



**Minutes of a meeting of RAINFORD PARISH COUNCIL
via Zoom on 25.01.2021 commencing at 7pm**

Present: Councillors: Bardsley, Brown, Dodson, Grice, Jones, Lee, Long, (joined the meeting at 7.25pm), Monk, (Chairman), Reynolds, Travis, Wesley

Absent: Councillor Newton

In attendance: Peter Hanlon, Censor Engagement Manager for the Office of National Statistics
Sally Powell (Clerk)
Victoria Swainbank (Event Co-ordinator)

1. Apologies for Absence:

Councillors: Collins (Technical), Lamb (Family), Sterry (Family)

2. Declaration of Acceptance of Office, of Interest, and Updating of the Register:

None

3. Formal announcements from the Chairman:

- The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He wished everybody a belated Happy New Year in what was proving another uncertain year.
- Due to hard work and personal sacrifice, the financial outlook for the next few months looked sustainable.
- The Chairman asked all members to support the Parish Council initiative: Be Local, Buy Local. This has been well received so far by businesses and consumers.
- There is still some bar stock available if anyone would like to make a purchase. Please contact the Clerk or the Event Co-ordinator

4. To hear and respond to any questions/deputations by members of the public:

Peter Hanlon, one of around 200 Censor Engagement Managers for the Office of National Statistics for the March 2021 Census covering Warrington & St Helens, gave a presentation. This will be the first digital census. The census takes part every 10 years and everyone should take part. It gives the most detailed information about our society and the census is undertaken to give details that are used for:

- Shaping policy
- Allocating resources
- Planning services
- Monitoring equality

This is achieved through the following 6 strands:

- Planning & Development
- Public Health & Social Care
- Housing
- Education
- Transport
- Other (including Emergency Services, Libraries, Waste collection and disposal)

The 2021 census will ask for information including: who lives in a household, their ethnicity, what work they do, how they travel to work, what is their educational history and whether there is central heating in the property. There will be additional questions about gender identity, sexual identity and whether people have ever served in the Armed Forces.

It is expected that 70% of the population will complete the census online. Every household will receive a unique reference code to use at the beginning of March 2021. Households identified as not using the internet will be sent a paper copy. Anyone can request a paper copy.

It is anticipated that the other 30% may have difficulties completing the census. Key population groups that may need assistance are:

Eastern European residents – possible language barrier

The Traveller community – history of non-engagement

Low-income households

However, Peter will also be working with the elderly, the vulnerable and any other groups brought to his attention who may struggle to complete the census. It is important that people on the margins of society complete the census form as they are more likely to require various forms of funding in the future. The Parish Council can assist by:

- informing Peter of any groups or individuals who may need assistance to complete the form
- by advertising that the census is taking place
- encouraging and reminding people to complete the census

The census will take place on 21.03.2021 in a COVID-19 secure manner.

Councillors made the following suggestions:

- i. Contacting 'Our Warm Welcome'. Peter had already been in touch with Gordon Pennington
- ii. Putting an article in the All Saints Parish Church newsletter
- iii. Using the Rainford Facebook sites, including the Parish Council's to advertise the census and remind residents to complete it. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are the social media platforms that will be used by the ONS. The sites will be addressed in different ways, depending on the number of followers
- iv. An article in the next Parish Council newsletter

There was a discussion about where posters could be placed to access the greatest number of residents. Peter agreed that it would be good to encourage younger society members to help older residents with the technology or completion of the form. Older members of the community are more likely to act on an official letter 'to the occupier', but younger members may ignore such a communication.

Peter will email the Clerk with all the relevant materials for distribution, as appropriate and maintain contact with the Parish Council.

The Chairman thanked Peter for his presentation and assured him that the Parish Council would do everything it could to assist him.

Action: All Councillors/The Clerk

5. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Rainford Parish Council meeting held on Monday 14 December 2020:

Item 8 Councillor Dodson requested that the wording was altered from 'residential institution'. The Clerk informed the meeting that this wording was used as it is how the planning application is worded. It was accepted that this would not be how the home would be referred to.

