

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes and Action Points

Date / Time:	Thursday 19 th September 2024, 8.00pm
Location:	Rushden Village Hall
Councillors Present:	Jenny Barlow (JB) – CHAIR, Steve Pettyfer (SP), Graham Lamb (GL), Sue Lewis (SL)
In attendance:	Mark SG Hopley (MSGH) - Clerk, Michelle Hopley (MH), 10 members of the public

Item	Description	Status / Action
24/042	<p>To receive and accept apologies for absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kate Heath (Parish Councillor) and Steve Jarvis (District and County Councillor). 	-
24/043	<p>Declarations of interest and dispensations</p> <p>a) To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. <p>b) To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. <p>c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NA. 	-
24/044	<p>To confirm the Minutes of Rushden and Wallington Parish Council and Annual meeting held on Thursday 23rd May 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>To confirm the Minutes of Rushden and Wallington Extraordinary Parish Council Planning meeting held on Thursday 13th June 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	-
24/045	<p>Report from the District and County Councillor</p> <p>(Written Report by Steve Jarvis was relayed at the meeting.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Herts Council has awarded the contract for recycling and waste to Veolia who will take over from Urbaser in April. Changes to collections are to be introduced from August or September. The new arrangements are confirmed to be collection of glass, cans and plastics (including soft plastics) one week, paper and cardboard the next week and non-recyclable waste the third week. Food waste will continue to be collected weekly and garden waste (from those who pay for the service) every two weeks. According to the NHDC website this is due to start in May 2025. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Herts Lynx bus service was originally funded until September 2025, but that has now been extended until December 2026. The service continues to need a subsidy (and probably always will) so a source for this will need to be identified after December 2026, but there is now much more time to do this. The service will also be operated by the council itself. There are several road resurfacing works coming up in Wallington. Patching will be done from the A507 to the Lodge next week, with the section through the village done in early December. This is likely to be followed up by surface dressing next summer. The Mill End Speed Indicator has been moved and will identify the speed of cars heading towards Cumberlow Farm. The A507 weight limit is now in force, although some changes to signage are still outstanding. Grass cutting issues over the Summer months. There are a few locations where SJ has been able to get additional "visibility" cuts at junctions and bends. He has been told that extra cuts and earlier cuts are being looked at for next year since it seems likely that the warmer and wetter climate will continue to make the grass grow more than it once did. There was a question regarding the 'pothole' on Bennetts Lane in Rushden. Steve Pettyfer will email Steve Jarvis directly about this. 	SP/SJ
24/046	<p>Energy Advice Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a presentation by Tom Hogan, energy champion of Citizens Advice on Home Energy improvements and alternative energy technology. 	-
24/047	<p>NHDC – 'Have your say' on local Parish arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHDC have opened up an online survey called 'Have your say' which is a Community Governance Review (CGR). This asks residents throughout North Herts, about their views on current parish arrangements. Parishioners can put forward suggestions such as creation or naming of a Parish, alteration of Parish boundaries, changes to the number of Councillors elected, the possible merger of Parishes, electoral arrangements etc. The deadline for submitting and feedback or comments is the 7th October 2024. The Parish Council agreed that no comments were required to be submitted on behalf of the Parish Council, but residents were advised that information about the survey could be found on the Parish Council website if they wanted to submit their own personal views to NHDC. 	-
24/048	<p>Wallington Footpath 22 Update (FP22)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GL gave an update on the issues regarding FP22. However, the unofficial footpath has now been blocked off with some 'warning – hazard' tape erected by NHDC / HCC as the path has not been maintained for a couple of years and is now dangerous. 	-

