

Committee Reports attached at the end of these Minutes

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR THE PARISH OF

RUDDINGTON HELD AT ST. PETER'S ROOMS ON

TUESDAY 5th 2011 at 7.30 pm

CHAIRMAN

Councillor J.V. Norton, Chairman of the Parish Council, took the Chair.

ATTENDANCE

15 Members of the public were present.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Mrs. M.G. Grice, Cllr. K.S. Piggott, Cllr. M. Walsh, Andrew Green (James Peacock Educational Foundation), Fran Dent (Ruddington Bowls Club) and Julie Lazonby (Ruddington Churches Holiday Club)

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th May 2010, having been circulated to every elector present, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the Minutes raised.

CHARITY ACCOUNTS

James Peacock Educational Foundation

In the absence of Mr. Andrew Green, the Clerk read his report in respect of the James Peacock Educational Foundation. She explained that the Charity is registered with the Charity Commissioners and constituted by Deed of Trust. The objects of the Charity are to assist by way of gift or grant the education of young people up to the age of 25 years who live, or whose parents live, in the Ruddington area.

During the year income amounted to £5341.95, a decrease over the previous year of £132.15. Total expenditure was £1936.35 including grants to individuals amounting to £295.12. All school children on transfer to secondary school are presented with a bible, dictionary and calculator and total expenditure in this regard was £1378.93.

The excess of Receipts over Payments for the year amounted to £3405.60. Total funds (at cost) as shown by the Balance Sheet now amount to £62856.85.

There were no questions raised by the electors present.

The James Peacock Bread Charity

Mrs. Kim Aspinall, the newly appointed Chair of the Trustees presented the following report on behalf of The James Peacock Bread Charity:-

Mr. M. Tailby, resigned as a trustee this year and leaves with our best wishes and thanks for 25 years unstinting work as a trustee and chairman. We welcome two new trustees – Rob Macshane and Peter Johnson-Marshall. The current trustees are: Mrs. Kim Aspinall, Chair; Mr. Peter Johnson-Marshall, Secretary; Mrs. Yvonne Clay and Robert MacShane.

There has been a turnover of 4 tenants at the Hareham Garden Allotments during the year and currently only one plot, No. 45, is vacant.

Following the installation of new gates and padlocks there have been no reported incidents of theft, although some greenhouses near Asher Lane have had panes of glass broken.

A substantial proportion of our rental income will again be donated to the Honeycomb with our usual request that the money is to be used to benefit needy people in Ruddington. Individual tenants have also donated vegetables to the widows of former allotment holders. This is in line with the Charity.

Our thanks go to those tenants who have contributed to the upkeep of the paths and hedges, but there remains some areas of concern, especially in the Eastern section and the stream crossing. The trustees will seek improvements.

The accounts will be prepared after the annual collection of rents on 12th April 2011. The trustees will ensure that there is no shortfall in this year's accounts.

David Hollingworth suggested that the new trustees may wish to pursue the position with regard to obtaining copies, or new, deeds as there is an ongoing dispute regarding the exact position of boundaries between the allotments and some properties on Musters Road. He reminded those present that the original deeds were 'lost' by a Solicitor during the 1940's-1950s and despite the efforts of the late Ken Marriott and himself several years ago, no progress had been made.

The Chairman thanked Mrs. Aspinall for presenting the report.

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE – presented by Councillor James Norton in the absence of the Acting Chairman, Councillor K.S. Piggott.

Councillor Norton gave a brief résumé of the work undertaken by the Amenities Committee over the past year. A copy of the full report is appended to these Minutes.

Chris Murden queried why the Parish Council was still proposing to install a seat on The Green at its junction with High Street, despite his previous objections to this. He said that in his opinion it would be dangerous to place a seat in this position, particularly in bad weather, as it has been known in the past for vehicles negotiating the bend in the road to mount the verge to The Green. He said that it was ridiculous to even consider putting a seat at this location. David Hollingworth re-iterated this concern and pointed out that the bollards in this particular area have been knocked down.

The Clerk advised that following the removal of the temporary seat at this location, the Parish Council received several requests from residents for a seat to be placed there as they considered it to be a good location which had been well used.

Mrs. Muriel Woodhead asked whether there was any chance of a seat being placed on The Green, again in the same position that the temporary seat was sited, at the junction of The Green and the road through to Leys Road. She advised that this seat was very much appreciated by residents coming into the village from the Leys Road/Moor Lane area. She also asked about a new seat being provided to replace the one currently located at the junction of Easthorpe Street and Loughborough Road. The Clerk advised that this seat belonged to Nottinghamshire County Council and it was therefore their responsibility to either clean it or replace it.

ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – presented by Councillor Nick Tegerdine

Councillor Tegerdine gave a brief résumé of the work undertaken by the Environment & Community Committee over the past year. A copy of the full report is appended to these Minutes.

David Hollingworth advised that over the past few months he has been in contacted on several occasions with the distributors of the Recorder following discovering large quantities of the newspaper 'dumped' in Church Street Car Park. He said he will continue to monitor the situation.

Chris Murden advised that he has been given a quantity of vouchers relating to the provision of school facilities by Sainsburys and asked whether these could be left at St. Peter's Rooms for collection by residents. Mrs. Barbara Breakwell advised that the vouchers are being collected by both of the schools in the village and suggested that he takes them there.

Arun Chopra commented on the phenomenal success of the website and suggested that it may be beneficial to set up a website forum, which he would be interested in helping with. He was advised that currently there is insufficient time for the office staff to undertake any more work associated with either the website or the Newsletter.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Tegerdine for his presentation.

FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE – presented by Councillor Peter McGowan

Councillor McGowan gave a brief résumé of the work undertaken by the Finance & Policy Committee over the past year. A copy of the full report is appended to these Minutes.

Mrs. Marion Pell asked about the cost of providing the signage in respect of dog control and the Clerk advised that the groundstaff are currently ascertaining the number of signs required. She commented that she hoped it was worth it!!

The Chairman thanked Councillor P.F. McGowan for his presentation.

REPORTS FROM LOCAL CLUBS/ORGANISATIONS

The Chairman advised that it had previously been agreed by the Parish Council that any Club/Organisation which received priority use of a Parish Council Asset, or had received funding from the Parish Council during the year, be requested to attend the Annual Parish Meeting to present a report on their activities.

Ruddington Bowls Club

The Chairman advised that apologies had been received from Fran Dent, the Secretary of Ruddington Bowls Club, but she had advised the Clerk that there was nothing further to add to the report presented last year.

Ruddington Local History & Amenity Society – presented by Peter McGowan

Peter reported that there are two arms to the History Society – one being the operation of the Village Museum and the other the Meetings of the Society. Meetings are held monthly between October and March and are very well attended, with speakers being invited to each meeting. During the summer months various visits to other areas are arranged and last year the Society visited Bunny. The Group was given a tour of the village, which proved very interesting, and refreshments were provided afterwards.

The Village Museum is operated by a Curatorial Team and opens from Easter until October. During other times, Members of the Society work on records and clean artefacts where necessary. They also deal with numerous enquires from all over the world from people wishing to trace their ancestors who lived in Ruddington.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business conducted.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.54pm.

Chairman

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 5th APRIL 2011

AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Recreational and Sporting Facilities

Jubilee Clubhouse

The Jubilee Clubhouse continues to attract users and is fast becoming an ideal venue for corporate events which do not overlap with junior football and other youth events. It is still hoped that at sometime in the future, some of the restrictions placed on the use of the building by Rushcliffe Borough Council, can be lifted or reduced to enable the premises to be used for some children's social events.

During the year, the Parish Council has had the alarm system modified which has helped to avoid the large number of false alarm callouts.

Also during the year, the Jubilee Clubhouse Liaison Group who meet twice a year, agreed a core use fee for the use of the facility by the football club. A formula was set for future years based on the number of playing weeks, the number of teams and an agreed rate. For the 2010-11 season this was £3 and the fee of £1080 was paid by the club on invoice.

Unfortunately, during the course of the season, one of the brick gateposts at the entrance to the Clubhouse car park was badly damaged by a vehicle, and for a short period one of the gates was secured locked for health & safety reasons and to prevent unauthorised access to the car park. The gatepost was completely rebuilt in December and the whole of the cost was paid by the vehicle driver's insurer at no cost to the Parish Council.

The building project has still not been signed off by the Parish Council as we are waiting for the contractor and architect to agree final works.

Play Areas

As in previous years, in May 2010, the play areas were inspected by Play Safety Limited and found the following:

Sellers Play Area – Risk rating LOW – No remedial maintenance recommended

Vicarage Lane Play Area – Risk rating LOW – No remedial maintenance recommended

Elms Park Play Area – Risk rating MEDIUM – Some works recommended to reduce the risk.

