

5RUSHDEN TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY 8th JUNE 2021 VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL COMMENCING AT 7.30PM.

Present: Councillor: Adrian House - Chairman

Councillors:	Tracey Smith	Janet Pinnock
	Paul Harley	Kaye Rawlins
	Sarah Peacock	David Coleman
	Richard Lewis	Marian Hollomon
	Carol Childs	Melanie Coleman
	Adrian Winkle	

Town Clerk: Vivienne Prodger

39/22 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Adrian House be appointed Chairman of the Community Services Committee for the forthcoming Council Year 2021/2022.

40/22 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Tracey Smith be appointed Vice Chairman of the Community Services Committee for the forthcoming Council Year 2021/2022.

41/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

42/22 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Barbara Jenney and Gill Mercer.

43/22 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 30th March 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

44/22 EVENTS WORKING PARTY

There have been no further Events Working Party meetings since 4th March 2021. This meeting was reported at the last Community Services meeting on 30th March 2021, therefore there is nothing further to report from the Events Working Party.

45/22 CELEBRATE RUSHDEN

Cllr Lewis reported that there had been little uptake for a revised Celebrate Rushden, scheduled for October. Therefore, after discussion it was

RESOLVED

That the Soap Box Derby will go ahead on 3rd October 2021 but no other events will be organised this year under the 'Celebrate Rushden' banner for this year.

46/22 POLICING AND HIGHWAYS

- i) Policing – Cllr Marion Hollomon gave the following report from the JAG:

1. Update on Agreed Priorities

Sgt Leigh Goodwin advised the JAG members of the retirement of PC Paul Mitchinson.

The Police had carried out multi stop-searches in connection with drug/knife issues in Rushden which had proven a great success. A stop-search at Risdene Court had resulted in an arrest, this is currently awaiting a court date to seek a closure order.

Intelligence had been received regarding drug dealing in the Cemetery which had resulted in a car chase through the Cemetery, the stop-search had proved negative on this occasion. A foot chase through Rushden had also resulted in a negative stop-search in relation to drugs.

The previous dealing in Hall Park has now stopped, it was believed that the arrest in Risdene Court was linked to the drugs in Hall Park and the Cemetery.

Sgt Leigh Goodwin is aware of a current drugs issue in Alfred Street and this is being dealt with, no arrests have been made to date but this is on the Police radar.

At a previous meeting Cllr Gardner had spoken about the antisocial behaviour issue at the Skatepark in Higham Ferrers with the over 16's. Despite Police patrols monitoring the area they have not been able to see any problems at the skatepark but would continue to monitor the area.

They had however had a success with raiding two cannabis factories in Higham Ferrers after receiving intelligence.

Sandra Mitcham asked whether the Riverside Recreation Park in Higham Ferrers had been included on their patrols as she was aware of problems with anti-social behaviour in this location. Cllr Jackson requested this area be added to the agreed priority to prevent the vandalism and litter problems being encountered.

Sgt Leigh Goodwin advised that small fires were emerging in Higham Ferrers and asked that anyone with any information to report this to the local PCSO Stephanie Bacon.

Some good news was that the Northants Police Recruitment campaign was now resulting in increasing Police numbers for Sgt Leigh Goodwin's Team. She hoped, by the end of June, to have a PC starting in Irthlingborough to work alongside PCSO Nadia Norman and a further PC, yet to be deployed. Her future plan is to increase the numbers to 3 PCs and 3 PCSOs in Rushden, with a PC and PCSO for each of Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough, this would obviously be dependent on resultant operational requirements.

2. Priorities for next 3 months

Sgt Leigh Goodwin had been informed by Mike Greenway of North Northants of a county wide decision to change the way in which locally identified priorities would be agreed. In future these will be determined by the wider community and not at JAG meetings by members. Surveys will be sent to allow residents to highlight their issues and concerns, these will inform the Police on issues to be identified as priorities. Publication of these surveys was discussed; Sgt Leigh Goodwin would be attending a meeting on 24th May which would give greater detail of the new scheme. It was thought that distribution would

be via the Police and towns social media portals and inclusion in newsletters. It is expected that this system will “go live” by the end of May.

