

Minutes of the Meeting of Rushock Parish Council

held on Thursday 7th September, 2023, 7.30pm, Rushock Village Hall

Present:

Cllr. T. Green (TG) (Chairman)
Cllr. D. Cutler (DC) (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. S. Davies (SD)
Cllr. R. Hampshire (RH)
Cllr. D. Pugh (DP)

Also Present were:

The clerk Mrs. B J Drew (BD), Parish Lengthsman Mr. Bill Waldron (BW), Cllr R M Drew (District Councillor).

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr M Hart (County / District Councillor) and Cllr I Hardiman (District Councillor).
2. **Declarations of Councillors Interests:**
None declared.
3. **Public Question Time:**
No Public Questions.
4. **Minutes:**
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11th May 2023 were duly approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.
5. **Progress Reports:**
TG advised of attendance at a recent Chairman's meeting and CALC meeting. DC commented that the meeting she had previously attended was poorly run and not informative.
6. **County Councillor's Report:** *Report previously circulated*
Rushock Issues

Unless I am mistaken, I have dealt with all flooding and drainage issues in the Parish.

I am aware that the issue of verge cutting is ongoing, and I have not forgotten that I need to arrange a meeting with yourselves, myself and Hayley Steele from WCC highways.

Wyre Forest Issues

In respect of Lea Castle Quarry, despite the planning inspector dismissing the appeal on 5th May, the applicants have appealed to the Secretary of State by way of a Judicial Review and the hearing will be held on 28th September in Cardiff.

WCC highways have been out doing their second highway cuts over the last month and there have been considerable road and pavement resurfacing over the summer months, together with new white lining.

Bewdley Bridge is currently closed for the next month due to some preliminary Severn Trent works for the flood defences. It will then be operating one way over the bridge into the town for approximately 18 months whilst the Environment Agency undertake the work for the construction of the flood defences. This is a circa £6.6m scheme, £6m from the Government and £500k from WCC.

Strategic Issues County Wide

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. There is now a Here2Helpbusiness scheme as well. (simply google Here 2 Help Worcestershire and it comes straight up.)

Here2Help is now also co-ordinating our Ukrainian Refugee programme working with the 6 District Councils. We now have several hundred refugees in the County and a number of families have now come to the Wyre Forest and young people are taking up places in local schools.

OFSTED have now finished inspecting our children's social care services. We were rated inadequate in 2017. We were removed from being inadequate in 2019 and from intervention from the DfE last year as a result of our progress and I am delighted to say we have received a 'good' rating. This has slightly been overshadowed by the sad death of my cabinet colleague Cllr. Andy Roberts the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care who had held the post since 2017.

WCC have undertaken a raft of lining and carriageway and pavement resurfacing now over the summer months.

WCC are embarking on a 'programme of libraries unlocked' following the success at Droitwich and Stourport. Libraries remain open for longer but are unstaffed. Access is by a secure swipe card. After the 12-month trials at Droitwich and Stourport the scheme is being extended, most locally to Chaddesley at Hagley and Bromsgrove.

The boundary commission have kick started a boundary review for the 57 divisions across Worcestershire. The proposal is to retain 57 divisions. The first stage of the process is for WCC to agree its response at Full Council on 14th September. There is a need for better elector equality across all divisions and all divisions need to be contained within the district council area boundary. The proposal for Wyre Forest is that it will retain its 10 county councillors but there will be some changes to the boundaries to get better electoral equality. For example, in the St Mary's Division my colleague has 9,614 electors compared to my 6,819 electors.

The Chaddesley Division currently includes the parishes of:-

Broome
Chaddesley Corbett
Churchill and Blakedown
Rushock
Stone

Plus, the whole of the Spennells Estate. The number that every division will need to work to to achieve elector equality is circa 8,600 but + or - 10% to take into account local circumstances ie. Parish communities or estates.

The Boundary Commission will then further consult on the proposals and the final order with the new divisional boundaries is scheduled to be made in July 2024 with the elections on 1st May, 2025.

7. District Councillor's Report: *Report previously circulated* 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.

You will shortly receive an invitation from WFDC Planning Officers, this will be a presentation on changes to planning laws including updates on material considerations, change of use, outline and reserved matters etc. The meeting will be held prior to Chaddesley Corbett PC meeting at Chaddesley.

Callimore Farm; WFDC are concluding talks with the applicant/agents on the unilateral undertaking and final conditions. We believe completion and full consent will be completed next month.

Wyre Forest Issues

Regarding the Lea Castle Quarry appeal on 5th May whilst the planning inspector dismissed the appeal, the applicant has appealed to the Secretary of State, hearing is on 28th September, and we await the outcome.

There is no update as yet as to when the 800 homes planned for Lea Castle will be determined by WFDC following the submission of the planning application some months ago. Likewise, the Woven Oaks application has yet to be determined.

Cllr Drew commented on the Planning Training which he is sure will be very informative.

8. Police Report:

The three Policing Priorities were agreed as Burglaries, Speeding and Wildlife Crime.

Police report had been previously circulated;

There has been nothing of note for Rushock, other than a report from a local farmer that crop circles appeared in his field, sparking a lot of interest on social media, with people wanting to get on his land. The farmer “nipped this in the bud” (excuse the pun) fairly quickly by cutting the field a week or two earlier than planned!

