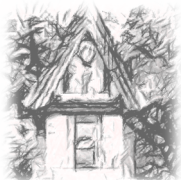


Rous Lench Parish Council

DRAFT Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 20th May 2024

at 7:30pm at Rous Lench Village Hall.

Present	Cllrs D Browne (Chair), G Hughes, S Davis, S Harrison & K Hicken. In attendance: Kerry Williamson (Clerk). Public: 11 residents Meeting opened at 7:30pm
32/24	Election of Chairman: Cllr Browne was proposed as Chairman, following a vote it was agreed to elect Cllr Browne as Chairman for the 2024/25 municipal year and the Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed.
33/24	Election of Vice-Chairman & Deputy Vice-Chairman: Cllr Newton was proposed as Vice-Chairman, following a vote it was agreed to elect Cllr Newton as Vice-Chairman for the 2024/25 municipal year. Cllr Harrison was proposed as Deputy Vice-Chairman, following a vote it was agreed to elect Cllr Harrison as Deputy Vice-Chairman for the 2024/25 municipal year.
34/24	Apologies for Absence: Cllr Newton and District Councillor Ben Hurdman.
35/24	Declarations of Interest: Cllr Browne has a disclosable interest in agenda item 11.5. Cllr Browne will not take part or vote on agenda item 11.5.
36/24	Dispensations: No requests received.
37/24	To receive reports from District, County Council and Police: Wychavon Dist. Council (WDC): District Councillor Ben Hurdman provided the following report to share: <i>This month the Wychavon councillors will be looking at the contract for the Home Improvement Agency which is up for renewal in March 2025. We will be scrutinising the performance of the current contractors and reviewing what they do and do not cover in the field. It is vitally important that especially in our rural communities elderly people and people with a special need can remain in their homes with the correct care to maintain a good quality of life.</i> <i>Wychavon have committed to using HVO fuel where possible in their diesel equipment in parks and gardens. This should reduce Co2 emissions by 90% in comparison to white diesel. We are also using environmentally friendly herbicides rather than pesticides.</i> <i>Over the past six months everyone is aware of the amount of rain we have had. However, there is a weather station at the Civic Centre which gives us a bit of detail. We've had:</i> <i>61mm in Jan (slightly lower than average)</i> <i>143mm in Feb (highest ever recorded)</i> <i>122mm in March (just below highest ever)</i>



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	<p><i>Over the last six months we have seen the highest percentage of winter water run off in the last 39 years.</i></p> <p><i>Planning – There have been 5 planning appeal decisions over the last month with all 5 being dismissed by the government inspector. This is promising and gives me confidence that the planning committee and officers are making the correct decisions where necessary. Applications are currently being processed in 3 days and last month 320 were processed.</i></p> <p><i>Regarding the applications in Rous Lench, I have chased the officer regarding the application at The Caravan, at Radford Rd, unfortunately there is very little to report. Having spoken with the officer at present the agent’s application still has discrepancies with what the applicant requires and what he has presented. I will keep chasing weekly and have asked Gemma to keep me updated.</i></p> <p><i>I am concerned by the amount of live/work applications that keep popping up. I don’t think this is always of value to the villages and can be used as a back door to gain permission for a property in a desirable location, whereas normally they would be refused. It also concerns me that those people who really need live/work units may miss out. I am going to speak with our new head of planning regarding this matter in the near future.</i></p> <p><i>Finally, I would like to thank you for welcoming me so warmly into the role of councillor. Over my first 12 months as a district councillor I have learned a great deal and have been reassured by the Parish Council’s commitment to preserving Rous Lench and Radford and continuing to strive for the best for the villages. It is a credit to the Parish council that we have a desirable village with lots of facilities and a community spirit.</i></p> <p>Worcs County Council (WCC): No report provided.</p> <p>Police: PCSO V. Elliot responded with nothing to report.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to check with SNT – break in near Community Gardens.</p> <p>Public participation: Residents local to the Community Garden attended to support the letter they had sent to the Parish Council. Concerns as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope of the Community Garden has increased from the original consultation meeting: car park, events. • Gardens were meant for the benefit of the village but it is being advertised widely. • A meeting with the trustees of the Community Garden had not gone well and residents felt there was no regard for their views. • Cars were parked illegally during the open day. • Grant has been spent but no water has been connected. • Concerns with the compost toilet – a lot of maintenance and smell. • Questions were asked of the transparency of the Parish Council. <p>Cllr D Browne responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council has an obligation to Wychavon District Council to check that the grant funding is spent in the correct way. Processes have been transparent. • Parish Council has a responsibility to try and satisfy all concerned. <p>Action: Councillors will read the letter (only sent to Clerk on Monday 20th May) and will provide a response.</p>
38/24	<p>To approve minutes of previous meeting. The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on March 18th 2024, were agreed as a true record and approved.</p>

