



**Minutes of a meeting of RAINFORD PARISH COUNCIL held on 28 March 2022
commencing at 7pm in the Council Chamber at Rainford Village Hall**

**Present: Councillors: Bardsley, Collins, Dodson, Grice, Griffiths, Lamb (arrived 7.06pm), Lee,
Long (Chairman), Monk, Newton, Reynolds, Sterry**

**In Attendance: Sally Powell (Clerk)
Victoria Swainbank (Event Co-ordinator)**

Absent:

1. Apologies for Absence:

Councillors: Brown (away) Denton (away), Lamb (work)

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

None

3. Formal announcements from the Chairman:

The Chairman informed the meeting that the band concert for the Chairman's fund for Rainford Heritage Society had been a great evening, and he thanked Councillor Grice for his assistance with the event. Additionally, he had delivered flowers for a Golden Wedding and the couple had made a point of thanking the Parish Council for all that it did. On another occasion, a gentleman had complained that he and his wife had not received flowers on their anniversary. The Chairman had explained that the Parish Council can only deliver flowers to residents on their special anniversaries, when it is made aware of.

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

None.

5. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Rainford Parish Council meeting held on Monday 28 February 2022:

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28 February 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record, proposed by Councillor Lee, seconded by Councillor Bardsley and carried unanimously.

6. Receipts and Payments for February 2022:

Income for February 2022	£ 11354		
Expenditure for February 2022	£ 8594		
Amount invoiced in February 2022	£ 4097		
Bank Balances @ 28.02.2022: Current A/C	£13552	Business A/C	£38274
Christmas Fayre A/C	£ 2525		
Expenditure does not include salaries for February 2022			
Provision for liabilities	£32264		
Debtors	£ 2998		
Funds available	£ 22087		

Councillor Monk queried the way that the expenditure had been presented, and suggested that the figure for salaries should be separated out from the liabilities figure.

Councillor Lamb joined the meeting at 7.06pm

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. All remaining restrictions were lifted on 24.02.2022, including the need to self-isolate following a positive COVID-19 test. The antibacterial hand gel dispensers will remain in place for people to use when entering and leaving the building. The office staff continue to test regularly. *In the last 7 days there have been 73 new cases in Rainford, which is up 10.6% on the previous week. The R rate is between 1.1 and 1.4.*
2. The latest report from the Stonemasons has now been received. The next work that needs to be undertaken is pointing and repairing the stone window surrounds. This will cost an estimated £12,000 - £15,000, plus a contingency for scaffolding. It may be possible to apply for grant funding for this work, as it has not been started yet. *Francis Coales Charitable Foundation may be a source of funding. Also, the National Heritage Memorial Fund. This will be researched further.*
3. The Government has announced £710m funding for 'Active Travel'. It is hoped that funding for 'Red Rose Way' may be obtained through this. The scheme has been sent to St Helens Council and to LCR Active Travel. Councillor Allan Jones has been asked for assistance with this as he sits on the travel group and a response has been difficult to obtain. A forum meeting took place 28.02.2022. The survey about the cycling and walking network in St Helens is now closed.
4. The research being carried out regarding grants for installing on-street residential car charging points is on-going. A local firm which installs the charging points has also been contacted. A resident has contacted the Clerk's office supporting this initiative.
5. Quiz nights are continuing, with additional marketing to encourage more teams.
6. A Parish Council newsletter was published in the March 2022 issue of Local Life. The distribution list for Rainford has been obtained from Local Life so that households that are not currently included can be reached. Local Life is reviewing its distribution in Rainford in the Autumn. A copy of the newsletter is also posted on the Village Centre and Village Hall noticeboards. Online copies are also available.
7. The footpath between Higher Lane and Lakeside Gardens remains closed despite the fact that the bungalow has been demolished. The Planning Officer has been contacted by Councillor Lamb and myself. *There has been further contact from residents regarding when the footpath will be re-opened. Neither Councillor Lamb nor the Clerk had heard anything further from the planning department. This will be pursued. The Chairman stated that he had been told by one of the builders on site that the footpath would be closed until the build was complete as the boards are being used for security.*
8. Tickets are now available for the Afternoon Tea on 22.05.2022 and Gala Dinner on 28.05.2022 to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Please support these events. St Helens Council has waived the fee for road closures for any residents that want to hold street parties.
9. The Afternoon Tea for the Chairman's fund for Rainford Heritage Society had to be cancelled due to lack of ticket sales. The concert by Rainford Band on 26.03.2022 is sold out. *This was a great success and raised just over £1600 for RHS including £370 from the raffle.*
10. The outstanding furlough money should be shown on the payroll for February 2022, but this documentation has not yet been received.
11. The details for payroll payments for November, December, January and February have not yet been received, but have been requested multiple times.
12. Steve Littler attended the FPA committee meeting on 09.02.2022 to discuss the renewal of the lease for the Village Hall and the cost of the on-going repair work to the building. He is arranging a survey of the building which it is anticipated will take place before the end of the financial year. *No date for this has been agreed yet.*
13. Bookings for after 01.04.2022 continue to be made. An additional weekly class is starting after the Easter holidays.
14. Outstanding invoices continue to be chased and several payments have already been made. Councillor Sterry has assisted with this. *There is now only one outstanding function invoice.*
15. The last B A R breakfast meeting will be held on 23.03.2022. Councillors are very welcome to attend. *This was an excellent meeting with more businesses attending for the first time.*

