



**Minutes of a meeting of
RAINFORD PARISH COUNCIL
held on 27 February 2023 commencing at 7pm in the Council Chamber at Rainford Village Hall**

Present: Councillors: Bardsley (Chairman)

Absent: Councillors: Griffiths, Reynolds

In Attendance: Sally Powell (Clerk)

Victoria Swainbank (Event Co-ordinator)

1. Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Bowden (Family), Councillor Lamb (Business), Councillor Lee (Family)

2. Formal announcements from the Chairman:

The Chairman informed the meeting that he had delivered flowers to a couple for their Diamond Wedding.

He also offered his congratulations to the Event Co-ordinator on the success of the Beer Festival, which had been "an absolute cracker!". Everyone who had spoken to him about it, had said how much they had enjoyed it.

The Chairman will be attending the official opening of the St Helens Borough of Culture on 04.03.2023.

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

None.

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 23 January 2023:

The minutes of the meeting held on 23.01.2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record, proposed by Councillor Long, seconded by Councillor Dodson and carried unanimously.

Action: The Clerk

6. Receipts and Payments for January 2023:

Full details can be found in the February minutes of the Finance, Planning and Administration Committee.

Receipts for January 2023 £23,787

Payments for January 2023 £28,435

Bank balances @ 31.01.2023:

Current Account: £ 4,523 Business Account: £ 52,587 Christmas Fayre Account: £3,852

Liabilities: £8,474

Debtors £3,501

Amount invoiced in January 2023 £8,444

7. Clerk's Report:

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

- i. The meeting to prioritise the items on the Condition Report for the Village Hall has not yet taken place.
- ii. A local organisation may wish to use the land at the rear of the Village Hall, which would alter the negotiations for the lease renewal.
- iii. The Bar Supervisor's role has been readvertised. In the meantime, the Event Co-ordinator continues to cover most of the functions. *A possible recruit is attending an interview on 28.02.2023. They may be more interested in a zero-hour contract than a 16 hour per week contract as they have another job. It was agreed that this was acceptable.*
- iv. One of the Registrars from St Helens Council visited the Village Hall with a member of the licencing team and agreed that a licence to hold marriage ceremonies could be applied for. The application will be submitted in the New Year. This has not yet been completed due to staff shortages.
- v. The rear doors in the Main Hall have not yet been replaced. *Councillor Grice asked for clarification about which doors. Additionally, he felt that the external kitchen door was not very secure and suggested that there was a further lock on the internal doors in to the Main Hall. Councillor Long requested that this was put on the agenda for the next Health & Safety Committee meeting.*

Action: The Clerk

- vi. The deadline for the application from Miller Homes has been extended to 09.04.2023 and the applicants have submitted revised documents. This is a separate agenda item.
- vii. The Beer Festival was the most successful to date in terms of income and attendance. Numbers were low on the Sunday, but those who did attend, enjoyed the afternoon. Having Councillors volunteer at the event helped enormously. The total profit from the event was £3162 + £854 for the Chairman's fund from the Gin table. *Councillor Stockton-Pugh asked for thanks to be recorded to all the volunteers that helped make the event such a success. There was a brief discussion about staffing the event, particularly on the Saturday evening. The Event Co-ordinator thanked all the Councillors who had attended and helped out during the weekend.*
- viii. St Helens Council has completed the first consultation of the Community Governance Review which took place between 1 October and 30 December 2022. The Cross-party Working Group will make draft recommendations to St Helens Council at its meeting on 19 April 2023. For the existing Parish Councils, the same process will begin in January 2023. The Cross-Party working group will review all representations received and present draft recommendations to St Helens Council at its meeting in July 2023 (date tbc). Further updates and the relevant reports will be published on the website www.sthelens.gov.uk/cgr when they are available.
- ix. The Annual meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Friday 19.05.2023 at 6pm and will be followed by the new Chairman's evening. The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Monday 22.05.2023 at 6pm and will be followed by the ordinary Council meeting for May 2023.

