Minutes from the Annual Parish meeting held at the Bowls Club
Monday 25 April 2022 which commenced @ 19:00

Present: Chairman Cllr. D Amies, Cllrs. D Rolfe, D Wilby, N Bellairs, S Smith, P Davies. County Councillors Rick Wilson, 7 members of the public and the clerk Sarah Gresty.

Apologies were received from Sarah Markwell-Cook, Adrian Gombault and Richard Ludlow

Agenda

1. Approval of the Minutes of the APM dated 22 March 2021 were signed as a true and accurate record of events Proposed by Cllr. Rolfe, seconded Cllr. Smith - **RESOLVED**

2. Reports were read to the meeting from:

- **Ryhall Parish Council –Chairman** This year, like last, has continued to be dominated by significant international problems. We continued where we left off from the previous year with Covid and its continuous mutations, causing difficulties to all, but especially those with underlying health issues. As is the case with close communities, families and friends have offered assistance wherever possible. My thanks go to you all.
  Recently the extreme difficulties faced by the people of Ukraine have been at the forefront of the news. People of this community, the children and parents of Ryhall CE Academy and country as a whole have drawn together to supply much needed essentials to those who are suffering. A huge thank you! Internationally there is a struggle with costs rising on all products which will in the forthcoming weeks and months add to the difficulties that we all face. I was pleased therefore that in January the Parish Council voted unanimously to make no increase in our precept. Although a small contribution, I am sure the residents of Ryhall and Belmesthorpe were grateful.
  In the early part of this reporting year we continued to conduct our meetings through zoom; working hard to ensure that matters that had come to our attention could be resolved and actioned. On traffic issues we had a positive result with the erection of a new light on Foundry Road, offering more security to a poorly lit stretch of road. As we moved into the summer months the 'Junior Travel Ambassadors of Ryhall CE Academy' started an initiative to make people aware of speeds that vehicles were travelling through the village. The Ambassadors approached the parish council, who immediately offered assistance on this matter; undertaking community speed checks (my thanks to Stella, Andrew, Debbie, Sarah and everyone else who chipped in), a parish survey was undertaken and recommendations made to the parish council. This matter has been enhanced to seeking a 20mph speed limit through part of the village and ongoing discussion with Rutland County Council will hopefully draw this to a conclusion. The Parish Council have continued to keep Ryhall CE Academy informed of progress and hope that the next report will contain a successful conclusion.
  With the partial opening of lockdown monthly meetings could start to take place, albeit in a variety of venues due to the closure of some facilities. We have been, as always very vigilant, on highway issues ; Phil Davies has constantly been inspecting road and pavement repairs, supplying the parish and county council with his well-documented reports on quality and standards, again my thanks for those reports.
  Andrew Nebel has kept the parish council current on Health and Wellbeing issues not just locally but across the county, highlighting all relevant areas of concern, progress and initiatives that will impact on our lives in this eastern fringe of the county. A huge task on broad shoulders!
  July offered the parish council a bit of a shock with our 26 year service parish clerk (Caroline Adams) handing in her three month notice of retirement. The Parish Council cannot thank you enough for your dedication to the position. An interviewing panel would need to be convened! We were indeed fortunate that David Wilby kindly offered his patio for outdoor meetings to enable all the pre-interview paperwork to be in order before the interviews commenced. Thanks to David, Stella and Adrian for your time and commitment.
  In September, with sadness, we were informed that Bob Rushby had passed away; a former Councilor who had given 9 years' service until his retirement in 2018.

