

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of Rushock Parish Council

Held on Thursday, 23rd January, 2020 at Rushock Village Hall at 7.30pm

Present:

Cllr. T. Green (TG) (Chairman)
Cllr. D Cutler (DC) (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. S Davies (SD)
Cllr. R. Hampshire (RH)
Cllr. J. Nicholls (JN)

Also Present were:

The clerk Mrs B J Drew (BD) District Councillor Mr Ian Hardiman (IH), the Lengthsman Mr. Bill Waldron (BW), Malcolm Linney (ML) and Kate Easthope (KE) West Mercia Police.

1. Apologies for Absence:

County / District Councillor Marcus Hart (MH), District Councillor Lisa Jones (LJ) and Cllr. T. Jennings (TJ).

2. Public Question Time:

None

3. Minutes:

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21st November, 2019 were duly approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

4. Progress Reports:

TG reported on Superfast Broadband – Progress is being made, Clattercut Lane has been installed but needs final adjustments.

5. County Councillor's Report:

Councillor Ian Hardiman reported on behalf of Councillor Marcus Hart;
(Written report circulated by Clerk).

Rushock Issues

The main issue since the last meeting is one of flooding and land drainage issues on Clattercut Lane. I hosted a site meeting, together with Bill Waldron the Lengthsman, Paul Green our local highways engineer, Dee and Terry on 17th December. We discussed a number of issues regarding the possible reasons for the flooding and Paul has promised me a comprehensive reply, after speaking with WFDC's North Worcestershire Water Management Team. To date, he has not done so. I am seeing him on the day of your meeting and hope to be able to send an email up date to your clerk.

We also discussed and look at the gap between the road and the verge again in Park Lane and Paul has promised further action. We also discussed potential planting on wild flowers, locations still to be confirmed.

Wyre Forest Issues

The public realm work for Kidderminster Town Centre is now completed and Worcester Street is open.

Work on Kidderminster Train Station continues, with changes to the forecourt taking place. The station has recently been demolished.

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.

Consideration is currently being given as to what type of congestion reduction scheme will be implemented on the A449 Hoobrook island. This should benefit Rushock 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.

Strategic Issues County Wide

The Cabinet have announced their budget strategy and are proposing increasing Council tax by 1.99% and having an adult social care levy of 2%. The government has reduced the capping level for general council tax from 3% to 2% this year. It is anticipated that we will collect an additional £14.5 million in council tax income in 2020/2021 (as a result of an additional 2,500 properties across the county) and council tax income now amounts to 81% of our overall income. Due to growth we anticipate a further £1 million of income through business rates retention.

Our income, is however, not growing fast enough with our expenditure, given the pressures on our demand led services and the ever increasing complexity of need in children's and adult's social care, together with inflation and the national living wage increases.

In 2020/2021 we will be investing a further £13.2 million in adult's social care and £4.7 million in children's social care and transport. This follows investment of £14.1 million and £7.7 million respectively in 2019/2020. In addition, £10.5 million was re-prioritised for children's safeguarding and placements, which makes a total investment in adult's services of £30.9 million and children's services of £22.9 million over the last 3 years.

We are forecasting a further £14.9 million of other pressures, in respect of pay awards to staff and in delivering our corporate plan priorities on highways, economy and the environment with inflation and external factors playing their part. We also have additional waste disposal costs. The impact of weather affects our roads and also the fragmented commercial passenger transport market is a pressure.

With these financial pressures that means an additional £32.6 million of pressure in 2020/2021, offset in part by £24.1 million of growth in funds less £1.1 million use of reserves leaving the Council to find £9.6 million of efficiencies or increased income.

Importantly and good news is that there is further investment to tackle congestion in the sum of £5 million in 2020/2021 and an additional £6million for highways in 2020/2021 and a further £6 million in 2021/2022, together with a further £4 million for footways in 2020/2021 and a further £4 million in 2021/2022.

There is also a £1 million investment for flood mitigation in 2020/2021 and a further £1 million for 2021/2022.

