

Minutes of the “Virtual” Meeting of Rushock Parish Council

held on Thursday, 21st May, 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)
Cllr. J. Nicholls (JN)

Also Present were:

The clerk Mrs. B J Drew (BD) District Cllr M Hart (MH) and District Cllr. Mrs. L Jones.

1. Apologies for Absence: District Cllr. Mr. Ian Hardiman (IH) and Rebecca Ruston, West Mercia Police.

2. Public Question Time: None

3. Minutes:

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 23rd January, 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 faster Broadband has now arrived in Rushock and many residents have taken advantage. It is a great improvement on previously. There has been no action yet on the new Smart Water signs. Emergency Planning – SD is the lead on this but this has somewhat been overtaken by the recent Coronavirus Pandemic. SD reported that many things such as fetching prescriptions, shopping etc have been put in place for Rushock residents supporting them through this difficult time

5. County Councillor’s Report:

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. 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.

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. We do have approval for a warning triangle sign at either end subject to the Parish Council’s approval.

I have liaised with your clerk regarding any drains that need jetting and rest assured if there are any outstanding please advise and I will chase for action.

Wyre Forest Issues

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. This coming week there will be disruption as one of the lanes is closed to facilitate the work. Work has stopped as a result of Coronavirus but I understand contractors will be starting with safe distancing measures being put in place.

As reported previously, the additional funding for the Hoobrook island has now been agreed as part of the budget and we should see this scheme commence this year to tackle this major congestion hotspot in Kidderminster. I have now seen a design scheme at an officer briefing and it is anticipated that work could commence before Christmas this year.

Strategic Issues County Wide

As you will appreciate, since I wrote my last report, the world let alone Worcestershire and Rushock has somewhat changed!

The County Council has been heavily involved in the response to the Coronavirus pandemic working with our other statutory partners.

Libraries remain closed in line with Government legislation as going to them does not fit into the category of exercise, food, medical or health need or work.

One household waste site (Stourport Road) is now open.

Obviously schools remain closed except for vulnerable children and key workers, but potentially from 1st June, school will be open for reception, year 1 and year 6. Locally. Obviously your local schools at Chaddesley Primary School and Cutnall Green Primary School will be making the necessary arrangements.

Our Hospitals are coping very well with substantial capacity on all 3 sites and as you would expect given the more nature of Worcestershire we have been less affected by infections than many other authorities in the West Midlands region. We have also been assisting our many care settings with PPE.

Registrations of births and deaths are currently being done remotely as our Register offices are closed and County Hall is closed to the public.

Worcestershire has a fantastic website Here2Help which is a community action response to Coronavirus. There is also a dedicated phone number 01905 768053 for those without access to the internet.

Annual council scheduled for 14th May has been cancelled at is planned, subject to the 'lockdown' restrictions being removed to hold annual council at the 16th July meeting of full council.

Primary School offer day took place on 16th April and I am pleased to say that 9 in every 10 pupils will get their first choice primary school. 98% of parents now apply on line and received their offer on line.

I am still able to allocate my divisional funding for 2020-2021 and if you would like to make an application over the coming months for me to consider I will be pleased to do so.

Councillor Hart advised that he had attended a virtual meeting on 30th April regarding the Hoobrook Traffic Island. A scheme is being worked on to ease congestion which is awful at Peak Times and puts additional pressure on our local villages which people use as rat runs. This is likely to involve installation of traffic lights at all junctions on the roundabout.

6. District Councillor's Report:

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

Work on the £4,000,000 transformation and redevelopment of Kidderminster train station continues. The station forecourt has recently been demolished. Obviously as a result of Coronavirus this has affected work.

Obviously, since we wrote our last report the world has changed! We are very pleased that WFDC has received substantial government grant, circa £1.1 million to continue to provide services and compensate for loss of income. WFDC has also been administering and handing out substantial grants from Government to local businesses.

Car Parking charges have been suspended and this was really done to start with in response to the flooding issues.

All refuse, recycling and garden waste collections are carrying on as normal.

Wyre Forest House is closed to the public.

Full Council met virtually over zoom on 21st April and 13th May and there was public access. Planning DC met virtually on 23rd April and will do so again virtually for its May meeting. There have been a number of changes to the constitution and delegations to the Chief Executive during this emergency period. It is hoped to hold the formal meeting of annual council over the next couple of months and in any event by 30th September.

We are delighted that Crown House has been demolished, something that Ian and Marcus were heavily involved in instigating prior to May 2019.