Following on from that report and despite the optimistic start to plan for refurbishing the Elms Park Play Area which was reported in the last meeting, the grant award of £30,000 from the Playbuilder Fund was a victim of the cutbacks and was withdrawn. However, successful applications for funding from Rushcliffe Community Partnership Board and the Rushcliffe Borough Council Capital Grant Scheme, along with funds

from the Parish Council's Repairs & Renewals Equipment Fund, meant that work on the Toddler & Teen and the Multi Gym Areas were able to proceed.

Work started in November and despite numerous unforeseen problems including weeks of snow, the contractors finished in February just leaving some final projects for the Parish Council groundstaff to complete.

The grand opening took place during half term, on Monday 21st February and invitations were sent to local schools and everyone who had contributed towards the project. In addition, play activities were organised in the Elms Park Pavilion which was a bonus considering the damp and cold conditions. There was an excellent turnout to this event and the play area has been well received by everyone who has used it. The Parish Council would particularly like to thank local businesses and residents who have made a contribution, no matter how large or small, to enable this project to take place.

In addition to all the work on the Play Area at Elms Park, Rushcliffe Borough Council's Local Improvement Scheme Team are planning to install a tarmac path for both pedestrians and cyclists which will run from the Elms Park entrance through to the Rushcliffe Country Park and Business Park. Following discussions with Parish Council staff, the construction will include some landscaping and tree planting, and the entrance gates will be replaced by the gates that were originally at the Loughborough Road entrance. This work will further enhance this popular facility in the village.

Following a number of complaints from residents about poor television reception due to the height and density of the leylandii trees on the Vicarage Lane Playing Fields, the Parish Council agreed for them to be removed. Several quotations were received and with the approval of Rushcliffe Borough Council, the trees were removed. Residents who expressed an opinion were very pleased with the results and the groundstaff were happy that the remaining deciduous trees would develop and mature.

On the same playing field, the Parish Council has replaced the path leading from Barton Close to the play area. Although this project was planned much earlier in the year, it was January 2011 before it was complete due to the poor weather.

The Parish Council asked NCC Highways Department to review the entrance/exit to the footpath on the edge of Sellors Playing Field as there appeared to be a need for a barrier of some sort. Highways agreed that they would install barriers and this work took place within weeks of the decision. The Parish Council now has to install a small section of ranch style fencing to complete the work.

In February 2011, the Parish Council agreed the first steps of a Dog Control Policy to encourage all dog owners to take responsibility for cleaning up after their pets. Areas of particular concern that would come under the policy would be all play areas and playing fields. Signage will be erected during the next few weeks.

Bowling Green

This facility continues to receive praise from everyone who plays there, both from the quality of the green to the quiet and beautiful location. Ruddington Bowls Club is actively looking for new members to ensure that the green is used to its maximum effect during the season.

Cricket

The planned replacement of the artificial wicket went ahead in April 2010 as planned.

Discussions with Ruddington Cricket Club which started in 2008 have continued throughout 2009 and 2010, with the aim of improving the facilities by installing practice nets and encouraging more young people to get involved. At the Amenities meeting in November 2010, representatives from the Cricket Club were in attendance and discussions were planned to encourage the club to thrive and attract youngsters to the sport. The Parish Council groundstaff are now looking for the best possible site for the practise nets which will be partly funded by a donation from County Councillor Reg Adair of £1500 and the Cricket Club's donation of £200 in addition to £5000 which the Parish Council had already included in the 2010/11 budget.

Village Hall

The Village Hall remains popular with dance groups and exercise classes and we are still turning away organisers who would like to use this facility – especially in the evenings. Unfortunately, the hall has been subject to several acts of carelessness during the course of the year including the breakage of about 30% of the crockery on one occasion and damage to storage cupboards on another occasion. The Parish Council has been unable to identify who was responsible.

St Peter's Rooms

Both the hall and the committee room continue to be in demand from people wanting to hire the facilities both for one-off events and for regular classes. It has even become necessary for the Parish Council Office to decline some regular weekend bookings to enable the rooms to be free for hire for children's parties, charity events and meetings. The Parish Council website has had a positive effect on bookings for all of the facilities available.

In May of 2010, it was agreed that as a result of increased demand, the Parish Council would offer a special arrangement for wedding receptions. The new deal would enable the venue to be available before the event for setting up and after the event for clearing away, at an all-in price.

Allotments

The Allotments' Competition was judged in July 2010 as usual, by an independent judge. Winners of the Thorncroft Trophy were Bob & Mary Smith of Paradise Gardens – in fact, 3 of the 4 awards went to tenants on the Parish Council Allotments. Awards and prizes were presented to those who attended the Parish Council meeting on 21st September 2010.