There is also a £1 million investment for an LED replacement programme in 2020/2021 and a further £1 million in 2021/2022. We will therefore overall set a net revenue budget for 2020/2021 of £344.9 million. This figure is £346.1 when you add on the use of £1.2 million of reserves. The breakdown is £100 million for Children's Social Care, £57.77 million for Environment and Infrastructure, £140.3 million for Adult's Social Care, £16.8 million for COACH directorate, £0.45 million for the Chief Executive's Unit, £1.75 million for Public Health and £28.9 million for corporate items ie debt and pensions. This means that we are spending 69% of our net revenue budget on children's and adult's social care.

Cabinet have approved the continuation with a further schools national funding formula for 2020/2021 and we should see an additional £8.7 million for SEND and an additional £18.7 million for mainstream schools.

Cabinet have also approved the libraries strategy now, following the consultation process during 2019 and none of the county's 21 libraries are going to close, albeit there will be some changes to the smaller libraries.

The Council is undertaking an organisational redesign with a view of reducing its staffing costs by £6million and restructuring its top 3 tiers of management to a chief executive, 3 strategic directors including a new people's directorate as a result of children's service going into the new company. The interim director of adult services has retired and we have appointed an interim strategic director of people, Elaine Carolan at this stage. The assistant directors are currently being appointed, there will of course be a lot of 'slotting in' as with the chief executive and 3 strategic directors but there will be some posts that will be the subject of full external recruitment including the assistant director for legal services as Simon Mallinson, the current Head of Legal and Democratic Services is retiring from the Council in February 2020 after 21 years of service.

Rushock Issues – TG site meeting with Paul Green, nothing happened yet, also not looking promising with drain jetting, IH met with MH/PG scalping's will be put down Park Lane, John – too soggy at the moment, TG needs doing whatever they are offering,

6. District Councillor's Report:

Councillor Ian Hardiman reported;

The Progressive Alliance who now run the District Council, have been preparing their Budget for 2020/21 and intend to increase the District element of Council Tax by £5.00 (for a band D property).

They intend removing All Free parking periods from all car parks, to increase parking charges overall and extend the charging period till 9.00 pm each day.

They are also proposing reduced Grass Cutting frequency of verges across the District.

Under the Heading of Localism they are wishing to save considerable monies by transferring responsibility for various services to the Town and Parish Councils.

7. Police Report:

KE reported on incidents from 1st December 2019 which includes theft of fibre glass box being used for sewerage treatment, attempted break in at trading estate, door forced and crow bar used on car, resident in village subject to scamming (Operation Prospero) and for information goats loose in Cursley Lane.

TG advised of new Smart water Signs being offered to the Parish Council at no cost. Clerk to contact the "We don't buy crime administrator" and request new signs be erected in the Parish.

8. Rushock Village Hall:

TG reported that the registration of the title is currently being processed. There may be a slight additional cost relating to the transfer of ownership for the small kitchen extension.

RH reported that there was a Village Hall meeting last week but he was unable to attend. JN reported they are planning on a James Bond night as a fundraiser to raise money for the new kitchen.

9. Planning:

TG reported on planning since the last meeting;

WF/19/0670/Full: Demolition of existing dwelling house for new replacement dwelling and associated external works and driveway has been approved but there are numerous conditions attached.

WF/19/0735/Full: Erection of two storey rear extension, first floor side extension. Front porch canopy and detached car port/garage building at Park Cottage, Park Lane, Rushock. Recommended Approval.

WF/19/0794/Full: Proposed single storey rear extension at Upper Hyde, Rushock. Recommended Approval.

New application received, WF/20/0010/Full: Construction of an agricultural building, surfacing of associated access track and formation of concrete apron. Planning Committee to meet to review and will advise of recommendation.

Iris Cottage – application was withdrawn 3rd December.

Clerk had previously forwarded Probity in Planning Document.

Clerk advised of recent attendance at training session on new Planning Software System which is due to go live at the end of January 2020.

10. Highways:

JN reported that the Lengthsman (BW) has completed all necessary works in the Parish however the drains still need attention. JN enquired whether the Parish can use drain jetting services to undertake the work.