39/24	<p>Planning Applications and Appeals: The following applications were noted and/or discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) SWDP Review Consultation – response provided by RLPC. Any updates to be provided. No updates. b) W/23/00321/FUL, The Caravan At, Radford Road, Rous Lench, Evesham, WR11 4UL – amended to part change of use of land (retrospective) from agricultural land to provide extension to existing gypsy site approved under reference W/15/01159 together with the siting of 3 no. mobile homes, 3 no. day rooms and 3 no. touring caravans to provide three gypsy pitches for members of the same family. Comment provided by RLPC, currently pending decision. No updates. c) W/23/02236/FUL, Land On, Little Ashdene Farm, Kington Lane, Kington - Change of use of land to residential for the erection of 3 dwellings. Comment provided by RLPC, currently pending decision. No updates. d) W/24/00175/FUL, Westol Hall Farm, Alcester Road, Radford, Worcester, WR7 4LW - Change of use of land to residential garden land within the curtilage of Westol Hall Farmhouse. Application approved by Wychavon District Council. Noted. e) W/24/00253/FUL, Land at (OS 0113 5403), Radford Road, Rous Lench - Erection of agricultural grain store. Application approved by Wychavon District Council. Noted. f) W/24/00501/HP (Clerk’s delegation) To note comments submitted between scheduled meetings: Beehive Cottage, Radford Road, Rous Lench, Evesham, WR11 4UL - Erection of a timber garden shed. Application approved by Wychavon District Council. Noted.
40/24	<p>Public Rights of Way and Highways - Clerk reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) PROW maintenance and obstruction issues – none. b) Lengthsman Scheme – No items for work schedule. c) Flooding – Water is collecting at the Radford Road/Alcester Road junction – a leak somewhere? <p>Action: Cllr Harrison will contact Severn Trent to report this.</p>
41/24	<p>Progress Reports - Clerk reported:</p> <p>Update on Actions since Previous Meeting – Grant policy including application form, village Green tree quotes, Wychavon Rural fund – extra info provided, portrait – ordered but damaged, enquired about petition (30mph extension) – no response. End of year and internal audit work, annual meetings preparation.</p>
42/24	<p>Community Gardens & allotments – Cllr Newton provided an update to share:</p> <p>Update from the Incorporated Charitable Organisation (ICO) for the Rous Lench and Radford Community Garden for the Rous Lench Parish Council Meeting 20th May</p> <p>The garden had its official opening on May 4th. The chairman of the council attended as did Ben Price, Community Officer who has been liaising with the Trust over the implementation of the Community Legacy Grant so far. David Browne, chair of the Parish Council said a few words and planted a tree in commemoration of King Charles’ Coronation. The garden was officially opened by RHS judge John Cunningham.</p> <p>The sun shone! With over 100 people in attendance, it was a great success and so lovely to see so many people from the villages enjoying the sunshine, a walk around the gardens and catching up with friends. We raised £500 for the Charity which will</p>

help maintain the gardens going forward.

