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# CHAIRS REPORT 2019 – 2020

This Annual Report for 2019-2020 is based on the Annual Assembly held in April 2019 where members of the parish council met with members of the community. The issues raised were many and I am reporting on the actions the Parish Council has taken.

Due to Covid-19, meetings and actions since March have had to be suspended. However, a joint initiative with St Laurence Church was set up in March 2020 “**The Meriden Helpline**”. All households got a leaflet through the door just before lockdown with a single phone number for any resident who needs help with shopping, collection of medication or just someone to talk to. I would like to thank the volunteers who answer the phone (we’ve answered 350 calls so far) and the 55 volunteers who are asked to venture out or call someone who needs a chat. We are working closely with SMBC, local school and GP practice The NHS have helped us with PPE equipment and we have provided gloves and gel. There have been many acts of kindness by others, too many to mention, and we appreciate every single one.

**The Helpline Number is 07483 371204 8am to 8pm every day**

## FEEDBACK FROM THE ASSEMBLY

### THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Recycling plant, quarries and air pollution

The Parish Council listened to residents and worked in partnership with SMBC public health and the Environment Agency for monitoring equipment to be placed in the parish. You will have noticed the monitoring stations sited in the sports park car park by the EA and near Meriden C of E Primary School by SMBC Public Health. Data will be recorded and evaluated at the end of 3-6 months of monitoring.

2. The effects of HS2

The Parish Council continue to promote the attendance of HS2/LM/BBV at parish council meetings on a quarterly basis for residents to receive updates, raise their concerns and receive answers to their questions. The recent review concluded the project will go ahead and work will continue on M42 junction 6, A446 and A452. Work is already progressing the new road layouts and station build. The community engagement team continue to organise drop-ins and information updates and these are publicised on the parish council website, Facebook page and noticeboards.

### BUS SERVICE, TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

1. Parking restrictions

Phase 1 has been completed with refresh of yellow lines, no loading and time restrictions supported by the Enforcement Officer. Phase 2 has been out for consultation and has been shared on the Parish Council Facebook page and website. These works will continue by SMBC based upon public feedback.

2. Disabled carpark spaces

The parish council has put this request to SMBC highways officers for their suggestions.

3. Bus services on Sundays transport services for villages with additional needs (elderly and vision impaired).

The Parish Council continue to liaise with Transport for West Midlands for sustainable transport services connecting Meriden to Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull. After a period of uncertainty Community Transport took over “the little blue bus” linking to service 89. A new edition to service 82 now the X20 introduced connection to Stratford-upon-Avon via Solihull Station and Shirley; a welcome addition with increased connectivity for our community.

4. Enforcement Officer

The trial initiative of Meriden’s own Enforcement Officer jointly funded by the Parish Council and SMBC has proved successful. Moving forward we will be funding the Enforcement Officer 100% for 2020-2021. Currently 145 tickets have been issued with 120 fines paid generating an income of £3,000.

5. Speeding through the village is a problem

Speedwatch was reinstated in October 2019 with insurance and support from WM police team in place. The team comprising police, parish council and volunteers has carried out 4 sessions with 60 letters sent out by West Midlands Police. We have a trained volunteer team of 12 supporting Speed Watch. If you are interested in joining the Speedwatch team please email: [Jon.Barber@meridenparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:Jon.Barber@meridenparishcouncil.org.uk)

## SPORT

1. A disabled swing in the park for children

Sports Park Directors have considered the introduction of a disabled swing; however with scoping works carried out by playground specialists there will be a need to redesign areas of the existing play area due to the minimum space required for swing movement without impacting safety of park users. Currently there is the basket swing for multi-use however a better solution will be considered for the future.

2. More sports opportunities for children and young people

Sports Park Directors are discussing opportunities with external providers for Saturday football training; resurrection of Junior and Youth teams and an improved sports camp offer to families for their children/young people to participate in sports activities. The Girls FA Wildcat programme has proved very popular and has moved to Meriden School for winter training.

3. “Velo was not a good idea”. “Need more public consultation on future Velo events etc”.

The Velo event has proven unpopular with many residents, and the restricting access to and from homes with the many road closures imposed. SMBC lead on the event and many representations have been made to officers for a re-routing of the event to provide residents with greater movement on event day and local stewards to be used with a knowledge of the road networks in and around Meriden. Currently with Covid-19 the event is cancelled for 2020.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. Keep development to a minimum

The parish council appointed a Consultant to assist with the “call for sites” minimising the impact of future developments in our local community. Independent assessments were carried out on the suitability of identified

sites in Meriden with the outcome of only one being considered which had been previously put forward for development.

