

**Rainhill Annual Parish Meeting**  
**26<sup>th</sup> April 2017**  
**Held at Rainhill Village Hall**

Present Cllrs: B. Almond, J. DeAsha, J. Carroll, M. Donovan, J. Doyle, J. Fulham, S. Glover, B. Heydon, D. Long, P. Long, C. Moore, W. Wood, Insp. Matt Drennan (Merseyside Police), and 19 residents.

1. The Chair, Cllr J. Carroll, welcomed residents to the meeting, thanked them for attending, and explained how the meeting would progress.
2. Apologies were received from Cllr B. Grunewald and L. Glover.
3. Insp. M Drennan outlined the statistics for crime in Rainhill. There were approximately 40 crimes reported per month, this showed a reduction of 2 per month and accounted for 3% of the overall crime in St.Helens. Violence related crimes had increased from 7 last month to 10, representing 3% of the overall violent crime within St.Helens. Anti-social behaviour has increased from 20 last month to 24, representing 4% of the overall anti-social behaviour within St.Helens. Whilst knife crime was rising, it tended to be targeted attacks, the risk to the general public was not increased. Resources were being increased on educating school children to not carry weapons.

Cllr Carroll thanked the Police for their attendance.

4. It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016 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 his year in office. He 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. 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. In 2016, Rainhill United had received support in renaming Rainhill Park to Albert Fellowes Park. Elsewhere, a new footpath and two new bins had been provided.
  - The Parish Council continued to help the hard-working members that run the Village Hall by contributing towards the hall running costs. Members of the Village Hall and 4F Centre Management Committees were thanked for their achievements.
  - Preparations continued to be made to celebrate the 190<sup>th</sup> and 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rainhill Trials. In partnership with the Railway & Heritage Society, the Presidents of both the British and American Institute of Civil Engineers and Institute of Mechanical Engineers had been welcomed to unveil a plaque. Meetings had been held with many local organisation to put together a schedule of events over the Whit bank holiday in 2019.
  - In June a new plaque was unveiled on the War Memorial, to commemorate those soldiers not previously included. The event was combined with remembrance of the Battle of the Somme and a celebration of our twinning with the residents of Latour-en-Woëvre in France. It was an honour to welcome Marie Rimmer, MP, the Mayor of St.Helens and many members of the community, to commemorate the sacrifices made during WW1.

- Thanks were expressed to the many dedicated volunteers in Rainhill. The Rainhill Gala continues to go from strength to strength. This is 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 2016 event had been excellent and the performances were of a very high standard. The Chair expressed thanks for the pleasure of presenting the Winner's trophy to Julianna Antczak for her amazing cello playing.
- The Chair thanked Rainhill Civic Society for all their efforts, especially in organising the Rainhill in Bloom, which continued to add colour to the village and enhance the environment.
- The Rotary Club were thanked for their community activities throughout the year, especially the Beer Festival which raised thousands of pounds for local causes.
- St. Ann's 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 and enjoyed a visit to the Alleyway Project between Park Avenue and Rainhill Road, where residents turned what was a forgotten back alley, into a blossoming oasis.
- The Parish Council were pleased to present the Good Citizenship Award to Edna North, Joan Owen, Margaret Blackburn and Rainhill Eco Group, to recognise their excellent work in and for the community.
- The Parish Council continued to support local residents by vetting local planning applications and making comments, and objections where necessary.
- Close co-operation continued between the Police, Ward Councillors, St Helens Council and the Parish Council. The Police drop in facility was now held at Rainhill Library at 2pm on Fridays.
- Whilst financial cuts continued to hit all parts of community life every effort was being made to maintain a pleasant environment. Spring bulbs were to be planted along the highway and barrier baskets would be provided.
- The Annual Report had, once again, been distributed to all homes in Rainhill.

6. The Clerk briefly presented the draft accounts for 2016/17 to the meeting:

- The Parish Council was in a stable state financially and was conforming to all statutory requirements and national association guidelines.
- Total Income for 2016/17 was just over £62,500 predominantly made up of precept and income from pitch hire. £1,200 had also been received in reclaimed VAT. Compared to last year the income was up by £5,000.
- Total Expenditure for 2016/17 was just over £55,000, a £7,000 increase on the previous year, as a number of major schemes had been delayed to 2016/17 expenditure. Administration remained the highest cost and was up by £1,000. Public Open Space spending was up £5,500, and Environmental Expenses were up by £1,500, however this was compensated with a reduction in spending under Section 137.
- At the end of the 2016/17 financial year the accounts show a balance just over £53,000, this is made up of a cash balance of £17,000 and reserves of £36,000. The Clerk had recommended that reserves be built up to support the planned celebrations of the Rainhill Trials 190<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019. Following a budgeting exercise this year's precept had been set at £63,400.

7. Mrs A. Davey spoke on behalf of the Civic Society reporting that it had been a busy & active year. There had been many activities and visits had been arranged to Loyola Hall and St. Ann's Well. Regular events: Rainhill in Bloom, Rainhill Remember and speaker events continued. Planning issues, including the local plan had been

considered. Environmental improvements had been achieved at Stone Cross on Mill Lane and through involvement with the Eco Group. The society will celebrate 50 years next year and hoped to enter a golden age of achievement, change and challenge.

Mrs Howitt then outlined the Civic Society's aspirations on how the past might help influence the future, and encouraged the Council to consider a Heritage Action Zone application. Given Rainhill's many achievements, it was well placed to take advantage of funding available from Historic England to improve business investment and job creation.

Cllr D. Long thanked Mrs Howitt for the research undertaken. The Parish Council had discussed such options with the Conservation Officer and would continue to push for funding from heritage sources. Cllr S. Glover indicated that additional conservation staff were to be employed to facilitate such proactive work.