Action: All Members

- x. The advertising deal with Local Life for the bi-monthly Parish Council newsletters has been renewed. They have created an advert for the Village Hall which will appear in the next addition. *The advert is very good. Editorial space will be given for the Senior Citizens Fair and the Eurovision Night in the next edition, if possible. The editor put together the article about the Eurovision Night, which was very upbeat.*
- xi. P/2022/0548/FUL Erection of 2no detached dwellings to facilitate the maintenance and preservation of existing reservoir and adjacent woodland (resubmission)
Rainford Reservoir, Higher Lane, Rainford: This application has been refused.
- xii. Rainford Heritage Society has indicated that it is exploring the possibility of using the library building for a Heritage centre as an alternative to the land at the rear of the Village Hall.
- xiii. The Eurovision Night Event is being advertised.
- xiv. The role of 2nd caretaker has been advertised and there has been some interest.
- xv. The main caretaker is currently on sick leave for 2 weeks. *He is due back at work on 01.03.23.*

- xvi. *There has been on-going correspondence with Paula Blallock regarding the Pavilion. This is a separate agenda item.*
- xvii. *The Event Co-ordinator has been looking at ideas for an event to celebrate the King's Coronation. There was a discussion and various ideas were suggested. There is an emphasis on volunteering for the Coronation. It was agreed that a formal dinner would be held on Friday 5 May 2023. Councillor Holden will be in charge of the catering and will enquire whether students from St Helens College would be available to assist with the event. It was further agreed that all Councillors have a responsibility to sell tickets for the event. (If each Councillor sold 6 tickets, that would be 90). The aim will be to sell 120 tickets. There was a conversation about the cost of tickets. There will be dinner and live entertainment.*

Action: The Event Co-ordinator/The Clerk/All Members

- xviii. *New card machine and broadband deals with a local business will save approximately 30% on current costs.*

Action: The Clerk

- xix. *The Keep Britain Tidy Spring Clean is back on this year from 17.03.2023 – 02.04.2023. In the past the Parish Council have joined with Rainford in Bloom to do litter picks around the village. Local organisations have also been involved. There was a discussion. Councillor Dodson suggested also contacting the schools and Councillor Bimpson advised contacting the Highways department at St Helens Council.*

Action: The Clerk/The Event Co-ordinator

- xx. *The contract for the gas supply is due for renewal in May 2023.*
- xxi. *A special Coronation flag has been ordered.*

8. Committee & Working Party Reports:

➤ **Borough Council:**

Councillor Mussell had sent the following report:

1. **Miller Homes** proposed development – Rookery Lane/Higher Lane. Unfortunately this has reared it ugly head again! Miller Homes have submitted amendments to the original application. The number of houses has been slightly reduced, more areas of green space /playground area and ponds have been added to the plan. The Borough Councillors will fight and oppose this of course, but it is going to be difficult. The plans are on the council website and people can object or indeed support the new plan. We are waiting for the Council's Planning Officer for Policy and the Woodlands Officer to comment on the amendments. The technical documents are not as yet submitted for review. This is pivotal as if they support the amendments then it will be difficult to stop.
2. **Library.** A new Library strategy is to be presented to the Cabinet in the next few months if approved then public consultation will commence in coming months. Should this include closure of Rainford Library we will continue with our previous plans of a Community Hub/Library in the library building with a board on a new trust to run with the help of Volunteers. All community groups would be consulted should they need space within the building.
3. **Budget** Full Council on Wednesday March 1st is to vote on the proposed budget and council tax increase. Within this CiF is to continue until a replacement process is reviewed.
4. **Speed Humps/Safety** measures on the Scouts /Brownies/Doctors car park on Church Road. The Council have appointed a contractor to do the work. Its awaiting approval but is likely to be approved. Although our preferred option would be 50/50 split with the Parish Council if this is not agreed we will pay the total costs from our CIF.
5. **Governance Review.** The Council has now completed this process and the working group of which Linda is a member are reviewing all the comments from the public. The proposed option of a Newton-le-Willows Town Council and review of Windle/Eccleston/Rainhill Parish Councils have been completed Rainford/Billinge/Garswood/ Bold are on the agenda for the next meeting in March. Once complete a recommendation will be submitted to Full Council.

6. **Potholes.** More than 20 have been reported to the council and have been repaired or approved for repair.
7. **LCR Governance and Scrutiny Committee.** Cllr Mussell has been appointed as Conservative rep on this committee.
8. We plan a Surgery on Saturday 4 March at 11am in the Village Hall.

Cllr Linda Mussell
Cllr John Case

➤ **Community Liaison Committee:**

No report was given as Councillor Lamb was not in attendance.

Councillor Denton asked for someone to stand in for her at the next Community Support Hub on 15.03.23, as she would be away. Councillor Holden agreed to do this. There was a discussion about the poster for the group. The Event Co-ordinator will create a new one for the next meeting, which the Fire Brigade will be attending.

Action: The Event Co-ordinator

Councillor Grice informed the meeting about the next Parkinson's support group meeting on 03.03.2023 at 2pm. The meeting is open to anyone who wishes to attend.

Action: Councillor Holden

➤ **Finance, Planning & Administration Committee:**

Councillor Long gave the following report:

- ❖ Planning applications now go to all Councillors. There were no comments.
- ❖ Members of the Bowling Club on Scarisbrick Road had attended the last meeting. Following a discussion, it had been agreed that the Bowling Club would pay the utility bills (water and electricity) for 6 months of the year. Councillor Long asked the Clerk to investigate the possibility of having a water meter installed.

