

**Rainhill Annual Parish Meeting  
20th April 2022  
Held at Rainhill Village Hall**

Present Cllrs: G Barker, A V Howitt, D Hendrick, A Daniels, I Brown, M Rothwell, S Roscoe, K Stevenson, J Tasker, J Woodhouse, Sarah Smith (Community Support Officer- W/Powers), and 17 residents.

1. Due to The Chair, Cllr W. Williams not attending due to illness Cllr G Barker will chair the meeting and, welcomed residents to the meeting, thanked them for attending, and explained how the meeting would progress.
2. Apologies were received from Cllrs D, Greaves, G, Ward, W, Williams and G, Roberts.
3. Community Support Officer Sarah Smith stated the main issue in Rainhill recently has been ASB and due to residents not previously reporting incidents resources were going elsewhere. Reporting has now increased due to being encouraged thus enabling a dispersal zone to be put in place Tue-Thur. 10 notices were given out. Also after the dispersal zone patrols were increased and 8 more names were passed onto youth outreach team who work with the parents. Sarah reported there have been various meetings held with the Councillors, residents and businesses providing a positive response from businesses and parents.

Councillors confirmed they are working with the police, schools and businesses to look at what best provision of services could be implemented.

Cllr G Barker thanked the Police representatives for their attendance and for all their service in protecting the residents of Rainhill on a daily basis.

4. It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021 should be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The following was provided by Chair Wil Williams in his absence Read by Cllr G Barker.

What a 12 months we have had! The fight against COVID continues and although life has returned to normality for most, it remains a threat to many. We have seen Rainhill flourish since the lifting of restrictions, with new businesses opening, community groups re-engaging and our community coming back together. A highlight of this for me was seeing the large crowds for Christmas Lights switch in the Village, with Rainhill Rotary and St Barts School Choir participating in the event.

As a Parish Council we have continued to support our residents, businesses, and the community at large. For the third year in a row Rainhill Parish Council has NOT raised our Council TAX Precept as we are fully aware the impact of COVID, increase in living costs and the rise in utilities is having on our residents.

We continue to address concerns as and when they arise. A common subject of conversation is ASB in the Village area, as a Parish Council we are in continued talks with Merseyside Police, Businesses and Residents. We are planning an additional CCTV camera within the village and will be shortly launching a 'Spot it, Report it Share it – Campaign' aimed at asking witnesses to report all ASB incidents to Merseyside Police. We have Zero Tolerance for ASB in Rainhill.

Rainhill Parish Council are committed to maintaining Rainhill as a fantastic area to live, work and study. We have big plans for the future of Rainhill and thanks to a lot of hard work we are beginning the grant application process for large scale projects the likes of which Rainhill hasn't seen for 40+ years. We have recently worked with the Ukraine Crisis appeal in conjunction with Polskie providing support and supplies with amazing community support.

5. The Clerk briefly presented the draft accounts for 2021/22 to the meeting:  
The Parish Council is in a stable state financially and is conforming to all statutory requirements and national association guidelines

Total Income for 2021/22 was £71.9k which is made up of precept and income from pitch hire. We also reclaimed just more than £2100.00 in VAT.

Total Expenditure for 2021/22 was £58,334.61 which is just over £6,543.00 more than on the previous year. Covid still having an impact on events. Administration remains the highest cost as this covers a multitude of expenses. Environmental Expenses were down by just over £3k, (the previous year having expenditure for the dog park) spending on Publicity was decreased slightly with improvements on website being done without charge and spending under Section 137, which covers grants and other items not allowed for under other legislation has a significant rise due to 2 Good Citizenship ceremonies taking place in the same year due to Covid. Also more grants have been agreed for various community causes.

At the end of the 2021/22 financial year the accounts show a balance of £112K this is made up of a cash balance of £51k and reserves of £61k. The reserves are higher due to the probability of costs being imposed by St Helens Council for the maintenance of open spaces and also 9K in election costs and the reduction CIF funding. Following a budgeting exercise this year's precept has been set at £68,340, this is not an increase on the last two years.

