

RAINHILL PARISH COUNCIL – MINUTES
13th November 2017

At a meeting of the Finance Committee of the Parish Council held on Monday 13th November 2017 at Rainhill Village Hall, the following were present:

Cllrs: B. Almond, J. Carroll, J. DeAsha, J. Doyle, S. Glover, D. Long, P. Long, C. Moore and W.M. Wood.

01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs: M. Donovan, B. Heydon, L. Glover, and B. Grunewald.

02. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

03. ACCOUNT BALANCES, INCOME EXPENDITURE & RESERVES

The Clerk gave a report on the half-year bank account balance including a summary reconciliation of figures for each month of the half-year. It was agreed that funds above £75,000 be moved from Unity Trust into TSB to ensure all funds are covered by the financial services compensation scheme.

It was agreed that the Clerk would provide training to the Unity Trust Bank authorisers on authorising transactions to familiarise them with the process.

The Clerk outlined the updated auditing requirements and arrangements, and invited members to examine the accounts and processes if they so wished.

Last year the Development reserve was increased to £25,000. This incorporates funds for Rocket 190 and replacement changing rooms.

It was agreed that the Election Reserves be maintained at £11,000.

The Clerk reported that cash reserves are within the range advised by national bodies. It was agreed that cash reserves would be kept to a minimum.

04. PRECEPT

The Clerk was instructed by the Council on the parameters for determining the 2018 Precept. It was agreed that a final decision on the Precept amount will be made at the 22nd January 2018 meeting, informed by the budget papers. Sufficient funds needed to be raised to meet the expected expenditure. Together with the risks outlined by the Clerk, detailed below, the following factors needed to be considered when determining 2018 precept: transfer of responsibilities for services currently provided or co-funded by St.Helens Council; loss of Council Tax support grant; and increases in National Insurance contributions.

05. RISKS

The Clerk summarised potential financial risks, including:

Open Spaces

Responsibility for statutory inspections has been passed to the Parish, increasing the annual costs. It was agreed that the shower facilities at the sports pavilions be decommissioned to reduce costs. Future maintenance at the sites could pass to the Parish.

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Asset Register

It is essential that the Asset Register is finalised. It was agreed that the costs associated with this could be incurred.

Sandstone Wall

Following a recent incident with the collapse of the sandstone wall at Old Lane open space, it was agreed that retention of the sandstone material was important to the character of the village. Quotes would be obtained to include the wall within the insurance schedule, however this may not be cost effective.

06. 4F CENTRE

The Centre is currently self-financing and was no longer considered to be a demand on Parish money.

07. VILLAGE HALL GRANT

It was agreed that the Village Hall grant be maintained at £11,023, for the third consecutive year. The outcome of a grant application for essential repairs was awaited. Should this not be forthcoming additional support may be needed.

08. OTHER POTENTIAL PROJECTS FOR 2018/19 AND BEYOND

Holt Changing Rooms

This proposal had been discussed for many years and it was agreed that resolution was needed. A meeting of the Executive Committee would be arranged to discuss whether a scheme was feasible or it should be discounted.

More immediate storage problems at Holt Lane would be considered for a landfill tax grant application. It was agreed that the Parish Council would contribute the 10% clawback money required to secure the application, together with submission of a planning application.

Rainhill Visioning

Work was progressing at St.Helens Council level and proposals would soon be available for consideration by the Parish Council and public. The Parish would then need to decide whether to invest in its progress.

Rainhill Rocket 190th Celebration

Work was progressing, and previous commitments to underwrite costs associated with the celebration should be covered by ensuring adequate reserves were available.

Environmental Improvements

Wildflowers – following issues with some areas of planting, wildflowers had been replaced with bulbs. This would be assessed before any other areas were considered for similar treatment.

Tree planting – the working group would consider where planting could be accommodated. An initial commitment to £3,000 to facilitate the first year of planting was agreed.

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Village Hall Land Contract

The land on which the Village Hall stands is leased and the contract will require renewal after 2032. Discussion would be needed to determine the best way forward and advice would be sought from St.Helens Council Chief Executive.

DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was resolved that the next ordinary meeting will be held on Monday 11th December 2017, starting at 7:00pm, the venue being Rainhill Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

Chair of the Parish Council
11th December 2017