

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF
RUSHWICK PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 8 MARCH 2023 AT 7.30 PM
AT RUSHWICK VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllr Jenkins (Chair), Cllr Hemsworth (arrived 7.45 pm), Cllr Williams, Cllr Lowe and Cllr Haywood

In Attendance: Sharon Baxter (Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer) plus 2 parishioners.

1. Apologies: To receive apologies and approve reason for absence
Cllr Bryan (Work) Cllr Hughes (Personal) and Cllr Wise (Personal) - Accepted
County Cllr Scott Richardson Brown (Personal) and District Cllr Daniel Walton(Personal) - Received
2. Declarations of Interest
 1. Register of Interests: Councillors were reminded of the need to update their register of interests.
 2. To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature - None.
 3. To declare any Other Disclosable Interests n items on the agenda and their nature - None
3. To Consider written requests from Councillors for the Council to Grant a Dispensation (S33 of The Localism Act 2011) written requests to be with the clerk prior to the meeting - None

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Unfortunately, the representative from WCC Highways was unavailable to attend this evening but offered to meet the Chairman together with County Cllr Scott Richardson Brown to address various highway issues. Councillors agreed that Chairman should progress this meeting and report back at the next available meeting.

County Councillor Report - Cllr Scott Richardson Brown

Confirmed he would like to provide the Parish Council with £1000 of funding towards something Coronation related.

District Councillor Report - Cllr Daniel Walton

The report was circulated in advance of this meeting including Vic's latest round up and also a copy of the Digital Marketing Update from the Tourism Team.

4. Minutes: Having been previously circulated the minutes of The Parish Council meeting of 08.02.2023 were signed as a true and correct record.
5. Progress Reports: Matters arising from previous minutes None
The Action Plan was reviewed and updated.
Hard copy guidance notes and application forms were circulated for the forthcoming May elections.
The Clerk to follow up and enquiry with WWT to check availability for a Guest Speaker for the Annual Parish Meeting.
The Clerk to chase the bank signatory of the defunct Playscape Bank Account to enquire if funds can be transferred back to the Parish Council.
Cllr Jenkins to make enquiries on how/if the Whitehall Inn can become an Asset of Community Value.

6. Correspondence for Information/Action: Circulated by the Clerk
A discussion took place, following complaints, about reinstating a new litter bin, with a larger size capacity, suitable for mixed waste purposes, to be located by the Whitehall Inn. This will be subject to cost and confirmation from MHDC that this can be emptied. Cllr Bryan to establish a cost for follow up.
7. Parish Lengthsman Scheme: Update
An update was presented as per worksheet which included cleaning out gully grates at Broadmore Green, removing graffiti and clearing litter from the underpass, clearing footpath along the Bransford Road and clearing verges in Claphill Lane and Crown East.
 - a. **RESOLVED:** To renew the Contract of Services for the Lengthsman from 01.04.23 to 31.03.24.
8. Finance
 1. Payment of accounts as per schedule were authorised.
 2. Monthly Bank Reconciliation Statement – For Information Only
9. Reports from representatives: To receive an update
 1. Report from Village Hall Committee: Cllr Bryan
 - No further update on the village hall this month as no further meetings have taken place since the last Parish Council meeting.
 2. Footpath Officers report: Cllr Williams
 - The handrail posts adjoining the footbridge below Brookfields were insecure and dangerous. With the help of the Lengthsman, new posts and concrete footings, this was made safe and secure.
 - Responding to a complaint on Rushwick Village News Facebook that the path between the rear of The Whitehall and the pedestrian underpass was very muddy and slippery. I have cut back brambles to make circumnavigation of the muddy patches possible. *(This area is to be added to the list to discuss with WCC Highways).*
 - I learned from a WCC surveyor measuring in Grange Lane that pavement resurfacing work will take place on April 5th.
 - He requested that the ivy that has grown around the stump of the large tree on the corner that we took out be removed up to the line of the inner edging stones. The Lengthsman has kindly offered to attend to this as a goodwill gesture.
 - a. Progress update on replacing stiles and gates - Cllr Williams to provide the Farmer with the relevant contact details, as unfortunately they had been lost so the matter had not been pursued by the Farmer.
 3. Report of Play Area: Cllr Hemsworth
 - The park continues to be very busy and popular with visitors from within the Parish & further afield.
 - The pump track is still well used and continues to be in good condition nearly 18 months after opening and the bulbs planted last year are making a repeat appearance.
 - Litter picking and sweeping of the stones for the drainage pits at the pump track continues to be a regular duty although installing the bins has had a positive impact on the amount of litter within the park.
 - Repairs have taken place to the zip wire take off, swing footings & ground clearance of the roundabout – Invoice to be paid.
 - The new benches and swings will be installed shortly by Reid's Playground Maintenance Ltd.
 - Oldbury Tigers U14s played a further match on Saturday 11th February with 3 more left to play for the season (11/03/23, 25/03/22 & TBC).
 - Top Cut continue to cut the grass bi-weekly for £80+VAT per cut on either a Thursday or Friday - This was paused during the Christmas period.
 - The Annual ROSPA inspection due in March, all maintenance items from the last report have been addressed ahead of this inspection.

