

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Meriden Parish Council held on 18th May 2020  
Virtual Meeting via Member Zoom Conferencing commencing at 2 p.m.

<b>Present:</b>			
Cllr R Weaver RW	Chair	Cllr J Hughes JH	
Cllr J Barber JB		Cllr M Woollard MW	
Cllr M Nunn MN			
Mrs B Bland BB	Clerk		

Chair opened the Annual Meeting advising NALC's Policy to be adopted by Parish and Town Councils for the use of various virtual platforms available to hold legal virtual meetings in order that parish council business can be maintained. The parish council has chosen to use the Zoom platform and a Virtual Meeting Procedure Policy has been drafted and requires Member approval for adoption. The document had been circulated to Members for their perusal prior to meeting.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members approved the adoption of the Virtual Meeting Procedure Policy with immediate effect subject to adding the words "when safe to do so" to read (which will also go on the noticeboard when safe to do so) to paragraph 5 of the Policy document. Proposed Cllr Weaver, seconded Cllr Woollard.

**1. Welcome & Apologies**

Chair welcomed Members to the first virtual meeting of the parish council and thanked all for their logging in. No apologies received from Cllrs Kipling or Lynch-Smith with their absence duly noted.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members recorded the absence of Cllrs Kipling and Lynch-Smith.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

None declared.

**3. Minutes of Last Meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

The minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019, circulated prior to meeting, were considered for accuracy and agreed. All matters arising are included in agenda items.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** The minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 were approved; proposed by Cllr Barber and seconded by Cllr Hughes.

**4. Chair's Report 2019-2020**

The Chair's Report was circulated prior to meeting and follows. RW advised that the report will be going into the Meriden Mag. She further added that the parish council

**Signed .....** Chair **Dated .....**

has done a lot over the last 12 months and recorded her thanks to Members for their contribution and to Barbara Bland for her exemplary work and support to the Team.

“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.

**Signed .....** **Chair**      **Dated .....**



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”.

**Signed** ..... **Chair**      **Dated** .....

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**

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)

1. 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:-

**Signed .....** **Chair**      **Dated .....**

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- ❖ 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)

2. 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.

3. 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 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.

4. 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.

5. 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

**Signed** ..... **Chair**      **Dated** .....

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.

6. **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."

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members unanimously approved the Chair's Report for 2019-20.

5. **Election of Chair**

Clerk advised she had received one nomination. The nomination was for Cllr Weaver to be elected Chair. There were no other nominations and Members approved unanimously the election of Cllr Weaver as Chair of Council.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Cllr R Weaver be elected Chair of Meriden Parish Council proposed and approved unanimously by Members.

6. **Election of Vice Chair**

Clerk advised she had received one nomination. The nomination was for Cllr Barber to be elected Vice Chair. There were no other nominations and Members approved unanimously the election of Cllr Barber as Vice Chair of Council.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Cllr J Barber be elected Vice Chair of Meriden Parish Council proposed and approved unanimously by Members.

7. **Sub-Committees**

Chair advised that the sub-committees remained the same unless anyone wished to change or be removed; however she advised Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust will conducting all future meetings by zoom and the present parish council representatives does not wish to use zoom so we need an alternative person to be nominated. Cllr Hughes said he would be willing to be the parish council representative. The following was agreed as follows:-

A	Village Hall Management Committee	Cllr F Lynch-Smith
B	Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group	Cllr R Weaver Cllr J Hughes Clerk

Signed ..... **Chair** Dated .....