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2020 via Zoom were agreed as a true and accurate record, proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Lee and carried unanimously

6. Receipts and Payments for December 2020:

Full details can be found in the draft January 2021 FPA committee minutes circulated with the agenda

Receipts for December 2020: £4734 Payments for December 2020: £2021

Amount Invoiced in December 2020: £2883

Bank Balances @ 31.12.2020: Current A/C £5907 Savings A/C £48121

RESOLVED:

Councillor Jones proposed the figures be accepted. This was seconded by Councillor Bardsley and carried unanimously

7. Clerk's Report:

The following report was circulated with the agenda. Additions are in italics:

1. Statements from the Government regarding COVID-19 continue to be monitored on a daily basis for relevance to the Parish Council and the Village Hall and the local COVID-19 case figures will be circulated as soon as they are available.
2. From 06.01.2021 the Liverpool City region is in Tier 5 national lockdown. This means that the Village Hall is currently closed to visitors. 2 of the businesses are required to close for the duration of the lockdown. The Caretakers and the Event Co-ordinator remain flexibly furloughed.
3. The Volunteer scheme has not been re-started, but the situation will be monitored closely and re-assessed regularly. To date, 2 phone calls have been received asking if the scheme had been revived and additionally an email from the CVCA asking for information to pass on to residents. *The Clerk confirmed that there had been no further requests for help*
4. The cashflow document has been updated.
5. An application for a grant from the Liverpool City Region was successful. £6800 has been received.
6. £2000 has been received as a local restrictions support grant.
7. Other grants applied for are pending.
8. The Council Tax Base for 2021/22 has been set at 2886 (Band D equivalent) which is 42 less than the current financial year. The reason for the difference is additional discounts and resident's inability to pay due to the pandemic. Consequently, the precept will be £1092 less than anticipated. The budget has been adjusted accordingly.
9. The dates that the precept will be received are:
50% on 15.04.2021 and 50% on 17.06.2021
10. The application for a marquee in the Beer Garden at the Golden Lion will be considered by the planning committee of St Helens Council at the February 2021 meeting. *This is a separate agenda item*
11. The shoes being stored for St Helens Rotary have been collected for distribution. Rainford was part of one of the largest collections in the North West.
12. Mass vaccination clinics opened in St Helens on 16.12.2020 and Rainford residents have begun to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
13. The change of use application for the house on Pilkington Street is still being considered. *This is a separate agenda item*
14. NHS Blood & Transplant used the Village Hall for a Blood donor session on 29.12.2020.
15. Flooding on the linear park between Rookery Lane and the bridge caused by 2 overflowing manholes, was reported on 12.01.2021. The details were passed to St Helens Council. Councillor Reynolds was actively involved in getting the problem sorted. A drainage company attended on 14.01.2021.
16. Peter Hanlon, the Census Engagement Manager for Warrington and St Helens on behalf of the Office for National Statistics contacted the office about the Census that will take place across England and Wales on the 21st of March this year. It will be the first digital census and around

75% of the population is expected to complete it online. Paper copies will be available for those who need them. He wished to discuss how Rainford Parish Council could support the process and provide much needed local information and advice. Mr Hanlon will be attending the Council meeting on 25.01.2021.

17. Scribe, the accounting software used by the Parish Council is being upgraded and a booking system is being integrated into the accounting system. Rainford will be part of the pilot scheme.
18. A further payment from the Local Restrictions Support Grant of £3000 (for a 6-week period), was paid in to the Council's account on 14.01.2021.
19. A planning application has been received for a Change of use from C3 to C2 (Residential to Residential institution) with garage conversion, external alterations, creation of bin store and landscaping works at Treetops, The Spinney. A planning statement from Achieve Together who made the application is attached as a separate document. *This is a separate agenda item.*
20. Councillor Collins was highlighted on the Parish Council Facebook page after receiving her first COVID-19 vaccination. So far the post has 40 'likes'.
21. Concerns were expressed at the height of the brook in Beech Gardens on 14.01.2021. The situation was monitored and the Flood officer from St Helens Council made a site visit. The level dropped, but given the current wet conditions, the state of the brook will continue to be observed.
22. Notification has been received that the Village Hall can again register for spoilt beer due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

8. Committee Reports

➤ **Borough Council:** Councillor Reynolds reported the following:

- i. The flood officer from St Helens Council had visited Beech Gardens twice during the recent heavy rain. There were issues across the borough with flooding. Fortunately, the level of the brook receded before any homes were flooded. The Borough Councillors will be setting up a meeting between themselves, the Parish Council and the Environment Agency in due course.

Action: Councillor Reynolds

Councillor Long joined the meeting at 7.25pm

- ii. There was a separate flooding of gardens on Red Cat Lane. This has been a persistent problem over the last year which has not disappeared despite various attempts to solve the problem.
- iii. Further flooding issues were resolved on the Linear park between Cross Pit Lane and Rookery Lane. Councillor Wesley thanked Councillor Reynolds for his efforts in sorting out the Linear Park flooding issues. The Borough Council had responded very quickly.
- iv. He had been involved in scrutinising the method of preparation of the budget for St Helens Council, which is looking to make a further £13million of cuts in the next financial year. £6million of reserves had been used during the current financial year. St Helens Council are considering further investment in commercial property and Councillor Reynolds had expressed his concerns as the returns from previous investments had been substantially lower than predicted.
- v. The Chairman asked if the Councillor Improvement Fund had been discussed. The level of this has not yet been confirmed. Councillor Long requested an update regarding the Borough Councillor's contribution to the School Crossing Patrol. Councillor Reynolds informed the meeting that he would make enquiries.