6. Anita Hoey spoke on behalf of the 4F centre reporting that although she had been managing the centre for 7/8 years she had been involved for 18 years with her son being a user of the centre. The centre has excellent facilities and is used by groups day and night. The centre is supported by a committee of Parish Councillors and has a healthy financial balance. There are a large umbrella of groups using the centre of an evening but Anita wishes to increase and promote the centre for use by Children's groups. Due to St Helens Council removing certain funding, particularly for disability groups, it has had an impact on some groups being able to use the centre. The Chair described the 4F as Rainhill's hidden jewel and acknowledged there has been some issue around parking in front of the gate which Cllr Tasker has rectified by arranging the 'H' road marking now in front of the building.

7. Ann Davey spoke on behalf of the Civic Society (RCS) reporting that the Society was hit by Covid and not able to hold meetings but still carrying on monitoring planning applications and heritage research. Rainhill Remembered Group meet monthly in the library. Flower boxes have now been planted and also various sites across Rainhill including the Stone Cross with more areas planned to be completed. New opportunities have also been grasped due to restrictions and Heritage walks have now evolved. The first AGM for 2 years is due in the near future and a concert on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to celebrate the Jubilee is being organised with the Society looking forward to planning lots more future events. The Chair noted we are always incredibly thankful to Rainhill Civic Society for their dedication and hard work. In particular the floral displays across Rainhill which never go unnoticed.

8. Les Jackson gave a report on behalf of Rainhill Eco Group. The Group is made up of representatives of local organisation and residents and the ECO garden was set up in 2013 to encourage wildlife and be a community garden. After Covid the group have been able to get back to working within the garden and are now playing catch up. There is a huge issue with vandalism – graffiti, plants being pulled up and the gate on numerous occasions being pulled off. All the incidents have been reported to the police. Sarah Smith confirmed the garden is on the list of areas requiring patrolling. St Anns schoolchildren have visited the garden and planted bulbs then taken back into the classroom and the school has also been given a talk on birds by a representative from the garden. A very successful Easter Egg hunt has taken place with further Halloween event and plant sales planned. Thanks were expressed to the Parish Council for their support and to residents for their appreciation. The garden are always on the look out for volunteers and all are welcome.

The Chair stated Rainhill Parish continue to support the Eco Garden Management Committee in anyway we can. We thank the committee for their ongoing hard work throughout the year.

9. Steve Clarke reported thanking Brian Heydon and Gillian Pinder for all their hard work with the 190 celebrations. This year the committee have decided due to the restrictions of Covid over the past two years the gala will not be held. The committee have lost a number of members and it is vital more

volunteers are found. The committee needs to regroup and restart. If volunteers are not found a discussion will have to be held to look at the viability of continuing.

The Chair reported due to the ongoing uncertainty surrounding COVID19, Rainhill Gala have taken the tough but justified decision of cancelling the 2022 Annual Rainhill Gala. Rainhill Parish Council back this decision and wish to pass on our thanks for all their hard work and hopefully we will be able to look forward to 'Rainhill Gala 2023. Cllr Barker stated any support that can be offered will be available and there is a lot of goodwill out there.

10. Peter Reeves reported, Last July I became President of the Rotary Club of Rainhill my Year as president ends in June.

We started as the previous year with covid and zoom.

We had to cancel planned walks because of covid and bad weather and we had our meetings in the Rec Club well separated signing in, masks and hand gel.

Unfortunately we had to postpone our proposed beer festival again which was scheduled from 31st March which would have been 3 weeks ago, and it is now back to the autumn, and will not be till October the 27th to 29th. A date for your diary. At which we will be glad of any of your help.

A few of us went to the beer festivals at Ruskin Hall and Warrington.