At the September meeting Alison Glover (parishioner), who is kindly representing the parish council at the Climate Change Forum, gave us a detailed report of the meetings she had attended.
Various ideas had been discussed, including rewilding areas, reduction of waste and recycling; but it was very pleasing to have an immediate impact with a line of young trees being planted on the western verge of the A6121.
In October, Sarah Gresty, the successful applicant for the parish clerk position, was unanimously endorsed by the parish council. Followed by her taking up the reins in November. Sarah has thrown herself into her workload with drive and determination. She has made changes where she felt they have been warranted and I would like to thank her for all the work she has done in working with the committee through the change, but also to all the Councilors' for the support you have given Sarah.
At this time we also accepted the resignation from Jo Gresty (potential conflict of interest); I would like to thank him for all the work he has done with the Ryhall meadows playing fields. And also for his offer to continue in a consultancy role while we undergo a change in members.
In addition, we said goodbye to Richard Coleman one of our RCC members who resigned; again I would like to offer the thanks of the parish council and parishioners for the work that you have undertaken on our behalf.
Nick Bellairs has worked throughout the period with the Allotment committee to ensure we have an excellent working arrangement and a facility that is well supported by the community. At the time of writing this report I was delighted to see the installation of a new secure gate on site.
We have had a number of planning applications during this period and my thanks go to Emma Sismore, Stella Smith and Nick Bellairs for their professional approach to what can be a difficult task. And for their assessment, understanding and objectiveness on what can be a very emotive topic. As we are all well aware the significant projects at St Georges Barracks, and the Stamford North Development have also hovered in the background. We have been kept appraised of these developments by David Wilby RCC, for which we are grateful, and to date they have only had a low impact on our community.
Which, in the later part of this year, is a lot less than the Mallard Pass Solar Farm project has offered. This is an area that will have an impact on the parish and the surrounding area. There have been a significant amount of consultations, an extraordinary parish council meeting (which was very well attended) and a Mallard Pass Action Group has been formed. While this is unlikely to reach the parish council planning committee it is something that will affect us all and quite rightly we all have our thoughts and concerns on the course of action proposed. Those thoughts must be heard!
At the end of the year Ryhall and Belmesthorpe were delighted to welcome the High Sheriff of Rutland and his wife for a tour and informal discussion with members of the local community. The discussion covered many topics and the High Sheriff was delighted with a detailed historical talk on the church and an invite to Ryhall Hall.
As this report draws to a close, with great reluctance, I have accepted Emma Sismores' resignation from the parish council. I would like to thank her not just from myself but also from all members of the parish council for her dedication and work on the parish council and planning committee.
Finally, we draw to the end of the year where we started with an endorsement of the proposed precept for the parishes of Ryhall and Belmesthorpe for the coming year. My thanks go to Adrian Gombault and Sarah Gresty for a detailed financial presentation which kept questioning to a minimum and allowed us to not seek an increase in the precept for our parishioners for the forthcoming year.
I would like to thank all the parish council members for the extraordinary commitment to their community over the last year. Well done! Read by Dave Amies (DA).

- **Ryhall Meadows Playing Fields** on behalf of the Trustees of The Meadows Playing Field Management Association 2021 – 2022. The past year was dominated by the continuation of the Covid 19 pandemic and, yet again, Meadows Playing Field proved its great value to the Ryhall and Belmesthorpe community.
  The Play Area was and continues to be extremely well used. Last summer it was not unusual to see more than 50 young children playing on the equipment and enjoying the adventure of being outside whilst parents watched on.

Inevitably the intensity of use has resulted in various running repairs to the equipment being needed, especially to the zip wire which required a whole new mechanism. However, in the main the equipment is used well and levels of vandalism and misuse remain low.

The Tennis Courts have been reasonably well used over the past year, by both tennis players and for group activities like Zumba and keep fit. Again, great thanks must be given to Miranda and David Amies at the village shop for their help in co-ordinating the court hire for the benefit of the community.

The Bowls Club continued to find it difficult to attract players during the pandemic. Oddly, this is a pattern being experienced across the country by most sports, with a significant percentage of players not returning to organised sport after the pandemic. We will have to wait to see if this is a permanent societal change and, if so, how if affects the bowls club.

Grass Pitches - The only user of the grass pitches and pavilion continued to be One Touch Football Ltd which this season ran 8 junior football teams from Ryhall as well as holding weekly training sessions and football sessions in school holidays.

Vehicles & Car Parking remains a matter of concern with some drivers parking and driving on the grass. This not only results in damage to the grass, making the playing fields less pleasant for all, but also is potentially a risk to users of the playing fields, especially young children. Discussions have been held with One Touch which have helped to reduce misuse of the playing fields by drivers but the Management Association trustees continue to keep the matter under review.

Ryhall Fete held at Ryhall Hall in the summer made a generous donation of over £3,000 to the Playing Fields which the Trustees are using for improvements. A living willow structure has been planted and built which will provide an exciting informal play area for younger children for many years to come and three picnic benches are being purchased which will enable people to sit and relax.

Finances – following better than expected income from the tennis courts and the fete donation, the balance sheet remains sound. The terms of use of the grass pitches and pavilion is to be reviewed as the rates charged are significantly lower than for similar facilities elsewhere in the area and barely cover the costs of maintenance of the pitches.