2. Neighbourhood plan feedback from residents – “excellent document we need to protect our fabulous green spaces”.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan has been a long process for all those involved in its creation for the protection of Meriden’s history and sustainability of its future. We are lucky that the Parish retains much of its rural charm whilst being accessible to Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull with good road and transport networks. Of course key to this is Meriden’s landscape and historical value being part of the historic Vale of Arden and protected Meriden Gap.

3.”Lets push for affordable housing to attract young families into the village to build future generations in the community”, “Affordable housing for people tied to the parish”, “Covenants to stop affordable housing being extended and sold at a profit which always happens and then they’re not affordable”.

All Parish Council negotiations with developers and housing associations will be to provide the best offer for a sustainable future for Meriden’s community.

## GENERAL UPDATES

1. Neighbourhood Development Plan nears completion with Regulation 14 concluded and the process is about to go to Regulation 16. SMBC is currently reviewing the NDP and we await their outcome prior to submitting to the Planning Inspectorate with a community Referendum expected next year. Unfortunately the process has been delayed once more due to Covid-19.

The NDP can be accessed on [www.meridenparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.meridenparishcouncil.org.uk)

2. Youth Council

Cllr James Hughes has taken the lead for setting up a Youth Council. He is supported by myself Cllr Weaver and Cllr Woollard. Key aims of the strategy are:-

- ❖ Identify young talent in the community to ensure the council is both delivering a good service now and long into the future,
- ❖ Incorporate young people into the decision-making process within their community, giving young people a voice on issues important to them,
- ❖ Equip young people in the parish with the skills and infrastructure to better their future in an increasingly complex and competitive world.

If you are interested in being involved email: [James.hughes@meridenparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:James.hughes@meridenparishcouncil.org.uk)

3. Meriden Library

The Parish Council has worked with SMBC Library Services to sustain a Library and its building in Meriden. The Parish Council has been reserving funds from precept to match fund SMBC for the first floor strengthening works so the library building may be better used. The purpose will be the relocation of the parish council office to the first floor and with the clerk on site the opportunity for increased access to the library may be offered to residents and for community use.

4. War Memorials

The Parish Council successfully completed the transfer of the War Memorial from St Laurence Church PCC. A clean up of the site was undertaken prior to Remembrance Day service by the Parish Council. Further maintenance is required, and the pre-submission application has been accepted by the Heritage Lottery Fund Memorials Trust for a formal application for funding for the maintenance and repairs

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required. A successful meeting was also held with the Conservators of the National Cyclists Memorial for funding to carry out a clean and maintenance of the Memorial. The centenary service is scheduled for May 2021.

5. Climate Emergency

The Parish Council declared a Climate Emergency in January 2020. Volunteers are required for a task and finish group to look at what may be done within the parish and at a local level. If you are interested please contact the clerk.

6. Meriden Pool

The Friends Group continues to steer the work at Meriden Pool which is looking great. There is crossover with SMBC Rangers and Public Realm officers in supporting the volunteers. An additional picnic bench has been sited and another bench has been purchased by Meriden Bloomers for seating on the rear pathway. The Meriden Mag has donated funds for a further seat to be sited on the newly created pathway to enjoy the views. Plans to have a history board are also under way. There is work to do and anyone wishing to get involved would be welcomed by the group. The Christmas calendars raised funds to assist with hand tools for volunteer maintenance. Thank you to everyone who supported the Friends Group in purchasing a calendar.

7. Keep Meriden Clean Campaign

Cllr Woollard is leading on this great initiative and the first "litter pick" was held in February with 19 volunteers. Dates had been scheduled for the last Saturday in every month thereafter but due to the current lockdown situation all dates have been postponed until later in the year. Anyone wishing to get involved please email [Marie.woollard@meridenparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:Marie.woollard@meridenparishcouncil.org.uk)

## SUMMARY

On behalf of all councillors we thank all our contractors and especially Barbara Bland our Parish Clerk. I hope for the rest of this year all of us stay well and stay positive.

**Cllr Rosie Weaver BEM**

**Chair Meriden Parish Council**

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