

Rainhill Annual Parish Meeting
20th April 2016
Held at Rainhill Village Hall

Present Cllrs: B. Almond, J. DeAsha, J. Carroll, M. Donovan, J. Doyle, L. Glover, S. Glover, B. Grunewald, B. Heydon, D. Long, P. Long, C. Moore, W. Wood, Sgt. S. Barcroft (Merseyside Police), and 24 residents.

1. The Chair, Cllr J. Doyle, welcomed residents to the meeting, thanked them for attending, then asked members of the Council to briefly introduce themselves and explained how the meeting would progress.
2. Apologies were received from Cllr J. Fulham and Mrs J. Speakman.
3. This year the Police 'Have Your Say' meeting was combined into the Annual Parish Meeting. Sgt S. Barcroft gave a report on the key issues regarding policing, reporting that Rainhill was one of the safest wards. "MerseyNow" an interactive messaging service was promoted to enhance communications. Questions/comments were then invited.

Cllr Doyle thanked the Police for their attendance.

4. It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Meeting held on the 22nd April 2015 should be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.
5. The Chair thanked the members of the Parish Council and Clerk for the support provided during her year in office. She then gave a report on the activities of the Parish Council over the previous twelve months. Key points included:
 - The Parish Council, with the help of Ward Councillors and St Helens Council, continued to support the provision of open spaces for the enjoyment of Rainhill residents. The Council had responsibility for 8 parks spread over 43 acres of Rainhill. In 2015 permission was granted for the provision of outdoor gym equipment at Old Lane open space area. The junior football teams, Rainhill Rockets and Rainhill United continue to go from strength to strength, thanks to the dedication of their managers and coaching staff.
 - The Parish Council continued to help the hard-working members that run the Village Hall by contributing towards the hall running costs. A defibrillator, paid for by the Parish Council, had now been installed in the foyer.
 - Preparations continued to be made to celebrate the 190th and 200th Anniversary of the Rainhill Trials. In partnership with the Railway & Heritage Society it was hoped to draw attention to the importance of the Trials in transport history and ensure their significance was commemorated appropriately.
 - In September a twinning ceremony was held, simultaneously with the residents of Latour-en-Woëvre in France. Marie Rimmer, MP together with many members of the community attended to honour the sacrifices made during WW1 and celebrate our Treaty of Friendship with the residents of Latour, who continued to tend the grave of Lt. Thomas Jones, a WW1 Pilot from Rainhill, killed and buried in France. Friendships continued to be forged between the two villages.
 - An Armed Forces Covenant had been entered into, which sets out aims to support improved conditions for service personnel and their families. There continued to be a commitment to remembrance, including a contribution

towards renovation of St. Ann's war memorial and a new plaque for the Civic war memorial.

- Thanks were expressed to the many dedicated volunteers in Rainhill. The Chair, expressed thanks for the privilege of opening the Rainhill Gala which continued to raise money for good causes with over £9,000 raised for local organisations and charities in 2015. This was recognised as a tremendous achievement and a real reflection not only on the charitable giving of the community but the amazing efforts of the Gala Group.
 - The Parish Council continued to support the Music Festival by providing trophies and prizes and as usual. The 2015 event was excellent and the performances were of a very high standard. The Chair expressed thanks for the pleasure of presenting the Winner's trophy to Chris Hill for his amazing flute playing. The festival continued to nurture young talent in the village.
 - Rainhill Civic Society were thanked for all their efforts, especially in organising the Rainhill in Bloom. The competition adds colour to the village and enhances the environment.
 - Tower College School Choir were thanked for singing at the switch on of the Christmas Tree lights, which helped to make it such a special and festive occasion.
 - This year the Parish Council have also contributed to other good causes including the Eco Garden, Rainhill Swimming Club and facilitating the Police Drop In facility at the 4F Centre.
 - The annual Good Citizenship Awards evening was held on 26th February, where awards were made to Jim Johnson, Peter Graham, Chris Tigwell and Derek Cleveland to recognise their excellent work in and for the community. The Parish Council rely on the community to nominate those who they consider should have their good work acknowledged.
 - The Parish Council continued to support local residents by vetting local planning applications and making comments, and objections where necessary. Work was ongoing with St. Helens Council to look at a Vision for Rainhill, looking at our long term future.
 - Close co-operation continued between the Police, Ward Councillors, St Helens Council and the Parish Council. The Police Community Compact agreed last year had been reviewed to work together to make Rainhill a safer community to live in.
 - Financial cuts were hitting all parts of community life and the cost of bedding plants in the road side verges could no longer be justified. The Parish Council and Ward Councillors were looking at ways of maintaining a pleasant environment in times of austerity and were having shrubs planted in the beds. An overall plan for planting throughout the village, including the barrier basket and wildflower meadows would be prepared.
 - The Annual Report had, once again, been distributed to all homes in Rainhill.
6. The Clerk briefly presented the draft accounts for 2015/16 to the meeting:
- The Parish Council was in a healthy state financially and was conforming to all statutory requirements and national association guidelines.
 - Total Income for 2015/16 was just over £57,000 which had been boosted by goodwill payments and reimbursements from statutory undertakers. Whilst there had been a marginal annual increase in the money received through the precept, this had been needed to cover additional costs. The current level of income was stable and should not be subject to downward fluctuations.
 - 'Expenditure' showed a decrease of £3,000 to just short of £48,000, due to delays in planned schemes. Administration costs had reduced, but additional