Cllr Bert Jackson advised that the campaigning carried out prior to the recent local elections highlighted many of the residents concern and this could be a good starting point for the Police.

It was agreed that for the time remaining prior to the introduction of the new system, the priorities would remain as previously agreed:

Anti-Social Behaviour/Drugs within Public Parks in Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough with the aim that CCTV would be utilised more and have proactive rather than reactive policing.

3. Other Policing issues including COVID 19 enforcement.

It was reported that COVID-19 enforcement was going well. It was expected that there would be more group gatherings for social events/barbecues etc in the public parks with Summer approaching but the Police will continue to monitor the situation.

4. Highways Issues

Cllr Jackson asked for assistance with a problem reported to him with a property in Elm Walk carrying out vehicle repairs from home. The cars are parked on the Highway, they are not roadworthy and it is believed they have no tax or insurance, he requested the assistance of the Police and an ANPR vehicle. Sgt Leigh Goodwin advised that this issue be reported to PCSO Stephanie Bacon who could then investigate the matter.

Viv Prodger reported incidences of people riding bikes the wrong way up Rushden High Street, this was a safety concern with pedestrians. Sgt Leigh Goodwin requested that Rushden Town Council advise on social media that Rushden High Street is a one-way street, to attempt to educate those riding the wrong way. Once the policing numbers have increased for Rushden a patrol could be arranged.

5 VOI Scooters

Cllr Marian Holloman asked Sgt Leigh Goodwin whether many issues had been reported with the introduction of the VOI scooters. She advised that following the early glitch where underage riders had been able to register, this had since been fixed and she had not received any further complaints.

It was raised that the numbers of private electric scooters had increased since the introduction of VOI as riders were not aware of the different laws for private users. Although VOI users were insured to ride on the roads, this was not the case for private users.

Paul Wilcox asked whether the VOI scooters could have GPS tracking. At present when reporting an issue, a scooter serial number is required, he advised that this was very difficult to obtain with it being on the footplate or rear of the scooter, when these are travelling at speed it is not possible to capture this. A VOI operator was captured on CCTV riding through Hall Park which is an exclusion zone. This will be fed back to VOI.

6. Any other business

Cllr Marian Holloman asked for an update regarding the reported shop lifting in Rushden. Sgt Leigh Goodwin reported that the crimes in Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough were all linked, a person had been arrested and remanded, whilst seeking a criminal behaviour order.

Chris Healey was very pleased with the partnership working between the Police and CCTV operators, he felt it had improved significantly and they were able to offer greater assistance to the Police. He reported that it had been very busy lately, Crimesecure had assisted with arrests and he had received good communication from both PCSOs Norman and Bacon.

Viv Prodger had noticed that drinkers were again gathering at the war memorial. Sgt Leigh Goodwin advised that the Police were aware and are monitoring the situation daily, it was still on their radar and they are collating breaches.

Viv Prodger thanked Chris Healey for his tip-off regarding a person carrying out graffiti at Hall Park, thanks to his early phone call Paul Wilcox had managed to catch the person and the matter had been dealt with.

Cllr Bert Jackson asked whether Chris Healey could visit the Riverside Park at Higham Ferrers to advise whether a signal could be received there should the Town Council wish to install a CCTV camera in that area. Chris Healey agreed to visit and contact Sandra Mitcham with his findings.

Christine MacKenzie had written an article promoting the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and asked whether this would be of interest to meeting participants, all Town Clerks asked for it to be forwarded to them to enable them to publicise on social media/newsletters.

Cllr Marian Holloman advised Sgt Leigh Goodwin of an ongoing problem with a tractor on Rushden High Street, she would send details following the meeting.

7. Time and date of next meeting

It was agreed the next meeting would be held at Rushden Town Council on 12th August 2021 at 10.30am.

ii) Highways –

Highways continue to circulate detailed information regarding the ongoing work at Chowns Mill roundabout and they appear to be on track for completion by the end of the year. Rebecca Miller from Highways also sends regular reports regarding ongoing maintenance works throughout the town and these are circulated to all members.

47/22 COVID UPDATE

We are continuing to be cautious with Hall bookings and face to face meetings with the public. All our Covid precautions are all still in place and we will continue to keep them in place, after 19th July, when all restrictions are to be lifted.

