



**Minutes of a meeting of  
RAINFORD PARISH COUNCIL  
held on 26 February 2024 commencing at 7pm in the Council Chamber**

**Present:**        **Councillors:**        **Bardsley, Bowden, Denton, Holden (left 8.10pm),  
Lamb BEM (Chairman), Lee, Long, Reynolds, Roberts,  
Stockton-Pugh, Whalley**

**Absent:**        **Councillor Grice**

**In attendance:** **Billy Bradshaw (Engagement Officer, Liverpool City Region)**  
**Paul Draper (The Junction Pub)**  
**Sara Manson (Principal Planning Officer (Policy), St Helens Council)**  
**Sally Powell (Clerk)**  
**Victoria Swainbank (Event Co-ordinator)**

**1.        Apologies for Absence:**

Councillor Bimpson (Away), Councillor Dodson (Unwell), Councillor Turner (Business)

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

The Chairman congratulated Everton Football Club on getting some points and Liverpool Football Club for winning a cup.

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

None.

**4.        Neighbourhood Plans – Sara Manson, Principal Planning Officer (Policy) St Helens Council:**

Sara gave an introduction to Neighbourhood planning, including what a neighbourhood plan is, and what it can do for a community, and how the unitary authority can assist. Rainford is the only Parish Council in the borough currently showing an interest in producing a Neighbourhood Plan.

Realistically, it is hard work and takes 3 to 4 years to complete the process, the final stage of which is a local referendum to establish if the local community wishes to adopt the Neighbourhood Plan produced by the Parish Council. St Helens Council can assist with this. There are lots of regulations involved.

Neighbourhood plans cannot stop housing developments, but if one is in place, then the community has a greater say and there may be developer contributions for additional educational and health care facilities. Additionally, having a neighbourhood plan helps to protect open spaces.

Any Neighbourhood Plan must be in line with Local and National policies. The cost of producing one is in the region of £20k. All statements and intentions in the plan have to be evidenced.

Lots of councils in Cheshire East have produced Neighbourhood plans, and it would be worth contacting them to establish what worked and what didn't during the creation process.

The first step is to engage with the local community to gauge views and discover what residents would like to see included in a neighbourhood plan. A good way to do this would be to use another event that is taking place (possibly the 50 years Exhibition in September)

Sara answered questions from members and will also send further information to the Clerk, including details of funding schemes to help cover the cost. The Chairman thanked her for attending the meeting.

**Sara Manson left the meeting at 7.28pm**

5. **Moving Buses Forward - Billy Bradshaw, Engagement Officer, Liverpool City Region:**  
Billy Bradshaw gave an oversight regarding the new Liverpool City Region strategy for Bus Services across the area. Young people have been particularly engaging with the consultation currently underway. LCR are very keen to improve bus services and to provide what communities need and want. Many consultees have stated that there needs to be an integrated timetable with other forms of public transport. The new system will mean that there is only one organisation in charge of the bus network, providing a single point of contact for passengers and stakeholders. The new system will be rolled out across the region in stages, with St Helens being the first. This is expected to take place in September 2026.  
Billy answered questions from members. The Chairman thanked him for attending the meeting.

**Billy Bradshaw left the meeting at 7.53pm**

6. **To hear and respond to any questions/deputations by members of the public:**  
Paul Draper addressed that Council about his interest in setting up a Community Investment Company (CIC), to create a power hub through solar panels on land at the rear of The Junction Pub. A CIC could work with the National Grid to provide power. 1.7mw of power would provide power for around 400 houses. Currently there are grants for farmers, but not for other types of landowners. CIC shareholders would see a return on their investment after 3 years. Such a scheme could provide lower fuel bills and an investment opportunity.  
The Merseyside Pension Fund's investment constitution states that investments should favour local people, so this may be a source of investment.  
Planning permission would be required.  
Members reacted positively to Paul's suggestion and wished to be kept up to date with the project.

**Paul Draper left the meeting at 8.08pm**

7. **To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Rainford Parish Council meeting held on Monday 22 January 2024:**  
The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 22 January 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record, proposed by Councillor Bardsley, seconded by Councillor Long and carried unanimously.

**Action: The Clerk**

**Councillor Holden left the meeting at 8.10pm**

8. **Photographs for Reception Room:**  
This item was deferred as the photographs have not yet been sent in by the resident. Councillor Lee stated that the High School should have repainted when they left, as agreed.

**Action: The Clerk**

9. **Knifesavers – Councillor Bernie Bowden:**  
Councillor Bowden informed the meeting that free training sessions were being arranged. They would take place in the early evening. Additionally, there is a Blood Box in Crawford. Councillor Bowden will take photos to show members what the box looks like.

