

PARISH COUNCIL VILLAGE ASSEMBLY
Minutes and Action Points

Date / Time: 16th April 2025, 8.00pm

Location: Rushden Village Hall

Councillors Present: Jenny Barlow (JB) – Chair, Steve Pettyfer (SP), Sue Lewis (SL)

In attendance: Mark SG Hopley (MSGH) - Clerk, Steve Jarvis (District and County Councillor) & 1 member of the Parish

Item	Description	Status / Action
1	To confirm the Minutes of Rushden Parish Assembly meeting held on 17th April 2024 - Minutes were <i>carried unanimously</i> as a true and accurate record of the proceedings. No matters arising, other than those on the agenda. Minutes were signed by the Chair. - Item to be carried forward was the suggestion by Karen Pettyfer that a village flyer be produced that reminded residents what organisations such as the Rushden Manor Trust, the Village Hall Committee, the Church PCC committee and even the Parish Council, do for their local community. It should also explain how these organisations are funded and what is required each year to keep them viable. This should also be posted to the website for information. - MH will organize the same for Wallington and add these to the Parish Council website for information. - The speed camera has been moved in Mill End and is probably due to be moved again fairly shortly. - Residents in Mill End need to come forward as volunteers if they would like to set up a speed watch in Mill End. - A successful Village cleanup was carried out in 2024. - Some progress was made by following up with the pond charities about what could or could not be achieved.	KP MH
2	Report from the Parish Councillors on the years activities - The PC chair alternates between Rushden and Wallington and this year was Rushden's turn. The PC had a new chair: Jenny Barlow. Other members for Rushden are Steve Pettyfer and Sue Lewis, and for Wallington Graham Lamb and Kate Heath. - The Parish Council domain name has been changed to an official ".gov.uk" identity, which has only recently been made available for Parish Councils, along with funding for making the change. Thanks to our clerks for arranging the switchover. The previous PC email addresses continue to be forwarded to our inboxes. - This year's Internal Audit was carried out by Andy Nunn for the first time. Andy has kindly taken over from Ann Warner who was the Parish Council's independent volunteer auditor for many years. The Parish Council expressed its thanks to Ann for all her years of audit service. - There is an ongoing proposal to build a large solar farm in the River Beane valley beyond Rushden, and a related consultation has been taking place. A local protest group contacted the PC, and we agreed to pass on their contact details,	

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	along with information about the proposal, so that Wallington residents can form their own views and object or support as they wish. We did not feel it was appropriate for the PC to respond to the consultation because it is not a statutory consultee, and various councillors had been contacted by residents supporting both sides of the debate. - As part of a widespread Community Governance Review, North Herts Council has put forward a proposal to change the boundaries of the RWPC area to include the whole of Redhill. Currently the Wallington side of the road is split, being mostly in Wallington with a tiny minority of houses in Rushden administrative parishes, while the Sandon side of the road is in Sandon PC area. The PC debated this subject, but we decided not to propose it ourselves because there did not seem to be a drive from Redhill residents to make a change. Now that NHC have proposed it, we would of course accept the change if the consultation favours putting it into place. - Following the tragic discovery of the late Victoria Greenwood near Wallington in November 2023 we introduced a PC Safeguarding Awareness Policy, raising awareness of violence against women and children, and signposting to relevant organisations via noticeboards and our website. Updated posters are displayed in Rushden and Wallington, and on the PC website, after every PC meeting. - Community Drivesafe Update: The Hertfordshire Drivesafe Scheme has changed its requirements. 10 signatures are needed to support taking part in the Scheme, and only 5 volunteers are now needed. They have to be trained in the operation of the equipment. Signatures and volunteers can come from across the Parish. We plan to communicate this across Wallington and Rushden and report back on potential engagement. - Housing Assessment Survey – Update. We hosted a guest speaker from Community Development Action (CDA) Herts in 2022, and we planned to ask him back after the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, when it would be appropriate to revisit the services that they provide in relation to Affordable Housing Needs. The invitation was extended during 2024. Unfortunately, funding constraints mean that the organisation now has to focus on areas with larger development opportunities and will not be able to include Wallington after all.	
3	Report from the District and County Councillor. - Steve Jarvis gave an update on the pothole situation and the process for getting the repairs done and timelines (see discussion below). - SJ gave an update on the proposal to convert to a unitary authority. - SJ got the Council’s flood risk management people to visit Mill End to address the issue of the flooding that occurs, as it did last Autumn (2024). - SJ stated that they then need to engage with the Environment Agency to address issues with the river and culverts causing flooding. - SP thanked SJ for getting the water cleared in the emergency but pointed out that the culverts in Redhill are great, but they are just built 6 inches too high above the road.	