Following the event and in receipt of comments from some of the neighbours we are currently undertaking some consultation to get feedback on the event and the garden in general. An online survey and paper copies have been circulated to all those who left details on the day and to every house in the villages of Rous Lench and Radford. So far, the feedback is overwhelmingly positive, with over 90% of people 'loving' the garden, with some great ideas for things they'd like to see, and some constructive criticism which the Trust will be taking on board going forward.

We will share the results with our contact list and the Parish Council and on our website in due course.

As the Parish Council is aware, we are currently awaiting news of our Rural Fund Application to which the Parish Council has generously committed match funding. This will enable us to complete the garden in line with the aspirations set out within the original Community legacy Grant application. We hope to hear whether we've been successful in the next month.

We're planning The Big Lunch as our next event over the summer. We look forward to seeing you there.

43/24 **Rous Lench & Radford parish matters for discussion or decision:**

a) Asset maintenance checks (standing item)
All assets checked, nothing to report.
Action: Cllr Browne to forward defibrillator registration information to the Clerk.

b) Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) – VAS funding has been received and the new VAS unit with solar panels has been ordered. When received the Lengthsman will be able to do the fitting.
Clerk has put forward a case to Worcestershire County Council for a second new VAS sign with solar panels plus the roundels for Goom's Hill.

c) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding – deferred to a future meeting.

d) Community Legacy Grant (CLG) (round 5) – St Peter's Church PCC are preparing their full application; the Parish Council will see the full application before it is submitted. It was agreed that as the accountable body for the CLG, the Parish Council will obtain regular updates from the PCC on project progress and monies spent and will monitor the achievement of key milestones.

e) Trees on the Village Green – It was agreed to accept quote of £850 from MJW Tree Surgeons.
Action: Clerk to check with MJW Tree Surgeons that they have adequate public liability insurance.

f) Atlas Tower Group – Parish Council is acting as a conduit to get information from Atlas regarding mobile phone coverage and masts, and to determine resident opinion on mobile phone masts.
Action: Cllr D Browne to confirm availability for meeting with Atlas.

g) Flags for the Flagpole – It was agreed to replace the damaged, aging flags.
Action: Cllr D Browne will get costs of replacement flags.

h) Road Safety on A422 – update from Cllr K Hicken and Cllr S Davies who attended the meeting:

- Options to decrease speed discussed: dragon teeth, community speed awareness, VAS and speed vans – not enough space for speed vans.
- Not enough records of accidents – encourage public to report accidents, incidents to police.
- Independent highways report to make it safer.

