Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 9 April 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs. Debbie Rolfe (Chair), David Wilby, Andrew Nebel, Sarah Markwell Cook and Kevin Corby.
In Attendance: Paul & Rachel Szyszka, Val Lofthouse, John Simpson, Jo Gresty, Keith & Sharon Mosley, Sharon Evitts, Brian Cuppelditch, Tony and Sarah Critchard, Rose Busby, Anna Woodall, Craig Huntbatch, Rev Andrew Hollins, Win Peck, Michelle Nebel, Marion Taylor, Pattie Wilby and Sarah Gresty Parish Clerk.

The meeting was opened with a warm welcome, glass of wine and some cheese.

Minutes of the previous years Annual Parish meeting held on 25th May 2023 had been signed as accurate at a Parish Council meeting dated 26th June 2023.

Agenda

Debbie Rolfe, Ryhall Parish Council chair opened the meeting with: Good evening, everyone and welcome to the Ryhall Parish council annual meeting. Thank you for coming. We are joined by the groups in our community and you will hear from them shortly.
The council itself has had a relatively quiet year for which we are grateful however, we cannot ignore the challenges faced by RCC and the recent storms we have had which have caused widespread damage. Thankfully Ryhall came out of it with very little damage in comparison to other villages, however we must remain vigilant and ensure we are prepared for any emergencies. The County Councillors will provide you with a brief update on RCC shortly.
The biggest challenge the Parish has had this year has been the removal of the crashed car! But seriously the announcement of the sale of land next to the meadows. A joint effort by all concerned meant we were able to submit 43 questionnaires which represented the views of 50 people. This was a great achievement especially as we were dealing with a short time scale in which to get it submitted. RCC have confirmed receiving the application however we await their formal confirmation on the procedure going forward which could take up to 2 years. we will however let you know of any progress as we hear.
I am also really pleased to be able to let you know that a County Council bid for funding to the Arts Council's Library Improvement Fund was successful, and as a result RCC will be able to undertake some improvements to Ryhall Library, as well as the other libraries in the County. RCC are now hoping to develop detailed plans for each library site, and they very much wish to engage with RPC and residents to ensure that our valuable community assets continue to deliver great services for the community.

RPC have also been looking at a new speed awareness campaign (not the community speed watch) and we are currently trying to get RCC and the police to adopt the information that can be produced from the cameras if installed. As we know speeding is a concern for all villages not just Ryhall and these cameras can help produce a pattern of non-accidental speeders through villages and surrounding areas. The cost to install these is approximately £2500 however this is only effective if we can get RCC on board. There will be a meeting of parishes and county councillors to work out a way forward. In the meantime the village has a community speed watch campaign which we are sharing starting in Essendine on 15th April and Ryhall 's will start 20 April – 24th. and is in desperate need of volunteers. Mandatory training for using the equipment is necessary tomorrow 3pm and 6.30 pm in Essendine Village hall but if you cannot make this we can arrange an alternative session. If you are able to help even if it is just for one session please do let the clerk know. You will be required to attend some training before hand and must be over 18.

Over a year ago maybe even 2 now, RPC after feedback from the school and residents, started the process of getting a 20mph zone installed from Church St to New Road. This was all approved by RCC, but due to staffing issues and people leaving the council unfortunately this has not happened. We are hoping that RCC honours the quote that we received to install the signs in the last financial year, however this will be reviewed in the event of increased costs.

The parish council is currently talking and meeting regularly with the school to try and alleviate some of the

issues created at peak times when dropping off/picking up. The school is very aware of the issue of extra vehicle activity and lack of consideration by some parents when dropping/collecting their children. We will continue to keep you updated. Pre school you will hear more of this from Craig later.

The council have assessed unallocated cash reserves for 2024/25 The are some wall repairs required in the Old Cemetery opposite the church and we will be working toward the commissioning of the new cemetery over the next 5 years.

We are looking for particular projects you would like the council to consider please do let us know at the end of the meeting.

So it just leaves me to say once again thank you for attending.

1. Cllr. Kevin Corby – read the Belmesthorpe Neighbourhood watch report on behalf of Adrian Gombault

The Belmesthorpe Neighbourhood Watch continues to act on the village's behalf in matters of crime and personal safety, as well as having an eye to the quality of the village environment and the social cohesion of the village community.

The Committee has once again undergone some changes over the year, but pleasingly it has always proved possible to recruit new members to replace those who depart. We recently enjoyed our first "live" meeting since the Covid pandemic and intend to meet this way for the foreseeable future.

Incidents of crime have been mercifully few. Two residents had vehicles interfered with in the recent spate of incidents which also affected Ryhall and other nearby villages. Details were communicated to residents via our email group circulation, which covers the vast majority of village residents. A similar message was issued recently to warn residents about the shed and outhouse burglaries which we have experienced in the past at this time of the year. Welcome packs continue to be issued to all new residents as they arrive in the village, and these contain membership forms which enable them to sign up to the email service. Paper newsletters are no longer issued on a regular basis but may be used occasionally, when more detailed communication is appropriate.

