

**Rainhill Annual Parish Meeting  
19th April 2023  
Held at Rainhill Village Hall**

Present Cllrs: G Ward (Chair), I Brown, D, Greaves, D Hendrick, A Daniels, I Brown, S Rutherford, J Woodhouse, Laura Boyle Con Community Policing and 14 residents.  
Cllrs K Stevenson & J Tasker arrived 20.20 due to attending St Helens Council Meeting.

1. Cllr G Ward 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, G Barker, A V Howitt, W Williams and S Barlow.
3. Constable Laura Boyle stated the main issue in Rainhill recently has been ASB-around Warburton Hey. Any other areas experiencing ASB have been addressed – using the Cookhouse and surrounding area as an example – the offending individuals have been identified and parents spoken to.  
The Chair thanked the police for all the effort and time put into addressing the issues as the efforts have produced a positive outcome.
4. It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Meeting held on the 20th April 2022 should be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.
5. The following was provided by Chair Geoff Ward

**Challenges and Achievements**

- Library ...The proposed closure of the library came as a shock to us all as it is one of the most used libraries across the borough. It is used not only for books and computer/internet access, it is also a meeting point for residents who welcome the warmth and social contact there and which in turn improves their wellbeing. It is also an integral part in the running of the Rainhill Railway Heritage exhibition which is situated in the grounds of the library. A number of local organizations also use the facility for meetings and activities. Local primary schools also benefit from the opportunity to be able to visit during school time.

As you know the closure decision is now under review and we await the outcome. Thanks must go to our Ward Councillors- Greaves, Stevenson and Tasker and Parish Councillor Cllr Woodhouse for their tenacity and determination in challenging the Borough Council's decision to close it. Their actions are fully supported by all the Rainhill Parish Councillors.

The Parish Council continues to address residents' concerns, promote / support local initiatives and is receptive to requests of assistance in claiming for grants from outside sources.

Cllr Greaves provided an update on the recent information. St Helens Borough Councils strategy is deprivation is the foremost reason being taken into consideration and Rainhill is not deprived enough to keep the library open. Bold will be the alternative which is inaccessible. We are going to fight it again. As last time there continues to be numerous flaws with St Helens Council and as stated it was and continues not to be a done deal.

Cllr Woodhouse stated it was not just Rainhill that had a reprieve but a total of 6 libraries across the borough.

- ASB ... there has been a marked decrease in this type of behaviour since the Parish Council's "Report It" campaign which resulted in increased police patrols. A number of youths were identified resulting in a reduction of the number of incidents of this nature. Should any further ASB incidents occur it is recommended that they are reported in order to maintain Police patrols.
- Good Citizenship Awards ... Another enjoyable, successful evening when recognition was given to those residents who had "gone the extra mile" in various ways to benefit Rainhill. All were thoroughly deserved and not just residents of Rainhill.
- Football Clubs ... We continue to support our local football clubs and assist in whichever way we can in their applications for grants to improve their playing pitches and facilities. We endeavour to keep their ground charges to a minimum. This is ongoing at the moment with discussions taking place with the teams due to the charges being proposed by St Helens Council.
- Tree Plantation ... This is well under way with some areas completed and many trees being planted with more planned in conjunction with the Parish Council and Mersey Forest.
- Christmas Tree Lights switch on ... Another successful, well attended lights switch on. Thanks to St Bartholomew's choir, East Liverpool Riding for the disabled and Buttons the Shetland Pony, and local businesses who helped make this another successful and popular event.
- Annual Report ... Unfortunately, due to some roads being overlooked last year by the delivery company, this year's annual report was personally delivered by your local councillors. I hope you found it informative and enlightening as it sets out some of the achievements and challenges faced by your Parish Council in its endeavours to make Rainhill an excellent place to work, live and socialise.
- Monthly Farmers Market – This was started last year with an initiative from resident Geoff Pearson. The Parish Council has continued to support the first one of this year having taken place in April and will continue to take place once every month until September.

As in previous years, we will continue to liaise with local groups and businesses to promote Rainhill by participating with national celebrations. This year we have a welcome return to the Rainhill Gala, Rainhill Cricket Club Gala and there will be events organized for the King's Coronation. I look forward to them all. It's been an eventful year and I have one more meeting before passing the position of Chair onto Cllr Graham Barker.

6. The Clerk briefly presented the draft accounts for 2022/23 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 2022/23 was £72,799k which is made up of precept and income from pitch hire. We also reclaimed just more than £2148.00 in VAT.