Staff will continue to work in separate offices and screens will continue to remain in place within the office environment.

48/22 COMMUNICATIONS

Report from Michelle Lewis – Communications Officer

Press Releases complete - April & May 21

Reopening Rushden – Mayor visited shops upon the reopening after lockdown

- Mayor Making
- St George's Day
- Sensory Garden at Hall Park progress updates
- Half term inspiration and activities in Rushden
- Ongoing promotion of Classic Car Show
- Ongoing promotion of Virtual Gardens Tours
- Ongoing promotion of the Lockdown Memories - Mayor visited and zoomed with Schools
- Covid testing Site at Hall Park
- Mental health Awareness week in conjunction with Nature
- One in a Million 70th Anniversary of Jack and Elsie Smith with Mayor visit
- A Spotlight on Spencer Park
- Outdoor hospitality promotion

Local authorities and Government Comms

- Covid safety messages
- Neighbourhood policing Team - Local Priorities survey
- North Northants news
- Recovery through enterprise info
- Latest Highways information
- New Covid grant information
- Library extra opening times
- Election info

Local business and community stories

- RHTS events
- Rugby club
- Serve - Asda green token and volunteer week
- Evolve your future - workshops
- General sharing of business and community messages on the business and community page

Future Communications for June

- Several big anniversaries
- New Roundabout play equipment - Spencer Park
- New Bus Shelters
- Official opening of Hall Park's Accessible toilet – Friday with Melanie and it's my life
- Art in the Park – Spencer Park Mural
- Events (Subject to government announcement on 14th June) including Celebrate Rushden (Subject to uptake from community groups and businesses), Soapbox Derby, Bark in the Park, Proms in the Park, Heritage Day

- Heritage trail
- Promotion of Recovery through enterprise fast track job matching service
- Ongoing promotion of town app
- Ongoing promotion of Virtual Gardens Tour
- Latest Local authorities and Government Comms
- Latest Local business and community stories

Rushden Matters Summer Edition 2021

- The 8 page Summer Edition of Rushden Matters will be distributed from Monday 14th June
- Royal mail and councillor volunteers to cover the problem boundary areas.
- The printed copy of Rushden Matters will be on display at the following locations: Rushden Lakes boards, inside Rushden Lakes Shop – recovery through enterprise/made in northants, Rushden Noticeboards and Interpretation boards
- A digital copy will also available on RTC website and will be promoted over our social media.

Future press releases

- Zip Wire - Spencer Park
- Toddlers area at Melloway
- Table Tennis at Spencer Park - launch
- New, independent bakery/dessert shop in high street
- Summer holidays activities and inspiration in and around Rushden

Rushden Town App

- Over 400 businesses and community groups added to date
- 540 people have downloaded and are using the app to date (see image on growth)
- It's being used regularly by 340 over the last 30 days
- Special offers introduced and listed
- Events are starting to be listed
- Training to add the trails has been completed and in the process of being added
- Ongoing maintenance (by Nicola and Michelle)
- NEW feature; we can send out push notifications, for example; when a user of an app comes within 500 metres of one of our events, we can set up so they will receive a notification about the event.

Website

2commune our website provider will update the A-Z Services and web links for North Northants once the Gov.uk has provided this data. They are unable to update this information for us until this is in place.

Website and social media analytics report

Facebook

- Total page followers to date: 2800k (2,050k last July)
- Overall Reach 72,742k from Jan – June 2021; reach means how many people have viewed an RTC post (this could be direct on our page or a post that someone has shared). Compared to Jan-June 2019 with a reach of 5828k
- Engagement

Popular Facebook posts

- Defib telephone boxes with a reach of 29.8k
- All the Rushden Cyclists posts (St Patrick's, St David's and St George's) around 10k reach
- Highways and road closures always get a reach of around 8k
- Easter bunnies 6k
- Big Celebrations – Jack and Elsie's 70th wedding anniversary 6k
- Spotlight on Spencer Park 3k
- Sensory Garden 3k
- Town App 2.5k

Instagram

- Total followers to date: 761
- Reach 1k from Jan – June 2021
- Average interactions per post or story 40 (likes, comments, messages, shares)

Twitter

- 269 followers compared to 90 this time last year
- On average we have a 1.4% engagement rate

49/22 SENSORY GARDEN

Members had been circulated with a design for the proposed sensory garden in Hall Park. Phillip Reed, former owner of Podington Garden Centre had produced the design and had advised on plant species and ground preparation.

