



Meriden Parish Council

the centre of england

APPENDIX 1

Meriden Annual Parish Meeting 29 April 2013 Chair's Report

It's been another challenging year with the issues and concerns raised by residents, the planning applications and the extreme weather conditions we have endured.

It took one year and eight months for the parish council to recruit new councillors by co-option and we are now back to a full council of 8 members. We appointed Barbara Bland as Parish Clerk in July 2012 and she has made excellent progress and is based at the sports pavilion twice a week. The parish council would like to thank Diane Weir who acted as interim clerk until Barbara's appointment. Since Councillor Dr Peter Lea retired, a new district councillor was elected in May 2012, Cllr Tony Diccico.

Planning matters have taken up considerable time and money during this year. In June 2012, a public inquiry was held at the Heart of England Club over the proposed development of 45 homes in Leys Lane by Taylor Wimpey Homes (TWH) which both Solihull Council and the parish council had objected to. Planning permission was granted in November and the revised plans for 40 homes will begin construction in June 2013. TWH came to our pc meeting with their property consultant Barton Willmore in December 2012 to share with us the plans and how they would manage the building site in terms of minimum traffic, noise, dust and parking disruptions. They have agreed to keep the parish council in touch with their plans. The allotment holders on this site nearly lost their access at the crucial planting season until the parish council intervened. A reasonable resolution was found and Taylor Wimpey Homes gave them the access they needed from March 2013. A temporary tenancy agreement with the parish council is being drawn up.

Eaves Green Lane saw two further planning applications to re-site the gypsy caravans to the adjacent yard, firstly for eight caravans, rejected by Solihull Council, and subsequently for two caravans, also rejected. The injunction served on the gypsies stated they had to vacate by the end of March 2013 and restore the site to its original state by end of April 2013. Due to the severe weather this was extended to 21 April and the site is now vacant. The restoration must be completed by 21 May. The decision to reject the two caravans has been appealed and will go to public inquiry later in the year.

Shirley's Garage was granted permission this year to build 7 homes on the site of the garage. The Community Centre on Alspath Road announced they would close at the end of March 2013 and the plans are to build a couple of bungalows in its place for community housing. Users of the community centre have been re-homed.

A planning application was granted for an extension of 15 years for sand and gravel extraction with two conveyor runs that is currently taken from Meriden. Two other applications currently in process are for a new mineral extraction site, and change of use for a recycling operation at Cornet End's Lane. Colliery spoil and inert waste will be taken to Area G off the Birmingham Road opposite the archery club. NRS Wastecare will infill the quarry with these materials to bring the



Meriden Parish Council

the centre of england

APPENDIX 1

land back to its original state. It was also confirmed that Daw Mills Colliery has had to shut due to a fire and this means no spoil will come through the village from this site.

Since the parish council invited Tarmac to their council meeting in October, a Quarry Liaison Group has now been set up to liaise between the landowners of the Meriden Quarries being Packington Estate and Harcourt Estate, representatives of the Parish Council in Meriden and Hampton-in-Arden, a local resident representative, officers from Solihull Council comprising Planning, Highways and Neighbourhood Co-ordinator, and operators including Lafarge Tarmac, NRS Wastecare, Coleman, Tarmac Building Products and Hope Ready-Mix Concrete.

Many complaints have been received from residents over the construction traffic to and from Meriden Gate and their irresponsible parking, the refuge crossing and pedestrian safety. The parish council monitors the situation closely with Solihull Council and continue to lobby for a pedestrian crossing on Fillongley Road.

Solihull Council was considering the re-location of the library to the primary school. The parish council invited the Head of Libraries to discuss the situation at June's parish council meeting. Many concerned residents attended where they were promised the library would not close, but that the building was not fit for purpose. It was resolved to conduct a survey over the location of the library and this took place over the summer months. Results confirmed that the school was not an option and that residents were happy with its current location. The parish council is still in dialogue with Solihull Council over the potential refurbishment of the first floor of the library to create more space. From 1 April 2013, the library opening hours on Mondays and Thursdays changed to 10am-6pm instead of 7pm.

Weather conditions were extreme this year; the summer was a wash-out most days and affected the drainage on the sports park. The winter saw heavy snow and in December Meriden was flooded from the Bull's Head up to the surgery. Many homes were damaged by the floods and a public meeting was held in January inviting Solihull Council's flood risk manager Neal Thomas and Severn Trent Water's senior network technician Ian Shaw to explain to the residents the cause and what was being done to rectify the matter. A follow up meeting was held in March showing the results of the camera survey and what rectifications had been achieved / are to be pursued. Neal Thomas and Ian Shaw will return to the Village Hall on 15 May from 7:00pm with a progress report.

Our parish council precept remains the same at £40,000. With the reduction in council tax benefits from April 2013, the precept potentially could have been set higher, but for this year Solihull Council gave parish and town councils across the borough a grant to help with the reduced tax base. This grant is not expected in 2014.

