

Minutes of the “Virtual” Meeting of Rushock Parish Council

held on Thursday, 10th September, 2020 via ZOOM at 7:50pm

Present:

Cllr. T. Green (TG) (Chairman)
Cllr. D Cutler (DC) (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. S Davis (SD)
Cllr. R. Hampshire (RH)
Cllr. T. Jennings (TJ)

Also Present were:

The clerk Mrs. B J Drew (BD) County Cllr. Mr. M Hart (MH) and District Cllr. Mr. I Hardiman.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. J Nicholls (JN) due to another meeting. District Cllr. Mrs. Lisa Jones (LJ) and Rebecca Ruston, West Mercia Police.

2. **Public Question Time:** None

3. **Minutes:**

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21st May, 2020 were duly approved and will be signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record when “lockdown” measures have been lifted.

4. **Progress Reports:**

TG reported that the CALC bulletins are offering various on-line training sessions. The Parish Council do have budget for training so if any Councillor would like to attend please contact the Clerk. BD reported the Chairman had undertaken the Chairmanship Training and passed with flying colours!

5. **County Councillor’s Report:**

MH reported;

Rushock Issues

The main issue since the last meeting report is the ongoing issue of flooding and land drainage issues on Clattercut Lane. You will recall that I hosted a site meeting, together with Bill Waldron the lengths man, Paul Green our local highways engineer, Dee and Terry on 17th December last year!!! Regrettably, first flooding then Coronavirus have somewhat affected the pace of action on this matter but rest assured Paul has not forgotten this and I am pursuing him for action but he hasn’t got a meaningful update for this meaning.

Regarding the gap between the road and the verge again in Park Lane as indicated by Paul Green and communicated over email, this is going to be difficult to resolve due to the fact that it is large tractors churning up the verge. I am pleased that a warning sign has been installed at either end of Park Lane.

Wyre Forest Issues

Work on Kidderminster Train Station is complete and work continued through lock down and the station opened officially in July.

WCC highways have now started work on the Churchfields site with the creation of the spur road off the island which will take traffic out of town and again this carried on through lockdown and is now going ahead at a pace.

Consideration is actively currently being given as to what type of congestion reduction scheme will be implemented on the A449 Hoobrook island. This should benefit residents wanting to come in and out of Kidderminster onto the A449 before going onto the A442, especially at peak times. Since my last report further capital money is proposed to be allocated to this scheme to ensure it is completed over the next 12 months and indeed £1.3 million has been secured from the Local Enterprise Partnership. I have a meeting at the month to look at potentially the final scheme.

Strategic Issues County Wide

Highways and resurfacing work continues at a pace.

Virtually all libraries are now re-open, but in particular the ones most local to Rushock are open.

The two household waste sites in Wyre Forest are re-open, albeit the Worcester Road site requires you to book a slot online in advance.

Schools have now started back this week in their 'bubbles' and all should be fully open by the start of next week.

The County Council has now completed the changes to its management structure with the Directors and Asst. Directors in place, in particular with the new Director for Adult Social care, now the Director of People, Paula Furnival in place and a new Asst. Director Legal and Governance Abraham Ezekiel in place (replacing Simon Mallinson who retired in February).

TG advised that he had seen a drain jetter in the Parish. MH reported that following a list compiled by many local parish councils and submitted to Worcestershire County Council drain cleaning had been undertaken.

SD advised that a tree had fallen on a BT box resulting in loss of landline phone service for numerous residents for over 4 weeks. There is likely to be a further delay because a road closure is needed before repairs can be undertaken. MH will investigate with Highways.

6. District Councillor's Report:

IH reported;

Local Issues

We have been dealing with the usual routine casework, reporting litter and fly tipping on the main A roads and along the country lanes.

Wyre Forest Issues

The enforcement team have successfully charged a fly-tipper for dumping rubbish along our lanes and highways. We as members are continually working with the enforcement team regarding various environmental issues that blight our villages. The fly-tipper was seen dumping rubbish by a passing driver who provided a statement and after giving us a statement. The fly-tipper received 3 fixed penalty notices.

- for fly tipping £300
- failure to produce waste transfer notes £200
- not holding a waste carrier license £200

There has been a campaign launched to discourage the use of laughing gas drug abuse within our communities to raise awareness about the dangers and the related litter in our public spaces.

Local voluntary groups and charitable organisations in Wyre Forest can now apply for a grant between £200 and £500 to help towards the cost of projects that benefit local people. The information can be

found of the council website; you can also contact ourselves as local members for assistance. There is also funding available from Worcester County Council for local groups and organisations, this can also be found of the County Councils website.

The District Council are backing the Worcestershire County Council's bid to improve walking and cycling routes within our district. A motion was passed at July's Full Council Meeting welcoming the positive impact increased cycling and walking has had on resident's health and wellbeing. A second application is currently being put together by the County Council.

The District Council has created a Wyre Forest Community Lottery for local causes and organisations to benefit from. There will be a virtual event taking place on Wednesday 16th September at 11am, the District Council will be inviting organisations to express an interest in attending. If there are any local groups that you feel would benefit from this funding, please contact the new Lottery Manager Rachel Symons. The first draw will take place at the end of November and tickets will cost £1 with 60pence going towards local causes. The draw will be weekly with a jackpot of £25,000 for a matching sequence of six numbers, other prizes being £2,000, £250, £25 or three free tickets. The council will not make any money out of the lottery. You can purchase tickets from the District Council Website by completing an online application form.

Staff and members have been asked to complete a survey regarding the implications of home working and attending meetings on zoom by the Chief Executive, we will inform you of the results and any updates.

