



**Minutes of a meeting of Rainford Parish Council  
held in the Council Chamber at Rainford Village Hall  
on 11 December 2023 commencing at 7pm**

**Present:** Councillors: Bardsley, Bimpson, Bowden, Denton, Lamb BEM (Chairman), Lee, Long, Stockton-Pugh, Whalley  
**Absent:** Councillors: Grice, Reynolds, Roberts, Turner  
**In attendance:** Sally Powell (Clerk)  
6 residents

**1. Apologies for Absence:**

Councillor Dodson (Family)

**2. Formal announcements from the Chairman:**

The Chairman stated that the Christmas Fayre had been a great success, despite it being the coldest day of the year. Everyone had had a great time and he thanked all the Councillors and volunteers who had been out at 6am to ensure everything was ready in time.

The Chairman wished all members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**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:**

The Proprietors of Little Italy addressed the meeting. They hope to open a takeaway at 169 Ormskirk Road. A small minority of residents have been very vocal in complaining about the proposal and have made assumptions about issues that would arise. In order to address the issue of parking, the proprietors have arranged for customers to park in the school car park next door, as the school will be closed when the takeaway is open. There are 25 parking spaces and the proprietors will be providing CCTV.

The new venture will provide employment opportunities. Uber eats/Just eat etc delivery services will not be used and last orders will be at 9.30pm.

The proprietors invited residents to meet with them to discuss their concerns, but no-one turned up. There was a discussion regarding the change of use from a café to a takeaway with some inside seating, the sale of alcohol and the opening times. Councillor Denton will mediate with the residents who oppose the proposal, in an attempt to diffuse the situation and help clear up any misunderstandings there may be between residents and the proprietors.

There is a lot of local support for the proposal from residents. Members commended the proprietors for what they have achieved so far at Little Italy and the improvement their business has brought to the Village.

There was a further discussion regarding how the planning application process works. Officers from St Helens Council will look at the application objectively and take into account all the issues, including traffic etc. Highways officers would comment on the suitability of traffic controlling measures such as yellow lines, although it was thought that the possibility of these had been rejected.

**Action: Councillor Denton**

5. **To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Rainford Parish Council meeting held on Monday 27 November 2023:**

The residents' names were redacted from the minutes. Councillor Lee stated that it was Councillor Whalley, not Councillor Dodson who gave the report regarding Rainford Youth Council. With these alterations and corrections, the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record, proposed by Councillor Bardsley, seconded by Councillor Long and carried unanimously.

6. **Knifesavers – Councillor Bowden:**

Councillor Bowden informed the meeting that she had spoken to the doctor involved in the campaign. He would like a blood cabinet outside the Village Hall next to the defibrillator, which would contain 4 Lifesavers packs. This would require planning permission. The packs cost £55 each and the cabinet approximately £500.

The Parish Council has previously agreed to fund a pack for each pub in the parish, but not the cabinet. As the cost of the packs has reduced considerably, there may be funds available for the cabinet. Costings and details of the cabinet will be needed for the planning application.

In the New Year, free training will be provided at the Village Hall to any residents who wish to attend. Dates to be agreed. Packs will be provided to businesses who send staff for training.

**Action: Councillor Bowden/The Clerk**

7. **Neighbourhood Plan – Councillor Roberts:**

This item was deferred to the January 2024 meeting as Councillor Roberts was not at the meeting. There was a short discussion regarding Neighbourhood plans.

8. **Update on Miller Homes Development: Councillor Lamb:**

Councillor Lamb informed the members present that a meeting was being arranged with representatives from Miller Homes. A further submission for S106 monies will be submitted. The Village Hall is the nearest community facility to the development and needs some upgrading to accommodate the large numbers of additional residents. There was a short discussion.

**Action: Councillor Lamb/Councillor Denton/The Clerk**

9. **Receipts and Payments for November 2023:**

Receipts £ 19,834.68

Payments £ 19,105.24

Bank balances @ 31.10.2023:

Current Account: £ 10,228.57

Business Account: £ 65,777.72 (~£4,500 Christmas Fayre)

10. **Clerk's Office Report:**

The Chairman welcomed the Clerk back. The Clerk sincerely thanked all members for their support over the past 6 months.