HS2 continues to concern us and through the Solihull Area Committee, of which Cllr Weaver is chair, we lobby Solihull Council for its support and publicity of mitigation plans and Cllr Lynch-Smith attends HS2 meetings. We have contributed to the judicial review which goes into the



Meriden Parish Council

the centre of england

APPENDIX 1

national big pot. We constantly raise our concerns of the noise, pollution, blight and construction traffic that will be generated. More information can be found at the Heart of England High Speed Rail Action Group's website www.hhag.org.uk.

The parish council celebrated the Queen's Diamond Jubilee by organising events at the sports park over the bank holiday weekend. A friendly cricket match took place on the Friday evening between Meriden Cricket Club and Solihull Municipal Cricket Club. A five-a-side football tournament was held on the Saturday for both adults and children followed by a curry and music night at the Heart of England Club. Rain stopped play on Sunday, but the sunshine returned on the Bank Holiday Monday for the Queen's Head's street party. Bank Holiday Tuesday saw a family fun day at the sports park. It was cold, but the rain held off and everyone enjoyed the day. Many thanks to sports co-ordinator Paul Jayes for organising the sporting events on Saturday and Tuesday and to the residents who volunteered their time to serve refreshments at the pavilion. All proceeds from the curry night and refreshments served at the pavilion went to Cancer Research UK.

A five-a-side tournament returns this year during the Coronation Weekend. Saturday 1 June 2013 will be for the children and Sunday 2 June for the adults. Meriden Spar in conjunction with Alan Lole will hold a Sunday Fun Day that weekend on the Village Green fund raising for Marie Curie and MacMillan cancer charities.

The cricket season started in May 2012 with Meriden Cricket Club playing on Tuesday evenings and Solihull Municipal Cricket Club playing on Saturdays. The rain disrupted at least half of their matches and we hope for better weather this season which starts next month.

Meriden Rovers Junior Football Club kicked off their first league season in September 2012. We now have two teams, Under 10s and Under 13s. The Under 13s won the league title on Sunday 28 April 2013 and are in the cup final 5 May 2013. The parish council would like to thank Darren Brown and Paul Harrold for joining Meriden Rovers with their Under 13s team. And thanks to Cllr Jon Barber, sports coach Paul Jayes and Kevin Meek for founding Meriden Rovers JFC and managing the Under 10s. Everyone concerned is keen to see other age groups coming on board.

The adult football teams continue to choose Meriden Sports Park as their home ground. Triumph Meriden FC were promoted from Division 7 to Division 4 in the Birmingham AFA league this season and have now guaranteed their promotion for next season. They suffered many injuries and their player manager Dean Sherrington had to resign from playing due to his knee injury. St John's Rangers FC play on Sundays and were promoted to the premier division of the Coronation League. They've had a tough season and we wish them well for next season.

In August, the parish council sponsored free netball training for girls and ladies which was provided by coach Emma Haines. Hopefully, the interest is still there and we'd like to see netball return for Tuesday evening training sessions.



Meriden Parish Council

the centre of england

APPENDIX 1

Tennis coaching came to the sports park in September 2012 provided by coach Collen Mhlanga. Practice takes place every Sunday from 10am at the sports park for both children and adults. We thank Collen for approaching us with his vision and he now has a following of a dozen or so children and he's slowly building up adult interest too.

Sports camps continue to run during half term and summer holiday periods at Meriden Sports Park. These are organised by Paul Jayes and have proved very successful over the last year.

Meriden Rotary Club organised the annual Meriden Megaride in June 2012 and the motorcyclists drove through the village to the Queen's Head where music and other entertainment was provided. They also organised Meriden's first Santa Fun Run which was a delightful sight watching 140 'Santas' run the 4km from Meriden Hall. They raised over £4000 for Marie Curie. This year's Megaride will take place on Sunday 23 June 2013 and Santa Fun Run on Sunday 8 December.

We decided not to enter the Best Kept Village competition in 2012 as the state of the roads and traffic caused by construction at Meriden Gate would certainly not be seen as 'best kept'. We will not be entering in 2013 either nor with Solihull Council's 'In Bloom' project as more construction work is to follow. But we thank Bruce Brant for donating six large flower boxes to the parish. Thanks go to Andrew Arnold of Brailes Farm who installed them throughout the parish with his farming equipment and our gardener Brian Ball for the planting scheme he designed for them.

The majority of the capital from the sale of homes at Meriden Gate has been transferred to our public sector holding account. The parish council will be forming a company limited by guarantee for the running and maintenance of Meriden Sports Park. This should be up in running in May, the start of the new municipal year.

On a personal level, I want to thank all the other councillors who have supported me this last year. Finally, on behalf of the Parish Council - a big thank you to Barbara the parish clerk, who in a short time has come to grips with her role, mastered our financial software and split the accounts into council and sports park and manages both council and sports park matters in her stride.

Melanie Lee
Chair
April 2013