

Rowde Annual Village Meeting

Thursday 19th May 2021

7.00pm,

Rowdefield Farm

Attenders: 13 online (zoom)
2 people (in person)
From Parish Council: 10 + Clerk
Presenting reports: 4

Welcome:

Pat Bryant introduced the meeting. It was noted that the Parish Council has lots of work to do, including the asset transfer of land from Wiltshire Council (Silverlands Play area).

The biggest success of the Parish Council for the last year has been running the Covid support group for the village.

1. Agree the minutes of the Annual Village Meeting of 23rd May 2019.

Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

2. Presentation of the Parish Council Accounts for 2020-21. The accounts were presented to the village meeting. These had been previously presented in draft form at the Parish Council meeting on 22nd April 2021. The accounts have been examined by the internal auditor (John Davis & Co Accountants Ltd, Chippenham) and they are ready to be submitted to the external auditor.

Rowde Parish Council has £45,978.58 in its bank accounts on 31st March 2021.

The following amounts have been ring fenced.

Ring fenced	
Large playing	
field	£5,080.97
Allotments	£758.70
P.I.G.S grant	£67.92
Jubilee Celebration	
Fund	£116.57

Solar Farm Community payment	£538.64
VE day celebration (redundant village fete money)	£1,920.08
Community Infrastructure Levy (C.I.L)	£8,150.34
Total ringfenced:	£16,633.22
Available funds:	<u>£29,345.36</u>

Financial Analysis of Accounts 2020-21

Income for 2020-21 was £50, 0039, as compared to £41,735 for 2019-20

The positive variance is due in the main to a £8,150 Community Infrastructure Levy (C.I.L) payment received from the Malthouse Farm development. There was also a slight increase in the amount of the precept received in 2020-21 from the previous year (+£2,898).

Total expenditure in 2020-21 was £32,152, compared with £49, 115 in the previous year (inc VAT), a difference of £16, 963. In the previous year, there were costs to demolish the pavilion (-£7,945), expenses to create the PC shed (-£2463), money spent on an extensive village clean up including siding out of the pavements (-£3186). Other savings were made in 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic and less expenditure on room hire, lock down periods where litter collectors did not work and less village clean-up work taking place.

Future expenditure

A new grounds maintenance contract has been negotiated for the next two years. There are ongoing and increasing costs with emptying the public bins around the village.

The project to create a footpath in Tanis is still live. The Parish Council has committed to contributing 25% (of £6,000) of the design costs of the project. The Community Area Transport Group (CATG) has proposed that the project will be submitted for a substantive funding bid in the summer 2021. It has been postponed due to the pandemic.

The Parish Council has applied for an asset transfer of the play area at Silverlands Road. This will come with s. 106 funding. However, the parish will be

responsible for the ongoing maintenance and safety work, plus grass cutting of the area.

3. Annual Reports – Village Groups

Parish Council update – Pat Bryant

A report of the Parish Council's activities over the year was discussed at the meeting and is attached to these minutes.

Friends and Family of HfT – Furlong Close

Trish Gange, a parent of a resident of HfT and a member of the Friends and Family support group, thanked the community in Rowde for their support since the announcement that HfT was to close its site at Furlong Close. Some of the residents are still distressed about the news and are becoming unwell. HfT has given notice to Wiltshire Council, which expires this month. HfT has agreed to lease the site for up to two years. There are restarting the day services, and the 'sow and grow' project.

Antonia Field spoke as the Chair of the Family and Friends group. A new care provider will be put into Furlong Close for two years. Antonia noted that this does not mean that there is a 2-year reprieve. There are plans to sell the site eventually. The Friends group view this as an emptying process. Wiltshire Councillors have expressed support, but it still appears to be the intention to close the site in the long term. This is the policy as far as officers of the Council stand. It was noted that there is nothing to suggest it is any different.

It was reinforced that Furlong Close is not an isolated community. It is much loved and integrated, and its residents are at the heart of Rowde.

Sue King spoke as a mother of a resident. Sue spoke about how happy her son is at Furlong Close and how he wants to stay there. Her son loves going to Church. The Friends and Family are hoping and praying that they can save Furlong Close.

Pat Bryant responded there was very little practical help that the Parish Council could give. It was suggested that the Parish Council could try to make the hall at Furlong Close, an asset of community value on the hall. This might impose restrictions on who the land could be sold onto. The Friends and Family Group thought that it was an idea worth investigating.

St Matthew's Church – Rev Ruth Schofield

Annual Report to Parish Council from St Matthew's Church – May 2021

“Throughout 2020, the church has continued to serve the village. From March to July, we had to stop meeting in church for worship, but we held services over zoom. Members of the church joined the Rowde Village coronavirus support group, collecting shopping and prescriptions for those in need.

We’ve posted a Thought for the Day on our Churches Facebook page, which has been read by many people who aren’t regular worshippers, and we’ve also filmed services that were watched on YouTube. At Christmas we filmed a Carol service which had over 170 views online. We also filmed a service for All Souls, and another for Remembrance, which was seen on YouTube 62 times. We also had an online Christingle service, and a live nativity outdoors in the Churchyard, with donkeys from the Rowdey Cow. Throughout the year we held funerals in the church, in the graveyard and in the crematorium.