We have received updated statistics regarding the number of fatalities from the Covid virus for the Wyre Forest District, there has been a total of 116. There have been no recorded fatalities within this parish which is very good news. We would like to remind residents to continue being careful and ensure that social distancing is still maintained and respected for the safety of all residents and the vulnerable people in our community.

Wyre Forest House is still closed to the public as is the Green Street hub save for dealing with housing and homelessness applications.

7. Police Report:

Written report circulated – no issues at present.

8. To discuss Biodiversity Project:

DC reported that the subcommittee met last week to consider the projects which had been previously identified within the Parish. These to be funded by generous grants of 2 £500 from Marcus and intended to increase the food available for pollinators, create distinct areas for future projects and enhance the environment for those who live in and those who visit Rushock Parish. All undertaken within the recommendations from Natural England.

They have identified 3 distinct areas.

Firstly the wide verge to the left of Lunnon Lane at it's junction with Clattercut Lane. Here it is proposed to plant a small orchard of 4/5 Rushock Pearmain apple trees, which were bred in the garden of the blacksmiths cottage, now the Savages home. To buy the trees plus a couple of crab apples to ensure pollination, to stake, protect them and cover some labour for planting would be around £250. In addition to this, because of the way in which that verge is used for casual parking, it is proposed to put in a line of 18" wooden posts leaving the splay and at 1metre in from the road to allow for verge cutting. County have kindly agreed to sponsor these and a sign explaining why the trees have been planted. DC is currently seeking quotes from local people for putting these in.

Secondly, it is proposed to plant the little copse opposite this with native bluebells, which protected from verge cutting could be left to naturalise.

The third area is the triangle around the post box. Here it is proposed to plant native bluebells, daffodils and wild tulips to create a splash of blue and yellow throughout the Spring and early summer. It is also suggested that we plant a viburnum to one side of the box which would give summer flowers and an autumn supply of red berries providing valuable food for birds. We also propose planting cowslips here and scattering calendula seeds. Again all brilliant for pollinators.

In addition to the 3 areas we propose planting bluebells and daffodils by each village sign on Clattercut Lane and maybe some wild anemones by the stile on Lunnon Lane into Wheelers field.

The total cost for all these bulbs would be around £135 but represents good value as they will all naturalise in time and provide a veritable feast for pollinators!

These projects would use around a third of our total grants, leaving a surplus for future maintenance, cutting grass around fruit trees, pruning etc.

Lastly, we all love to turn a corner when walking and come to the sweet smell of wild honeysuckle. We suggest buying 3 of these at around £9 each and offering them to local residents who could plant them in a roadside hedge by their property but who could guarantee that the hedge would not be cut until the end of October to allow maximum benefit from these plants.

It was unanimously agreed by the Parish Council to support the project and proceed. Clerk will provide information required by Worcestershire County Council to grant license for planting. TJ to liaise with DC regarding purchase of trees and bulbs and planting. Clerk to try and obtain further funding for the project.

9. Problems with cyclists:

Although Rushock is happy to welcome cyclists lately there have been a lot more club cyclists racing extremely fast through the lanes, many shouting and using inappropriate language, particularly unsuitable as many children have been at home and in the garden during the co-vid pandemic. It was agreed Clerk to write to local cycle clubs to highlight concerns raised.

10. Consultation Responses.

- a) PCC Town and Parish Council Survey – Clerk to complete.
- b) Consultation on the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service draft Community Risk Management Plan (2021 – 2025) TG encouraged Councillors to respond to the consultation.

11. Planning:

TG reported on Planning since the last meeting;

WF/20/0549/NMA: Modification to the stone portico to the front elevation, the addition of a stone canopy over the door on the side elevation, removal of the projection at ground floor level on the rear elevation and the chimney projection on the side elevation, changes to windows and french doors on the rear elevation removing fanlights above doors and modified driveway and rear terrace around approved dwelling at Clattercut House, Rushock. The Parish Council Recommend Approval.

12. Highways:

BW has cut around the gateways and trimmed hedges. The Pothole in Lunnon Lane has been marked for repair.

13. Footpaths:

TG reported footpaths are generally in a good condition. He has repaired a couple of stiles and cleared vegetation.

14. Finance:

The financial spreadsheet was duly circulated and it was in accordance with the bank statements. The current bank balance was £6395.82

There are no accounts for approval. The Council are still awaiting payment of £60.00 for reimbursement of lengthsman work and the ICO direct debit fee has not yet been drawn. Delays are due to co-vid.

The Clerk advised the Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2020 – 2021 has now been agreed.

15. Rushock Village Hall:

There have been no functions as the hall remains closed. The kitchen has now been completed. The hall has received a £10k government grant from the co-vid scheme.

16. Parish Winter Grit:

The grit bin is full, so no additional grit needs to be ordered.

17. Correspondence:

The Clerk had circulated the schedule of correspondence and presented the correspondence to the meeting. The Clerk advised that the website accessibility statement, required by the new NALC Website Accessibility Regulations will be on the website before the due date of 23rd September 2020. TG asked if we knew how many “hits” the website receives. Clerk will investigate.

The schedule was duly noted.

18. Agenda items for future meetings:

Please advise Clerk.

19. To note the date of the next meeting(s) and dates for 2021 meetings.

Thursday 26th November, 2020,

2021 Dates;
21st January 2021,
20th May 2021,
9th September 2021,
25th November 2021.

Clerk advised we have not yet received confirmation from the Village Hall for the 2021 dates.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed..... (Chairman)

Dated.....