

Rainhill Annual Parish Meeting
12th May 2010
Held at Rainhill Village Hall

Present Cllrs: B. Almond, J. De' Asha, J. Doyle, S. Glover, L. Glover, B.Grunewald, J. Kelly, W. Wood, PC J. Moore (Merseyside Police), 12 residents.

1. The Chairman, Cllr. J. Kelly, welcomed residents to the meeting, thanked them for attending and explained how the meeting would progress.
2. As PC Moore had been tasked with other duties for the evening, he was asked to make his report so that he could then leave the meeting. PC Moore talked through the crime figures for the previous 3 months, comparing figures with the previous year. In summary the statistics were:
 - Motor Vehicle Theft (of and from) up 35%
 - Burglaries down 25%
 - Attempted Burglaries down 42%
 - Theft down 23%
 - Criminal Damage / Arson down 25%
 - Drugs Offences up 216% (due to the increasing detection and arrest by Police)
 - Robbery same as last year (4 actual)
 - Anti-Social Behaviour down 25%
 - Violent Offences down 70%
 - Vehicle Nuisance down 27%
 - Alcohol Seizures down from 22 units to 7 units
 - Fixed Penalty Notices issued up to 294

Cllr De' Asha raised the issue of the newspaper shop close to St James Church on Warrington Road that had suffered 3 robberies in 18 months. PC Moore and Cllr De' Asha both agreed that further discussions about options needed to take place with the shop owner.

Mr C. Tigwell suggested that the figures discussed in the Police report would be more relevant if they referred to the full 12 month period, i.e. the year since the previous Annual Parish Meeting. PC Moore agreed to pass this suggestion on. PC Moore also agreed to try and obtain comparison figures for the previous 12 months and forward it to the Clerk. The Clerk agreed this would be passed on to everyone who left their name and address with him.

PC Moore then answered other questions regarding a stolen wedding card containing money and the effectiveness of the traffic warning signs installed on Warrington Road

3. The Chairman then gave a report on the activities of the Parish Council over the previous twelve months. Key points included:
 - Working closely with Rainhill Ward Committee to make a number of environmental improvements including improvements to the Christmas lighting

- The Parish Council being actively concerned about the safety of residents and taking part in other joint initiatives including the installation of CCTV and Speed Warning signs on Warrington Road
 - Cleaning of the War Memorial and repainting the surrounding railings repainted
 - Agreeing to include the name of a local man who died while serving in the Gulf. This requires a new plaque
 - Continuing the healthy and productive co-operation between the Police, St Helens Council and the Parish Council
 - Agreeing a scheme of work with St Helens Council and the Ward Committee to improve the changing facilities at both Holt Playing Fields and Rainhill Park
 - Continuing to object to proposals for phone masts being sited close to residential areas in Rainhill
 - Giving active support for the pending improvements at Rainhill Railway Station
 - Continuing to support the Rainhill Carnival by sponsoring a team of pupils from Rainhill High School
 - Continuing to financially support the village hall by contributing significantly towards the hall running costs
 - Organising the Good Citizenship awards on behalf of the residents of Rainhill. This year the award was presented to Eunice Benson, Margaret Ailsa Clive, Gerald Farley, Pam Farmer, Ann Slater and the Rainhill Gala Committee for their excellent work in the community
 - Back in 1996 Rainhill Parish Council became the first Parish Council in the UK to be awarded the prestigious Government Quality Charter Mark and the Council has continued to be re-assessed and retain the award since then. However the Charter Mark scheme officially closes on 30th June 2011. It has been decided that the Parish Clerk and Councillors will work together towards achieving Quality Status under the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme
 - Redesigning and upgrading the Parish Council website, any suggestions for additional content being welcomed
 - Distributing the Annual Report to all homes in Rainhill
4. The Clerk then briefly presented the draft accounts for 2009/10 to the meeting.
- In - general the accounts for 2009/10 are very similar to the accounts for the previous year
 - In the 'Income' section the main difference is due to the crash in bank interest rates during the financial crisis
 - In the 'Expenditure' section the 'Environmental Improvements' item is the restoration of the War Memorial outlined by the Chairman
 - The difference in balances in the 'Balances' section is also mainly accounted for by the decrease in income from bank interest.
- In response to a question from Mr J, Crossley regarding what items were included in 'Administration' the Clerk gave a brief summary and offered to send out a more complete list of items
5. Mr D. Whitley gave a report on behalf of Rainhill Civic Society
- It has been the most successful year for some time with attendances up

- The highlight of the year has been the September exhibition of photos which over 1500 people attended
- As a result of the exhibition, and benefitting from lottery funding, a book is being produced
- Another success has been Rainhill in Bloom which was extended to include gardens
- New members are very welcome

Mrs A. Slater added that the Book Launch will be on 18th September and, in response to a question by the Chairman, that some of the boards from the exhibition of photos will be on display again.

