

Rainhill Annual Parish Meeting
27th April 2011
Held at Rainhill Village Hall

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

Apologies received from Cllrs B. Grunewald, B. Heydon and C. Moore.

1. The Chair, Cllr. D. Kelly, welcomed residents to the meeting, thanked them for attending and explained how the meeting would progress.
2. The Chair then introduced the members of the Council and gave a report on the activities of the Parish Council over the previous twelve months. Key points included:
 - Early in the year Mr Ian Walker resigned from the Parish Council and was replaced by Cllr Mark Donovan. Mr Gordon Jamieson retired from the Council after many years of valuable service.
 - The Parish Council continues to support Rainhill Carnival by sponsoring a team of pupils from Rainhill High School
 - The Parish Council continues to support Rainhill Village Hall by contributing towards its running costs.
 - The Parish Council continues to support Barnardos 4F Centre by providing rent-free land and accommodation.
 - A new plaque was added to the War Memorial to include the name of Simon Roger Owen who died while serving in The Gulf.
 - With the help of St Helens Council and the Ward Committee the changing facilities at both Holt and Rainhill Park Playing Fields were re-furbished.
 - The Parish Council helped the Rainhill Music Festival get started by providing trophies and prizes. The Chair was very pleased to be able to present the Mike Doyle Memorial Trophy to 'Young Musician of the Year' Adam Case from Rainhill High School.
 - The Parish Council continues to support local residents by objecting to planning applications where necessary and continues to object to proposals for phone masts being sited close to residential areas.
 - On 15th October the Parish Council was successful in preventing the loss of part of Rainhill's heritage by getting the Water Tower at Rainhill listed Grade 2 by English Heritage. Thanks also to the Civic Society, the Railway and Heritage Society and St Helens Council for their support and background information.
 - The Parish Council works closely with Rainhill Ward Committee in making environmental improvements which included further improvements to the Christmas lights. The Chair was delighted to be joined by St Ann's School Choir at the switch on of the Christmas Tree lights this year on what was a very cold night – so many thanks to them.
 - St Ann's Church has recently announced that it has been successful in obtaining Heritage Lottery funding to help restore the Lych Gate. The Parish Council is pleased to have been able to support that application by agreeing to make a significant contribution to help fund this very worthy project.

- The Good Citizenship Award was presented to Judy Lowe, Margaret Fairclough, Maureen Monaghan and Ros Tigwell to recognise their excellent work in the community.
 - The Parish Council website continues to be improved and is now a regular source of messages to the Council. Any suggestions for additional content will be welcomed.
 - All existing Councillors together with new Councillor Mr Paul Lynch, from Coylton Avenue, have been elected unopposed to serve on the Parish Council for the next 4 years.
 - The healthy and productive co-operation between the Police, St Helens Council and the Parish Council continues.
 - The Annual Report has, once again, been distributed to all homes in Rainhill.
3. The Clerk then briefly presented the draft accounts for 2010/11 to the meeting.
- In general the accounts for 2010/11 are similar to the accounts for the previous year
 - In the 'Income' section 'Football Pitch Hire' appears to be down but this due to a late payment received after the end of the financial year.
 - Also in the 'Income' section the 'Other' item is a rebate from ScottishPower relating to electricity payments made for Holt and Rainhill Park changing rooms.
 - In the 'Expenditure' section the 'Churchyard Maintenance' payments have reduced due the re-tendering process that is carried out every four years.
 - Also in the 'Expenditure' section the 'S137 Payments' include the significant cost of the new plaque added to the War Memorial.
 - In the final section 'Total Expenditure' is shown to be less than the previous year. The Council were actually committed to significantly more expenditure in the financial year but several large invoices have not been received yet. Given this, next year's expenditure is likely to show a significant increase. There were no questions regarding the accounts.
4. Mr D. Whitley gave a report on behalf of Rainhill Civic Society including:
- It has been a successful year
 - Rainhill in Bloom was even better
 - The unsightly fence at the end of Houghton Street has gone
 - The Society continue to keep an eye on Planning Applications
 - The Heritage group had a very successful book launch
 - Afternoon 'reminiscing' sessions are taking place on the 2nd Tuesday of every month
 - An audio-visual display of wartime memories has been produced

Cllr Wood complimented Mr Whitley on the production of the DVD and sound recordings.