The Management Association - Currently the charity has four trustees: Sarah Critchard (Treasurer), Andy Capper, Sarah Markham-Cook and Debbie Rolfe whilst Jo Gresty is a co-opted member (chairman) and Sarah Gresty is secretary. Caroline Adams resigned as trustee in the autumn and deep felt thanks go to her for all the hard work she committed to the Playing Fields during her time as secretary to the Association. Jo Gresty (Chairman). Read by Clerk.

- **Ryhall Village Hall.** Following a difficult year when the village hall was closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we finally re-opened in June 2021. Prior to re-opening we had a Fire Risk Assessment carried out which highlighted some minor issues that required attention; these have been addressed. During the period of closure, the building was regularly maintained and essential work on replacing the main hall's wooden floor was carried out. Various other smaller tasks were also completed.

  We are pleased to report that since the re-opening, the hall welcomed back all our previous users as well as having a new Tai Chi group join us. Private bookings are very buoyant with many children's parties occurring at weekends.

  We have put on two fundraising events: a comedy play, Holmes & Watson in October, and a Quiz Night in November, both of which were well attended and well received. We were also able to have our long awaited 50+1 celebratory party in September where many ex-village hall users/volunteers came along and enjoyed an afternoon reminiscing over tea and cake.

  The last financial year for the hall, as for other organisations, has been totally different from the previous year, when the building was forcibly closed for many months with no income from hiring. Letting income this year recovered strongly to £9,782, supplemented by income of £1,275 from events. Grants via RCC totaled £10,667, which, together with other income gave a total income for the year of £22,536

  Caretaking wages and running costs totaled £8,985, repairs and maintenance £730, and other costs £1,135. Replacement of the large hall floor cost £7,101, made possible by the RCC grant. Expenditure for the year totaled £17,953, giving a surplus of £4,584.

Revenue income, excluding grants, totaled £11,869: revenue expenditure, excluding the floor renewal, totaled £10,851. This indicates that the hall paid its way during the financial year, with the cash situation remaining satisfactory.
In November and faced with ever-rising costs, the management committee reluctantly decided that it would have to increase the hourly rental charge from the current £13.00 to £15.00. The new rates took effect from 1st January 2022.
We realised that times are hard for groups and organisations, which is why previously we absorbed continual price increases. Indeed, this is the first rise for two years. However, as a charity and accountable to the parish, we felt conscious that to keep the hall up to the high standard its users expect – and certainly deserve – we have to be prudent with our budget.
We are very much aware that the hall plays a key part in the life of this community. We regard it as our mission to ensure that it is run smoothly and efficiently for the benefit of all.
For the immediate future, the committee is determined to shoulder as much of the increases as is feasible to protect our users, but will constantly monitor our finances as we also have to be pragmatic about the hall's upkeep.
Our committee is a loyal group who meet regularly and offer support to the various events. As always, we like to encourage new ideas and would welcome parishioners to the committee who, we feel, could give the hall fresh impetus. Please feel free to contact us and make a difference to village life. By Anne Virgin, secretary of the hall committee, John Saunders, treasurer, and Paul Huddleston, chair.
Paul Huddleston adds: On a personal note, I would like to particularly thank Anne and Martin Virgin and John Saunders for their tireless work behind the scenes. They have certainly made my role easier, and we all owe them a debt of gratitude for the time and effort they put in on a daily basis. Their devotion to this popular and attractive venue is truly outstanding. They give a solid backbone to the sterling efforts of our faithful committee and it is through such dedication that the hall continues to function so well. It is a shining example of community spirit. Read by DA

- **Police** No formal report has been received. PCSO Di Freeman has investigate the parking problems on Coppice Road and will continue to monitor this and inform householders not to park and block pavements. Reported by Clerk.

- **Library Ryhall: Open House** The Coronavirus pandemic has played havoc with our volunteer Library service, and what had been a healthy and thriving operation was rudely stopped in its tracks at the beginning of 2020. It will take some time for it to return, if it ever does, to the levels of support we enjoyed up until that time.
  Although Rutland County Council reopened Ryhall Library in late Spring with a limited service and strict Covid precautions, it was not until the Autumn that volunteers were allowed to return into the building.
  Over the course of the year, we had lost a number of volunteers, and Open House in November therefore had to be restricted to Tuesday afternoons only. However, we opened on both Tuesdays and Fridays in December, and the recruitment of four new volunteers early in the new year, following an appeal in the Village News, has enabled us to maintain this level of service into the new year.
  Tuesday activities in the shape of Family History assisted research and the monthly Knit 'n' Natter Group have been resumed and have a reasonable following. Sadly, the monthly Book Club and the Board Games venture did not succeed in attracting sufficient support, and both have now been curtailed. The closure of the Friday afternoon Zumba session threatened to rob us of our regular hot drinks custom on Friday afternoons, but , pleasingly, some of its members have continued their habit of meeting together at this time for a drink and a chat.
  We still await any evidence from Rutland County Council of any intention to carry out the repainting of the library exterior. It is to be hoped that this will be effected at some time during this calendar year.
  I should like to express my personal thanks for their continuing commitment and support to the volunteer team, both those who have been with us from the start and those who have joined more recently; and in particular to Andrew Downing and Janet Gray for their help in organising the