Total Expenditure for 2022/23 was £73,804.93 which is just over £15,470.00 more than on the previous year. Administration remains the highest cost as this covers a multitude of expenses. Environmental Expenses were up by just nearly £3,500k, with the cleaning and repairs to the war memorial being an additional expenditure. Spending under Section 137, which covers grants and other items not allowed for under other legislation has a significant rise due to increased numbers of Good

Citizenship winners and also due to more grants being agreed for various community causes to benefit Rainhill Village.

At the end of the 2022/23 financial year the accounts show a balance of £111K this is made up of a cash balance of £50k 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 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 three years.

The Clerk asked if there were any questions. A resident asked why is a 1/5 of the expenditure Precept being given to the Village Hall and residents might not support such a large amount being given to one beneficiary. The Clerk explained this is something that has been in place for a long time prior to herself and the Councillors coming into position. Cllr Tasker explained the Parish Council wish to support the Village Hall as its an asset to Rainhill but would like to support the hall in gaining independent funding. A resident stated if the hall became more independent then more could be done with the monies to support Rainhill and other groups. Cllr Tasker stated the hall is run by volunteers and one part time paid employee but it does need to look at options of other funding. A resident stated the hall always says the room booking are full and if this is the case it should not require such a large grant. A resident stated they had enquired about joining the committee and was told as they were not a regular user of the hall they would not be able to join. A resident stated that the constitution confirms there is space for 5 members of the public to be on the committee and that these are supposed to be widely advertised but has not seen them do so.

6. Ann Davey spoke on behalf of Rainhill Civic Society reporting it had been a busy year With a number of projects and activities. Our Jubilee concert at the Ex services club was a great success we have another one planned for the Coronation in May - we have tickets if anyone would like some.
- Our Heritage group have researched the history of some of the people buried in St Anne's churchyard and also soldiers on the War Memorials allowing us to lay poppies on private and Commonwealth War Graves- if anyone knows anything about John Andrew Reed buried in St Bartholomews please get in touch.
- We are working with Marstons brewery to preserve the ancient wall paintings at the Manor Farm and we held two history days looking at Rainhill and South West Lancashire in the Middle Ages
- Our speaker meetings included Peter Elson's sinking of the Lusitania, Arthur Jennions George Stephenson's original railway maps and a quiz.
- We have been holding heritage walks on the first Sunday of the month looking at local history and finishing with some refreshments in one of our local pubs. Our last walk looking at Rainhill hospital was very popular with the second-half of this walk planned on the 15th of May. We continue to monitor local planning applications that may affect our green belt or conservation areas. We are working with local Councillors and Rainhill Railway and Heritage Society to help save our library and the trials exhibition. We are sponsoring a poster competition for the local primary schools. We planted flowers at the Pack Horse bridge and continue to maintain tubs at the village hall, Houghton Sreet and the stoops. If anyone is interested in joining us to take part in any of our activities then please contact us via e-mail or followers on Facebook.

7. Les Jackson gave a report on behalf of Rainhill Eco Group. The Garden has noticed a reduction in vandalism which is a favourable situation. The Halloween event in October was very well supported with a very successful Easter Egg hunt being another success. Wildflower seeds have been planted with an expected show in June. The garden has a Duke of Edinburgh Volunteer and Volunteers on most Saturdays. 2 plant sales are planned. Thanks were expressed to everyone for their support and also the Co-Op and Rainhill Rotary Club. The garden are always on the look out for volunteers and all are welcome.
8. Steve Clarke Chair of The Rainhill Gala reported, We're delighted to be returning this year after the 3-year break and we've been humbled by the response from the community, the encouragement and support have been amazing, and this has really spurred us on to put on what we hope will be an amazing show. Preparations are going well, and we're delighted to have some great new attractions as well as the old favourites. Our programme is coming together nicely, and we invite any local groups to submit a feature, likewise local businesses are invited to advertise with us if they so wish. As with many local volunteer run organisations, we are struggling to attract new people and since we started in 2008, our committee looks very much the same however we encourage anyone who would like to join us either as a committee member or volunteer to get in touch. This year we will be hosting what we hope would be the first Rainhill Transport festival, celebrating our transport heritage and building up to the Rocket 200 celebrations in 2029. I will finish by saying a huge thank you to the local groups and businesses who make the gala such a success. I would also like to thank the Parish and Borough Councillors and the Clerk to the Council for their help and support.
11. Chris Tigwell reported on behalf of Rainhill Railway and Heritage Society, reported this has been the first year of meetings not disrupted by Covid. There have been a range of speakers on a broad spectrum of topics reasonably well attended but no doubt down on pre-covid. It is getting harder to find speakers at reasonable rates. Otherwise our activities have been dominated by the issue of closure of the library. As well as the monthly talks we have taken an information and sales stall to various events round the village and beyond to raise awareness of the significance of Rainhill and the Rocket. The Sandstone remains used for winding are being looked at being listed. The latest news clearly marks the start of a new campaign, but we will be happy to work alongside the Parish Council in the ongoing battle.
12. Mrs S. Reeves spoke on behalf Rainhill Women's Institute. The group now holds 70 Members and meet every 4<sup>th</sup> Monday at 7pm at the Ex Services Club. We have had a variety of speakers for example Gary Hart from parliament who was excellent. One of our members told how she adopted her daughter as a tiny baby from Romania. Her beautiful daughter came with her mum to listen to her story. She gave her mum a bouquet of flowers which was very moving. We have done a variety of craft evenings including button pictures, decorating plant pots and decorating Easter hats. We have had various trips to RHS Bridgewater, Temple Newsam, Country House & Garden, M&S Museum Leeds and Barton Grange Garden Centre. We held a successful party for 100 Children to celebrate the Queens Diamond Jubilee which was supported by the CO-OP, Waterfields and Forget me not Balloons who gave food, cakes and beautiful balloon arrangements for free. We had charged £4 per ticket but because they had been so generous supporting the party and WI paid for the party bags, sundries etc we gave everyone