6. Mr C. Tigwell gave a report on behalf of Rainhill Railway and Heritage Society:
 - Like the Civic Society it has been a successful year
 - Number of interesting speakers including topics from ‘old St Helens’ to ‘the mountain railways of Switzerland
 - A 5” gauge live steam model of The Rocket is being built
 - Also received lottery funding which has enabled the exhibition in Rainhill Library’s railway carriage to be refurbished
 - Discussions continuing with St Helens Council regarding the possibility of the exhibition moving to the unoccupied part of Rainhill Railway Station but not a ‘done deal’ yet
 - Repair work at Rainhill Railway Station is due to take place in July and August
 - Extremely unlikely that Skew Bridge will be affected by electrification of line

7. Mrs J. Speakman gave a report on Rainhill Townswomen’s Guild, including that fact that they had also had a successful year with a number of interesting visiting speakers and trips, culminating in a recent coffee morning that had raised £460.

8. The Chairman then introduced the Open Forum section requesting that residents wishing to speak should give their name and address before speaking.

9. Mrs A Slater raised the issue of parking in the village asking if (a) the Parish Council or St Helens Council had any powers to designate disabled spaces particularly on the Dane Court car park outside the village hall, (b) whether the Parish Council had any long term plan for co-ordinated parking in the village and (c) whether the land next to the Railway Station could be used for railway parking.

Cllr De’ Asha said he would go back to the authorities and speak with the owners of the precinct. He re-iterated the fact that that the commitment made before the election about parking would be honoured but that it will take time. Regarding the piece of land next to the Railway Station he will determine what happened following a previous investigation that recommended strengthening the land before it could be used for parking

Cllr Grunewald added that in discussions with the breweries about the Victoria and Commercial it was clear that the Victoria wanted to safeguard their parking space for their own customers but that the Commercial were more open-minded. However since then it appears that the Commercial also want to protect their own

parking area. Cllr Grunewald hoped that discussions regarding the Dane Court car park would lead to an announcement in the near future.

10. Mr A. Bennett asked why there were no bus shelters in the village and commented that dog fouling seemed to be getting worse. He later asked why the 61 bus did not stop at the St James bus stop.

Cllr Kelly said the council could look at whether bus shelters can be provided and Cllr Grunewald reported that the Ward Committee had previously tried to get St Helens Council to adopt the same system used in Liverpool where PCSOs could issue tickets. St Helens Council had declined this request but with the changes following the recent elections Cllr Grunewald thought it was worth trying to do this again. The Clerk offered to get an answer regarding the 61 service from the bus operators.

11. Mr & Mrs J. Platt requested a meeting with councillors to discuss a dispute with St Helens Council. Cllr S. Glover agreed to talk to them immediately after the Annual Parish Meeting.
12. Mr J. Crossley pointed out that fences seem to be getting “higher and higher” in Mill Lane with a particularly high fence at the corner of St James Road and Mill Lane. Cllr S. Glover said this was a Ward Committee issue and offered to inspect the area himself and, if appropriate, request the enforcement officer at St Helens Council to take action.
13. Mrs J. Speakman raised an issue re sandstone blocks on Mill Lane and asked where they were disappearing to. Councillor S Glover remembered Mrs Speakman raising a similar issue last year and had taken it up with St Helens Council. However the cost of building up the low sandstone wall was deemed too great at that time. Cllr De’Asha added that he had brought the issue of sandstone being stolen to the attention of the police. Mrs Speakman also mentioned an obstruction where a lighting column that had been replaced “just up from the quarry”. She said young mothers with prams were struggling to get past. Cllr De’Asha said he would inspect it.
14. C. Tigwell gave a vote of thanks for the work of the Parish Council and the voluntary efforts of the Councillors on behalf of residents.
15. Being no further business the meeting closed at 8.35pm.