C	PCC Committee Member War Memorial & Cyclists Memorial	Cllr J Barber Cllr R Weaver Clerk
D	Meriden Pool	Cllr M Nunn Cllr M Woollard Clerk
E	Allotment Representative	Cllr J Barber Clerk
F	Solihull MBC Footpaths Forum and Representative	Cllr F Lynch-Smith
G	Quarry Liaison Group Representatives	Cllr R Weaver Cllr J Hughes Mrs L Parker – Co-optee & Resident Representative Clerk
H	Solihull MBC Conservation Committee	Cllr R Weaver (when invited)
I	Local Council Award (Quality & Self-Assessment)	Full Council Clerk
J	Association of Parish and Town Councils Solihull Area Committee	Cllr R Weaver Cllr J Hughes Clerk
K	Solihull MBC Tree Wardens	Mrs S Sharland – Co-Optee Clerk
L	Planning Committee	Cllr J Hughes - Chair Cllr M Woollard Cllr J Hughes Cllr R Kipling Clerk Full Council (as & when required)
M	Community Surgeries	Cllr R Weaver Cllr J Barber Clerk Neighbourhood Co-ordinator
N	Community Speed Watch	Cllr J Barber
O	Airspace Change Consultation & Birmingham Airport Extension	Cllr R Weaver Clerk
P	Meriden Sports Park (Management)	Cllr R Weaver – Director/Chair Cllr J Barber – Director/Vice Chair Cllr J Hughes Cllr M Nunn Mrs B Bland – Company Secretary
Q	Meriden Sports & Recreation Trust	Cllr J Hughes
R	Finance Committee	Cllr R Weaver Chair Cllr J Barber Cllr M Woollard Cllr F Lynch-Smith Cllr M Nunn Clerk
	Quarterly Internal Controls Bi-Annual Internal Audit/Quality Checks	Mr M Spencer – MS Audit & Consultancy

Signed ..... Chair Dated .....

**Clerk:** Barbara Bland

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S	Personnel Committee	Cllr R Weaver Cllr J Hughes Cllr F Lynch-Smith Cllr J Hughes
T	Clerk's Supervising Officer	Cllr R Weaver
U	Operation London Bridge	Clerk Cllr R Weaver Cllr J Barber Cllr F Lynch-Smith Cllr J Hughes Cllr M Woollard

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members unanimously approved sub-committee membership and the appointment of Cllr Hughes as parish council representative for Meriden Sport & Recreation Trust.

**8. Casual Vacancy**

RW advised there had been some interest in this vacancy and requested the clerk to commence the recruitment process advising the Monitoring Officer in the first instance and revising the advertisement, person specification and job description.

**Action: Clerk to contact Monitoring Officer and revise advertisement, person specification and job description.**

**9. Bank**

Clerk advised currently bank signatories are Mrs Bland, Cllr Weaver and Mr Kipling. It was agreed that it would be prudent to have another signatory on the bank mandate. RW explained the need to use a card reader for authorisation or payments. JB suggested as he was already using a card reader for the sports park and was an authorised signatory for the park, he would be agreeable to being put onto the bank mandate for the parish council. Members agreed to this recommendation.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members approved the recommendation to add Cllr Barber to the parish council bank mandate of Cllr Weaver, Cllr Kipling and Mrs Bland. Proposed Cllr Weaver, seconded Cllr Woollard.

**Action: Clerk to contact Barclays for bank mandate paperwork for process completion.**

**10. Internal Auditor**

MS Audit Consultancy supports the parish council with a robust and comprehensive internal audit check list in accordance with WALC. Therefore the recommendation is to retain MS Audit Consultancy.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members unanimously approved the retention of MS Audit Consultancy.

**Signed .....** Chair **Dated .....**

**11. External Auditor**

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 required from 2017 smaller authorities will appoint auditors through a sector led body or opt out such arrangements. Therefore Meriden Parish Council elected to stay with the sector led body and collective procurement arrangements to appoint an external auditor. The appointment of P K F Littlejohn was confirmed in 2017 for a 5 year contract from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

**12. Outsourced Payroll Administration**

The current outsourced payroll administration is provided by D M Malley; Members considered the continuation of this service and agreed unanimously.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** Members approved unanimously payroll administration being provided by D M Malley.

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next Annual Meeting will be 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

The meeting closed at 14.16.

Signed ..... Chair Dated .....

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