volunteer operation, and to Tony Critchard for his expert and ever-cheerful mentoring of the Family History researchers. By Adrian Gumbault. Read by Clerk.

- **Allotments** In November we held our Annual Bonfire Night. This was very successful and enjoyed by all. The monies raised can be seen on the finance report sent to the Parish Council.
  We have a few new tenants, all fees are and bonds are paid up to date.
  We have had the new gate installed, this is now more secure and easier to use.
  The last inspection that was done on the 26th February was all ok, a few little things to keep an eye on but Nick is happy with everything.
  We are hoping to hold a summer event, this will be everyone bringing food and drink and we have a raffle to raise a little money towards the use of the gas and generator.
  Bonfire night is book for 3rd November a deposit has been paid, this shows on our accounts.
  Insurance has been renewed and paid. By Sue Evitts-Secretary. Brian and Sue added their thanks to the Parish Council for their support. Read by DA

- **Neighbourhood Watch** On behalf of Neighbourhood Watch in Ryhall, I keep myself notified about the local and general concerns through the local police messages and the national NHW information. Appropriate topics are chosen by me to inform the village via the Village News publication. These are mostly concerning general safety measures and the spreading of helpful information to the residents.
  There is also an active Ryhall NHW Facebook which has been very effective for the local people, who use Facebook, to get prompt reaction to local safety and social issues.
  There have been some vehicle damages and some building entries which have been recorded by the police over the year but the total is much the same as usual. There has been unsocial activity on the playing fields and play areas giving rise to a local and swift response. More people are reporting unknown vehicles loitering in the area and this seems to have been effective in reducing the number of household thefts and burglaries.
  Even though it would be helpful to have more people involved in maintaining a service, the present activity and awareness of NHW in Ryhall does seem to be increasing and being used.
  By Sheila Halliday-Pegg Ryhall NHW Co-ordinator. Read by Clerk

- **Belmesthorpe Neighbourhood Watch** Mercifully, and perhaps coincidentally, the village has had little in the way of crime to contend with, whilst wrestling with the challenge of the pandemic.
  The only incident of any note was the theft of a catalytic converter from a vehicle parked in Main Street in January. This followed a spate of similar incidents in the County, which was reported in our last Newsletter, which was delivered to all homes in November.
  Our Committee has met twice on Zoom over the course of the year, allowing all but two of our eight members, who do not have this facility, to keep in touch and maintain our service. We were pleased to be able to replace two long-serving retiring members with fresh blood and thereby keep our Committee numbers up to full strength.
  Welcome packs, as usual, have been issued to new arrivals in the village and their membership enlisted.
  The email circulation, which has proved so successful during the pandemic, with over thirty update bulletins issued, is now, with residents' approval, being used as the default communications vehicle for NHW and other appropriate information, including updates relating to Mallard Pass and the Broadband Upgrade project. Newsletters may be published on an ad hoc basis, as and when the need should arise. We have also posted regular features in the Village News for the benefit of the whole community. By Adrian Gombault Chairman, Belmesthorpe Neighbourhood Watch. Read by Clerk

  Rutland Neighbourhood Watch Association In accordance with the wishes of its membership, as expressed at an EGM in November 2021, Rutland Neighbourhood Watch Association was terminated on 31st March of this year.
  Whilst this decision was not taken lightly and was a source of much regret for many of the members, it was forced upon the Association because of an inability to find a sufficient number of volunteers to serve as Trustees and take an active role in managing the Association's activities.