We’ve kept in touch by phone and by emailed newsletters. We also posted prayers and readings in the churchyard, suitable for the season of the year, to help people to take a moment to reflect as they take their daily exercise. As far as possible we’ve kept the church open for prayer, and also open for weddings and baptisms – we held one wedding in September last year. We continue to maintain the churchyard, and we’re very grateful to the parish council for their help in keeping the clock maintained. As soon as we could, our bellringers started ringing again, and we’ve marked key moments in the year with bellringing. We marked Prince Philip’s death, the 75th anniversary of VE Day and other moments by holding prayer services, and we continue to pray both for the village and for the nation.

The church has continued to support the school through the pandemic – I’m pleased to work with others from the village on the Academy Council, both supporting and challenging senior leaders in the school.

If you know of anyone in the village who would like support, a chat or a prayer, please get in touch”.

Rowde Primary School - Mr Jon Edy-Berry

The school was supportive of the recent HfT protest.

There was an update on the situation with the school swimming pool. The pool was vandalised in the summer of 2020, causing over £8k worth of damage. The Acorn multi-academy Trust has said that the pool is costing money which could be spent on education and the school will have to look at whether it is still viable.

The pool no longer meets Key Stage 2 swimming lesson requirements.

There is an ongoing parent consultation taking place asking views on whether the swimming pool should be retained by the school. It is agreed that views should be sought from the wider community.

A question was asked about how much it costs to maintain the pool for a year. Mr Edy-Berry said that he would share the maintenance figures.

It was noted, by a Parish Councillor, that there was planning permission to put a roof over the pool. This permission would have elapsed now, but the paperwork could be used again to make a new application.

It was agreed that a working group would look at repair costs, overall ongoing maintenance costs, looking at improving the pool to meet the requirements for KS2 teaching and the lapsed planning application to put a roof over the pool.

Mr Edy-Berry emphasised the importance of the school and community working together.

Rowde Village News – Julie Baker

The Rowde Village News is now a bi-monthly publication. The decision to produce an issue once every two months was down to cost and the huge amount of volunteer time that it takes to produce each issue.

A request was made for donations last year to keep the magazine afloat. Lots of people came forward with donations. The bi-monthly issues can now be maintained through regular advertisers.

The magazine has £825 in its bank account. It costs £399 to publish every two months. It is ticking over, as long as the advertisers continue to contribute.

Thanks were given to all of the distributors.

Laura Mayes – Councillor for Bromham, Rowde & Roundway

Cllr Mayes was elected in the election on 7th May, as the Councillor for the newly formed ward of Bromham, Rowde & Roundway'.

Cllr Mayes has been attending Rowde Parish Council meetings on and off for two years, so is up to speed with local issues.

Cllr Mayes gave an update on the current situation with HfT. The last meeting that was held with families of the residents was on 29th April. Wiltshire Council is looking for a new provider to take over care on the site. Wiltshire Council pays for the residents' care but does not provide care itself.

It was noted that Richard Clewer is now the Leader of Wiltshire Council. Laura Mayes is his Deputy Leader.

J Dalley met with Cllr Mayes at Silverwood School on 18th May to discuss traffic issues around the proposed expansion of the school.

A question was asked about when the new election for the role of the Police & Crime Commissioner will be held. The election will be on 18th August. It was noted that the cost for this re-election will be borne by central government and not Wiltshire specifically.

A Councillor noted a recent consultation on the proposed expansion of the number of pupils who will be able to attend Silverwood School and asked about the impact that this increase will have on local traffic into the village. Silverwood School (formerly Rowdeford) was chosen over two other special schools in the area to be expanded due to its central location in the county.

It was noted that Rosie Berry is working with the traffic management group for the expansion of the school.

The traffic will be made up of minibuses and taxis as well as individual cars. They will not all be transporting one child only.

National Grid – V.I.P project

“Rowde Parish Council – Going underground in Devizes update.

National Grid is making good progress as it forms its plans to remove up to 13 pylons and around 4.5km of overhead electricity line on Roundway Hill. Putting the electricity cables underground will significantly enhance the landscape and views north of Devizes.

In April 2021, surveys began just south of Roundway Down, about 2km north of Devizes and are expected to be completed by the end of the month. These surveys don't mean construction has begun. There's lots still to do and National Grid still need to get planning permission from Wiltshire Council before work can start. All being well, they are aiming to start construction in 2023 and the people of Rowde and neighbouring parishes can look forward to a pylon free skyline on Roundway Hill from 2024”.

4. Looking Forward

Parish Council Discussion on level of precept to set 2021-2022

- The Parish Council's role is to manage the precept, which is collected in tax locally and passed to us by Wiltshire Council. The precept is set every year in January. Budget papers were supplied to the Parish Council in January. These outlined last year's expenditure figures, the current year's expected expenditure and the forecast for the coming year.

The tax base for the year 2021-22 has decreased. This means that if the parish Council wished to receive the same amount in precept money, it would equate to an increase in payments made by residents.

It was agreed that due to the difficulties experienced this year as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic that the Parish Council would not seek to increase payments made by residents.

The rate payable by residents for 2021-22 remains the same as in 2020-21 (£37,644.93). However, it has meant that the Parish received slightly less in their precept due to the tax base changes.

Financial challenges for 2021-22, will be the asset transfer of Silverlands Play area and land adjacent to Reed Place. The continued pressure of supplying and emptying waste bins around the village. The creation of a footpath for Tanis at the entrance to Conscience Lane.

6. Question Time

A question was asked about who the grounds maintenance contractor now is for the village. Their work was commended.

There is concern that the grass cutting on Rowde Court Road has not left the area very tidy. This work is contracted by Wiltshire Council.

Thank you to everyone who presented at the meeting and to everyone who attended.

Signed:

Date:

Chairman of Rowde Parish Council