their money back. Not to be missed was the entertainer deciding to do musical chairs with a 100 children – Chaos!

A new cover for the post box was made for the Jubilee, which looked very impressive and the Christmas topper looked just as good 12 months later. The Christmas Fair which Edna helped organise was a success and we hope to do it again this year. We had a brilliant 40<sup>th</sup> birthday party at Blundell hill Golf Club 2 years late due to Covid, it was attended by 70 people they are always up for a party! We have been busy making crochet blankets & beanie hats. We have many more activities planned for this year and always welcome new members.

13. Rainhill Rockets & Rainhill United sent Apologies.

14. Anita Hoey Centre manager reported The 4f centre is the anchor of our community We have had numerous groups come and go in the past few years and we have still kept going especially over covid obviously when it was appropriate to do so The centre is self funded and the income from room hire just about covers the cost of running it at the moment This has been due to the energy costs which have been extremely high. Maintenance jobs have been presently put on hold till we can access some funding. Luckily there are no important jobs needing to be done at present

At the moment the groups vary from baby sensory to junior boxing to older group fitness like yoga and Zumba

I have liased with the village hall and millennium to form a network and I do suggest those venues when we can't accommodate especially children's parties

I am hoping the centre will become more appealing to children's groups in the daytime as we offer fab facilities we are on Facebook!!!

At the moment we are concentrating on going forward steadily and we are looking towards the future and what we can inclusively offer the community

Long live the 4f !!!!!

15. Rainhill Rotary sent their apologies and provided the following report- Rotary Club of Rainhill wants to say a big thank you to all the volunteers and sponsors who made the Beer Festival such a great success last October. Also thanks to the members of the public who have supported the charitable fundraising last year, with over £40,000 now available for good causes locally, nationally and internationally.

16. Mr N. Thompson sent his apologies for not being able to attend and sent the following report-

We still need to obtain a similar agreement as Rainhill Rockets over the changing rooms and pitches at Holt Lane.

As discussed last year we will not be able to attract funding without some kind of permanent base as the only adult football club in Rainhill.

We have still the only four adult football teams in Rainhill playing up to the first step of the football league pyramid.

We have reached 5 semi finals up to now this year and already in one final away this Saturday at Teyley walkers club Warrington 2pm Kick Off.

The club would like to thank the parish for its support but we both need to up our game to be able to secure adult football in Rainhill.

We have raised £350 this year for a very good cause after the sad passing of a young ex player Jack Ralphson 24 years old.

Cllr Ward thanked all groups who had attended and for all their efforts for Rainhill.

17. The Chair introduced the Open Forum section:  
The Clerk was asked if apologies had been received from the Village Hall representatives for not attending. The Clerk gave confirmation no apologies had been received.  
The Civic society raised the issue of the messy verge at the stoops and how difficult it was to receive any response from St Helens Council. The Civic would like to adopt the verge. Cllr Tasker confirmed he would follow it up.

Steve Clarke drew attention to the traffic issues within Rainhill – the one way into Exchange Place and the service road along Warrington road in front of the shops before the lights and Skew Bridge. All correspondence with St Helens Council seems to fall on deaf ears. Pavements are an issue and the street cleaner is never seen. As a resident Steve would like to thank all of the volunteers that go out on a Sunday morning to collect the rubbish left on the streets.

18. Being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.40 pm.



Chair, Rainhill Parish Council  
17th April 2024