Following this date, and as a result of this decision, the Rutland Neighbourhood Watch smartphone app, together with its slave website, will no longer be managed by the Association. The Association will therefore no longer be responsible for any output which may subsequently appear.
However, Rutland County Council's Crime & Safety Partnership has agreed to take over the management of the app and website, which will therefore continue to serve the interests of the neighbourhood watches in Rutland and the wider public. These groups are expected to continue actively to prosecute the cause of crime prevention in Rutland and to work closely with Leicestershire Police in so doing.
NHW groups will now have to work independently and without any central coordinating body to represent them to the Police and other third parties. However, the majority, if not all, are in touch with other groups in their areas and can be expected to liaise informally with one another over matters of common interest and, in particular, when criminal activity is experienced by any one of them. Within our area, the NHW groups in Ryhall, Essendine, the Castertons and Belmesthorpe regularly communicate with one another in this way. By Adrian Gombault Retiring Chairman, Rutland Neighbourhood Watch Association.

3. **Other Village Amenities**

a. **Bowls Club** Malcom Rylance gave a more positive report with an increase of 4 new members. The club is keen to carry on playing. The annual cost is approximately £1,000 per year just for the green upkeep. They are now using a local specialist. A recent open day was success but still would like to attract younger members. Also, a requirement for small woods for ladies and younger people to use.
Moria Dolby (Chair of the Bowls Club) expressed concerns regarding parking and restrictions imposed on their members driving on the grass.
Response: The Meadows Playing Field Committee are aware of this problem and are looking for solutions to service all members of the playing fields in a fair and safe way. Health and Safety of all users is the main priority. This item will be carried forward.

b. **Rutland Climate Action Group** RCA group have agreed and created a policies document that outlines key areas that need addressing to help us all cope with the severity of the climate emergency. Some of these areas are:
Reducing food waste and look at the council implementing a home composting scheme.
Encouraging people to plant trees and give them the information to help them to make good choices; around species and position of tree. *I would really like to find a way to develop this in Ryhall so that people can optimism their gardens for nature but not be left with huge tree surgery bills in the future.*
The RCA are having a say around verge and hedgerow management contracts, which come up for renewal in 2024. (This is key to protecting our fragile biodiversity, as so many hedgerows are unnecessarily and brutally mowed and flailed). *I have attached Natural England's hedgerow policies from the government website and RCA will be pushing for these to be implemented.*
Recommended management To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.
We recommend that you:

- cut hedgerows in **one** of the following ways:
- no more than 1 year in 3 between 1 September and 28 February - leave at least two-thirds of hedges untrimmed each year
- no more than 1 year in 2 between 1 January and 28 February - leave at least one-half of hedges untrimmed each year
- gap up any length of hedge with more than 10% gaps within the first 2 years

There is no requirement to trim hedges at all during the agreement. Instead, leave them to grow and manage in a coppicing or laying rotation.https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/management-of-hedgerows-be3

Obviously road safety has to be the first priority.

During the last committee meeting, we had a very interesting talk from NFU; the Allerton Project and a local farmer. The talks covered areas about their real concerns around future food production. There was mention of being forced (for many reasons) to play their part in protecting the climate in a time of huge demand for cheap food and rising fuel costs (all very difficult). From what they were saying, it will demand huge government commitment and investment to help them through the difficult times. By A Glover. Read by Clerk.

4. **Mallard Pass Solar Farm** update received from Adrian Forsell from the Mallard Pass Action Group(MPAG). MPAG were taken by surprise on the recent issue of stage one consultation summary(SoCC) which had been held by both councils RCC and SKDC for 3 weeks before release, however MPAG had managed in the time left to submit comments for the deadline of 22 April. The next stage is critical. Parish Councils are key in getting information out to the public and to formulate responses. We should soon receive details of the next stage of the public consultation. Adrian stressed the importance of responding and for everyone to put their views across by the various medium that will be made available. This will be the last chance to have input into the planning process. He urged everyone to be vigilant for the next stage. Local Community Representatives from the Action group are poised for action.
A Members of the public asked if the farmers concerned were known. This was easily found by looking at the map.
Simon Davies asked if there was a problem in the Councils as there had been a delay in getting notifications of the recent SoCC. It was confirmed that the SoCC did not have to be published but the public consultation would have to be. Mallard pass will have to publish on their website as well as the Planning Inspectorate website.
Cllr. Wilby assured all present at the meeting that RCC and SKDC have worked together and have drafted in a specialist to collate and keep all County Councillors fully informed. As Ward Councillor he also keeps the Parish Council circulated in all information. RCC have suffered from shortage of staff during the pandemic.

5. **Public Time** Nothing further was added.

Meeting Closed at 20:07

CHAIRMAN: _____ **Date: _____**