The demand for allotments continues to rise and most new applicants are delighted to be offered a starter plot of around 75 sq mtrs which is approximately ¼ of the original allotment plot size and currently costs as little as £10.50 a year. With the increase in the number of tenants, the Parish Council is allocating one of the less desirable plots on the edge of the gardens to be used for sheds and greenhouses to accommodate the requirements of new tenants. The revenue from these shed plots will fully reimburse the Parish Council for the loss of this shady allotment.

In the autumn of 2010, the Parish Council encouraged tenants who are pensioners to take advantage of the 25% discount that they are able to claim. The new Tenancy Agreement includes simple instructions for tenants to register for the discount and several tenants have taken advantage of this scheme.

The replacement of the old water pipework which was due to take place in the first few months of 2010 did not happen due to the poor weather. By the time conditions had improved sufficiently for work to start, the growing season was well under way and so work was postponed. However, digging started in February this year and whilst the area is currently looking like a building site, the finished result will be far more convenient for users.

Other amenities

Summer activities

Councillor Mrs Barbara Breakwell was actively involved in organising activities for the summer holidays using Surestart, Extended Services and a number of other agencies. As a result of her efforts the Parish Council agreed to allow the Summer Play Activities to use some of their venues free of charge during July and August. The project was a great success and will be provided again in the summer of 2011 although probably in a slightly different manner due to the cutbacks in service providers.

Car park

During the summer of 2010, work continued on the Ruddington Medical Centre which from time to time meant a reduction in parking in the Parish Council Car Park on Church Street. However, with some co-operation from Thomas Long, the contractors on site, disturbance was kept to a minimum and the workmen were excellent at maintaining goodwill by always being polite and helpful.

Vicarage Lane Cemetery

No further ash vaults have been purchased this year but groundstaff have prepared a base for headstones on a new section of graves. There is also ongoing work to establish the position of a leak to the water supply on site which is currently causing concern as we have had to turn off the supply until the leak is repaired.

Flawford Cemetery

The Clerk found copies of plans which have been used to help the groundstaff identify the outline of the old church at the Flawford Cemetery site. Materials to mark the outline were selected and approved, and this work has now been completed.

St Peter's Churchyard

During the course of the year, discussions have been ongoing between the Church and representatives of the Parish Council in respect of the maintenance of the churchyard and work which is required to some of the memorials. These discussions have been protracted and will continue in to 2011.

High Street Improvements

Whilst the repaving of the High Street was the project of Nottinghamshire County Council's Local Improvement Scheme Team, the Parish Council was actively involved in the planning of the scheme and helped with choosing paving colours and street furniture. The Parish Council Office also found themselves being a point of contact for residents who were concerned about the temporary one-way system in place during the work.

War Memorial

During the summer of 2010, the Parish Council sought quotations from numerous contractors to undertake repairs and maintenance to the War Memorial. This project is ongoing and we are seeking to obtain funding assistance from the War Memorial Trust before work commences. County Councillor Reg Adair has also suggested that the Parish Council applies to the Local Improvement Scheme for funding for this project.

The Village Green

Following the removal of the temporary buildings which housed the Medical Centre on the Green between December 2009 and August 2010, the contractors undertook their initial re-instatement work. During Spring 2011, a further inspection will take place by the Parish Council and further levelling, seeding, re-turfing and repairing of footpaths will be required before the Parish Council accepts that re-instatement is complete. In addition, Nottinghamshire County Council has donated a bench seat which, following popular demand, is to be installed at the junction with High Street to replace the one which was temporarily placed there.

Part of the agreement for the temporary occupation of the Medical Centre on the Green, was that the Medical Centre paid a charge to the Parish Council for the loss of the amenity. This amounted to £16,410 and has been “ring-fenced” until all the re-instatement has been completed to the satisfaction of the Parish Council. Once work has been completed, the Parish Council will be seeking opinion from residents as to how this money should be spent.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 5th APRIL 2011

ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Traffic Management

The Village Newsletter and website continue to highlight problems with HGV's using the centre of the village as a through-route. Residents become increasingly frustrated that the Parish Council is unable to act to stop these vehicles.

Residents have also voiced increasing concerns about parking in the village and suggesting that many of the parked vehicles belong to commuters using our roads and car park to leave their vehicles whilst catching a bus to the city. The Parish Council has surveyed the car park over several weeks and even at the busiest times, there was always at least one parking space available.

