

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF  
RUSHWICK PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 7.30 PM  
AT RUSHWICK VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllr Jenkins (Chair), Cllr Hemsworth, Cllr Lowe, Cllr Williams , Cllr Haywood and Cllr Griffin-Blugher

In Attendance: District Councillor Peter Whately and Sharon Baxter (Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer)

1. Apologies: District Cllr Rouse (Personal) - Received.
2. To appoint councillor vacancy by co-option - Three vacancies are currently available with one person expressing some interest.
3. Declarations of Interest
  1. Register of Interests: Councillors were reminded of the need to update their register of interest.
  2. To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature - None.
  3. To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature - None
4. 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

<b>Public Question Time</b>
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District Councillors Reports – The reports were noted.
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5. Minutes: Having been previously circulated the minutes of The Parish Council meeting of 10.07.2024 were signed as a true and correct record.
6. Progress Reports: Matters arising from previous minutes - None  
The Action Plan was reviewed and updated. Jayne Waters has been appointed as the new Internal Auditor for the financial year 2024-2025.
7. Parish Lengthsman Scheme: Tim Hughes continues to work very conscientiously siding out footpaths and cutting back verges. In the month of August, he carried out this work in Claphill Lane, Bransford Road, Upper Wick Lane and the underpass.
8. Finance
  1. Payment of accounts as per schedule was authorised.
  2. Monthly Bank Reconciliation Statement - For Information.
  3. Conclusion of Audit year ended 31 March 2024 - Awaiting conclusion from PKF Littlejohn LLP
9. Reports from representatives: To receive an update
  1. Report from Village Hall Committee: Cllr Jenkins/Cllr Griffin-Blugher
    - a. Update on transfer of ownership status and insurance matters  
Cllr Griffin-Blugher to make some further enquiries and try to arrange a meeting with the Trustees of the Village Hall for a clearer perspective on how to move forward.
    - b. Defibrillator update - Rather than wait for a funding opportunity, it was **resolved** to trade in the existing defibrillator (approximately £500 at the last enquiry made) with the Parish Council agreeing to pay the remainder of the cost and reinstating it at the earliest opportunity. Cllr Griffin-Blugher to progress.

2. Footpath Officers report: Cllr Williams
1. The path from the A4103 junction toward Bransford bridge; condition ok
  2. The beginning of the path into Oldbury Woods; still very wet and muddy
  3. The path to Summer Hallow; requires trimming
  4. The boardwalk to Brookfields footbridge; contractors have cut back vegetation prior to boardwalk repairs.
- Cllr Williams reiterated he needed some help with this role to meet the physical demands. It was agreed for the Clerk to enquire with the Lengthsman if he would be interested in taking on some of the more demanding tasks on an ad hoc basis, with Cllr Williams coordinating them.
- A provision of £1800 had been placed in the budget for this financial year which could be used for this purpose and invoiced separately.

3. Report of Play Area: Cllr Hemsworth
- The park continues to be very busy & popular with visitors from within the Parish & further afield over the summer holidays.
  - Litter picking, changing of bins & 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.
  - Oldbury Tigers U13s have sent back the pitch hire agreement for 2024/25 season & have started their pre-season.
  - Invoice to be raised for Oldbury Tigers for August/September use.
  - Top Cut continue to cut the grass biweekly for £80+VAT per cut on either a Thursday or Friday.
  - S106 grants have been secured from MHDC as follows:
    - £125,339.67 - New Tower Multi Play Unit, obstacle course & perimeter path improvements to be supplied by ESP Limited)
    - £20,441.70 – Improvements to football pitch (3-year contract) Contractor to be agreed. ESP Play Parks have commenced work on the new Tower Multi Play Unit, obstacle course & perimeter path improvements, started Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September for approx. 14 days.  
Work to be carried out as follows:
      - New Tower Multi Play Unit & obstacle course - £94,000.00 ex VAT
      - Perimeter path improvements - £29,000.00 ex VATTotal = £123,000 ex VAT
- The legal agreement has been received along with unconditional offer letters for both elements of the grants.
- Thanks were expressed to Cllr Hemsworth for his help and efforts.
- A grand opening of the new play area will take place assisted by District Cllr Peter Whateley

**RESOLVED:** To engage Smart Cut for football pitch maintenance/improvements for 3 a year period, at a cost of £20,441.70 (excluding VAT).

4. School Representative report: Position Vacant - It is anticipated a meeting will be arranged with the Headmaster soon.
5. Speeding Issues & Crime Prevention Update: Vacant - One volunteer is still needed to join community speed watch to move this project forward.
- a. Safer Neighbourhood Team Parish Contract October - December 2024 - Three policing priorities for the upcoming quarter were identified to include: -
- Illegal/inconsiderate parking outside the school and village hall especially from vehicles from the Kier Housing Development
  - Anti-Social Behaviour at the underpass
  - Reckless driving from the A4440 roundabout and speeding from A4103 to the Village Hall.