44/24	<p>Annual Business as per Standing Orders:</p> <p>a) Review of delegation arrangements to the Clerk and conditions of the Staffing and Finance Working Groups and to appoint 2 members. Cllr Harrison and Cllr Hughes were proposed as members for the Finance Working Group, following a vote it was agreed to appoint Cllr Harrison and Cllr Hughes as members. Cllr Hicken & Cllr Hughes were proposed as members for the Staffing Working Group, following a vote it was agreed to appoint Cllr Hicken and Cllr Hughes as members.</p> <p>b) Review and adoption of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and other RLPC Policies.</p> <p>(i) It was agreed to adopt the latest NALC Model Financial Regulations (2024). (ii) It was agreed that no changes were required to the remaining policies. (iii) It was agreed to adopt the new Grants policy.</p> <p>c) Review of inventory of assets and risk assessment. Inventory of assets is up to date. All risk assessments are up to date.</p> <p>d) To consider quotes received on arrangements for insurance cover. Quotes had been sought from Ansvar (£430.56) and Zurich (£369.43). It was agreed to accept the quote from Zurich with cover starting from 1st June 2024.</p> <p>e) To agree the payment of £220.99 annual subscription to Worcestershire CALC. It was agreed to pay the £220.99 annual subscription to Worcestershire CALC.</p> <p>f) Review of representation to the Wychavon Area of CALC. Cllr Davis and Cllr Newton were proposed as representatives to the Wychavon area of CALC, following a vote it was agreed to appoint Cllr Davis and Cllr Newton as representatives.</p>
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45/24	<p>Finance:</p> <p>a) To receive and note Annual Internal Audit from Internal Auditor. The Annual Internal audit from the Internal Auditor was noted.</p> <p>b) To approve the accounts year ending 31.03.2024 including bank reconciliation, explanation of significant variances and payments over £100. The accounts for year ending 31.03.2024 were approved. Bank reconciliation was approved. Explanation of significant variances were approved. Summary of payments over £100 was approved.</p> <p>c) To adopt the Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control. The Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control were adopted. Action: Clerk to cross reference Statement of Internal Control with the new Financial Regulations to ensure consistency.</p> <p>d) To consider documents for approval for the External Auditor:</p> <p>(i) To approve Annual Governance Statement. The Annual Governance Statement was approved and signed. (ii) To approve Statement of Accounts. The Statement of Accounts was approved and signed.</p> <p>e) Bank mandate: To review bank signatory arrangements. It was agreed that the current bank signatory arrangements were satisfactory.</p>
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45/24	<p>f) 2024-25 Budget expenditure: To consider and approve. The budget expenditure was approved.</p> <p>g) 2024-25 Bank reconciliation: To consider and approve. The bank reconciliation was approved.</p> <p>g) Invoices: To approve the proposed payments. The proposed payments (see table at the end of Minutes) were agreed.</p> <p>h) Clerk’s Delegation: To note the payments made between meetings. The payments made between meetings (see table at the end of Minutes) were noted.</p> <p>i) Grant application from Rous Lench & Radford Community Gardens. It was agreed to approve the grant application of £3,000 towards phase 2 and completion of the project.</p>
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46/24	<p>Correspondence: Worcestershire CALC: Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Wychavon Area. Worcestershire CALC: CALC subscription invoice. Worcestershire CALC: New Model Financial Regulations. Worcestershire CALC: CALC Update 24-02. Wychavon District Council: Application to Wychavon Rural Fund – Initial Checks. Wychavon District Council: SWDP Review. Wychavon District Council: Rous Lench VAS Appraisal Panel. Wychavon District Council: Social Media Guidance. Worcestershire County Council: Atlas Tower Group. Worcestershire County Council: Digitalisation of the Parish Lengthsman Dashboard. West Mercia Police: OPCC – Acceptance Form and Supporting Documentation. West Mercia Police: Parish Priorities Charter Q2. Zurich Insurance: Policy Renewal. PKF Littlejohn: 2023/24 AGAR External Auditor Instructions. Peopleton Parish Council: Beltane Bash Festival. Flyfords Parish Council: A422 Meeting Invitation. Age UK: Evesham Computer Café.</p>
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47/24	<p>Councillors Reports & Items for Future Agenda None.</p>
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48/24	<p>Meeting dates: 15th July, 16th September, 18th November, 20th January 2025, 17th March 2025 & 19th May 2025</p>
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Meeting closed at 9:34 pm

SIGNED:..... Chair

Date:

Rous Lench Payments and Expenses 20th May 2024 meeting					
Payments for authorisation.					
Chq. No.	Payee	Details	Net	VAT	TOTAL
online	Mrs Kerry Williamson	Salary & Expenses	£665.55	£0.00	£665.55
online	Parish Lengthsman	March (£240) & April (£240)	£480.00	£0.00	£480.00
online	Rous Lench Village Hall	Meeting booking May 2024	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00
online	Worcestershire CALC	Annual subscription	£187.37	£33.62	£220.99
online	Zurich Insurance	Annual insurance premium	£369.43	£0.00	£369.43
online	Iain Selkirk	Internal audit fee	£105.00	£0.00	£105.00
online	Simon Newton*	Allotment/Community gardens work (CLG funded)	£421.00	£0.00	£421.00
online	Taylor Landscape & Design Limited*	Allotment/Community gardens work (CLG funded)	£1,833.33	£366.67	£2,200.00
online	Stocksigns Limited*	VAS sign with 2 solar panels (funded by OPCC)	£4,315.00	£863.00	£5,178.00
TOTAL			£8,406.68	£1,263.29	£9,669.97
* - payment made between meetings					

Kerry Williamson
Clerk and RFO