In November and December 2010, the village had a trial period of what a one-way system would really be like when work on block paving the High Street took place. To keep traffic moving and keep the workforce safe, Highways felt it was necessary to divert traffic around the village making High Street and Church Street one way. This caused many heated debates with residents, business owners, commuters and authorities all having an opinion on what will and what won't work. It remains to be seen whether Highways are considering a one-way system in the future or not.

Highways Work

In April 2010, roadworks to repair the gas mains at the junction of Loughborough Road and Kirk Lane caused long tailbacks but fortunately due to good weather the work was quickly finished and traffic returned to normal.

In May 2010, the Environment & Community Committee was asked to comment on improvements that it felt could be made to make gritting more effective in the village. The Parish Council wrote to Nottinghamshire County Council's Highways department asking for clarification on Health & Safety Issues, for areas where there is a predominance of elderly people to take priority when gritting and to ask that grit is cleared away when the problem of ice and snow has passed. The early heavy downfall of snow in the autumn put these plans to the test and generally the feedback from residents was better than in the previous couple of years.

Over the year there have been numerous smaller issues which have affected village roads and the Parish Council always reports these problems as soon as they are advised about them. Despite being asked by the Drainage Flood Risk Officer at Nottinghamshire County Council to identify locations where gullies are regularly blocked, problems continue to be reported every time there is a heavy downpour.

The main event of the year was definitely the Christmas celebrations which the NCC Local Improvement Scheme Team organised for the completion of the new block paving on High Street. Santa was in attendance, along with the Ruddington & District Choral Society who sang carols and the Ruddington Army Cadets Corps of Bugles and Drums also entertained.

There is unanimous approval for the work done and the only negative feedback has been why vehicles are being allowed to park on the paving which will ultimately cause damage. The Parish Council has contacted the Local Improvement Scheme Team and Notts County Councillor Reg Adair about this problem and unfortunately it seems that there are no plans to install any additional bollards to prevent parking on the new paving.

In March 2011, the Highway Design Department at Nottinghamshire County Council advised that they were proposing to reduce the speed limit on Landmere Lane to 30 MPH and Loughborough Road – the old section – to 40 MPH. Following consultation with residents and other departments, the proposal was revised for both roads to be 30MPH.

In addition, there are continuing efforts by a group calling themselves “Pedals” to get the underpass which links Sharphill and Landmere Lane re-opened. There are numerous issues which need to be satisfied before this proceeds including consent from the landowner, the height of the underpass and access. This is an ongoing campaign.

Planning Applications

During the course of 2010, the number of planning applications increased slightly on the previous year and there have again been applications which have caused concern for residents.

September 2010, the Parish Council received an application for the change of use from offices to flats, along with a second floor extension to form 5 flats in total at 24c and 24d High Street. The Parish Council objected to the application and it was subsequently refused by RBC Planning Department. However, in February 2011 the applicant re-applied and although the Parish Council has objected again, we have been advised that on this occasion planning consent has been given by the Borough.

When Grices moved out of the village and Sainsburys took over the premises, residents asked why they had not been given an opportunity to voice their approval or disapproval of the change. However, as the property remained as a retail outlet, no approval was required other than applications for fascia changes, signage, etc. An application for an external ATM was withdrawn and the application for a licence to sell alcohol does not come within the jurisdiction of the Parish Council.

There were three special planning meetings called to discuss applications received during the summer and Christmas recesses. Two meetings in August discussed a total of 6 applications and 5 applications were discussed at the planning meeting on 11th January 2011.

Residents regularly attend meetings to speak about specific planning applications – whether it is to promote their own application or to voice an opinion on someone else’s application. The Parish Council encourages residents to come forward with their opinions and suggestions so that they can be taken into account when making recommendations to the Borough Council.

In March 2011, the Nottinghamshire Association for Local Councils wrote to the Parish Council detailing the loss of funding for Planning Aid and asking that parish councils voice their concerns about this removal with their local MP.

Planning Appeals

As reported at the last Parish Council Meeting, an appeal was lodged by the Thompson Jewitt Family Trust for outline planning permission to develop land at the rear west of 218/220 Loughborough Road. The application was to build 8 dwellings with access from Elms Close and to remove 10 poplar trees. In June 2010, the Parish Council was advised that the objection had been upheld and that the appeal was dismissed along with the refusal of costs.