The Clerk advised that following a site meeting earlier today with MH, Paul Green, Highways Engineer had advised that the Parish cannot employ drain jetting services and regrettably nor can Ringway undertake the

works on behalf of the County Council. MH has escalated this and is meeting with the cabinet member and a senior officer in the next few days. TG suggested the Parish Council send an e mail to MH expressing frustration and backing him with regard to this matter. Using the Lengthsman scheme funds would be the most cost effective way of getting the drains jetted and cleared.

IH reported that Paul Green is in a difficult position as Ringway have already been paid to do the job and a contract agreed but they are not fulfilling this.

JN reported on the poor state of Park Lane which has suffered from the continual deluge of rain. IH reported that Paul Green has agreed to put scalplings on it.

TG has reported a pothole in Lunnon Lane and commented on how easy it is to report directly on line. He has written a brief article for the Parish Magazine on this which will come out in the February edition.

IH advised that if any potholes are really bad and dangerous to cars/motorbikes etc then ring the County Councillor and they can get prompt action.

Clerk to ascertain what Lengthsman funds remain and advise JN.

11. Footpaths:

TG advised the grant money for Parish Paths has been received and ongoing issues with electric fencing.

12. Management of Verges:

Following the site meeting in December, Paul Green, WCC Highways Engineer has given permission for the bottom of Lunnon Lane to be planted but a licence will need to be obtained. DC advised that following attendance at a recent workshop she has made contacts and Natural Networks from Worcestershire County Council have money that may be available, they will come and look at sites and advise and the Council can apply for 45% of the cost of project between £2,000 and £25,000, they will also fund seeds and signs. DC will contact them to arrange a Bio diversity enhancement assessment.

13. Finance:

The financial spreadsheet was duly circulated, and it was in accordance with the bank statements. The current bank balance was £5150.90

The following were approved for payment:-

Already Paid;	
Print Serve Limited (Payroll year ending 2019/20)	£20.00
For Approval;	
Mrs B J Drew	£70.40
(Clerks Expenses 17th May 19 – 23rd Jan 2020)	
Rushock Village Hall	£120.00
(Hire of Hall for 2020 meetings)	
Mrs D Cutler	£33.70
(Grant to Crib Service)	
Church Sponsorship	£266.30
Re-issue of Chq 000186	£108.00
(Chemquad Weed Control)	

BD advised VAT reclaim for 18/19 has now been received.

DC expressed thanks for the grant towards the crib service.

The Parish Council considered the draft budget and precept proposal. Our precept in 2019/20 was £3025 and £39.80 per Band D property. It was proposed that we increase our precept to £3327.50, an increase of 10%. Our tax base for 2019/20 has remained at 76 and therefore, this would now equate to £43.78 per Band D property, an increase of £3.98 per year, 8 pence per week. This will show as a 10% increase on the Council Tax Bill.

It was unanimously resolved to increase the precept from £3025 to £3327.50 an increase of 10%.

14. Emergency Planning:

TG reported that the last Emergency Plan was done in 2011. Wyre Forest District Council no longer have the Emergency Plan meetings due to lack of support. This matter was raised due to alarm going off at the Trading Estate which it was noted would be responded to by the key holder or Police.

After discussion it was agreed that a "Welcome Leaflet" for new residents would be a good idea. SD offered to draft.

15. Minutes from Neighboring Parish Councils:

Elmbridge agenda 16th January 2020 and minutes 21st November 2019 have been received.

16. Correspondence:

The clerk circulated the schedule of correspondence and presented the correspondence to the meeting. Several items had already been discussed and the schedule was duly noted.

17. Agenda items for future meetings:

None declared. Cllrs to advise Clerk of any before next meeting.

18: To note the dates of the next meetings:

All at 7:30pm at Rushock Village Hall.

2020:

Thursday, 21st May, 2020

Thursday, 10th September, 2020

Thursday, 26th November, 2020

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Signed..... (Chairman)

Dated.....