- The RAF Falcons parachute display team are planning on doing a display jump for Rushwick School week commencing 27th March and have requested permission to land in Rushwick Park. They will carry out necessary risk assessments and put in place necessary insurance.

Worcestershire County Council have confirmed that this is a form of recreational use of the park and therefore, falls within the permitted use by the lease, allowing RPC to grant permission.

Next steps

Review quotes to replace large tower unit in play area as it is approaching the end of its useful life and complete 106 funding application for this as well as improvements to the football pitch and perimeter path.

4. Social Media Update: Cllr Hughes
 ‘There has been little activity. Parishioners contacted the Council via private message (ref: closure of Claphill Lane) and also through the Rushwick Village News Facebook page (ref: condition of PROW behind Whitehall Inn).
 I continue to monitor and upload documents when asked to do so.
 The Facebook page has matured at 292 followers which I consider to be a success, given the number of dwellings in Rushwick.’
5. School Representative report: Cllr Hemsworth (Temporary) - Nothing to report
6. Speeding Issues & Crime Prevention Update: Cllr Wise – No report available
 - a. To progress with Community Speed Watch.
10. Update on the Parish Neighbourhood Plan: Cllr Jenkins/Cllr Lowe
 The Chairman has assisted the help of Cllr Lowe to help progress the Parish Neighbourhood Plan. Comments/suggestion from MHDC have been taken on board and need to be incorporated into the policies. One area to concentrate on is the allocation of a piece of land for one dwelling. Once the policies have been devised and agreed the next step is to arrange a public consultation.
11. Planning: The following planning applications was considered: -
 Planning Application: M/23/00202/FUL
 Location: School House, Crown East, Worcester, WR2 5TU
 Proposal: Extension of existing garage to provide covered, secure access for 3 vehicles and solar panels to south facing roof. Change of use land to residential curtilage.
 Comments: No Objection.
12. Councillors’ reports and items for future agendas
 Cllr Williams highlighted the footbridge over the stream below Brookfields could be a beautiful little spot, but the course of the stream is full of debris including plastic, dead branches brambles and litter. He has requested a working party to help clean it up in the Spring. A call for volunteers is to be made via Social Media.

Meeting closed at 8.15 PM.

Signed Chairman..... Date.....

Standing Orders were adjourned

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A parishioner expressed his disappointment that there was no representative from WCC Highways available at this meeting, to address various issues.

Comments were made concerning the lack of representation from the County Councillor at Parish Council meetings.

County Councillor Report - Cllr Scott Richardson Brown

Confirmed he would like to provide the Parish Council with £1000 of funding towards something Coronation related, ideally something that might be a permanent reminder but is equally happy for the funding to go towards an event. The Chairman to follow up with the Cricket Club.

Unfortunately, the representative from WCC Highways was unavailable to attend this evening but offered to meet the Chairman together with County Cllr Scott Richardson Brown to address various highway issues. Councillors agreed that Chairman should progress this meeting and report back at the next available meeting.

District Councillor Report - Cllr Daniel Walton

The report was circulated in advance of this meeting including Vic's latest round up and also a copy of the Digital Marketing Update from the Tourism Team.

Again, a lot to report so my apologies for the long District Council report.

Every year we do a resident's survey and this year residents across the Malvern Hills District have said they are satisfied with the area they live, local parks, and leisure facilities. More than 1,400 people took part in our Annual Residents' Survey, which is a record number compared to previous years.

This year show significant improvement in perceptions across the majority of things that are measured. The results showed an improvement in the number of people who were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, at over 89% - give us an almost 9/10 satisfaction rate.

Over the last four years we have improved a lot of areas – even despite Covid.

Satisfaction with service areas has improved with, Parks and Open Spaces, Waste and Recycling, and Malvern Theatres all returning satisfaction rates in excess of 90%.

Most community safety perceptions have remained at similar levels to previous years or have improved, including feelings of safety in the dark and issues with rubbish and litter lying around, which has shown improvement following some falls in 2021.

Positively, the number of respondents who have felt socially isolated and lonely at some point in the last year has also decreased from 2021, to just over 20%.

In many cases, the results are the best we have achieved or are matched to the very high results seen during Covid in 2020.

This includes 'satisfaction with how the council runs things' which is now at 71%, the same as the record result recorded in 2020. The extent to which 'the council provides Value for Money' is also at its highest level with over 51% and over 65% have said that they believe the council 'acts on the concerns of residents'.

The responses to all questions, including those where residents could free type their views, will now be used to help us decide where to focus resources through its planning for services in the future and over the coming few months.

I know from my own involvement across supporting businesses that we've had a similar response from businesses being happy with the support through Covid and post covid and winning the Federation of Small Businesses' award for local councils late last year cemented this hard work.