In October 2010, an appeal was lodged by Hamilton Building Contractors Ltd for the development at 6 & 7 Paget Crescent. Both the Parish and Borough Councils objected to the outline application for a residential development of 14 dwellings with access from Ashworth Avenue and both also objected to the appeal. The appeal was subsequently granted and consent given to the application.

Finally, an appeal has been lodged for the application for various extensions and a new detached garage to be built at 50 Kirk Lane. At this time, the Parish Council has not been advised of any decision.

Community Bus

This is a very popular service bringing less mobile residents into the village on Wednesday mornings and is aided by Parish Council funding. Its popularity is such that on some days two trips to the same areas are required although this is often as a result of the shopping trolleys which take up space on the bus. Appeals in the Newsletter and on the website have brought more volunteers on board but more are needed for this very rewarding job. Volunteers tell us that they have a lot of fun and that those who use the service are always happy and grateful for the help they receive.

Annual Garden Competition

Thanks to the determination of Parish Councillor Mrs Muriel Woodhead, entries for the Annual Garden Competition were well up on the previous few years with 14 entries of a very high standard. The competition was promoted on the website, in the Village Newsletter and with posters in local shops and businesses, but councillors also put application forms through letter boxes of houses where it was apparent that the owners were enjoying their gardening. The growing season was late starting as a result of poor weather in the spring but judging took place in July and presentations in September as planned.

Mr E Radford won the Front Garden Competition, and Mrs P Summers won the Window Boxes/Baskets/Planters Competition. The overall winner of the Harold Wroughton Memorial Trophy was Mrs Summers.

In addition to the traditional Garden Competition, this year will see the launch of the photographic competition where residents are invited to take a picture of their pride and joy and send it in to the Parish Council for judging. Entries are invited between May and the end of August and prizes will be awarded in the same way as the Garden and Allotment Competitions. It is also hoped that instead of a presentation taking place during the September Parish Council, a special event will be held when all photographic entries can be displayed. More news on that later in the year.

Policing

During the course of the year, larger Local Area Group Meetings have taken place and Parish Councillor Mrs Barbara Breakwell has attended both as a member of the public and as a Parish Councillor. These meetings are Police Priority Setting Meetings and their aim is to identify issues that particularly affect the local district. Burglary, auto crime and anti-social behaviour continue to be areas which are highlighted for the Ruddington area.

At one of the meetings it was also confirmed that funding for PCSO's has been secured for another 2 years although where they spend their time will depend on where they are needed most.

Beat Manager, PC Ann Gill makes regular contributions to the Village Newsletter highlighting issues which are relevant for the time of year and recommending steps that residents can take to make the village safer for everyone.

CPRE Best Kept Village

As in previous years, Ruddington entered the Best Kept Village Competition and letters and posters were distributed to local schools and businesses asking for support. The website and newsletter both carried articles about the competition and asked residents to help get the village up to scratch.

Judging took place sometime between the 7th & 25th June and the overall feeling was that the village was not quite ready or at its best. Unfortunately Ruddington failed to make the top four for its section this year but the judges comments were helpful and it is planned that these are taken into consideration for this year's entry.

Bi-monthly meetings continue to be held with Streetwise management to discuss both new and recurring issues which require attention.

Valerie Gillespie Cup

This year, Parish Councillor Barbara Breakwell entered Ruddington's "Greening Campaign" for this award. The Greening Campaign received complimentary comments from the organisers and although it did not win the award, Ruddington was encouraged to enter again in future years.

Hanging Baskets & Christmas Trees

As usual, the groundstaff put hanging baskets up around the village and local businesses made a donation towards their cost and promised to keep them watered and looked after.

At Christmas this year, the Clerk was forced to find an alternative supplier for Christmas trees to decorate the village and the church. Fortunately, the new supplier has proven to be very useful and also cuts the bases in readiness for putting into brackets at a much cheaper rate than our own groundstaff can do. The Environment & Community Committee, the Amenities Committee and the full Parish Council are all trying to identify a suitable site for a village Christmas tree but this is proving to be a little harder and more controversial than first thought. Hopefully, a decision will be made before Christmas 2011.

Consultation Documents

As many consultative documents are lengthy and complex, Committees ask that at least one Parish Councillor thoroughly reads the document and reports to the committee on the content. The documents mentioned below can be seen and read at the Parish Council Office.

Draft Library Service Contribution Policy Consultation

Parish Councillor Allen Wood reported that he had fully read the document and that in his opinion there was nothing contained in the document to disagree with.