Following the success of our Coronation event last year, it is planned to hold another village social in the near future, hopefully in the Blue Bell, now thriving again under its new management. The main aim of this will be to afford new arrivals the opportunity to engage with the wider community. We also plan to hold a defibrillator refresher course, as it is some time now since the original training event. A safari supper is a likely candidate for a future social.

The Golden Jubilee sign at the crossroads has been repainted using funds donated by a former resident for the purpose, and these same funds will be used to purchase a fresh supply of Spring bulbs which will be planted around the village, as before, in the Autumn.

We have lobbied hard for the village to be included in the latest round of Broadband Upgrading, and we have recently received confirmation that our efforts have been rewarded. We look forward to the work being completed soon. Our other major concern continues to be for increased Road Safety in the village. It is disappointing that the recent survey, which gained such a strong response from the community and which was endorsed by the Parish Council, has not had the impact we had hoped for, and it remains a challenge to get commitment from Highways Department at Catmose to our cause. We have not lost hope yet of achieving the 20 mph speed limit which the former Head of Highways agreed to, and, to support our request, we hope also to mount a Community Speedwatch in the village in 2025.

In closing, we must thank Ryhall Parish Council for its financial and general support in the past year and in the year to come. Both are valued and appreciated.

2. Cllr. Kevin Corby gave an outline as his role as County Councilor and the RCC planning procedure. Ryhall Parish Council has a planning committee which decides the response on behalf of the Parish. He urged

people to attend parish council meetings were planning is openly discussed and to contact any of the planning team with questions and feedback on applications.

3. Cllr. David Wilby formally thanked Kevin as a colleague for coming on board the county team and for doing such a great job over his first year. He urged the need for younger people to come forward. The Country has been through trying times over the past few years and this has a knock on effect if money being tight in all quarters especially in the more rural counties like our. RCC are trying to keep staff, maintain highways and public services. Staff shortages are meaning that actions are taking longer to get results. He urged everyone to support the local community especially the Library in the afternoon sessions. I continue to push to get our infrastructure maintained, Foundry Road being a priority. A to push for new developments to have full assessment of infrastructure. Myself and Kevin are available if anyone has any issues.

4. Craig Huntbatch - Vice chair of Governors at the Ryhall Primary School. Apologies have been send from Mandy the Chair of Governors. The school is part of a wider Trust 'Peterborough Diocese Education Trust' PDet for short, which is an excellent organisation. The traditional roles have been taken over by PDet and now the role of Governs has changed. My team are responsible for supporting staff, pupils, the community, the church status and looking after areas of compliance. We go into the school on regular basis. The School now has a full time principle Alan Reed. Our main project in the community a present is working with a village group to try and resurrect the pre school. This if reinstated, will come under the funding and care of PDet giving longer term stability. At present we are trying to gauge how much interest there is for children to attend. Please get anyone witch children to complete the online survey.

5. Brian Cuppelditch – Ryhall Allotments Association. Thanks go to the Parish Council for getting trees and hedge cut in 2023. The Allotments Association is self funded we started the year with a balance of £3535 however main costs from this are water and insurance, a £800 is held as a bond for the parish council. We will have to replace 2 water butts this year costing £160 each. We would also like to paint the retreat (a small cabin which is used to hold events on the allotment) So as you can see there is not a huge fund available. We do have one plot is available at present. The only issue we have is an unsafe tree on the main A6121 hedge line which I have tonight reported to the parish council.

6. Debbie Rolfe read a report Open House @ Ryhall Library by Adrian Gombault Ryhall Library Coordinator At the end of 2023, the Open House library volunteer team received this congratulatory email from the Library Services Supervisor at Rutland County Council:

"In 2023, a whopping 1,200 people came to Ryhall Library for the coffee hubs run by the volunteers! November saw the highest take up, with 139 people coming, but most months saw figures of over 100 people and the average visitors per month was 100!

Of this total, 161 were kids and this number seems to be steadily increasing through the year. Early months we only have total figures for, and in March the hub was only operating on Wednesdays, so the figure for that month is lower.

Breakdown per month:

Jan 78; Feb 100; Mar 32 (only open Wednesdays); Apr 98; May 130 (15 kids); Jun 128 (17 kids) this figure includes being shut for flooding; Jul 93 (10 kids); Aug 112 (23 kids); Sep 101 (16 kids);
Oct 103 (23 kids); Nov 139 (36 kids); Dec 86 (21 kids) – hub shut from 20th,"

This is a remarkable achievement and is a great credit to the dedicated team of volunteers who staff our thrice-weekly sessions, some of whom have been with us from the very start.

The merger of the Open House and Winter Warm Places teams after the end of last winter meant that we were able to operate for three, rather than two, afternoons each week. The consequence of this is that the library building is now open to residents every afternoon of the week, as well as Monday, Thursday and Saturday mornings, and this has created greater confidence amongst users as to when they may expect the library to be open.

Once again, it is pleasing to report that volunteer numbers remain healthy, and new volunteers have come forward to replace the few who have, for different reasons, retired from the roster.