There is always more to do and it's always been an odd term of office given the long period of Lock Down we experienced and the varying levels of contact we've been able to have with residents in this time.

It's certainly been an interesting time to be a Councillor and as my first term it's been interesting to see how involved some councillors are compared to others.

You can see the attendance of all councillors online at the Malvern Hills website. Mine can be seen here: <http://moderngov.malvern hills.gov.uk/mgAttendance.aspx?UID=911&J=2>

It covers all meetings over the last year and of the 25 I was due to attend I gave apologies to 3. In one case it was for the interview of the new planning director and I gave my seat to our planning portfolio holder, which I thought made more sense. In the other two cases I couldn't attend due to work commitments. You can see this information for all councillors easily in this table:

[Malvern Hills District Council - Committee attendance - , 6 March 2022 - 6 March 2023](#)

I do think that residents ought to expect Councillors to attend and represent them at Council and there are varying degrees of this! There are certain areas I'd be very disappointed that some councillors attend so little – with some only just making the required amount of meetings not to be chucked off the Council.

Just to note these don't show attendance at panel meetings and other smaller meetings.

The council has agreed additional expenditure to replace the curtain walling on the Priory Park side elevation of Malvern Splash. The existing curtain walling is over 30 years old, and an increasing number of the glazed units often need to be resecured or replaced. Full replacement of the curtain walling will be guaranteed for ten years.

The upgrade from the current double-glazed units to modern triple glazed ones could save around 30,000kWh of energy and 6tCO₂e per year.

This figure represents an energy saving of 14.3% for the floor area directly impacted by the curtain walling on the elevation.

As we set out when we became an administration it's been key to look across the district at Carbon offsetting projects and to continue to make the most of greenspace as we're doing at Hallow as we build out the Nature Reserve there.

Following the success of the Community Renewal Fund Upskilling Project we are re-launching the Malvern Hills Upskilling Grant.

We are helping local businesses create their workforce of the future through the Upskilling Grant Scheme. This is something I've been really involved in – it's key that we try and ensure we keep young people in the district. At my own business we've continued to take on apprentices and will be taking on more this year.

The fund we've set out at MHDC will provide funding of up to £1,500 to help with the business cost of training new staff (apprenticeships, trainee or other).

In order to qualify the business must be based in the Malvern Hills district postcode area, employ fewer than 250 people and pay at least the Minimum Wage to the trainee for a post of at least 20 hrs a week, including training leading to a recognised qualification. For more information email ecodev@malvern hills.gov.uk or call 01684 862183.

Also, on business nearly £300,000 of funding will go towards supporting growth and innovation within the Malvern Hills District.

Up to £150,000 will go towards the delivery of the BetaDen programme and £140,000 will deliver the Worcestershire Growth Hub Service. The funding will enable the projects to be delivered until March 2025.

BetaDen is an existing programme located at the Malvern Hills Science Park which provides expertise that helps local entrepreneurs get their concept off the ground through workshops and support.

It is predicted that the project will create up to 30 new jobs and 10 new businesses.

The project will deliver measures to drive employment growth, research and development grants supporting the development of innovative products and services, support decarbonisation and improve the natural environment whilst growing the local economy.

The big issue at this time of year is, of course, Council Tax. The council has voted to increase to Council Tax by £5 (or 2.9%) for band D properties- far below the UK's rate of inflation. It is an area I'm always torn on – especially at the moment – but given that there is available support and we having rising costs this small increase was important.

This means the band D Council Tax becomes £177.60 (£172.60 2022/23), still one of the lowest Council Tax bills in the country and the second lowest in Worcestershire.

This ensures the council can keep front line services running, including waste and recycling collections, planning services, housing and green spaces.

Across all authorities for the average Band D Home the changes are as follows:

Worcestershire County Council – Increased by £69.00 (4.90%)

West Mercia Police Authority – Increased by £14.84 (5.94%)

Fire Services – Increased by £5.00 (5.59%)

Malvern Hills District Council – Increased by £5.00 (2.90%)

Plus the Parish Council Charge. For people experiencing difficulties they can contact me and I'll put them in contact with the right people to discuss options and support.

On more local matters I am hearing the end to road works at Lower Broadheath, for people driving that way are imminent. I've met with Bloor again since our last Parish Council meeting and we've exchanged emails on ensuring things are done better for residents in the future. The site opens up to potential buyers on the 25th March with the opening of the show home.

I've been working with local businesses effected by the closure.

We've continued to discuss the reserved matters application on Claphill and I know at this meeting you will be discussing Claphill Lane. It is now vital that any future work on Claphill Lane isn't forced through the village due to any closure of Claphill Lane.

I was also very sorry to see the appeal lost at Aymestrey was lost. We've had three or so appeals there now and always won the previous ones. Nothing had changed so it's beyond anyone's belief that this was accepted. It now means the extra accommodation will be built.