Consultation of the revised draft of Rushcliffe Borough Council's Statement of Licensing Policy

Parish Councillor Allen Wood reported that the statement appeared to contain nothing new from that which is current practice. He also recommended that the Parish Council and/or residents who had concerns over a change of use of a premise in the village for adult entertainment, should read the appropriate legislative framework prior to making a decision.

The Village Guide

The Village Guide is updated every 3 months with the assistance of Parish Councillors, and copies are supplied to the library and doctor's surgeries for new residents to the village. Like the Village Newsletter, it is produced by the Parish Council office so that costs are kept to a minimum and it has shown to be very useful for those residents who do not have access to, or chose not to use the internet.

The Website

The Village Website goes from strength to strength and reported 5,500 visitors in February 2011, a record since it started in September 2009. Letters and emails from residents show that it is being watched and that people are responding to its content.

The Parish Council is able to use this facility to communicate with residents in a way that the Village Newsletter and Village Guide cannot manage, with items of local news being updated regularly throughout the month. Parish Council Agendas and Minutes can be checked by any resident at any time even when the office is closed.

The site also presents information about the whole of the village and not just issues related to the Parish Council. Details about classes, meetings, organisations and events are published along with a History Corner and Gallery of photos from the past.

RuddingtonParishCouncil.gov.uk is an ongoing project and will continue to develop and be updated on a weekly basis.

The Parish Council Newsletter

With a team of around 6 or 7 contributors, the Village Newsletter now produces a regular 8 page issue and around 1200 copies are distributed to local shops and businesses each month. In February 2011 it celebrated it's first anniversary and appears to be very popular with residents. Like the website, we can judge the success of the Newsletter by the response to its content, and articles asking for help or information always get results.

To save money, the Newsletter is produced by the Parish Council Office and taken out by the Parish Council staff.

The Greening Campaign

Although the initial Greening Ruddington Campaign ran in 2009/10, the village was still being hailed as the first in Rushcliffe to get on board with the initiative. Councillor Mrs Barbara Breakwell has been asked to give talks to other villages as they prepare to launch their own campaigns.

Recycling

In July the Recycling Officer from Rushcliffe Borough Council presented pictorial samples of new sectional waste bins which could be used on the High Street and other busy areas to separate general waste from bottles and cans. The Committee eventually agreed on a black and gold waste bin and these were incorporated in the block paving scheme which the Local Improvement Scheme Team installed in the winter of 2010.

The Recycling Officer also agreed to supply the Parish Council Office with a Battery Recycling Box which he would arrange to have removed and replaced when necessary.

It has also been noted that the 3 parking spaces which Rushcliffe use for recycling in the centre of the village are being kept much tidier although there is generally an overflow immediately after Bank Holidays which is only to be expected. Streetwise are quick to get the area tidied again once they have been informed.

Twinning

Following a campaign which ran in the Village Newsletter and on the website, four residents of the village showed an interest in resurrecting the Twinning Association. Whilst it was agreed that there was perhaps not enough interest to run the association again, the four residents were put in touch with each other to see whether they might be able to take something forward.

Rushcliffe Community Awards

The Rushcliffe Community Awards took place on Thursday 11th November 2010 at the Becket School in West Bridgford. Ruddington Parish Councillor Mrs Barbara Breakwell won the award for Building Stronger Communities –

I quote: "Barbara volunteers as a Ruddington Parish Councillor and a school Governor. Barbara is an asset to her community, she cares for and supports young people and families, organises events and activities and helped the village get a new play area. Barbara is very proactive and frequently helps at a school and nursery."

The Parish Council would like to offer congratulations to Barbara and thank her for all her help in the village.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 5th APRIL 2011

FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

The name of this committee is a clear indication of its purpose – to manage the financial side of the Parish Council and oversee all expenditure to ensure that the best value is always achieved. Both the Environment & Community Committee and the Amenities Committee refers its plans for expenditure to this committee before any decisions can be taken. It is also primarily responsible for reviewing policy decisions before they are taken to the full Parish Council. It has three members from each of the other committees so that all sections are represented.

The Parish Council was selected to receive an intermediate Audit Report for the accounts to 31st March 2010 as a result of having a precept over £200,000 per annum. The external auditor found just one issue which required attention, this being the review of Risk Assessments facing the council. This matter has been dealt with and is detailed within this report.

In a year which has seen drastic cuts in most sectors, the Parish Council took great care to maintain the current level of the Proposed Parish Council Precept without any increases. The budgeted Precept for 2011-2012 equates to a charge of £97.53 per annum on a Band D property which is **another** slight decrease on last year and the fourth consecutive reduction.