We visited Natalie at Riding for the disabled in Rainhill on the 10th December.

We did struggle to do our Christmas Float, we had 11 local street collection routes, as normal as possible, a few had to be cut short with having fewer members out and the time was getting late. We did 7 supermarket visits and 7 local schools.

We attended the turning on of the lights on at Thatto Heath and in the village.

We finished outside the Co-op on Christmas Eve. We raised 11.5k. Which will be distributed to charities and good causes.

This year we have presented bursaries to a lot of young people in Rainhill. Including, 3 deserving school children, 2 Scout groups, a Guide group and a swimming club.

We have had so far 1 new member and we have a few prospective members in the pipeline.

This year we are not having a presentation night for the Community Support Fund (previously called Dragons Den) but the awards will still be going ahead as normal as we have had many applications for money .

We have now organised our Christmas sleigh to collect for the Ukraine refugees, decorating it with blue and yellow bunting. This happened over Easter. Good Friday we were at Tesco St Helens, Easter Saturday we were in the Village outside the Co-op, and Easter Monday at Asda in St Helens.

The sleigh will be returned to its Christmas livery in time for Christmas

We have not yet got a final total for our Ukraine Refugee collection, but it could be in excess of £4000.00

We have already donated £6000.00 to help the Ukraine refugees.

We are having our Charter at Blundles Hill Golf Club this year on Friday 20th May. And our weekend trip to Llandudno on Friday 10th June. Last time we did that was June 2014.

I would like to thank all our helper volunteers and as we are all getting older we always need more help. Please visit our web site.

11. Barrie Rushton reported on behalf of Rainhill Railway and Heritage Society, reported the reopening of the museum after 2 years and the return of monthly programme of speakers with the next one being on 09/05/22 by the CEO of the Shakespeare Theatre Prescot. The annual trip to Burtonwood Aircraft museum is organised with a full collection of souvenirs being available to raise funds and will be on sale at future events. At the recent model railway club £200 was raised. Grateful thanks is given to the library staff who continue to monitor visitors to the carriage. A DVD is available to schools to promote. There are continuing discussions with ST Helens Council, Network Rail and the Parish Council regarding the future of the Signal box. Also we are currently in dialogue with the Parish Council regarding arrangements for Rocket 200. 1829 Rainhill Trials was an important event to happen here and we must be proud of that and celebrate accordingly.

Cllr Barker confirmed once the elections and the Jubilee celebrations have taken place discussions for the arrangements will be picked up again.

The Chair thanked the Railway & Heritage Society for keeping Rainhill's rich Railway history and heritage alive. The recent and ongoing 'Save Our Signal Box' is testament to how Rainhill Parish Council is steadfast in protecting our local Heritage.

12. Mrs S. Reeves spoke on behalf Rainhill Women's Institute. The group holds 66 members and is attracting new younger members. They meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of every month. Successful events have included Christmas Fayre in the church, Christmas Party in the Village Hall, putting up and decorating the Christmas tree in the Village Hall foyer. The WI also look after the grounds at the front of the church and are also responsible for the poppy display within the church. Most recently we have been responsible for the pillar box toppers – an Easter one at present with a Jubilee one under construction. There are trips arranged for the future and a children's Jubilee party being arranged with tickets being dropped off at the 4 schools. A very active and busy WI.  
Cllr Barker thanked the WI for all they continue to do and their hard work within the community.

13. Mr N. Thompson presented on behalf of Rainhill Town Football Club who run 4 teams. This has been the first full season since Covid with the last 2 years being a struggle. There are 160 players mainly from Rainhill. There is a meeting arranged with the Parish Council to discuss leases and facilities. Support from local businesses for sponsorship has been amazing. Recently the club has raised £350 to go towards the Ukraine transport costs. There is going to be a 50 year celebration on 3<sup>rd</sup> June at the Ex services Club. Thanks is given to the volunteers and committee members. Thankyou also to the Parish Council for your support.