- responsibilities for maintenance had increased spending on public open spaces.
- Overall in 2015/16 income had exceeded expenditure and surplus funds would be used for delayed projects and reserves. Following a budgeting exercise this year's precept had been set at £58,500.
7. Mr C. Tigwell started by thanking the Parish Council for receipt of the Good Citizenship Award and then gave a report on behalf of Rainhill Railway and Heritage Society including:
 - The Society had a typical year with meetings reasonably well attended.
 - The summer trip had been to Llangollen including a trip on the canal across the Froncysyllte aqueduct, and a railway journey along the newly opened extension to Corwen.
 - Efforts to interest schools of Rainhill, and beyond, had been more successful.
 - Events to mark the 190th Anniversary of the trials were progressing with celebrations planned in 2019. Local Organisations were encouraged to contribute to the planned celebrations.
 - An appeal was made to identify the winner of the 'Miss Rocket' competition in 1980.
 8. Mrs A. Davy spoke on behalf of the Civic Society reporting that it had been a successful year, with 280 current members. Four sub committees cover: Heritage – who have launched a WW1 Website, initiated contact with Latour-en-Woëvre, and run Rainhill Remembered; Practical – organising Rainhill in Bloom and planting around Mill Lane Cross; Planning – responding to development proposals and protecting the Green Belt; and Speaker Programme – which operates a monthly programme of presentations. Everyone was encouraged to participate in local issues, through membership of RCS.
 9. Mrs S. Reeves, Treasurer for Rainhill Women's Institute, reported that the group formed in 1980 and this year had 7 new members. The programme of speakers had included: a pupil from Rainhill High who recounted her trip to Tanzania; current and retired Police Officers; and a demonstration of the defibrillator. Traditional crafts were also undertaken and good homes were being sought for knitted blankets. A new tree had been planted outside the Village Hall to celebrate 100 years of WI.
 10. Mrs R. Proffitt spoke on behalf of Kendrick's Cross Women's Institute. Fundraising this year had benefitted MIND and the homeless. A tree was planted in the Eco Garden for their WI 100 year celebration. The many press reports on the centenary had helped increase membership. They were hoping to start a craft group and activities at their meetings had included: Mature Movers; a visit from Liverpool's Town Crier; and a Houses of Parliament representative. A tea party had been organised for the Queen's 90th Birthday.
 11. Mr K. Robertson reported from Rainhill and Prescot Probus Club, who operate a dining club for retired and professional business people. Having formed in 1966, Rainhill and Prescot Clubs amalgamated in 2013. A luncheon meeting is organised each month with guest speakers. This year trips had been organised to Chester in May and Coniston in July. Regular meetings were held on the fourth Tuesday of each month in the Millennium Centre, Rainhill.
 12. Mr M. Steward reported that Rainhill Rotary Club would celebrate their 30th Birthday this year and were going from strength to strength. The Club now has

17,000 followers on facebook. Fundraising events throughout the year would include: the 14th annual beer festival in November; and the Christmas Float in December. Over the past 13 years £250,000 had been raised. Charities and local organisations were encouraged to apply for funding through their Dragon's Den Competition. This year 64 organisations would bid for a share of the £17,000 to be given away. The group can be contacted through their website.