During the course of the year, the Parish Council has undertaken a complete review of its Risk Assessments, including Fire Risk Assessments, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health and Manual Handling. Whilst these reviews are well under way, the issues raised will require an ongoing investment in time and money to bring the amenities up to date and within the recommended guidelines. To date, the Parish Council is acting within the timescales recommended by the assessments.

The Parish Council Office has been long overdue for replacement computers and systems to help with the smooth running of council affairs. During March 2011, new hardware was installed and the office staff are managing to get to grips with new software.

The Parish Council has had two ward vacancies during the 2010-11 year; one at the end of November and another in February 2011. Both of these resignations have been within the permitted 6 months before a scheduled election and therefore did not require the Parish Council to take action to fill the vacancies.

The James Peacock Bread Charity

During the course of the year, there have been numerous discussions in respect of the James Peacock Bread Charity and to what degree, if at all, the Parish Council should be involved. Representatives from the Hareham Gardens allotment site have requested that the Parish Council assist with the running of the allotments and have representation on the Board of Trustees. To date, the Parish Council has been unable to establish its position regarding any formal involvement despite contacting the Charity Commission but these investigations are ongoing and hopefully might be resolved during the current year.

Dog Control Policy

As a result of continuous complaints from residents and particularly users of Parish Council amenities, the Parish Council has established a policy for dog control on its amenity sites and specifically on play areas. Following discussions at the Amenities Committee and the subsequent Parish Council Meeting, it was decided that dogs would be excluded from all children's play areas and must be kept on a lead on the playing fields where football, cricket and bowls occur. The situation will be closely monitored but it is hoped that as a result, it might not be necessary for football and cricket officials to perform "poo patrol" before they are able to play. Signage will be posted and it is also hoped that a doggy bag dispenser will be installed on Elms Park for a trial period to encourage dog walkers to "pick up".

Meetings of the Parish Council and its Committees.

Meetings of the Parish Council and its three Committees now receive additional publicity by posting dates on both the website and in the Village Newsletter. Residents are also able to view agenda's prior to each meeting and research Minutes of meetings which have already taken place.

There are 6 Parish Council Meetings held each year and meetings of the Amenities, Environment & Community and Finance & Policy Committees fall between each Parish Council meeting. Members of the public may attend any, or indeed all of the meetings and are allowed to speak on agenda items during the adjournment. Planning applications are considered at the first meeting after which they have been received and a list of planning applications is also on the website. In addition, plans are displayed on the internal notice board adjacent to the office door. In the event that an application is received during a recess, or a decision is needed before the next meeting, a special planning meeting will be called and advertised on the notice boards and on the website.

Parish Council Surgeries continue to be held on the 2nd Saturday each month, except for August and December, at St. Peter's Rooms between 10am and 12 noon. This is an opportunity for members of the public to meet with and talk to a Parish Councillor, a Borough Councillor or a County Councillor without the formalities of a council meeting. Appointments are not required and issues which affect the Parish Council will be referred to the Clerk for action and will then be discussed at the next Parish Council Meeting. On some of these dates, you will also find representatives from your local neighbourhood policing team available for you to speak to if you

wish. As before, you can find a full list of these dates on the website or the notice board.

Major capital projects

The project of the year was the refurbishment of the Elms Park Play Area which opened to the public in February 2011. This huge development was made possible by additional funding and donations received from John Hallatt, Nottinghamshire County Councillor Reg Adair, Proludic Limited, a Rushcliffe Borough Council Capital Grant, Rushcliffe Borough Councillors Mrs Barbara Venes, Mrs Sue Bennett and Peter McGowan, a Rushcliffe Community Partnership Reward Scheme Grant and Sainsburys Local. The opening event enjoyed refreshments supplied by the Co-op and Thomas's, and Rushcliffe Play Forum were on hand to keep youngsters entertained.

Staffing

There have been no changes to the Parish Council's permanent staff during this year.

Grant Aid

During the course of the year, the Parish Council receives requests for assistance from different groups and organisations and these requests are put to the Finance & Policy Committee or Parish Council for consideration. Depending on the impact the organisation has on the residents of Ruddington, the Committee votes on whether or not to make a contribution. The following are organisations which have benefited in the last 12 months.

Rushcliffe Community Voluntary Service (Transport Scheme)	£50 donation
Woodley House Monthly Social Events for Residents	£250 donation