- 10 Update on the Parish Neighbourhood Plan: Cllr Lowe outlined the process through to Regulation 15 and 16. A little further work is required to ensure every stage is compliant. The next steps are to consult in writing to with local groups and businesses and to make draft copies available to the public for consultation purposes.
- 11. WCC Highway Issues - Progress Update: Cllr Jenkins  
No further response from WCC Highways to report
- 12. Parking Issues - Rushwick Primary School - Parking issues were referred to as not being illegal but more inconsiderate. Next steps are to obtain photographic evidence and report incidents to the police. Problems were highlighted with vehicular parking along the Bransford Road, causing visibility issues to drivers with nowhere/limited passing places once committed to drive forward.
- 13. Planning: Circulated prior to this meeting:

**Notification of Planning Appeal**

Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/J1860/D/24/3349369

Appeal Start Date: 20 August 2024

Proposal: Erection of two-storey rear extension

Site at: Woodbine, Bransford Road, Rushwick, WR2 5TD

The appeal is to be decided on written representations.

- 14. Correspondence for Information: Circulated by the Clerk throughout the month  
Worcestershire CALC Annual General Meeting - Thursday 26 September 2024  
Market Place at 5.30pm - Meeting to commence 7.00pm
- 15. Councillors' reports and items for future agendas – None  
  
The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

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

# PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

## **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR – PETER WHATLEY**

During the summer, two MHDC councillors switched political allegiance, in both cases leaving the group of independent councillors which is separate from the group to which Sarah & I adhere. One of the departing councillors has joined the Labour Party (before being an independent she was a Lib Dem). The second is understood to have aligned herself with the Green Party, though remaining nominally independent. This will affect us all by redistributing at least one portfolio (i.e. cabinet level) position and increasing the hold the Green group and urban Malvern based councillors have in MHDC. We don't see this as good news for outlying areas, especially those where additional housing - over and above those currently in SWDPr - might be allocated in preference to the edges of Malvern itself.

Since we last met, the new government has effectively reversed last year's changes in planning considerations. A full 5-year plan is now required, rather than 4 when a new plan (e.g. SWDPr) is under consideration and overbuilding in any one year cannot be carried over to the next. This means all the South Worcs authorities are well short of 5-year supply and will either have to seek out new sites in the near future or have a valid local plan which can achieve that level of supply.

Regarding SWDPr, the position is little changed since MHDC's announcement regarding the considerable increase in expected housing provision, as required by the new government. As a reminder, the increase over the 3 South Worcs councils is 80%, up from 1193 houses per year, to 2152. Within MHDC's area, the number is up 65%, from 368 per year to 609. Since Worcester City relies on MHDC and Wychavon for much of its existing SWDPr allocation, their increased allocation is likely to have to be found within Wychavon and MHDC. The city will doubtless rely on planning law's "duty to cooperate" to force the other two authorities to allocate housing space.

We are continuing to request a copy of WCC's transport plan, which should have been available at the end of August. Nothing has been forthcoming. We have been told that the government will likely allow to proceed through the inspection phase. However, even if adopted, it will need to be reviewed again immediately to move toward the new 5-year housing supply target. The prospect for most of this ward, unless in a protected area such as the AONB, is rather bleak.

**Peter Whatley**

**Councillor: Alfrick, Leigh & Rushwick Ward, MHDC**

**DISTRICT COUNCILLOR - SARAH ROUSSE**

All,

Having arrived at the end of August I have requested sight of the SWDPr WCC transport plan.

I have been told " members and the inspectorate will be updated next week ". I have responded that the PC requested a copy of the plan many months ago. It did not exist then but now it does can they have a copy asap.

I await any more news. I know that labour is keen on driving the Parkway development and Worcester was mentioned again yesterday as an area with agreed planning permissions that have not been built out. We will have to revisit any agreed SWDPr immediately. But funding for infrastructure will be key to all of this.

Malvern Theatre expansion planning application has now been submitted. It is the winner of the £20 million levelling up bid . There has been some contention about what it should have been spent on , but the bidding requirements were narrow and they were looking for large projects that would leave a legacy. So, whilst it is perhaps not what I would have chosen making the best of its influence locally and for the economy seems the wisest choice .

There are schemes at the moment to increase travel options. One scheme being trialled by Leigh Sinton Parish Council is the two-week e bike hire scheme . It is run by Malvern car club who also support car share cars. It may be something for Rushwick PC to consider as people may be keener to cycle into Worcester than they would from Leigh Sinton to anywhere . Also, people can have a bike on long term loan to help them get back into work. The car share scheme is proving very popular and gives people who are struggling financially an option to get to appointments or shopping as required . A car could be hosted in Rushwick. Do let me know if there is any interest.

MHDC appear to be running an awards scheme for those doing good environmental work , I am not sure who has been nominated so far but if there are any local groups again do let them know to contact me .

The resident's survey is out now so encouraging residents to fill it in can show local feeling about how the Council is running things at the moment . It is discussed in committees so is in some way influential , also in December there will be a corporate Peer Challenge by the local Government association . This will look at MHDC and involves peers from other Councils spending time on-site talking to partners and the Council . There should be the possibility for Parish Councils to feed into the meetings and be able to talk to Peers about their thoughts on MHDC. So again, one to watch out for .

Grants are also available for Arts projects and groups locally which is part of the commitment to better fund arts in the area . So again, any local groups could apply .

I am still waiting to hear back about the transport plan , but if I get it, I will forward it over to you .

**Sarah Rouse**  
**Councillor: Alfrick, Leigh & Rushwick Ward, MHDC**