16. Following the Road Safety meeting on 08.03.2022, the draft Road Safety Strategy drawn up by Councillor Reynolds will be updated. This meeting was attended by representatives from Merseyside Police, St Helens Council officers and borough and Parish Councillors. Councillors Denton, Dodson, Long and Reynolds attended. This is a separate agenda item.
17. The joint project with Rainford High School will be piloted for the last half-term of the school year. *The Head has requested that the project starts 2 weeks earlier than originally intended.*
18. A further meeting with Dave Boocock from St Helens Council regarding the future of the library service in Rainford took place on 01.03.2022. Councillors Denton, Dodson, Lee, Long and Reynolds attended. This is a separate agenda item.
19. I have been contacted by a company who may be interested in taking over the 02 Ormskirk Road as (among other things) a veterinary surgery. They wanted assistance in trying to gauge a need for the service. It was suggested that they post on the Rainford Social media pages.
20. A grant application for raised beds and wildflower beds in conjunction with Torus Housing Association has been submitted to the National Garden Scheme.
21. The invoice for the licence to play music in the Village Hall was queried and the reduced, amended invoice has been paid.
22. The Insurance premium for 2202/23 has been paid.
23. An arrangement has been made with the internal auditor to look at the accounts following the end of the financial year.
24. Confirmation has been received that the Village Hall will be used as a polling station on 05.05.2022.
25. A notification has been received that Rainford is in an area with an outbreak of Avian flu and that any dead birds should be reported to the relevant authorities.
26. Several complaints about potholes on the main roads running through Rainford have been received. This has been reported through the contact centre and notification sent that the potholes are on the list to be filled. The Borough Councillors were informed.
27. Posters for banners to stop drivers parking badly near the schools have been made by children from all 3 primary schools. *These are being taken to a company that manufactures banners.*
28. The Government Valuation Office have requested information about the separate offices in the Village Hall. The initial request has been dealt with, but further information has now been requested.
29. The Rainford Christmas Fayre working party have made and will be organising a fayre again this year on 03.12.2022.

8. Committee Reports:

➤ Borough Council:

The following report was received from the Borough Councillors on 28.03.2022:

This month's briefing with the CEO of the Council and other opposition leaders the following issues were discussed.

The Local Plan

Although this document has been widely consulted on and passed the planning inspector it cannot be presented to next meeting of the Cabinet (23rd April) for recommendations/approval due to Purdah and the upcoming elections.

The Library Strategy

Currently the Library Strategy is at draft stage and no recommendations have been made for the future direction of the library by the cabinet, until such time it is formally presented it is impossible to comment.

Notwithstanding the above, we maintain our position that a library service in Rainford is essential and will continue this stance.

To assist our final determination, It would be advantage to us if we understand what the Parish Councils position is given the discussions with officers.

Children's Services

Jim Leivers Interim Director of Children's Services of Children's Services has decided to retire a sad loss to the Council.

After a less than favourable report by Ofsted and independent review where although seen to be good there had been little movement forward.

This opportunity has been taken to restructure the department and the Children's Improvement Board with a new Chair. Linda is a member of this and the first meeting was basically a catch up.

Scrutiny Panels

Over the last 12 months we have considered

- Young Carers and support for this group,
- Foster Carers and how to attract more families
- NHS dental appointments across the Borough
- GP appointments post Covid
- Number of residents admitted to residential care which is over target
- Care leavers accessing employment and if the larger employers in the borough are supporting the group

It must be noted that these panels are chaired by the ruling group therefore the agenda are set by themselves.

John with Allan and Linda's help did a littler pick and sorted it out with aluminium cans being sold to a recycling group resulting in a £31 donation to Willowbrook

We are currently considering investment from CiF for the following initiatives

- Bowling Pavilion
- Bench on Siding Lane
- Dog bin emptying
- School Crossing patrol
-

Linda is working with Gregory Pat to gain permission to install Bird/Bat boxes Hedgehog houses along the linear park. Working with parks and gardens to explore where wild planting can be done.

