

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Rushock Parish Council held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 7.30pm, Rushock Village Hall

**Present:** Cllrs. T. Green, (TG) (Chairman), S Davies, (SD), R Hampshire (RH), T Jennings (TJ) and Cllr. J Nicholls (JN).

**Also Present were:** The clerk Mrs. B J Drew (BD). Two parishioners.

- 1. Welcome from Parish Council Chairman Cllr. Terry Green.** Chairman welcomed all to the Annual Parish Meeting.
- 2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2021.** These were duly approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.
- 3. Chairman's Report.** The Chairman reported as follows: -

Firstly, I would like to thank all councillors for their continuing help and support over the last year. This has enabled us to make good progress with projects and keep the parish moving forward. Councillors' willingness to commit their time and effort on behalf of the parish does not go unnoticed and there has been some encouraging feedback from residents. It has been really good to be able to get back to face-to-face meetings and I appreciate councillors' willingness to take part. As ever I have relied heavily on Bev's support and expertise which is always willingly given along with her extensive contacts in both district and county councils. I am also grateful for the ongoing support of our County and District Councillors who regularly attend our meetings and village events. Their help, advice and generosity are very much appreciated.

### Meetings

The Council has held four Ordinary Council meetings and one well-attended extraordinary meeting regarding a major planning application. We have also been well represented at CALC meetings, WFDC Parish Forums and WCC meetings.

### Planning

There have been fifteen planning applications, four of which were recommended for refusal. One was refused by Wyre Forest District Council (Callimore Farm), one (Leyland's Cottage) is pending, one (Foxhayes Farm) was Approved by WFDC with conditions attached and the final one (Track off Lunnon Lane) was approved despite our strong recommendations for refusal. WFDC also refused two further applications (Old Oak Barn).

### Finance

It was agreed that we did not need to increase the precept for a second year even though our tax base had decreased by three. We have also received £1000 from our County Councillor, Marcus Hart, for the Jubilee celebrations, Lengthsman's scheme funding and a grant from the Parish Path's Partnership. No councillors have claimed personal expenses again this year

### Highways

Our Lengthsman, Bill Waldron, has continued his sterling work which has ensured that rainwater is quickly drained off the carriageway. Effective gritting of the designated lanes was carried out by WCC during the winter weather and the grit bin on Lunnon Lane has been kept full by Richard Hampshire. Some potholes have been repaired by Highways although the work was generally of poor quality.

### Footpaths

These remain in good condition and have been well used by both residents and walkers exercising during the lockdowns. Crops were sprayed off to keep paths open across arable fields. Some repairs to stiles and signage have been carried out. The Parish Paths Partnership grant was used to cut back vegetation in some areas.

## Biodiversity Project

Further progress has been made with project with the planting of cherry and pear trees along with more bulbs. It is encouraging to see a wider variety of wildflowers growing in these areas. There was some concern expressed at a parish council meeting about the appearance of these areas and so a Parish Poll was carried out to allow all residents to express their views. Over 50% of questionnaires were returned with a large majority favouring minimal cutting back of vegetation during the summer to allow the wildflowers to set seed before being cut back later in the year.

## Community

All the documents relating to the transfer of the Village Hall to the Parish Council as custodian trustees have now been completed but the land transfers are still awaiting processing by the Land Registry who have a backlog of work. We also sponsored the Christmas Crib service and the children still got their chocolate Santa's even though Covid led to the event being cancelled. We continue to work with the Village Hall Committee and the Parochial Church Council to arrange events including the forthcoming Jubilee celebrations.

## **4. Reports to Annual Parish Meeting.**

District Councillors Annual Report – Cllr Ian Hardiman reported;

The three of us have been very busy dealing with numerous casework over the course of the last 12 months.

Despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic through the municipal year 2021-2022 there has been no abatement on casework from local residents, in fact it has gone up. Quite probably due to people having more time on their hands and working from home!

Obviously from May 2021, meetings of Parish Councils, the District Council (albeit from July) and the County Council have been back face to face.

We have tackled all issues pertaining to the district council, littering, dog fouling, fly tipping and planning applications.

Since our report last year, the Progressive Alliance who control the Administration of WFDC have had some further changes. There was a by-election held on 1st December 2021, due to the resignation of an ICHC councillor in the Franche and Habberley North ward, which was won by the Conservatives and shortly after that, the Labour group re-joined the Progressive Alliance.

Since May 2021 Cllr. Helen Dyke has been Leader of the Council with Cllr. Graham Ballinger becoming Deputy Leader of the Council.

The Progressive Alliance continue to rigorously pursue their localism agenda.

District Council meetings over the last few months have finally seen a return to 'normality'.

The Leadership at WFDC are content with the majority of staff, that are able to, continuing to work from home under a 'hybrid' model which was agreed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Wyre Forest House has very few staff actually working in it on a daily basis. We expressed our disapproval that officers presenting reports at meetings can now do so virtually should they so wish.

We have all attended all 5 meetings of Full Council and all of our relevant committee meetings, save for any Covid-19 self-isolation.

The two strategic directors, Mike Parker and Tracey Southall had their posts deleted and were made redundant on 31st December 2021. There is now a wider Corporate Leadership Team, made up of Deputy Chief Officers and the Chief Executive.

We have ensured that we have attended all Parish Council meetings as a team in the last 12 months and provided a written and oral report accordingly.

Lengthsman – nothing to report

## **5. Resident's Open Forum.**

Resident raised issue of large unsightly Paintball sign on A448 main road which is very distracting. Councillor Ian Hardiman will investigate.

Meeting Closed at 7.45pm