



# Meriden Parish Council

*the centre of england*

## **Meriden Annual Parish Meeting 27 April 2015 Chair's Report**

This year has seen Meriden Parish Council set a model example of successful partnership working with local government, businesses, community groups and residents.

We have worked well with highways, drainage and planning officers from Solihull Council to deliver results for the parish, all facilitated through the hard work of Solihull's Neighbourhood Team and in particular Bruce Brant, our Neighbourhood Co-ordinator.

The Quarry Liaison Committee, chaired by Cllr David Bell, is well attended at a senior level from the quarry companies Tarmac Lafarge, NRS Wastecare, A&A Recycling, Coleman & Co, Cemex Hope Construction, Packington Estate and Harworth Estate, with Solihull Council officers and residents.

Meriden's First World War Centenary Commemorations working group made up of representatives from the Scouts, St Laurence Church, Village Hall, Meriden's Women's Institute, Cameo, Meriden Tree of Thought, Meriden Rotary Club and our local historian meet regularly to plan community events that provide historical references to Meriden during the Great War.

A great part of the success we have achieved through partnership working has been thanks to the excellent work of our Clerk, Barbara Bland.

Through partnership working, we won Meriden Best Village and Commemoration of World War One in the Solihull Neighbourhoods in Bloom competition. This is thanks to our contractors Dovetail Facilities Management, Brian Ball, AMS and sponsors NRS Wastecare Limited, Taylor Wimpey Homes, Pertemps, Meriden Tea Rooms, Spar, Meriden Fish & Chips, Fordes on The Green, The Bull's Head and Alan Lole who donated thousands of poppy seeds that have been sown throughout the Parish. All those named achieved the display of hanging baskets outside the village shops and businesses, Memorial Approach with its floral poppy display and the floral display on Coronation Island. More is planned for 2015 and we will be entering both Solihull and Heart of England in Bloom with many more volunteers on board.

Thanks to Solihull Council's highways officers and Taylor Wimpey Homes, Memorial Approach improved by removing the parking bay and erecting a new bus shelter.

Our Clerk, Barbara Bland, negotiated a Service Level Agreement with NRS Wastecare to maintain Coronation Island and its surrounding through roads and verges over the 15 years they will operate from Area G. Each year they will contribute £1500 for maintenance and £500 for Solihull in Bloom.

Rural cinema came to Meriden in June last year through the hard work of the Village Hall Committee. The first screening was War Horse followed by Frozen, Philomena, Private Peaceful, What We Did on Our Holiday, The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel and the Imitation Game.

The WW1 working group received a grant of £8,700 from the Heritage Lottery Fund thanks to Cllr Rosie Weaver's help in preparing the bid with me. This helped fund coach trips to Imperial War Museum and National Memorial Arboretum and this year's upcoming events.



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Thanks to Meriden Rotary Club who funded the Bulkington Silver Band's appearance at last year's Family Picnic in the Park; they played music from the WW1 era. Meriden's Women's Institute are to be commended for the display they put on at the picnic 'Meriden in the First World War'.

A tree survey was commissioned by the parish council. Cllr Lynch-Smith worked with local arboriculturist Charles Harrison to catalogue all the trees with Tree Preservation Orders. This work is being shared with neighbouring councils who have shown interest in doing the same.

Residents at Meriden Gate formed a Neighbour Watch committee working with the police.

We launched the consultation required for Meriden's Neighbourhood Plan to begin and engaged with residents at Meriden C of E Primary School's Christmas Fayre, collecting contact details of those who wished to participate in the plan's development. Solihull Council's Cabinet approved our parish as the designated area for the plan. Our first meeting with officers and residents took place this month facilitated by our planning consultant, Neil Pearce.

The library closed for refurbishment earlier in the year and opened on 9 April with a brand new computing suite funded by Meriden Parish Council. It now houses ten computers from its original three.

Community events were once again successfully organised. We send a special thank you to Alan Lole for Meriden Tree of Thought who has raised to date over £43,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support and Marie Curie Hospice Solihull. Special thanks also go to Meriden Rotary Club for the 10<sup>th</sup> Meriden Megaride in June and the 3rd Santa Fun Run in December. Meriden's three churches held a carol service on the green in December which was, once again, well attended.

Reverend Kate Massey moved onto St Paul's Church, Stockingford, Nuneaton in January to take up a full-time position there. She was a great asset to the community and served St Laurence Church well as part of her internship. We wish her well and thank her for her contributions to Meriden. Welcome to Reverend Lynda Lilley who joined St Laurence Church in February and will serve the community on a part-time basis.

Sadly, we have to report incidents of vandalism at one of our assets for the community, Meriden Sports Park. As unpleasant as it sounds, it needs mentioning that there have been repeat sightings of human faeces and toilet paper 'dumped' next to the tennis courts and most recently in the children's play area. The trees have also been vandalised with twigs being snapped off and bark cut off their trunks. Benches too have been vandalised with graffiti. Our contractors will continue to be observant and the police have been informed. If anyone sees anything suspicious or unpleasant taking part in any part of our parish, please report to the Clerk.

Finally, to end on a positive note, the good examples presented this evening go far in demonstrating that Meriden Parish Council is regarded by Solihull Council and neighbouring parishes as a parish council of good practice. I thank all our councillors and the clerk for contributing to such positive team work.

Melanie Lee  
Chair  
2015