

**MINUTES OF ROWTON PARISH COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING**  
**MONDAY 15 JANUARY 2024 at 7.00pm**  
**held at Rowton Methodist Church, Moor Lane, Rowton**

Present: Councillors            Howard Hopwood  
   Paul Shannon  
   Melanie Fildes  
   Glenys Harrison  
   Michael Smythe

In attendance Clerk            Christine Davies  
   3 Members of the Public

**1 Apologies**

CWaC Councillor Stuart Parker (Unwell)

**2 Declaration of Interest**

None

**3 To approve the Minutes of the last meeting held on 13 November 2023**

**01/2024 Resolved:** The minutes were signed as a true and correct record by the Chair, Cllr Howard Hopwood.

**4 Matters Arising**

Website: Website now has a security certificate and a new CIL report section in the Governance Information drop down box.

**5 Public Participation**

Two residents, who said they were also representative of other villagers, expressed their disappointment at the unlit Christmas Tree on the Green over the festive period. They offered suggestions of using electricity supply from an adjoining property to the Green or perhaps liaising with Rowton Hall Hotel. Cllrs Hopwood and Smythe both agreed that this situation needs to be resolved and that it will be discussed in agenda item 10. The residents also wish to know what had happened to the unused glühwein and mince-pies and Cllr Harrison replied that they were being stored in a cupboard and freezer respectively. On another issue they were concerned about the rise in the Precept. Cllr Hopwood advised that it had actually gone down last year but would take their concerns into consideration. The other resident wished to know about the Council's actions regarding the potential for housing development at Manor Farm. Cllr Hopwood advised that a joint letter from the Parishes of Rowton, Christleton, Great Boughton, Huntington and Waverton has been sent to the Head of Planning expressing objection to any such potential planning application. In response the Head of Planning has confirmed that this letter has been sent to their Planning Policy team as they move forward with a new Local Plan. Copies of the letter of objection and response will be attached to these minutes for information. The resident also enquired about volunteering for the Village Green Volunteer Group and gave his contact details to Cllr Paul Shannon. He also enquired if there was a local Neighbourhood Watch

group. Cllr Hopwood said there was a local Rowton Support WhatsApp Group to which he is very welcome to join.

## 6 Councillor Vacancy

To confirm Casual Vacancy notice displayed on noticeboards and website. If no election is called, then the Parish Council can fill the vacancy by co-option. The Parish Council wished to express its thanks and gratitude to retiring ex-councillor Bob Knight for his valued contribution to the Parish Council – he will be much missed!

## 7 Highways

Boulders on grass verges: Selected properties in Rowton Lane, Claypits Lane and Greenfields Lane have been reported to CWaC for causing obstruction on the highway. Action: Clerk to follow-up

Horse & Rider Sign Moor Lane: Owner has cut back hedge but says sign is incorrectly placed by Highways. Highways have been notified and asked to investigate.

Blocked drainage ditch alongside short Rowton Lane: Action: Clerk to report to CWaC.

## 8 Planning

a) No Planning Applications have been received since last meeting. Planning Decisions received: 23/00265/FUL – Chestnut Cottage, Rowton Lane: Change of use of residential garage into commercial office accommodation and erection of new garden shed: Approved.

b) Potential Neighbourhood Plan with Waverton: Cllr Shannon reported that Waverton Parish Council are not interested in formulating a Neighbourhood Plan as the bulk of the surrounding land is owned by the Grosvenor Estate. They instead are looking at creating a Community Plan. Discussion took place and it was agreed to approach Christleton Parish Council to request inclusion in their Neighbourhood Plan, **02/2024 Resolved:** Request to be made to Christleton Parish Council for consideration of Rowton Parish Council to join their Neighbourhood Plan.

## 9 Finance

a) **03/2024 Resolved:** The following payments were approved:-

Payee	Amount	Statute Power
CM Davies - unpaid contractual hours, Nov Sal inc backdated pay	1276.97	LGA 1972 Section 112
CM Davies - November Expenses	34.98	LGA 1972 Section 111
Penny Lane Accountants - Payroll (November)	5.00	LGA 1972 Section 111
Walkers Nurseries re Xmas Tree	225.60	LGA 1972 Section 111
CM Davies re Thank You presents re Carols on the Green	39.40	LGA 1972 Section 111
Amazon – weatherproof box (MJ Smythe)	32.09	LGA 1972 Section 111
Glenys Harrison – refreshments Carols on Green	27.22	LGA 1972 Section 111
CM Davies - December Salary	303.98	LGA 1972 Section 112
Boroughbridge Marina Ltd – box (M J Smythe)	19.99	LGA 1972 Section 111
CM Davies - December expenses	22.62	LGA 1972 Section 111
Penny Lane Accountants - December Payroll	5.00	LGA 1972 Section 111
Curry's re Laptop (Mrs C Davies)	45.00	LGA 1972 Section 111

- b) Bank Balance as at 05/01/2024 = £8786.49.
- c) Cllr Smythe signed and dated the electronic cash book reconciliation sheet
- d) Additional Bank Signatory:  
**04/2024 Resolved:** Cllr Michael Smythe to be added as new signatory.
- e) To apply for NatWest Instant Access Business Reserve Account:  
**05/2024 Resolved:** That the Parish Council apply for an instant access Business Reserve Account.
- f) S106 Expenditure: Current proposals aim to improve walking routes to the schools in Christleton, including painting a white line on Rowton Bridge Road to indicate pedestrian priority.  
**06/2024 Resolved:** That the Parish Council has no further comment to make.
- g) Parish Precept for 2024/25: The Clerk presented a draft Budget for discussion. After much deliberation and considering the current rate of inflation it was agreed to increase the Precept by approximately 5%.  
**07/2024 Resolved:** That the Parish Council request a Precept of £6540.

Going forward it was suggested that a separate Finance Working Group be set up to look at possible savings in the annual running costs. Cllr Smythe agreed to chair it and arrange a meeting in February.

## 10 Village Green

- a) Weatherproof Storage Box: Request received from local resident for box to be painted. Cllr Fildes confirmed that the black paint has been purchased and is awaiting suitable weather conditions for the box to be painted.
- b) Lighting of the Christmas Tree: Various suggestions were put forward to resolve this issue, however, due to time restraints it was agreed that this be discussed in full at the next meeting.

## 11 Community Bench

The Canal and River Trust (CRT) confirmed that they would honour an installation price of £2400 which includes the cost of purchasing the bench, installation, service checks and maintenance for a set period of four years. The CIL payment of £1160.25 and Neighbourhood Pride Funding amount of £1632.45 will go towards this cost.  
**08/2024 Resolved:** That the Parish Council approve the cost of £2400 and request CRT to proceed with the installation.

## 12 Laptop

Clerk reported she has been experiencing performance issues with the Parish Council owned laptop (purchased 2020). It has been taken to Curry's for a "health check" at a cost of £45. This has resulted in an improvement in the performance; however, it continues to experience intermittent problems with connecting to Wi-Fi. Cllr Michael Smythe offered to look over the laptop to identify any problems.

## 13 Items for Consideration

Hosting of website to be discussed at next meeting

**14 General Correspondence**

Clerks & Councils Direct – January 2024 issue

The Clerk Magazine – January 2024 Issue

**15 Date of Next Meeting – Monday 11 March 2024 at 7.00pm**