13. Mr M. Steward then presented on behalf of the Gala Committee. The Gala had been resurrected in 2006, and relocated to St. Ann's School fields in 2009 to accommodate growth. The emphasis was on bringing the community together, with the added benefit of fundraising, £80,000 had been donated to date. Rainhill Gala was the biggest of its kind in the Borough. The Committee had 17 hardworking members who organise: a barn dance in spring; disco in October; and the main Gala event in May. The Group now had charitable status.
14. Mr I. Lucas gave a report on behalf of Rainhill Eco Group. The Group had transformed former wasteland into a garden for native planting. The ethos of the group was centred on recycling and promoting native flora as a wildlife habitat. The Group receive no funding and relied on donations and fundraising events. Further volunteers were always welcomed, in any capacity, advice, physical work or management. Everyone was invited to use the garden, and to help out!
15. Cllr C. Moore presented a report on behalf of the Village Hall Management Committee provided by Maria Heaton its Chair. Firstly Cllr Moore registered his thanks to Maria and retiring Treasurer David Boston for all their hard work.
 - The VH is used mainly by charitable organisations and local community.
 - Office hours, were now more flexible but when closed messages could be left by phone or via email.
 - There had been no increase in the rental rate this year.
 - The VH had again benefitted from a rate discount this year, due to its Charitable status.
 - Permission had been granted to display the Twinning Treaty of Friendship.
 - A new treasurer was desperately needed, and if anyone knew a willing volunteer they should contact Cllr Moore.
 - Thanks were expressed for the grant received, also for the defibrillator and training.
 - The Hall was used by a variety of groups including: Community Service Groups - Blood Donors, Parish Council; Sport/Health – Fit Forever, Keep Fit Groups, Bowls, Ballroom Dancing; Recreational/Fine Arts – Performance groups, Crafts, Women's Institutes (both), and Townswomen's Guild; and Social Groups – Luncheon Club, Mums & Tots and Intensive Care.Cllr Moore added that Rainhill United would be celebrating their 40th year by holding a celebration day planned for September. Rainhill Park would be renamed Albert Fellowes Park in celebration of all the work Albert had done for the community.
16. Mr R. Ormston gave a report from Rainhill Rockets Junior Football Club and offered thanks to the Parish Council for support provided through use of the pitches at Holt Lane. The Club celebrate their 20th Birthday and had grown to one of the most established clubs in the area having 150 registered players. The Club have a structured Committee including a Welfare Officer. Rainhill Rockets pride themselves on being more than just a football club, they accept any player irrespective of ability and run non-competitive academies. They also organise fundraising events and have collected "Kits for Africa" and made donations to the homeless together with charities such as Whizzkids, Make a Wish foundation,

Oliver King Foundation and Cancer research. Fundraising quizzes are held fortnightly to keep subs low.

17. The Chair introduced the Open Forum section:

- Mr Bennett questioned why no bus services ran along Warrington Road towards the stoops beyond evening time. Cllr Grunewald offered to take this up with Merseytravel, but acknowledged that this problem was not specific to Rainhill. Since deregulation the bus companies favour the lucrative routes and avoid those not commercially viable. No immediate solution is expected.
- Mr Carter, Chair of Planning Subcommittee at RCS raised concerns about the preservation of the Green Belt, given recent release in Knowsley for 1,500 houses on Rainhill's boundary. Concern was expressed that locally refused applications are being granted on appeal. Neighbouring authorities are building on all land surrounding Green Belt therefore we need to uphold Green Belt to maintain separation. Infill development in the urban area must be tolerated to defend more valuable Green Belt. Cllr Heydon confirmed that the Parish Council have consistently objected to inappropriate development in Green Belt. Mr L. Myers advised that individual letters of objection are given more weight than petitions and it is up to individuals to write in when objections were needed. Mr Carter highlighted that Knowsley would soon be producing a Supplementary Planning Document to detail infrastructure provision in relation to the 1,500 dwellings.
- Mrs A. Pearce reported that the entrances to Quarry Park are very marshy and need attention. As this park is not within the jurisdiction of the Parish Council, the Ward Councillors would raise the issue with St.Helens Council.
- Mr Robertson commented on the importance of the provision of defibrillators and indicated that those in need of provision in future should apply to the Rotary Club for funding.
- Mrs E. North raised concern about the condition of the railway memorial in Houghton Street and the general condition around Houghton St. Plans were in place to re-varnish the benches but the railway memorial needed greater attention. The Rainhill Vision Plans would incorporate improvements in this area but no details were yet available.
- Mrs C. Swatridge offered entry forms for this year's Rainhill in Bloom.

18. Mr C. Tigwell thanked the members of the Parish Council for their voluntary efforts on behalf of the residents of Rainhill.

19. Being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.20 pm.

Chair, Rainhill Parish Council
26th April 2017