

Community Engagement Strategy

Aims and Objectives

To develop:

- A vibrant and engaged community that understands the value a parish council can offer.
- A community that uses the council to help develop the parish for the benefit of residents.
- A community that is proud of its parish and actively works to foster pride through involvement in parish development

We deliver on our aims through:

- support for community facilities,
- two-way communication with residents,
- actively encouraging and supporting community involvement,
- partnership working, and
- 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, Filllongley, Eaves Green, Church Lane, Harvest Hill, Four Oaks (Back Lane & 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 is also a group of detached and semi-detached houses fronting the south side of Hampton Lane together with the existing Meriden Sports Park and Parish Council Offices. 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

Clerk: Barbara Bland, 55 James Dawson Drive, Millisons Wood, Coventry, CV5 9QJ

T: 01676 522474 **M:** 07767 162423 **E:** barbarablandmpc@btconnect.com

E: clerk@meridenparishcouncil.org.uk

www.meridenparishcouncil.org.uk

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 (centred 6.5 miles south-east).

Some demographic information is in the Appendix to this Statement.

Community facilities include:

- Village shops and take-away food outlets
- A post office
- A doctor's surgery
- Several places of worship
- A village hall in Meriden used by local organisations
- Infant and junior school in Meriden
- High School (not in the parish but serving the community)
- Sports Park with a Pavilion managed by Meriden Sports Park.
- A small public open space in named surrounding area
- Football and Cricket Clubs
- A play area
- Recreational footpaths, linked to Heart of England Way and Millennium Way.
- A Library with computer suite.
- Railway stations close by in Hampton-in-Arden and Berkswell.
- A bus service serving Meriden and surrounding areas to Coventry, Birmingham and Solihull.

At its widest the community comprises:

- all those living in, working in and visiting the parish or using its facilities
- businesses and employers in the parish
- voluntary organisations working for the benefit of the community

Provision of information to the community

Meriden Parish Council provides information to the community in the following ways:

- There is a website (www.meridenparishcouncil.org.uk) which includes:
 - A front page with news about the Parish Council (including forthcoming meetings) and other news of interest to the community
 - Minutes and agendas of all council and committee meetings for the past two years, and supporting documents
 - Information about payments over £500 [or over £100 if smaller parish]
 - A copy of the latest Annual Report, including financial information
 - Contact details for all councillors and the Clerk

Clerk: Barbara Bland, 55 James Dawson Drive, Millisons Wood, Coventry, CV5 9QJ

T: 01676 522474 **M:** 07767 162423 **E:** barbarablandmpc@btconnect.com

E: clerk@meridenparishcouncil.org.uk

www.meridenparishcouncil.org.uk



- A calendar of meetings
 - A copy of the Council' Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
 - A copy of the Council's Complaints Procedure
 - A copy of the Council's Freedom of Information Scheme
 - Links to the County/District/Borough Councils and sites of interest
-
- The Parish Council has a Twitter account and its Facebook page is updated regularly with matters of interest.
 - People can sign up to receive emails from the Parish Council on matters of interest.
 - Agendas of forthcoming meetings are displayed on Parish Council notice boards.
 - A newsletter is published four times a year in the Meriden Mag which delivered free to all residents.
 - The Annual Report is published by the end of June, and is made available in hard copy at the Parish Council office and Meriden Library. The Annual Report includes an overview of activities as well as financial information taken from the published Annual Return.
 - Hard copies of minutes and supporting documents are available on request.
 - More detailed financial information is available on request.

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 is set aside for public participation, which enables residents and representatives of community organisations to speak and ask questions.
- Councillors attend 'surgeries' every month at either the Parish Council office or Meriden Library.
- All residents have the opportunity to request items for inclusion on the Annual Assembly agenda.
- All residents have the opportunity to speak and ask questions at the Annual Assembly.
- Community organisations can be asked to make a presentation and /or have a display stand at the Annual Assembly.
- There is a 'Contact Us' page on the website
- Contact details for the council and for individual councillors are prominently displayed on the Parish Council website.

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

- Financial support for organisations working for the benefit of the community in Meriden and named surrounding area.
- Provision of sports and recreational facilities for all sections of the community: play areas, sports fields, open spaces and footpaths.
- Financial support for sports and recreation clubs providing opportunities for young people in the community.

Clerk: Barbara Bland, 55 James Dawson Drive, Millisons Wood, Coventry, CV5 9QJ

T: 01676 522474 **M:** 07767 162423 **E:** barbarablandmpc@btconnect.com

E: clerk@meridenparishcouncil.org.uk

www.meridenparishcouncil.org.uk



Involvement in partnerships

Meriden Parish Council is represented on:

- Meriden Village Hall Management Committee
- Meriden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- County Association of Local Councils
- Solihull Area Committee
- Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust

The Parish Council also works in close partnership with:

- Meriden Sports Park management company
- Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust
- St Laurence PCC
- Methodist Church

Meriden Parish Council also works in partnership with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

Role of council members and officers

Members of Meriden Parish Council:

- 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
- Attend monthly 'surgeries' when nominated
- Represent the council on community organisations (above)
- Are available to be contacted by residents and community organisations

The Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer of Meriden Parish Council:

- Is available to the public when the Parish Council Office is open to the public, at least two days a week
- 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

Clerk: Barbara Bland, 55 James Dawson Drive, Millisons Wood, Coventry, CV5 9QJ

T: 01676 522474 **M:** 07767 162423 **E:** barbarablandmpc@btconnect.com

E: clerk@meridenparishcouncil.org.uk

www.meridenparishcouncil.org.uk



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 Plan
- The development of a new burial ground
- The development of older people's housing
- Engagement with any future developers to ensure community needs are met.
- Meriden Pool Project
- Participatory budgeting

Scope for Meriden Parish Council to improve community engagement

Meriden Parish Council will seek to improve its engagement with all sectors of the community, including the use of social media such as Facebook. The Parish Council will consider in particular how to engage more fully with hard-to-reach groups such as:

- Young people
- Older people
- Ethnic minorities
- Disabled people
- People with caring responsibilities

Meriden Parish Council is keen to hear from people with suggestions for improvements in community engagement.

Incentives

Provide tea and coffee with biscuits or sandwiches alternatively cheese and wine – depending on available budgets!

Adopted by Meriden Parish Council on 24th April 2017 Signed

Cllr R Weaver – Chair

Review date: 01 April 2020

APPENDIX: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ABOUT MERIDEN PARISH

This information, taken mainly from the 2011 census, relates to the Parish of Meriden

- 14% of the population is under 16.
- 61% are between 16 and 64.
- 25% are 65 or over.

- The average age is 43.78 years.

- There are 80% houses, 12% flats and 8% caravan/mobile homes.

- 64% of the population of working age are economically active (i.e. employed, full-time or part-time, or self-employed).

- 85% of households own at least one car.

- 73% of the working age population are qualified to degree level or above.

- 27% of the working age population do not have any qualifications.

- 20% of the population are described as having a limiting long-term illness.