We all have our £1,000 community leadership fund so please spread the word to local groups who can make an application to us. Details on how the scheme works and to download an application form are on the WFDC website.

7. Police Report:

Written report circulated – no issues at present.

8. Rushock Village Hall:

TG advised that the land registry is still awaited. MH will chase.

A new kitchen is being installed during lockdown.

9. Planning:

TG reported on planning since the last meeting;

WF/20/0010/FULL: Construction of agricultural building, surfacing of associated access track and formation of concrete apron at land off New Farm Lane. Parish Council recommend refusal. The application has now been withdrawn.

WF/20/0060/HOU: First floor extension, 3 new dormer windows and single storey side extension at Iris Cottage, Elmbridge Lane. Recommend Approval.

WF/20/0074/CR: Approval of details reserved by conditions 9 (Archaeology) and 14 (Ecology Enhancements) of Planning Permission 19/0670 at Clattercut House, Rushock. For Information Only.

WF/20/0221/AG: Proposed erection of agricultural building at land at New Farm Lane. For Information Only.

10. Highways:

JN advised Park Lane gaps between road and verge still remain a serious concern and is proving dangerous for many cars, especially at night but he is unsure of a solution. DC queried whether it would be possible to have plastic bollards where the verges are at their deepest? MH agreed this would help and will arrange a site meeting with the Highways Engineer when lockdown restrictions allow and if Highways will not fund he will from his divisional fund. The Parish Council agreed they would support triangular verge warning signs as well at each end of the lane.

JN reported on work undertaken by the Lengthsman to cut back visibility splays and clear signs to allow for good vision. DC and BW have washed and cleaned the Parish Gateways.

SD mentioned poor visibility on lanes for walkers, TG reported that verges will need cutting back, which is done by WCC but hopefully will be left until flowers have finished. DC advised that as long as traffic have visibility, walkers should be fine. It is hoped to keep cow parsley blossoming for as long as possible to preserve as many areas for pollinators as we can.

TJ has reported Pot Holes on Well Lane, very easy to do on line.

11. Footpaths:

TG reported that footpaths are getting more use during the Coronavirus pandemic. TG also informed the Parish Council that the PPP grant application had been submitted for 2020 - 2021 and £220 been approved. Some stiles still overgrown which TG will attend to. TJ will cut behind the church.

12. Finance:

The financial spreadsheet was duly circulated and it was in accordance with the bank statements. The current bank balance was £6268.42.

The following were approved for payment:-

Already Paid;

Mr. W Waldron (Lengthsman)	£220.00
Worcestershire CALC (Training)	£40.00
Four Square Magazine Subscription	£10.00
Mr. W Waldron (Lengthsman)	£68.75
Worcestershire CALC Annual Subscription	£100.83
Print Serve Ltd – End of Year Submissions	£25.00
DM Payroll Services (Internal Audit)	£55.00

For Approval;

ICO Fee (by DD)	£35.00
Zurich Municipal Insurance Renewal	£257.60

13. Biodiversity Survey:

DC has spent a considerable amount of time working with Natural Networks on a Biodiversity Enhancement Assessment for Rushock. Sean Webber has produced a very comprehensive report which DC hopes all Parish Councillors have seen. Biodiversity Improvement Grants begin at £2,000 (40% of total cost) therefore the Parish Council would have to contribute £3,000 to match fund. Sean has however advised that they may consider smaller projects or be able to help us secure additional grants from Severn Trent.

DC has been chased by Natural Networks and has thanked them for this wonderful piece of work but advised unfortunately an application for the grant cannot go ahead without Council approval and the date for submission has now passed.

DC feels that the Parish Council should try and do some of the projects outlined in the report, possibly the planting of Apple Trees and Bulb Planting. This was agreed by all Parish Councillors. DC suggested possibly a village planting event to again bring this close community together and suggested the apple trees grown locally be used. TG, DC and SD to meet to discuss this and it will be placed on the agenda for the September meeting to agree action and take this project forward.

MH advised that the Council can again apply to his divisional fund and he would be mindful to support bulb planting and tree planting projects.

14. Correspondence:

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

15. Agenda items for future meetings: Biodiversity Project.

16: To note the dates of the next meetings and set dates for 2021 meetings:

All at 7:30pm at Rushock Village Hall.

Thursday, 10th September, 2020

Thursday, 26th November, 2020

2021 Meeting Dates;

21st January, 2021

20th May, 2021

9th September, 2021

25th November, 2021

Clerk to book Village Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed..... (Chairman)

Dated.....