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	- The new waste collection schedule, including the new waste bin, is due to commence in August 2025 and new bins will be delivered from May. - SJ gave a summary of the changes proposed under the NHDC Community Governance Review 2025 which involved potential changes to election dates and parish boundaries, as well as the minimum number of parish councillors. SJ encouraged parishioners to respond to the review otherwise decisions may be made that are not welcomed. - SJ did reiterate that there were no proposed changes to arrangements for parish councils.	
4	- SP's pothole walk and talk meeting with Ringway and the Council proved unfruitful and was very disappointing in that it achieved very little action. - All residents will need to continue to report all potholes in order to get them actioned. This can be done online by following the link below https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/report-a-problem/report-a-street-light-or-pothole.aspx - Steve Jarvis' understanding is that the preparation for surface dressing will take place in the Summer of 2025 and then the tar and chippings are planned to be done in the next council financial year ie sometime between April 2026 and March 2027.	
5	There was a report from the Rushden Manor Trustees that the Chair read out at the meeting. The report is attached to these minutes below.	
6	- Parish Councilors reported back on the Cumberlow Green Lightrock Solar Farm presentation that was held in Rushden Village Hall recently and reflected that the presentation, although very slick, did not reflect the reality of what would be delivered. There would be noise, and it would be visible, so the Parish Council agreed that a close, watchful eye be kept on the planning process. - Residents should be aware that their opinion matters and if there is an opportunity to comment on the plans then they should take every opportunity to do so.	
7	- It was noted that the Luton Airport expansion programme had been approved. - The Parish Council keep a watching brief over the plans for both Luton and Stanstead airports and are copied into RELAS communications as well as directly through NHDC and NHC.	
8	Finance: - MSGH presented the accounts to the year-end 31st March 2025. - The unaudited accounts show a surplus of £948, which is a budgeted surplus of £661 and an unbudgeted surplus of £287 (made up of £156 bank interest and £131 VAT recovery)	
9	Confirm date of next meeting and any items to be included on that agenda. Next PC Meeting due on 15th May 2025	
	The Chair closed the meeting at 9.00pm	

Report from Rushden Manor for Parish Assembly 2025

Thank you for the information which had been passed on to you from the Parish Council about the possibility of applying for grants for ponds.

Can we just reiterate please as we stated at the last Council meeting, that the ponds are not part of the Trust's land, and we do not have responsibility for them.

In addition, there had been some thoughts a while ago about doing something with the ponds, but we could not organise this through the Trust, because our insurance would not cover work on the ponds as they are not our land.

Just in terms of general interest, in looking at the criteria for applying for a grant which you sent through, I am not sure if any application could meet the criteria; so for example in terms of the depth of the pond which is required, there are periods when the pond is not really a pond, and dries up completely, so I'm not sure if any application was ever made whether this could be a problem? With the very welcome support of local residents.

We would however be happy to consider any proposals for access to the ponds if any other group of people wished to look at carrying out work on the ponds to improve them from environmental perspectives.

We continue to take our responsibilities seriously about maintaining the greens for the use and pleasure of local residents.

In terms of work on Trust land over the last year, we have carried out some fairly major clearing of overgrown areas on the green by the village hall with the support and help of a number of local residents, for which the trustees are very grateful. We have also been clearing some of the scrub at Southern Green. There has also been a good deal of work carried out at Shaw Green.

We are of course happy to provide any more information which may be of value to the Council.

Brian and Chip

16/4/25