Neighboring rural areas are experiencing residential burglaries and a farm has also been targeted, with irrigation pipework being stolen. We ask all residents to remain vigilant and to report anyone acting in a suspicious manner to us asap.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It's that time again, where we will need your priorities for the next quarter OCT – DEC inclusive. You currently have Speeding / Thefts from outbuildings / Wildlife crime.

Can I suggest that with the dark nights approaching you choose Burglaries (light up campaign) as one of your priorities going forward. We would also suggest a PUSH towards locals signing up to Neighbourhood Matters, so that we can keep them abreast of goings on in the area.

We are renewing our parish council contracts and need to check we have the current up to date details for Chair, Clerk and Councillors. If you could send these to us please on Kidderminster.east@westmercia.police.uk thank you by end of September latest.

TG reported that he had followed up the issue regarding the boundary policing between West Mercia and Droitwich on Clattercut Lane and is pleased to advise the Inspector has now agreed Kidderminster SNT cover all of Clattercut Lane.

DC enquired whether the speed along Clattercut Lane could be re-visited. Cllr R Drew will enquire with Marcus Hart.

PC Ryan Bridgewood arrived and was welcomed by the Chairman.

He advised that neighboring farms have had break ins and pipes stolen, it is the time of year for burglaries so please be vigilant.

Speeding was discussed, particularly the area between the village gates on Clattercut Lane, New Farm Lane and Park Lane. TG advised that the whole village is 60mph which is not really appropriate. Ryan advised it is difficult to do speed enforcement however parking a police vehicle in different locations is a good deterrent. TG suggested 7am-9am and 4pm – 6pm would be good times.

SD stressed that there are lots of cyclists, dog walkers, horse-riding and children in the area which is a concern with the speeding. Ryan suggested using operation snap if you see anything. DC mentioned that years ago cardboard cut outs of police were used as a deterrent. Ryan advised they are no longer used as they get vandalized and damaged.

TG invited the police to attend the monthly coffee mornings.

9. Finance:

The financial spreadsheet was duly circulated, and it was in accordance with the bank statements. The bank balance as at 31st July 2023 was £7192.73 with 1 unpresented cheque making it £7106.23.

It was agreed to increase the Lengthsman hourly rate by £1.00 to £17.00 per hour.

The following were unanimously approved for payment: -

Already Paid:

Mike Forbes (Wood Carving)	£285.00
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Litter Equipment	£75.26
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To Be Paid:

WFDC (Elections Costs)	£37.00
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Laptop Antivirus	£20.00
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Bannuttree Landscaping & Gardening Services Ltd £302.00

It was agreed SD become a third cheque signatory. BD to obtain forms to amend mandate.

BD reported that DM Payroll Services will undertake the 2023/2024 Internal Audit at a cost of £70.00.

10. Training:

Planning Training – date will be advised.

Cllr Dave Pugh is attending new Cllr training via Zoom on Tuesday 21st November 2023.

11. Update on bench and memorial post:

TG reported that the bench is in situ and looks great. Thanks to all for making this project happen.

SD suggested getting a photograph with Marcus as he contributed to the project. BD will check his availability. Thanks were expressed to Marcus for his contribution.

RH advised that the bench will need oiling perhaps annually, DP suggested Teak Oil.

SD/DP are working on the next project – The Memorial Post.

12. Coronation Living Heritage Fund:

BD had circulated email. After discussion it was agreed no suitable locations could be identified.

13. To discuss Biodiversity Project:

It was agreed that surplus funds from the coronation project be used to purchase more bulbs. Councillors to liaise with TG regarding variety of daffodil bulbs, also ideas for a Coronation tree for the Triangle.

14. Planning:

TG reported on Planning since the last meeting.

Callimore Farm – Still awaiting conditions which the Parish Council have been assured will be kept, particularly regarding prohibiting commercial vehicles with only agricultural machinery stored on site

Foxhayes Farm – The District Council recommend refusal and in light of further information received the Parish Council supported this.

Clattercut House – Approved.

15. Highways and Verges:

TG reported on the Park Lane verges and suggested that we could possibly use Lengthsman funding again, the Parish Council need to keep the pressure on the County Council.

Regarding the white markings on the roads, TG has asked Hayley Steele what these are for but has not yet received a response.

Verge cutting – awaiting a meeting with Marcus and Highways.

Potholes have been filled in Clattercut Lane.

Litter Equipment has been purchased for volunteer litter pickers.

16. Footpaths:

TG reported on a lot of vegetation growth. TJ has cut path part of Monarchs way. TG is keeping stiles clear.

TG will report the path that runs up the side of Rushock Trading Estate as it is very overgrown.

DC queried any update on double stile, TG advised none.

17. Rushock Village Hall:

Coffee mornings are going well and are well attended. Pub night 28th September 2023.

18. Parish Grit

None required.

19. Correspondence:

Nothing to report.

20. Agenda items for future meetings:

Please advise Clerk.

21. To note the date of the next meetings.

23rd November 2023.

It was agreed start time of future meetings be brought forward to 7.00pm.

Clerk to check availability for following dates;

- 18th January 24
- 9th May 24
- 5th September 24
- 21st November 24

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed..... (Chairman)

Dated.....