Action: The Clerk

- ❖ There is no further progress on the renewal on the lease for the Village Hall.

Action: The Clerk

➤ **Health & Safety Committee:**

No report was given as Councillor Reynolds was not in attendance. Councillor Holden requested that all members of the committee are sent the Health & Safety Policy documents.

Action: The Clerk

➤ **Rainford Christmas Fayre Working Party:**

The Event Co-ordinator informed the meeting that the Working Party would have an initial meeting in June.

➤ **Village Hall Improvements Working Party**

This working Party has not met since the last full Council meeting. It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on 08.03.2023 at 5.30pm.

Action: The Clerk

9. **P/2022/0461/FUL: The erection of 338 dwellings with associated access, public open space, sustainable urban drainage systems and other infrastructure**
Land opposite 55 – 85 Rookery Lane, Rainford

The Clerk outlined the differences between the original application and documents submitted recently by the applicants:

- ❖ 305 dwellings are now proposed, with increased green spaces and the additional of children's play areas. However, the focal one of these is adjacent to one of the main roads through the estate.
- ❖ A significant number of the apartments and affordable units have been removed.
- ❖ Some of the houses have been pivoted through 90 degrees, and others through 180 degrees.
- ❖ Some would now front on to Rookery Lane.
- ❖ 3 Paths to link onto the Linear Park have been added.
- ❖ The dwellings have been moved back from the perimeter.
- ❖ There is no updated design and access statement.

The Tree and Woodlands Officer's second report states that many of their original objections remain.

There was a discussion. The following points were made:

- ❖ There may still be sight line issues at the Higher Lane access
- ❖ The local plan stated 259 dwellings for the site
- ❖ Compliance with the National Planning Policy would allow more houses than stated in the Local Plan
- ❖ Smaller houses and affordable homes are required
- ❖ All the problems with the lack of local facilities still apply
- ❖ England needs to be more food self-sufficient

The Clerk was asked to compile a second submission. This will be circulated to all Councillors and considered at the next full Council meeting. The last date for submissions is 09.04.2023.

Action: The Clerk

10. **External lights on the Village Hall:**

This item was deferred as Councillor Reynolds was not at the meeting.

11. **The Bowling Pavilion: Scarisbrick Road:**

Thorough investigations in to the document archives had revealed that the Bowling Pavilion is, in fact and contrary to all other information previously given, owned by St Helens Council. The Timeline is as follows:

- 1989 A visiting bowler complained to St Helens Council that there were no toilet facilities at the Bowling Green. Subsequently, an officer from the Community Leisure Department at St Helens Council addressed the Parish Council and informed it that there was an on-going programme of upgrading the facilities at Bowling Greens across the Borough and Scarisbrick Road was 4th on the list. Nevertheless, due to budget constraints, only one green per year would be upgraded. However, if the Parish Council and Rainford Sports Council were prepared to contribute towards the cost, then the improvements at Scarisbrick Road could be undertaken sooner. The Parish Council agreed to part fund the project.
- 1990 St Helens Council applied for the planning permission and the Parish Council was asked by St Helens Council to manage the project, which it also agreed to do.
- 1992 St Helens Council assisted with the connection of the utilities which had been problematic, but the Parish Council office was the address used for the bills.
- 1993 The Pavilion was opened.

Paula Bellock has asked if the Parish Council would now be prepared to take a ground lease or licence with the following items being covered:

- *Responsibility for repairs and maintenance of the structure (including compliance and H&S requirements)*
- *Financial responsibility for any outgoings (utilities, rates etc)*
- *Public Indemnity*
- *Security*
- *The removal of the structure at the end of its useful/economic life.*

There was a discussion and the following points were made:

- The building could be condemned shortly afterwards if the Parish Council take responsibility for it
- No other sporting organisation in the parish is subsidised by the Parish Council
- The Parish Council has enough liability with the Village Hall

RESOLVED: *Councillor Long proposed that the Parish Council should not take on a ground lease or licence from St Helens Council for the pavilion at the Bowling Green on Scarisbrick Road covering responsibility for repairs and maintenance of the structure (including compliance and H&S requirements), Financial responsibility for any outgoings (utilities, rates etc), Public Indemnity, Security, and the removal of the structure at the end of its useful/economic life. This was seconded by Councillor Bardsley and agreed unanimously.*

Action: The Clerk

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.20pm

Councillor Stuart Bardsley
Chairman, Rainford Parish Council 2022/23