5. Mr C. Tigwell gave a report on behalf of Rainhill Railway and Heritage Society including:
- Like the Civic Society it has been a successful year
 - Monthly meetings have been well attended and quizzes have been popular
 - The re-launch of the website went down very well; 3 speakers were present and useful contacts made

- Membership has been declining possibly due to the uncertainty of the future of the exhibition (no news about moving to the station)
 - There are fewer staff in the library who have experience with the exhibition and can answer questions
 - The amount of archive material about Rainhill's heritage combined with the Railway material would justify a Rainhill Heritage Centre. If the 4F Centre became vacant this would make an excellent site and would enable the signal box to be sited there and preserved
6. Mrs J. Speakman gave a report on Rainhill Townswomen's Guild, including that they had also had a successful year with a number of interesting visiting speakers and trips, including support for a much smaller group at the Quaker House in Liverpool and funds being raised for the Alzheimer's Society. The AGM took place in March and they will be supporting another good cause in the next year – the new Chapel at Knowsley Cemetery. Mrs Speakman thanked the Council for including an article in the Annual Report and picture of the 60th Anniversary celebrations.
7. As PC Moore had been delayed, The Chair introduced the Open Forum section requesting that residents wishing to speak should give their name and address before speaking.

Buses

Mr A Bennett raised two issues regarding buses which he said he had raised in earlier years. The clerk was aware of an issue raised regarding the 61/61A bus service not stopping at both St James and in the village.

The Clerk had contacted the bus operators and had been told this was to avoid bus 'queuing' but that the possibility of this service stopping at both stops would be considered when relevant services were next reviewed. The Clerk added that he would have written to Mr Bennett to advise him of this but he did not have his address following last year's meeting.

Cllr S. Glover offered to raise this issue and the separate issue of lack of bus shelters in the village centre with the Merseyside Travel Advisory Panel.

Missing Bench

Mr C Tigwell asked about the ownership of the benches on Old Lane. He advised that the bench previously situated opposite the end of Marian Close had 'disappeared' and that he and other residents would like it replaced as it was a well-used bench and with the best views.

The Clerk advised that the most recent bench sited on Old Lane had been supplied by St Helens Council and paid for by a resident in memory of someone. The Clerk had been in touch with Mr B Johnson at St Helens Council who thought all the benches were the responsibility of the Highways section. The Highways section has said they have not removed the missing bench.

Cllr DeAsha agreed a replacement bench should be investigated and offered to take the matter up with the appropriate Director.

The Meadows

Mr D Siddell from St James Road spoke about the situation with developments at nos 1 and 3 The Meadows and was joined in the discussion by other residents from St James Road and Warrington Road. One of the concerns was the way in which the developers seem to be getting assistance from St Helens Council in submitting applications that are likely to be successful whereas residents get no such technical help in trying to stop such over-development. Mr Siddell also said he was grateful for the continued support of the Parish Council and the Labour Group on St Helens Council in objecting to proposals for these attempted developments. He asked for clarification on what happens with the 'permitted development' (Certificate of Lawful Use) obtained given that further proposals are being submitted. Other concerns included the developers seeming to be giving little heed to agreements made including working through Bank Holidays. Mrs M Bispham added that rubbish was being dumped on the area at the rear of the Warrington Road cottages where residents previously parked.

Cllr DeAsha said it may be possible to get the help of the Environmental Department on nuisance grounds re working at unsociable times and that he and the Council would continue to support the residents in their fight against the over-development of this area.

Cllr Wood added that he was surprised by the recent application, given that the applicant had obtained his 'permitted development', but pointed out the two substantial changes, i.e. the footprint being moved further to the right and the rear access being made bigger.

8. PC Moore, Merseyside Police, confirmed he is the dedicated officer for Rainhill and talked through the crime figures for the previous 12 months, comparing figures with the previous year. In summary the statistics were:
 - Anti-Social Behaviour down 25%
 - Vehicle Nuisance down 32%
 - Burglaries (residential) down 42%
 - Burglaries (other) up 25% (from 39 to 49)
 - Criminal Damage down 12%
 - Drugs Offences down 7%
 - Robbery up 25% (from 8 to 10)
 - Theft from Motor Vehicles up 6% (from 47 to 50)
 - Theft of Motor Vehicles down 39%
 - Theft down 9%
 - Violent Offences up 3% (from 28 to 29)
 - Issue of Stop Forms up 37%
 - 159 Fixed Penalty Notices (obstruction only) were issued

PC Moore circulated a sheet for anyone who wanted to have the Newsletter emailed directly to them. The Clerk advised that the most up to date Newsletter

was also always available on the Parish Council website. PC Moore then went through highlights from the latest (April) Newsletter including:

- Have Your Say meetings are every 4 weeks (next on 26th May)
- Trent Road/Trent Close car nuisance
- Deepdale Drive area wheelie bin damage
- Reporting any bogus or suspicious callers

Mr C Tigwell enquired about a significant police presence on Norcliffe Road. PC Moore was aware of an action on Second Avenue, which runs into Norcliffe Road, but not of any action on Norcliffe Road. However he pointed out that Liverpool City Police sometimes carry out actions independently of local police.

9. Mr 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.
10. Being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.28pm.

Chair, Rainhill Parish Council
17th May 2011