The proposed area has now been cleared and weed killing has been undertaken in preparation for planting in the autumn. The boundary wall for the garden has been refurbished and re-pointed and now provides an attractive back drop for the garden.

50/22 THE MALLARDS

Contracts/Asset Manager Paul Wilcox reported that there had been a number of anti-social activities taking place at the Mallards. It would appear that fish had been removed from the ponds and some fishermen were not complying with the code of practice for angling. Report below

The Mallards Fishing Ponds – Pemberton Ward 04/06/2021

Background information:

The Mallards fishing ponds is split into two lakes which form a balancing pond for the old Gravel Pits and the surrounding Roads

The fishing lakes are free to access for fishing providing a Current Environment Agency rod license is held and the rules are adhered to, the ponds do not have a closed season and are available to use between the hours of Sunrise and Sunset.

Historically the Mallards have had a number of issues with anglers not complying with the rules

The current Fishing Bailiff Mr Richard Marsden is no longer able to continue with his role as Volunteer Bailiff at the Mallards

Proposal:

Ideally we require Three to four Volunteer Bailiffs who can help police the Fishing area at the Mallards, to encourage Anglers to follow the rules and offer advice and guidance to Anglers on the appropriate use of this facility.

To appoint the bailiffs on a temporary basis for two months and if all is satisfactory appoint them for a 12 month and continue to review

All Bailiff issues and supervision to be dealt with by the Assets & Contracts Manager.

Bailiffs to be provided with photo Identification cards by Rushden Town Council and Hi-Viz vests to help identify themselves to Anglers using the fishing ponds.

Our long serving fishing bailiff, Richard Marsden is now unwell and unable to carry out his duties, therefore Paul requested that we appoint new bailiffs to continue his work. Members discussed this matter and it was

RESOLVED

That Paul Wilcox is given the authority to appoint three new suitable bailiffs as he sees fit.

51/22 TREE PLANTING

The Chairman advised members that there is now an ongoing national project to plant thousands of trees to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee next year.

The Chairman asked all members to consider appropriate planting for their respective wards and inform the Town Clerk of their ideas.

52/22 WARD PROJECTS

PROJECTS AND MAINTENANCE WORK IN PROGRESS 8TH JUNE 2021

WARD	Location	Job Description	Contractor	Start Date	Completion Date
Sartoris	Rushden Hall	Courtyard exterior painting	In House – on going	June 2021	
	Hall Park	Sensory Garden	various	March 2021	
	Rushden Hall	Public toilers wall rebuild	In house	June 2021	

WARD	Location	Job Description	Contractor	Start Date	Completion Date
Spencer	Spencer Park	Table Tennis Table	Playground supplies	April 2021	
	Spencer Park	Accessible Roundabout	Kettering Playsafe	June 2021	Completed
	Spencer Park	Accessible Swing	Sutcliffe	June 2021	
	Spencer	Public Art	Ady Turner	April	
	Spencer Park	Zip wire	Playground Supplies	July 2021	

WARD	Location	Job Description	Contractor	Start Date	Completion Date
Hayden	Cemetery	Improvements to footpaths	TBC	April 2021	

WARD	Location	Job Description	Contractor	Start Date	Completion Date
Spencer	Melloway Park	Toddler Play equipment	Kettering Playsafe	July 2021	

WARD	Location	Job Description	Contractor	Start Date	Completion Date
Bates	Manor Park	Master Plan	Hinton Cook	Submitted ENC December 2019	New Design June 2021
	Sports Site	Archeological Survey	KD Archeology	March 2021	Completed
	Sports site	Master Plan	Hinton Cook	Submitted to ENC December 2019	
	Manor Park	Badger Survey	Cherryfields	March 2021	Completed
	Manor Park	Reptile Survey	Cherryfields	March 2021	Completed
	Manor Park	Drainage Survey	MK Drainage	April 2021	Completed

Bus shelters for Rectory and Skinners Hill now installed

Summer planting to commence w/c 14th June 2021

Chairman