As reported last year, it remains a disappointment that Rutland County Council continue not to see fit to undertake the redecoration work that the exterior of the library building so very badly needs. Does more need to be done by the Parish Council to bring this about?

My thanks are due to all who serve in the volunteer team, without whose commitment and dedication this operation could not happen. I should also like to thank Andrew Downing and Janet Gray for their enthusiastic and unfailing support in managing the team and liaising with the County Council.

7. Meadows Playing Field Management Association – Chairman Jo Report:

The playing fields continue to be extremely well used, not only by the hordes of children that clamber over and swing from the play equipment but, in one way or another, by most sectors of the Ryhall and Belmesthorpe community as well as visitors from outside the local area.

One Touch Football has continued to make good use of the facilities, with games and practice sessions throughout the football season. In previous years there had been problems of over-use by OFT, especially on Saturdays and during weekday training, with too many cars and people causing a nuisance to nearby householders as well as overwhelming the play area at times.

Consequently, at the start of the season it was agreed that OTF would reduce the intensity of its use slightly, with fewer games on Saturdays and weekday training spaced out over different days. This appears to have worked pretty well with fewer car parking conflicts and generally less crowding at peak times. In spite of some initial concern by OFT, they have found this less intense use to be better for them as well. Consequently, it has been agreed that they will continue to use Ryhall next season with a similar, slightly less intense pattern of use, which hopefully will be more sustainable for everyone.

After several years when there have been additions and changes to the play equipment, no major works are planned this year. However, we are always considering ways to improve things and suggestions are welcome.

On a sadder note, I'm sorry to say that Sarah Critchard, who has been the Charity's Treasurer for several years, has decided to step down, both as a Trustee and Treasurer, and, although she's not gone yet, I'd like to thank her for all the help and excellent guidance she has given to the Association during her time as Treasurer. She will be missed.

As a charity, we have just four trustees and would love to get more people involved in the running of the Association. There are lots of wonderful and constructive things that could be done down at the playing fields but we are held back by our lack of numbers. So, if there is anyone who would like to join us, either as a trustee or just an occasional helper, please let us know and we'll give you some insight into just what you might be letting yourself in for.

Finally, most people will have seen that the field next door to the playing fields is up for sale. The land was put on the market in February with an asking price of over £150,000 and, although final and best offers were sought by mid-March, the land is still listed for sale on the Richardsons website. Accordingly we have informed the agents on several occasions that the charity may be interested in buying the field but at a more reasonable price.

Obviously, buying the field would require careful consideration, as well as a lot of fund raising, but we are keeping an eye on things should the agents return to us to discuss options

8. Rachel Szyszka - St John's Church. I am a Lay Worship Leader at St Johns, we have no vicar at present. PCC are elected members of church congregation all have a strong interest in the church and is progression in the community. Church Wardens are working hard, finding people to take services and answering queries making sure the church is safe, and the building maintained. We give thanks to the Church Yard Champions for their hard work in keeping the churchyard looking lovely. We have lots of sub committees within the PCC a Restoration and Renewal Group, An Environment Group and more. The PCC are always happy to hear

comments or feedback questions from resident. We have been trying to make sure there is a weekly service. We would like to get more of the community involved and other uses for the church. With another hat on I am Tower Captain for the bell ringers group, we have had a good year with the Kings Coronation events, anyone wanting to learn a new skill come forward.

9. Ryhall Bowls Club – Chairman John Simpson.

The Bowls club has been in the village for 50 years, as our membership gets older we are trying to get new members. Lot of people see bowls as an old people's game, it is not – Do come and have a go. We are opening the green on Sunday for the season ahead. We play league matches on a Monday and Friday night and roll out on a Wednesday night and Saturday afternoon. People will teach you to play if you come and have a go, last year was successful in the Stamford league. We desperately need members not only for social reasons but financial as well. We continue to try and raise funds.

A Question was raised about the Petanque court. This was set up last year but with such awful weather was not well used. It was generally thought that this might be a good way to encourage a younger audience.

Rev. Andrew Hollins – Methodist Church Minister. Ministers have always looked after more than one church we collaborate well with St Johns doing joint school sessions telling bible stories and we also have been planning some children activities in holidays. Summer children's holiday club will be our next challenge. We have bucked the trend and are finding that our church attendance average age of our congregation has come down, we now have children and families most Sunday mornings. We do café church in the hall the first Thursday of the month, we have a coffee morning for friendship and companionship of the more elderly congregation. We have well maintained premises which is being used for various groups. I thank you for the invite tonight, our ministerial areas are changing so I will now be looking after Stamford though to Uppingham area but I am sure my colleague Becky will be here next year.

10. Michelle Nebel – Advertised the **Village Fete** July 13th . A great team is organising the fete again this year. Last year 50% of funds raised went to St John church, the other between the Village hall towards replacement of some windows, to the Messy Church and Play Group. All funds are ploughed back into the village. Please support this event.

Debbie Rolfe opened the meeting to general discussion which was
How to support the Bowls club
The need for a Youth group