- Cllr Barker thanked all groups who had attended and reported the Chairs final comments. Queen's Jubilee celebrations – Lead by Cllr. Graham Baker, plans are in place to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee Coronation. Public Open Spaces – Rainhill Parish Council continue to maintain and look for new ways to maximise the usage for 8 parks spread over 43 acres of Rainhill. The possibility of St Helens Council passing costs for grassing cutting etc. on to Rainhill Parish Council has been budgeted for although at the time we are working with estimates. Christmas Lights Switch on – Due to funding cuts from St Helens Borough Council, Rainhill Parish Council were informed of this decision late September 2021. Rainhill Parish Council agreed to pay the unbudgeted expense and are looking at a permanently planted evergreen tree to reduce future costs. The Parish Council Good Citizenship – Another successful GCA evening with 14 truly deserving recipients.

The Annual Report – The Annual Report went out to residents in March. We have had issues with delivery, Kathryn (Parish Clerk) has been in contact with the delivery company, discussions are on going. Rainhill United and Albert Fellowes Park – We continue to support and work with Rainhill United AFC. Rainhill Rockets, Rainhill Town AFC – We are supporting the installation of a new car parking area to relieve parking issues impacting residents. We are also looking at extending the lease of Holt Lane playing fields to Rainhill Rockets and Rainhill Town which enable them to gain grants and funding for various external organisations. The Village Hall Centre – Rainhill Parish Council are pleased with recent agreements to improve communications. Rainhill Parish Council are happy we were able to increase this year's funding grant to assist with the increase in utility costs. We thank you the Village Hall Committee for their ongoing work in providing a location for many community groups and we look forward to working together. British Legion – Rainhill Cenotaph – Rainhill Parish Council are pleased to announce we are waiting the installation of two flag poles at Rainhill Cenotaph. Rainhill Parish Council responded to a request from Rainhill British Legion for Flag Poles, we were able to pay for the poles including installation and gain planning permission on their behalf. Merchant Navy Day – We continue to promote Merchant Navy Day every September to remember and give thanks to our sometimes forgotten Merchant Sailors. Local Churches – Rainhill Parish Council are proud to have a varied Churches across the Parish. We maintain lines of communication and support. Local Schools – Rainhill Parish maintain contact with our Local Schools and promote inclusion with the wider community. Rainhill Parish Council have worked with Rainhill High and Tower College, creating 2x Youth Ambassadors from both schools.

14. The Chair introduced the Open Forum section:

- Non delivery of the Annual Report was raised and some deliveries were reported to contain leaflets. The Clerk reported that the Parish Council were aware of issues with the delivery and the new firm used this year had not yet been paid due to the non delivery. Copies from tomorrow will be available

in the library and next years delivery procedures will be put in place to enable closer monitoring of the delivery.

Steve Clarke drew attention to the recent issues with ASB within Rainhill and what is the best way to report it. Cllr J Tasker confirmed the recent promotion of the need to report has shown an increase in the number of reports being received leading to a greater police presence. Also confirmed the quickest way was via the Merseyside Police Contact Centre Facebook page which is immediate then either use 101 or 999 or Crimestoppers.

Cllr Stevenson confirmed a lot is happening pro-actively regarding ASB and working with the police and schools and young person's focus groups to gauge what is required. Neil Thompson confirmed there are football goals left up at AF open space that can be used.

- Steve Clarke felt the whole village needed a clean-up. Pavements required a deep clean. Cllr Stephenson confirmed there was always a form of community clean up happening. Chasing Rainbows recent half term litter picking, the clean up at the Millennium Centre and also at St Anns Churchyard. If the £400k funding that was promised was available more work in the community would be a possibility. The new bins that have appeared recently have appeared with no consultation. All the funding seems to go North of St Helens and not South.

15. Being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.15 pm.



Chair, Rainhill Parish Council  
19th April 2023