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new issue has arisen in that residents who have the original FP22 going through their gardens have been told by NHDC / HCC that they may be liable should any member of the public injure themselves walking on the original footpath route, despite the fact that the original route is now blocked off by driveways and garden fences. GL made the point that the Parish Council is not responsible for footpaths and therefore should not be a decision making party in this matter. It is the Highways Authority who are ultimately responsible and should be made to make a decision. HCC assure GL that they are 'working on it'. 	
24/049	<p>Wallington Tree Update & Approval of Expenditure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KH proposed that we should go ahead with some of the longer-term tree work this winter, to try and avoid potentially damaging failures. There is £900 in the budget this year for tree works but KH believes the cost could be as much as £1,500. MSGH reminded the Parish Council that expenditure on the work to Wallington Trees has, in previous years, been below budget, so there are funds in the reserves if required. KH will gather quotes for the work, but would ask the Parish Council to approve this potential overspend in principle, until firm quotes have been received. The Parish Councillors will then be informed of the cost and be asked to approve or reject the works. The Parish Council approved this proposal. 	KH
24/050	<p>Garrett's Field, Rushden</p> <p>i) Access Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vicky Hodge had sent Steve Pettyfer some old papers regarding the land that was sold off into 27 parcels of land on the outskirts of Rushden, opposite Mill End Nursery. Correspondence from David Hodge's solicitor states that the Garretts have no objection to erecting a four foot high fence around the land but more importantly the letter states that the Garretts only have a right of access over the bridlepath, which the Hodges still own, to erect and maintain said fence. If this is the case then the 27 parcels of land have no right of access to each parcel of land from the road as the Hodge's still own that strip of land. This would make it difficult for the parcels of land to be developed for housing. <i>Post Meeting Note:</i> After the Parish Council meeting HM Land Registry documents were discovered that highlight that access at any time of day or night for any purpose had been granted at the time of the original sale, thereby overruling the letter that Vicky Hodge discovered. <p>ii) Maintenance of Footpaths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was some confusion as to who had previously cut the footpath and hedges by the Garretts field, and who is responsible for cuts in the future. It is believed that Highways were responsible for the roadside cuts and that 	-

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	<p>the individual landowners for the field side.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents were advised to report lack of cutting of grass verges and hedgerows to NHDC. The phone number can be found on the Parish Council website on the 'About Us' page. 	
24/051	<p>Rushden Footpath Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Roper has recorded all the footpaths around Rushden and has made representation to NHDC / HCC to ensure that the footpaths are all registered and therefore maintained. We are apparently 11th in the queue to be reviewed. 	SJ
24/052	<p>Safeguarding awareness and communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KH sent through an updated poster for displaying around the villages and on the website to highlight how victims can contact various bodies in order to help them with any safeguarding issues they may be facing. SL agreed to put up the posters around Rushden. 	SL
24/053	<p>Planning, including an update on planning applications being added to the PC Website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All recent applications appear to have been granted, however, the Moonshine application was approved but with many of the restrictions that the Parish Council had requested. There are currently 2 ongoing applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24/01633/FPH: Bounds Cross, Mill End, Rushden - raising of garage roof height. 24/01729/FPH, 24/01730/FPH: Blarney Hollow – raising of the existing chimney stack. No objections were raised to the current applications by the Councillors or Parishioners. 	-
24/054	<p>Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MSGH updated the PC on progress from switching from Barclays Bank to Lloyds Bank. Our application has been submitted and we are waiting to hear what the changeover date will be. All financial protocols that we had with Barclays will be replicated with Lloyds but there are additional benefits such as mobile banking that Barclays could not offer us. MSGH presented the accounts to 31st August 2024, showing that we are currently £10.70 under budget and on track for the remainder of the year, dependent upon the cost of the Wallington Tree work as discussed previously. Draft Budget for 2025-26: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflation is assumed to be 2%. This adds £37 to our budget. Due to other savings such as PC insurance, dog bin emptying costs, less village hall meetings etc. we are able to keep our precept request at the same level as the last 2 years at £4,850. 	-

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Our contingency is £311 which is 6% of our total budget. This is still below the desired contingency of 10% but is higher than in previous years.	
24/055	<p>Confirm date of next meeting and any items to be included on that agenda.</p> <p>Upcoming PC Meeting dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Thursday 23rd January 2025 – Parish Council Meeting● Tuesday 15th April 2025 – Wallington Parish Assembly● Wednesday 16th April 2025 – Rushden Parish Assembly● Thursday 15th May 2025 – Parish Council AGM and PC Meeting● Thursday 18th September 2025 - Parish Council Meeting● <i>Thursday 22nd January 2026 – Parish Council Meeting - TBC</i>	-
	The Chair closed the meeting at 9.35pm	