**Action: Cllr Bowden/The Clerk**

10. **Update on Miller Homes Development: Councillor Lamb BEM**  
The Chairman informed the members that the scheduled meeting with David Brackley from Miller Homes had been cancelled at short notice. Another date has not yet been arranged.

**Action: Cllr Lamb/The Clerk**

**11. Receipts and Payments for January 2024:**

Full details can be found in the FPA committee minutes for February 2024

Receipts £ 10,740.15

Payments £ 33,557.79

Bank balances @ 31.01.2024:

Current Account: £ 5,725.87

Business Account: £ 65,777.72

**12. Clerk's Report:**

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

- i. A meeting has taken place with Steve Littler and other officers from St Helens Council regarding the lease for the Village Hall. Copies of documents were requested by the officers, which have been provided. The list of works and information for the lease which Steve Littler stated would be provided before Christmas has still not been received. This was chased on 08.02.2024 and 15.02.2024. No reply has been received yet. *St Helens Council have requested a formal proposal from the Parish Council stating that it wishes the land bordering Pilkington Street be removed from the Village Hall lease. There was a discussion. Members were concerned that St Helens Council have plans for the land at the rear of the Village Hall, which have not been shared with the Parish Council.*

**RESOLVED:** *Councillor Lamb BEM proposed that the land bordering Pilkington Street remains part of the Village Hall lease. This was seconded by Councillor Reynolds and carried unanimously*

**RESOLVED:** *Councillor Reynolds proposed that a Freedom of Information request is made for documents pertaining to the land at the rear of the Village Hall that does not form part of the lease. This was seconded by Councillor Lamb and carried unanimously*

*The Chairman informed the meeting that he intended to write to the Borough Councillors regarding the request by St Helens Council for a memorandum of understanding from the Parish Council regarding space in the Village Hall for a Community Library as part of the Village Hall lease negotiations.*

**Action: Cllr Lamb/The Clerk**

- ii. The invoice for the outside tree lights for Christmas has not yet been received.
- iii. The sanding and polishing of the Main Hall Floor will take place week commencing 25.03.2024. Payment will be made in the next financial year. Classes in the Main Hall will have to be cancelled.
- iv. Flooding and trees falling on the Linear Way continue to be problems. Officers from St Helens Council have been informed and undertaken site visits.
- v. Quotes for replacing the boilers are awaited. They have been requested in time for the meeting.
- vi. Work has started on gathering photographs and other memorabilia for the 50 years of the Parish Council exhibition.
- vii. A meeting has been arranged with Jenny Wynn, Police Officer responsible for Rainford on Monday 11.03.2024 at 5.30pm for her to meet Councillors and discuss any issues of concern.
- viii. The PCC of All Saints Church have been asked if they would consider having the Blood Box on the Parish Hall.
- ix. The final recommendations from the Community Governance Review have been approved. See separate document.
- x. An application for a free portrait of the King to hang in the Village Hall has been accepted.
- xi. An email regarding the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment call for sites exercise has been received from the planning department at St Helens Council.
- xii. All Saints Parish Church have not yet made a decision about the Blood Box being sited on the Parish Hall wall.
- xiii. The Beer Festival was a success and made a profit, but it was not as busy as last year. The FPA committee requested a comparison of all 8 Beer Festivals. See separate document.
- xiv. The new printer/copier has been installed. The quality of the printing is noticeably better.
- xv. *Notification of planning application P/2024/0091/OUP for 8 dwellings at Peet Meadow, Rainford has been received. There was a short discussion. This land was removed from the green belt as part of*

*the Local Plan*

- xvi. *Information regarding a conference about developing a dementia care strategy has been received and Councillor Denton has expressed an interest in attending. The cost (with discount) is £359.20 + VAT per delegate.*

**RESOLVED:** *Councillor Reynolds proposed that one place is booked for attendance at the on-line conference. This was seconded by Councillor Bardsley and carried unanimously.*

**Action: Cllr Denton/The Clerk**

- xvii. *Councillor Roberts informed the meeting that she had been contacted by someone whose disabled daughter attends Rainford High School, about other vehicles parking in the disabled parking spaces. There was a discussion during which the Chairman stated he would contact the parent.*

**Action: Cllr Lamb/Cllr Roberts**

**13. Annual Report: Cllr Lamb:**

There was a discussion regarding the production of an annual report as part of the marking of 50 years of the Parish Council. Councillor Reynolds offered assistance in the production of the document.