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

- i. Swindles have re started the work on the flat roof work on the flat roof.
- ii. Pest Control have visited the Village Hall for a second time and the problem appears to be under control. They will attend for a third time to check.
- iii. Mitchells Drains have completed the work required outside the kitchen. *Councillor Lee informed the meeting that many years ago the caretakers cleaned out the grease trap on a monthly basis, and this should be on the caretaker's list of duties.*

**Action: The Clerk**

iv. The Clerk returned to work on 04.12.2023 on a phased return.

v. The Benches for the Linear Way have now arrived at St. Helens. A date for installation is awaited. *Councillor Denton informed the meeting that the benches have now been installed. It was agreed that photographs of the benches should be circulated on social media.*

**Action: Councillor Denton**

- vi. There are still reports of flooding on the Linear Park between Rookery Lane and the bridge. Councillor Lamb informed the meeting that following a site visit, United Utilities have agreed that it is their responsibility, but stated that it is not the right time to fix the problem. There was a discussion as the flooding is getting worse. It was agreed that officers at St Helens Council should be sent photographs.

**Action: Councillor Denton/The Clerk**

- vii. Arrangements have been made to have the gas fires in the Chamber removed.
- viii. Disappointment had been expressed at the Christmas tree in the centre of the village at a cost of £4500 from the Borough Councillor's CIF. Several residents had commented that this money could have been better spent, and that this additional tree in the Village was not necessary as there are trees outside All Saints Church and the Village Hall.
- ix. A positive meeting had taken place with Steve Littler, Paula Blellock and Lisa Harris from St Helens Council. This was attended by Councillor Lamb, the Clerk and the Event Co-ordinator. Councillor Lamb informed the meeting of the following:
- a. The EPC for the Village Hall needs to be elevated to 'C' before the lease can be agreed, otherwise it can only be a short lease until 2027. It was agreed that these measures would be put in place. The cost of this has already been approved.
  - b. Steve Littler will send a further list of works that will need to be completed, before Christmas.
  - c. Following this, a draft lease will be produced.
  - d. The possibility of using the Reception Room as a community library was raised by the officers, with no financial compensation being offered by St Helens Council, but rent could be sought from the Community Library Trust. Councillor Lamb had informed the officers that it was the Parish Council's understanding that the Borough Councillors were negotiating to keep the existing library building.
  - e. The land at the rear of the Village Hall was discussed.
  - f. The new lease will have conditions attached to it for remedial works to the Village Hall.
  - g. St Helens Council is currently looking at all its assets and how they can best be used.
- x. A meeting had taken place with The Chairman, the Clerk and the Borough Councillors. Councillor Lamb informed the meeting that Borough Councillor Case had asked for the precept to be increased by £10,000 to assist with costs for the Community Library Trust. The suggestion to do this had come from an officer at St Helens Council. The Chairman had informed Councillor Case that it was only the Parish Council who decided what the precept would be and how it was spent. Plans for the community library are not yet in place. The Borough Councillors were unable to provide figures on how many residents are currently using the library. Therefore, it is not possible for the Parish Council to agree to any funding at this time.

**11. Committee & Working Party Reports:**

➤ **Borough Council:**

The Clerk read out the following report from Councillor Mussell.

**Miller Homes.**

The plans were passed despite opposition from Linda, John and Chris Lamb and over 200 objectors. We understand that they will start building in 3-6 months' time subject to completion of pre build and addressing various conditions and submitting a n approved building plan.

We will be monitoring adherence to these conditions during the construction and reporting to compliance team any concerns.

**Library.**

The Library will close on 31<sup>st</sup> January. It is our intention to re-open the building as a Community Library and Hub as a Charitable Trust approximately 3-6 months after its closure. We are well down the path of an agreement with St Helens Council to do this and have the support of the Leader of the Council and other senior Cabinet Members. We have all the necessary documents in place to support our

application as a Charity Registration Number by the end of December and a bank account at the start of January. We have been working on this with the National Community Library Network regional co-ordinator.

We will look to the Parish Council to support us financially as this is a community asset and an important part of village life.

#### **Benches.**

We have arranged for 7 benches to be spread around the village. They will be located on the Linear Path ( at the Junction end -as there were none), at the Cricket and Bowling Clubs and at the Fishing pond at Siding Lane. Several are already in place and all will be in place by the end of December.