ACTION: Councillor Reynolds

- vi. Comments about cutting funding to libraries had been made, so Rainford library could be vulnerable and this is something the Parish Council could discuss at a further date; How could the library be made more successful. The Clerk would be circulating attendance figures.

ACTION: The Clerk

➤ **Community Liaison Committee:**

No meeting had taken place since the last full Council meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for 16.02.2021

➤ **Finance, Planning & Administration Committee:** *The draft minutes from the FPA committee meeting held on 02.12.2020 were circulated with the agenda.*

Councillor Jones reported the following:

- i. 6 sets of plans had been considered since the last meeting. There were no objections to any of the applications
- ii. The figures for the income & expenditure had moved on since the draft FPA minutes for January 2021 had been circulated.
- iii. The decision had been made to close the Chairman's fund bank account as there is currently no activity on the account, but it is attracting monthly bank charges. For audit purposes, any monies for the Chairman's fund will be shown separately in the accounts. The Christmas Fayre account will remain open for transparency.
- iv. Since 31.12.2020, £9k had been received in grant money.
- v. Furlough money for November & December 2020 was still owing.
- vi. The first tranche of the precept would be received on 15.04.2021. The precept will be £1092 less than on the original budget as the Council tax base (number of Band D equivalent houses) had been reduced from 2928 to 2886. The budget had been updated.
- vii. The cashflow document had been updated. It is easy to interpret as there is very little income at present apart from the grant money. 2 of the businesses within the Village Hall have had to close due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Invoices will be issued for their rent for January and February 2021, but allowances may have to be made,
- viii. £199 would be spent on an upgrade to the website.
- ix. The floodlights on the Village Hall will be upgraded, but not until April 2021.

➤ **Health & Safety Committee:**

No meeting of the Health & Safety Committee had taken place since the last full Council meeting. Councillor Reynolds stated that the committee would meet in the near future.

ACTION: Councillor Reynolds/The Clerk

9. Executive Working Party Report:

Councillor Monk informed the meeting as follows:

- All the latest advice and COVID-19 restrictions were being monitored
- Constant monitoring of the financial situation

10. Planning Application for a marquee in the beer garden at the Golden Lion pub:

Councillor Jones initiated a discussion by informing the meeting that the planning officer had had until 22.01.2021 to consider their response. The application would be considered at the March 2021 meeting of the planning committee, not the February meeting as had been previously indicated. The planning officer's decision is not known. An updated Heritage statement had been added to the planning application, stating that as the marquee was at the rear of the building, it did not have a detrimental effect on the Grade 11 listing. It was agreed that a decision about whether to attend the virtual planning committee meeting in March 2021, would be made at the next full Council meeting.

ACTION: The Clerk

11. Applications for a Change of Use to a Residential Unit on Pilkington Street and The Spinney:

No decision has yet been made on the change of use for the dwelling on Pilkington Street. Residents who are not in favour of the application have been in touch with Councillors.

An explanatory document from My3 was put on the Parish Council Facebook page and comments show that this has given greater understanding to residents of what My3 are hoping to achieve. There was a short discussion and it was agreed that the information provided by the Parish Council had helped to allay residents' fears, but on other Rainford Facebook sites, posts opposing the change of use are still being lodged. Councillor Reynolds

informed the meeting that answers to queries from residents had been requested from the Social Care Team at St Helens Council. It was agreed that it was unfortunate that due to the current circumstances, it had not been possible to hold the usual open meeting for residents when the application was first made. Ofsted reports for My3 are available and Councillor Reynolds can provide access details.

The planning application for Change of use at Treetops in The Spinney had been made by Achieve Together. The Company is hoping to use the dwelling as a home for 6 adults who have a primary diagnosis of Autism or Autism accompanied with a learning disability and associated complex needs. The residents would be constantly supported by a staff team. There had not been the same reaction to this application from residents.

12. Other Urgent Matters:

- i. Councillor Grice informed the meeting that he had contacted the Borough Councillors regarding the zebra crossing outside the Village Hall as the white lines had been severely eroded. Councillor Allan Jones had arranged for the white sections to be repainted, and there would be temporary traffic lights when this work is carried out. No date was available for when this work would take place.
- ii. Councillor Jones informed the meeting that buildings on Lords Fold were being demolished, so it is assumed that the housing development will begin shortly. Councillors Lee and Travis stated that they had seen adverts for the new housing.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8pm.

Councillor David Monk
Chairman, Rainford Parish Council 2020/21