**RESOLVED:** *Councillor Whalley proposed that a Parish Council Annual Report is produced this year. This was seconded by Councillor Stockton-Pugh and carried unanimously*

**Action: Cllr Reynolds/The Clerk**

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

➤ **Borough Council:**

The Chairman read out the following report:

- Sadly, the Library closed on Friday 26 January and the team will start the decanting of books, equipment, fixtures and fittings from the end of February. This is required under the insurance policy. The 2 staff will be redeployed. St Helens Council will now hand the building, along with the other 5 to the disposals team. We held a meeting with the CEO and Director in charge to fully understand the next steps on the way to open as a Community Managed Library and Hub and we have made our interest clear that we want to re-open it ASAP as a community hub and Library. This process that will likely take months. We will keep the PC informed along the route.
- We are having good success in getting potholes repaired. The council is now using a new machine that fixes potholes and seals them in a much more efficient way. They have done a very good job at the end of Rookery Lane. They have also repaired some very large potholes on Derby Drive and a series of potholes on Alder Lane in Crank. We have more potholes on our list and are systematically focussed on getting all our roads in the Rainford ward into a decent state.
- Mersey Forest, assisted by RIB, have planted 48 trees around Rainford. on Old Hall Est. Jubilee field, King George V field and the Bridge Inn Park. The sites were selected by Parks and Gardens team as they had to be on Council Land with an agreement to manage them in the future.
- There are plans for the buses come under the control of the LCR from September 2026. St Helens will be the first area to benefit from this change. It is a Franchised model, like London and Greater Manchester. Purchase of new buses, timetables and routes are under consideration. We are in discussions with the LCR about improving services for Rainford under this model We have had initial positive feedback from the LCR. There will be online feedback links so all people can comment and make suggestions. The public consultation meeting in the Village Hall 5th March between 1-5 and all residents should be encouraged to give their views.
- St Helens Council are in the budget setting process, John and I will be meeting the finance director the first week of March.

Cllr Linda Mussell  
Cllr John Case

➤ **Community Liaison Committee:**

Councillor Reynolds informed the meeting that a meeting was being scheduled with an officer from St Helens Council regarding the practicalities of getting the stone for the memorial on the Linear Park in place.

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

Councillor Long informed the meeting that the committee had not had any objections to planning applications this month. The finances were looking in reasonable shape for the end of the year, but increases to bar prices would have to be considered as the suppliers had given notification of price rises. Ways of cutting costs would also be explored. The new printer had been installed.

➤ **Health & Safety Committee:**

Councillor Stockton-Pugh informed the meeting that the committee had not met since the last full Council meeting.

➤ **Village Hall Improvements Working Party: and**

➤ **Rainford Christmas Fayre Working Party:**

Councillor Stockton-Pugh spoke about how the working parties had evolved over time. There was a short discussion.

**RESOLVED:** *Councillor Stockton-Pugh proposed the amalgamation of the Rainford Village Hall Improvement and the Rainford Christmas Fayre Working Parties to form the Village Hall working party that would look at events taking place at the Village Hall, including the Christmas Fayre, along with building improvements. Membership to be Councillors Bardsley, Denton, Dodson, Stockton-Pugh & Whalley, plus resident members. This was seconded by Councillor Denton and carried unanimously.*

**Action: The Clerk**

**15. Pensioner's Winter Package: Cllr Denton**

Councillor Denton informed the meeting that older residents in other areas of the borough receive a Pensioner's Pack every year. These have not been distributed in Rainford for some time. There was a short discussion about whether the Parish Council could provide these for Rainford residents. It was agreed that costings were needed and that the initiative would be discussed further at the next full Council meeting.

**Action: Cllr Denton/The Clerk**

**16. Committee decision making: Cllr Denton**

Councillor Denton initiated a discussion about the decision-making process within the Parish Council, as it was felt that some important decisions made at committee level are not being passed on to other members. Also, that some decisions made at committee level should be discussed and voted on at Full Council. It was also noted that some decisions were not being enforced eg. No dogs except service dogs being allowed in the hall.

**Councillor Bardsley left the meeting at 9.12pm**

The Clerk was asked to circulate the terms of reference for committees, so that members could put forward amendments at the next meeting. Additionally, the minutes of committee meetings and the notes from working party meetings will be circulated to all Councillors.

**Action: The Clerk**

**17. Private Agenda: Staff Renumeration**

The Clerk and the Event Co-ordinator were asked to leave the meeting. Councillor Lee agreed to take minutes for this agenda item.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.30pm

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**Councillor Chris Lamb BEM**  
**Chairman, Rainford Parish Council 2023/24**