#### **Police.**

We are very concerned with the increase in anti-social behaviour and crime. The incident at the High School was particularly shocking and we were interviewed by the St Helens Star and an article was published in the newspaper and online. We are in contact with the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for the Liverpool City Region and the local police, who we fully support.

#### **Royal Mail**

We are aware of a seemingly poor service at the North End and Linda has written to the Chief Executives Office of St Helens Council to raise this matter.

#### **Christmas.**

Linda and John would like to wish all councillors and officers on the Parish Council a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

#### ➤ **Community Liaison Committee:**

In Councillor Reynolds absence, the following update was given by Councillor Denton:

- The Christmas Fayre was a great success and raised ~ £1300. The Clerk read out the figures:  
Income:

£895.00	Raffle
£406.50	Hook a Duck/Grotto
£282.80	Bottle Tombola
£664.50	Mulled Gin & Mince Pies
£362.03	Card Machines
£800.00	Stalls

Total Income: £3410.83

#### Expenditure

£292.17	Mulled Gin & Mince Pies
£592.95	Grotto
£ 61.56	Volunteer refreshments
£ 70.00	Market Fee
£1035.00	Road Closure

Total Expenditure: £2051.68

Overall profit: £1359.15

Councillor Lee asked for full accounts to be circulated. The Clerk stated that it was difficult to give accurate figures for each of the Parish Council stalls as the same card machine had been used. Councillor Bowden asked for a better pool for the Hook a Duck next year. There was a discussion regarding the road closure.

The Chairman thanked everyone who was involved.

#### **Action: The Clerk**

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

Councillor Long gave the following report:

- There were no objections to plans
- Work needs to be done to get a grade C EPC
- The boiler will be serviced and the engineer asked to give an estimated life for the boiler.
- Work to the flat roof has been completed, but the scaffolding has not yet been removed.

**Action: The Clerk**

- The bar staff have agreed to do the internal decorating required.

**Action: The Event Co-ordinator**

- £4500 of the accounts has been raised from Christmas Fayres. New gazebos are needed, along with other sundry items.

**RESOLVED:** *Councillor Long proposed that the Rainford Christmas Fayre Working Party is given the power to make capital expenditure for items required to make the fayre feasible, such as gazebos. This was seconded by Councillor Bardsley and carried unanimously.*

- Councillor Denton asked about the planning application submitted by REDS to erect a covered gazebo. The planning officer had been contacted and a report from a Conservation officer would be necessary, but is not yet available. The Parish Council has not submitted an objection.

➤ **Health & Safety Committee:**

Councillor Stockton-Pugh informed the meeting, that the committee had not met since the previous full Council meeting. However, following visits to The Clerk's office, it had been agreed that the desk chairs needed replacing. Councillor Stockton-Pugh will provide a desk-based assessment for completion.

**Action: Councillor Stockton-Pugh/The Clerk**

➤ **Village Hall Improvements Working Party:**

Councillor Stockton-Pugh informed the meeting that the Working Party were looking at ideas for future events. The Chairman asked for a full update at the next meeting, including dates. The next meeting of the working party will be on 10.01.2023.

➤ **Rainford Christmas Fayre:**

It was agreed that letters of thanks should be sent to the volunteers who helped on the day.

**Action: The Clerk**

**12. Budget and precept for 2024/25:**

For 2023/24 the precept was not increased and remained at £27.17 (Council Tax Base Band D equivalent). With a tax base of 2969, this gives a total precept of £80,668. The Tax Base for 2024/25 has not yet been determined. There was a discussion and the following points were made:

- There will not be any income from the Miller Homes development for some time.
- There is the expense of redecorating the hall, stairs and landing, which detracts from the overall look at the hall at present. This needs to be done as soon as possible. Quotes are required. The report regarding the damp has not yet been received.

**Action: The Clerk/Councillor Denton**

- There may be the expense of a new boiler.
- The Reception Room also needs to be upgraded; the High School have not yet made good and the boards are still on the walls. Photographs are needed for new boards.
- The photocopier needs upgrading. Further information on costs is needed.

**Action: The Clerk**

- Following the desk-based assessment, upgraded office furniture may be required.
- The bank balance should be reasonably healthy by the end of the financial year.

**RESOLVED:** *Councillor Long proposed that the Precept for 2024/25 is set at £27.17 for Tax Base Band D equivalent. This was seconded by Councillor Denton and carried unanimously.*

**Action: The Clerk**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.33pm