Allan met with the police in response to their request to have representatives on the Community Action Group. Representatives from each area of policing (and wards) and Council Officers were invited, a total of 36 in all, however only about 7 turned up. Allan could only speak for Rainford, and Speeding was his top priority. Allan was sceptical about the usefulness of such meetings because everything discussed regarding Rainford can be discussed with the police at our own meetings but will continue to attend on our behalf.

Linda Mussell

Allan Jones

John Case

➤ **Community Liaison Committee:** *(See Appendix 1 for March 2022 draft minutes)*

Councillor Lamb gave the following report:

- Greg Hamilton's Rewilding project is gaining momentum and has been successful on social media.
- The school liaison officer is working with the schools on the parking safely banners
- There was a discussion at the last meeting about Road Safety
- The future of the library service was also discussed
- The Senior Citizens Fayre will take place on 15.09.2022
- The Christmas Fayre will take place on 03.12.2022

Councillor Griffiths asked if the Christmas Fayre would be inside or out. The meeting was informed that the working party felt that the fayre should be outside in the Village Centre, if possible as this

gave a better atmosphere. If necessary, the Fayre will be moved into the Village Hall.

- **Finance, Planning & Administration Committee:** *(See Appendix 2 for March 2022 draft minutes)*
Councillor Sterry gave the following report:
- 5 Sets of plans were considered and the Clerk is now able to give updates on the outcomes of plans, giving the reasons for the granting or refusal of applications.
 - The Parish Council will end the year with money in the bank, which is very welcome.
 - For 2022/23, better forecasting of funds will be undertaken, with greater reference to upcoming events and the expected revenue and costs, so that better decisions can be made
 - Future bookings were discussed and ways of increasing these.
 - Cheques will not be accepted as a method of payment from 01.04.2022.
 - There was no damage to the Village Hall in the recent gales, but there is still on-going work to be done on the building.
 - The new lease has not yet been agreed. It is hoped that the land at the rear of the Village Hall bordering on Pilkington Street will not be included in the new lease.
 - The future of the library service in Rainford was discussed.
 - The FPA committee is of the opinion that the Main Hall needs to be upgraded in order to secure large functions, and a list was created of possible improvements. These will be costed. This was agreed with.

Action: The Clerk

Councillor Collins requested that the Village Hall windows are cleaned.

Councillor Lee asked about charges for the hall when the bar is open and the Clerk gave the hire charges from 01.04.2022. She suggested that the room should not be charged for if the bar was open or should not be charged for if it was a 'good' bar. There was a discussion. The Chairman of the FPA committee stated that the pricing structure for the Village Hall is clear and fair and that it would not be appropriate to follow the business models of social clubs.

Councillor Reynolds suggested that soft play equipment was purchased to rent out at children's parties and that the Reception Room is could be hired for meetings. The Clerk informed the meeting that this already happens and the High School will be using this room on a regular basis in a few weeks' time.

Councillor Grice suggested the upstairs toilets could be converted into office space. (They are currently used for storage).

Councillor Monk suggested that the Council Chamber could be converted to office space.

Councillor Lamb suggested that the Village Hall gains a licence to hold weddings. The law is changing on this soon and it was agreed that it would be an attractive proposition if couples could get married at the Hall. This will be looked in to.

Action: The Clerk

➤ **Health & Safety Committee:**

Councillor Reynolds informed the meeting that the committee had not met since the last full Council meeting. The next meeting would be on 01.04.2022 at 11.45am.

9. The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations:

There was a discussion.

RESOLVED: *Councillor Lamb proposed that a Queen's Platinum Jubilee Flag and Bunting is purchased to decorate the outside of the Village Hall from 01.05.2022 until the end of the Jubilee Celebrations. This was seconded by Councillor Griffiths and carried unanimously.*

It was agreed that Jubilee flag and bunting should be purchased to decorate the outside of the Village Hall. This will be put in place at the beginning of May 2022. Also, that the Parish Council social media should be used to inform residents about events and that the fee for road closures for street parties has been waived.

Councillor Newton left the meeting at 7.40pm

The Event Co-ordinator informed the meeting that organisations in the Village had been approached to ask if they were organising anything for the Jubilee, so that a Village Events calendar could be produced and circulated. However, only Rainford Rangers replied.

Councillor Lamb requested that this is an item on the Community Liaison Committee agenda for next week, so that a further discussion could take place and actions agreed.

Members were reminded that an Afternoon Tea and a Gala Dinner are being organised by the Parish Council. Tickets are selling, but Councillors are requested to promote these events.

