



## RAYNE PARISH COUNCIL

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### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD WEDNESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023

#### **Present:**

**Parish Councillors:** Ann Hooks (Chair), Mike Eldred (Vice-Chair), Tom Agutter, Jan Rickwood, Martyn Stringer, Kimberley Davies, Paul Willis

District Councillor Paul Euesden

50 members of the public in attendance

Mike welcomed everyone and handed over to:

#### **Welcome and Introduction - Chair**

The Chairman, Cllr Ann Hooks, welcomed all to the meeting and thanked everyone for taking an interest in the evening. She expressed how privileged she felt to act as Chair and always strived to improve the village and do the best for Rayne. She reflected on the last year – the Jubilee weekend, sadly mourning the passing of our queen – and is looking forward to the coronation weekend. The celebrations for this are somewhat low key but just as important.

Finances – increased precept 7.8 increase equates to 37p a month. This increase was not taken lightly, but increased in expenses and decrease in funding needed to be absorbed. We have projects in the pipeline for this year – IT equipment and services. Precept grants awarded were £1,000 to Focus magazine. £993 to the village hall to allow the toilets to be opened during the school holidays and £81 for the defibrillator which we are pleased to be able to continue supporting.

Planning - this continues to be monitored. There are 3 being looked into at present – Brook Green, 79 retirement houses and the Solar Farm at Drapers Farm.

Communication – we are here for the parishioners. We are currently working on launching a new website which will be more user friendly. The Duty councillor scheme is still running so if you need help or support or just want to chat, come along on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of month at booking hall café.

Volunteers make the village great, church, councillors, Ian Whiteside, Roger Jiggins, Paul King, neighbourhood watch, speed watch, bambinos, scouts - Thank you everyone!

#### **Apologies for Absence**

Parish Councillors Scott Wilsdon, Trevor Rippingale, Karen Spencer, Celia Murton

#### **Minutes of the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting**

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were available to attendees at the meeting and were resolved as a true record of the meeting for that year and were signed.

Proposed: Cllr Wills; Seconded: Cllr Davies. All agreed.

#### **Naming of the Hedgecutter**

After an introduction from Ann there was a short video of the official naming ceremony. We were also lucky to have Andy's daughter Laura in attendance who thanked everyone for their support and this wonderful tribute to her late dad.

### **RCCE Essex Best Kept Village 2014 Runner Up RCCE Essex Village of the Year 2016 Merit Award**

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## **Presentations from invited speakers**

The first was Deputy Fire Chief Officer for Essex, Moira Bruin. She joined the fire service 27 years ago and has spent the last 11 years in Essex with the task of improving the reputation of the fire service. She talked through the various priorities being worked on – fire protection and increasing the number of fire inspectors who check buildings are compliant following Grenfell, keeping the vulnerable safe with the help of a dedicated safeguarding team, road safety and water safety and response standards.

She talked about investment in new technology and training and changing the culture towards the service. She also talked about the heatwave last year and the fact that they were able to respond to all incidents reported.

One resident asked if they were consulted on planning issues as roads seem to be getting smaller and this must make it difficult for vehicle access. She confirmed that they are consulted on this.

The next speaker was the new Head Teacher from Rayne Primary School, Debra Price. She has been teaching for 29 years and started at Rayne in September. Her ethos is that every child deserves the best education.

She talked through the curriculum starting with Year 1 learning about the forest, Africa and Victorian seaside, Year 2 learning about castles and the great fire of London, Year 3 Egyptians and Roman finds and a topic called Discovering Rayne. Year 4 London now and then, Year 5 suffragettes, Year 6 World War 1 and Ancient Greece. The children have loved learning about local characters.

She talked about the PSA and the fact that they have been able to raise a lot of money for Science and musical instruments.

She mentioned the link with the local area including church visits, tree festival and easter experience and also groups such as scouts, brownies and rainbows. There is also currently a community payback scheme where people on community service help with painting and the upkeep of the grounds on Sundays.

The school are also looking into the history of their house names – who were the people behind the names? They are still looking into renaming the houses and all suggestions are welcome.

The final speakers were Ed and Sally from Essex Police. They provided a handout of police reporting in Rayne and reminded everyone that all incidents should be reported officially, not just on Facebook, as they will be able to see where resources are needed.

They talked through some of the current concerns – Boy Racers around the A131 being one of them and this is something that they will be taking strong action against in the future.

There has been a steady reduction in overall crime figures in the Braintree district but a rise in thefts is causing concern and likely to be a knock-on effect of the cost of living crisis.

Ed reminded everyone they there are currently 54 wards being covered so they are under pressure and are looking to push for better working relationships with community groups such as Speedwatch. They have also run some events at the Booking Hall Café to raise awareness.

Ed emphasized the importance of incidents being reported officially and mentioned that anonymous reports can be made via Crimestoppers. Incidents may not be a crime themselves but could help with intelligence gathering.

One question was raised by a resident regarding the use of electric scooters properly. This is something that the police are looking into in greater detail as these become more popular. Another question was around vehicle thefts and what are the best deterrents? There are many security devices which can work out expensive but a steering lock can be very

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effective. There is also the Faraday pouch which will block signals to your keys but also remember don't leave keys near doors and windows.

### **Presentation of Citizenship Awards**

The annual presentation of Citizenship awards to residents who have made a major contribution to the life of the village were then made. There were six awards made this year:

Sarah Cocks for her dedication to Rayne and her long service as Parish Clerk  
Beryl Whiteside for her continued dedication to keep our village free from litter  
Ken Turner for his contribution to Rayne and his long term voluntary service to the allotments  
Mark Cain for his contribution to Rayne and his long term service as groundsman  
Pat Lowton for her contribution to Rayne and her long term service to Rayne Wives  
Paul Euesden for his contribution to Rayne and his long term support of the Parish Council.

### **Reports from Councillors**

District Councillor report – this was circulated at the meeting and is attached separately.

Nature reserve report – this was purchased 10 years ago and needs a lot of upkeep involving the removal of bullrushes and general weeding. It was suggested that a working party could be set up to help monitor and agree necessary and timely work so if anyone would like to volunteer, please get in touch. Cllr Willis was thanked for his continued help with the work needed.

Grounds report – The new hedge cutter has revolutionised the way the groundsmen work and they have achieved some fantastic results over the year. A trailer has now been purchased to help with efficiency. 2 salt bins have been purchased – one in Capel Road and one in The Street. Work has started on the building of new brick planters on The Street opposite the Welsh Princess. It was also noted that when the branches came off the oak tree in the park, the groundsmen quickly came and helped cut up the branches and make things safe again.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their support over the past four years and for attending the Assembly and hoped they had found it informative, she advised that parish councillors were available to talk to at monthly meetings. There are currently 2 spaces on Parish Councillor if anyone is interested in joining.

### **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 21.23

Signed By: ... ..

, Chairman

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