Money invested in blue chip industries with awards being made of 10's and 100's.
- The charity meets 3 times per year. One condition of award is any recipient must live in Meriden.
- Address of clerk is in Meriden Mag.
- As Ward Councillor receive complaints and act accordingly.

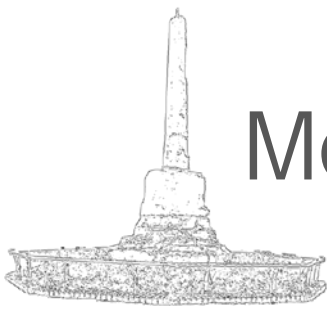
20. Cllr Tony Diccio – Ward Councillor Solihull MBC

- There are 3 Ward Councillors
- Elected 5 years ago
- Cabinet Member5 for Stronger Communities and Policing.
- Collaboration with Parish Council who are proactive and gets things done
- Planning and Local Plan Review – expected 50 new houses on Birmingham Road.

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- Balsall Common expected to take 1200 house developments which will impact on rural neighbours which we are trying to manage. The key issue is to get some pay-back and new facilities.
- Any issues please get in touch.

21. Kevin Hunt & Lyn Hunt – MCF Life Church

- Life Ministers of Pentecostal Church working in Meriden Parish for 11 years.
- Close relationship with Methodist and St Laurence Churches as part of Joint Churches Together
- Firs social friendship groups including crafts, sit & chat, music including instruments.
- Providing a musical therapeutic service
- Attends Meriden school assemblies which are great fun
- Prisoner Ministry and Prison Service support
- Chaplaincy connect service bringing together 80-120 people every month with Ministry Time Together
- Woodland View establishing prayer service becoming in-house Chaplain supporting the young people.
- There is no building so very mobile service but with a building could do so much more concentrating effort into community.
- Unfortunately the Centre charity shop closed down.

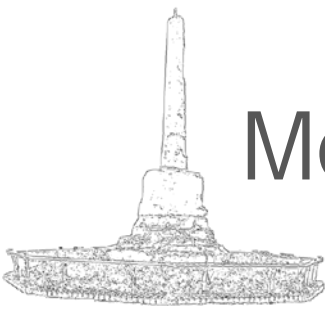
22. Rev Jane Braund – Meriden Methodist Church

- Covers Meriden, Balsall Common and Fillongley
- Open up facilities for anyone wishing to use the room. Hall is all booked.
- Churches working together is key partnership
- Cyclist's Memorial 18th May
- Escape from Meriden event meets on Green at mid-night with people dispersing and recording how far they get on 2nd June.
- How can we serve you? What can we do for you?
- In June Community Café launches for people isolated, community support, supper club 3rd Wednesday of every month and café service 1st Sunday of every month. All welcome.

23. Rev Lynda Lilley – St Laurence Church

- Heart of Village
- Services held every Sunday with some dedicated services on the Green.
- Commonly a hatch, match and despatch service.
- Introduced "Messy Church" for youngsters to get involved
- A new initiative "Community Café" organised by Churches Together to meet at Pavilion every fortnight with free use of the Pavilion to see how it goes.

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- Community event for all ages to come together for coffee, tea and cake building relationships and community support.
- To meet 2nd Friday of every month working with CAMEO to provide All Together and Cameo alternate Fridays.

24. Flick Blewitt – WI

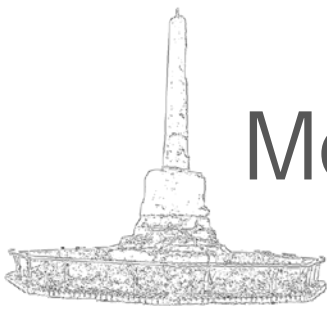
- 2015 was WI Centenary
- She and Joan Russell attended Buckingham Palace Garden Party
- President with 32 Members
- Fairly active with plenty of activities, excellent guest speakers, National Trust trips, theatre trips.
- PC cannot do much to help.
- 2018 will be the 100th Centenary of Meriden WI and planning is underway for celebrations and commemoration.

25. Lis Willis – Heart of England Cricket Club

- Church Warden
- Parish Safeguarding Officer
- Heart of England CC Secretary.
- There are 3 teams – T20 Coventry, Sunday Team Arden League and Saturday Team.
- Priorities to progress into higher divisions – WCC consider Sports Park to be substandard for higher divisions with artificial wicket (Astroturf). Unfortunately there are no cricketers from Meriden who play for HoE CC.
- Since setting up in village HOE are joint 1st in Division 8 Saturday league and 3rd in Division 2 Arden Sunday league.
- There have been extensive talks with PC regarding multisport area that needs lifting and replacing, maintenance of grass. There are no side screens and it is a public park. Need to promote cricket, there is a need to put in an inner circle for fielding restrictions.
- Positively the park is a beautiful setting attracting families and spectators.
- HoE unable to provide junior coaches and this will mean we will lose youngsters to Berkswell CC. There are approximately 30 children attending Friday training sessions.

26. Doreen Agutter – WW1 Committee

- Great War Committee
- First meeting was held in 2013
- Responsibility for commemoration of events and postscript in a charitable role
- The committee supports ABF (Army Benevolent Fund)



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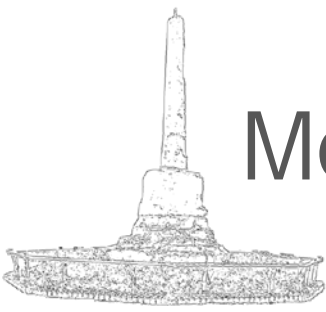
- In spring 2016 Meriden hosted Great War Society re-enactment weekend with VADs, commencing with a special Church service commemorating 1916.
- Funding has been obtained by Heritage Lottery Fund providing Candlelight Vigils at the War Memorial denoting Meriden's connection. This starts in Church and finishes at the War Memorial and it is a privilege to be part of. The next one will be 30th May 2017.
- There were three deaths to commemorate 100 years in 2016 and there is one in 2017.
- A talk was organised in the Village Hall for the local community which was popular.
- The funding enabled a wonderful book to be produced with some very emotional research undertaken that has provided a lasting record of Meriden's WW1 history for future generations.
- Other events include Royal Corps of Signals cricket and football fixtures and rural cinema.
- Planning next session for 1918 Commemorative Event as part of Meriden's 5 year Commemoration Events. Thinking ahead also to the National Cyclist's Memorial Service.

Chair 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. She added that it had been really important to have as many community groups included in the Annual Assembly and hoped the success of the evening will be valued by all present and continued for the future with new links to different organisations being made.

Chair referred to the networking observed during the earlier refreshment break and again hoped that local organisations found this a worthwhile opportunity 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 21.35 hours.



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