Action: The Clerk/The Event Co-ordinator

10. Road Safety in Rainford:

- ❖ The draft Road Safety strategy was circulated with the agenda. There was a discussion. When it is adopted, it will be distributed on social media. Paper copies will also be available. It was agreed that the strategy should not be adopted yet, so that additional information could be added.
- ❖ Councillor Sterry informed the meeting that the Speed Watch volunteers had not been out for some time as the PCSO hadn't been available and there seemed to be a lack of commitment from the Community Sergeant for Rainford. Councillor Reynolds felt that this should be made public. Paul Mountford is trying to persuade Merseyside Police to allow volunteers to go out on their own, as happens in other areas. There was a further discussion.
- ❖ Councillor Griffiths informed the meeting that the Police had been doing speed checks on Bushey Lane and Church Road recently. There was unanimous condemnation of people who warn others via social media when the police are doing speed checks.
- ❖ There was a discussion about making Rufford Road one way at school dropping off and picking up times, because of the congestion. The Clerk will follow this up. Councillor Griffiths pointed out that many parents drive instead of walking their children to school because it is dangerous to walk children up Old Lane.

Action: The Clerk

- ❖ Councillor Reynolds spoke about 'Walking Passports' which had been discussed at the recent Road Safety meeting. Expanding from this, the emissions saved and calories used could be calculated. Additionally, would it be possible to put a School Crossing Patrol for the duration of the event on Old Lane? The Clerk was asked to follow this up.

Action: The Clerk

- ❖ At other schools in the Borough, parents have got involved in directing school traffic and parking, but this is where a car park is available. The difficulty in Rainford is finding space where cars could be parked and then children walked to school from there.
- ❖ The Head teachers do not have the authority to stop people parking outside the schools
- ❖ The Clerk will look in to using Survey Monkey to create an online survey for residents to complete.

Action: The Clerk

11. Plans for the Simonswood Incinerator:

Councillor Griffiths gave an overview of the current situation. If this planning application is approved, there will be consequences for Rainford as the border is only 2 miles from the site and in the direction of the prevailing wind. Councillors were encouraged to lodge an objection. There was a discussion. It was agreed that an objection should be sent from the Parish Council on the grounds of environmental concerns. Councillor Lamb will assist with this.

RESOLVED: *Councillor Reynolds proposed that an objection on environmental grounds to Knowsley Council Planning Application 22/00056/NEI is lodged. This was seconded by Councillor Griffiths and carried unanimously*

Action: Councillor Lamb/The Clerk

12. The Future of the Library Service in Rainford:

St Helens Council is currently reviewing the provision of library services in the borough. No decisions have been made about library closures, but alternative ways of providing library services are being discussed and considered. There was a discussion and the following points were made:

- ❖ Councillor Lee had spoken to Ray Waring, Chairman of the Rainford Heritage Society who had also met with representatives from St Helens Council. However, he was of the opinion that the existing library building was not big enough for the Heritage Centre and the library.
- ❖ There was the possibility of extending the Rainford Band rehearsal room, forming a cultural centre with space for the Heritage Centre and the library.
- ❖ Dave Boocock had indicated that funds from the sale of the land where the library currently is, could be used to build elsewhere.
- ❖ The library in Rainford is one of the least used in the borough
- ❖ The Parish Council should not take on further liabilities when the Village Hall is in need of repair
- ❖ Managing a team of volunteers can be difficult. Also, who would do this?
- ❖ The scheme is too grandiose for a Parish Council with limited resources. Who would manage the scheme?
- ❖ The Parish Council could support an alternate scheme for the provision of library services, but not be involved in the day to day running of the service
- ❖ There would be an on-going cost to the Parish Council, but no revenue stream
- ❖ St Helens Council have a statutory obligation to provide library services in the borough

Councillor Sterry left the meeting at 8.30pm

- ❖ A mobile library is not a realistic option, but the housebound reader service will continue

Councillor Griffiths left the meeting at 8.32pm

- ❖ Libraries are not relevant anymore for current communities and not many residents would notice if Rainford library was closed

RESOLVED: *Councillor Lamb proposed that Rainford Parish Council does not have any interest in being involved in an alternate strategy for providing library services in Rainford. This was seconded by Councillor Dodson. This was carried by a majority.*

The Chairman reminded members that nomination papers for the forthcoming elections can be obtained from the Clerk's office.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.32pm

Councillor John Long
Chairman
Rainford Parish Council 2021/22

Appendix 1: CLC Draft Minutes March 2022



7. CLC Draft
Minutes 02.03.2022.

Appendix 2: FPA Draft Minutes March



FPA Draft Minutes
09.03.2022.docx