8. Mr I. Lucas gave a report on behalf of Rainhill Eco Group. The Group had taken full responsibility for the garden and had spent much of 2016 combatting existing problems with the paved areas and planters. Donations had been received from the Gala Committee, Parish Council and Coop, which had been spent on a few capital items but mainly on planting. Having now solved many problems, 2017 would allow for improvements to the garden, which it was hoped would be well used by the community and local organisations.
9. Mrs R. Proffitt had sent a report on behalf of Kendrick's Cross Women's Institute. The group had enjoyed a successful year with interesting talks and visits. Membership continued to grow. £600 had been raised for charity, £200 each to Rainhill Village Hall towards a new kitchen, Old Lane Scout Group towards building repairs, and also to Ravenhead Foyer to help homeless young people.
10. Mr D. Roberts reported that Rainhill Rotary Club had 53 members locally, and 1.4 million members worldwide. The group continued to meet weekly and enjoyed many fundraising events including Santa's sleigh and the Beer Festival. Over £25,000 raised in 2016, is being distributed to local organisations through their Dragon's Den initiative, and other charitable causes throughout the year. Mr Roberts provided a list of beneficiaries. Many social events were held throughout the year. Rotary Club wished to thank the local businesses and residents for their continued support, and looked forward to forming "Friends of Rotary" to help continue that support in coming years.
11. Mr R. Ormston reported that Rainhill Rockets Junior Football Club were celebrating their 20 year anniversary, and offered thanks to the Parish Council for support provided through use of the pitches at Holt Lane. The Club have 160 registered players, playing in 14 teams from under 7's to open age, together with an academy for under 6's. The Club now run a girls team. The Club undertake charitable work collecting children's toys at Christmas, and Easter Egg collections. The Club are proud of their 'family' approach, never turning away a child, irrespective of ability. In 2017 the club hoped to provide additional storage for equipment.
12. Mr N. Thompson presented on behalf of Rainhill Town Football Club. The Club has 180 members ranging from 16 – 50+ playing in 9 teams. The Club have qualified for 6 cup finals this year, have won 4, with one yet to be played. 90% of the members are Rainhill residents. Problems exist with the quality of the pitches, forcing the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> teams to play in Skelmersdale. Their aspiration for the future is to host all games in Rainhill and Parish Council support would be sought in achieving this.

- Cllr D. Long clarified that pitch leases were difficult to amend, but support would be discussed.
13. Mrs J. Speakman spoke on behalf Rainhill Townswomen's Guild. This year the organisation had enjoyed several trips, including a carol service in Blackburn. Money raised had been donated as follows: Marie Curie £656; Musical Memories £574; Alder Hey £367; British Legion £30; and £25 to St. Ann's in memory of Veda Taylor.
14. Cllr C. Moore presented a report on behalf of the Village Hall Management Committee provided by Maria Heaton its Chair.
- The hall email address had changed to [rainhillvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:rainhillvillagehall@gmail.com);
  - The hall continued to be well used, mainly by Charitable or Not for Profit Organisations for the benefit of the Local Community;
  - The number of user groups had increased this year, the room hire rates had been maintained the same as 2016/17
  - Gazprom had been selected for gas supply;
  - An application for discretionary rate relief had been made to St. Helens;
  - The Chair had maintained the accounts this year in the absence of a treasurer. A new treasurer had been identified;
  - The Hall relied on volunteers for its upkeep. Eric Rothwell and Doug Brown continued to undertake routine maintenance. Redecoration had commenced but would need much more time and effort;
  - It was hoped a new sign would be provided for the tower;
  - There were a number of major jobs outstanding: foyer roof, new boilers, but fund raising would be needed;
  - 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.
  - Thanks were expressed to the Parish Council for their continued financial support.
15. Mr C. Tigwell gave a report on behalf of Rainhill Railway and Heritage Society including:
- The Society had a typical year with meetings reasonably well attended, new members would be very welcome;
  - The summer trip had been to the Lake District, taking in the Lakeland Museum and Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway.
  - There had been more interest from local schools this year. A video had been made with St. Ann's school Huyton. This could be adapted to be Rainhill centred.
  - Plans were progressing to celebrate the 190<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the trials, support from Northern and local organisations had been encouraging and further ideas would be welcomed.
16. Mrs E. North reported that Rainhill Women's Institute were now in their 37<sup>th</sup> year and were welcoming new members. The year had seen much charity work, including support for the Village Hall. The WI wished to contribute to the excellent community spirit amongst Rainhill residents. They were preparing for the Rainhill Gala and any monies raised would be given to local charities.
17. Cllr D. Long thanked all groups who had attended, together with the wider voluntary groups throughout Rainhill. Their unpaid work makes Rainhill a better place to live and the Parish Council thanked all their members for their hard work.
18. The Chair introduced the Open Forum section:

- Mr Bennett indicated that over the past year the bus service had worsened. Encouragement to shop local was impossible due to access. Cllr D. Long clarified that neither St.Helens nor Rainhill Parish Council control service provision. Subsidies for non-profitable routes had been cut. Cllr J. Fulham added that the new devolution agreement would give control of the bus service to the devolved authority.
  - Mrs A. Slater raised concern that the railway memorial plinth in Houghton Street was in need of renovation. This would be added to the agenda for the Parish Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May and reported back to Mrs Slater.
  - Mrs J. Speakman reported that the pavement linking Calder Drive and View Road needed attention. This is not within the jurisdiction of the Parish Council, the Ward Councillors would raise the issue with St.Helens Council.
19. Mr C. Tigwell thanked the members of the Parish Council for their voluntary efforts on behalf of the residents of Rainhill.
20. Being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.17 pm.

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Chair, Rainhill Parish Council  
25<sup>th</sup> April 2018