

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT 7.30 PM ON THURSDAY 29 APRIL 2021
HELD VIA ZOOM DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Present

Councillor I Henderson, Chairman (in the Chair)
Councillor Mrs J Coles
Councillor M Daw
Councillor C Doolan
Councillor A Pitt
Councillor Mrs D Weir
Parish Clerk – Nicola Overall

District Councillors – Councillor R Hales & G Illingworth
County Councillor – Councillor J Cooke
10 members of the public

The Chairman, Councillor Ian Henderson welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked those present for taking the time to attend the meeting.

1. Apologies

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor B Sandford.

2. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18 April 2019

It was proposed by Councillor D Weir and seconded by Councillor J Coles that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18 April 2019 having been previously circulated, be signed as a true record.

3. Councillor J Cooke - Warwickshire County Council

County Councillor J Cooke

This last year Coronavirus has dominated activities & Services run by WCC. I have trawled through my reports and made a selection that gives a flavour of WCC work. I start with one from March 2020.

Coronavirus scam warning from Action Fraud

The moment that the virus became an issue Trading Standards started receiving reports. In the first few months a number of Warwickshire residents were defrauded, some running to many thousands of Pounds. Over the last year these frauds became more sophisticated and ambitious, Consequently more victims suffered. Now fraud is also being detected on the financial assistance being distributed by Councils and the Government.

Democracy

The County Council meeting scheduled for April 2020 was cancelled and fairly swiftly after that all full council and committee meetings met virtually by MS Teams. So too did members seminars and Group meetings. I think that members have adapted to it but still it is difficult to remember to unmute! I believe that come July this year some councils will start to meet again in person but I suspect some meetings will continue to be done virtually.

New Stroke Service provision in Warwickshire

The three clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) that plan and buy health services in Coventry and Warwickshire decided to implement plans to commence new stroke services.

This decision was taken after full consideration of the outcome of a lengthy public consultation which ended on February 2, 2020. Recommendations from the public consultation will be taken into account in the implementation phase of the model.

Implementation of the new model was put on hold until the current pressures on the NHS caused by COVID-19 are over. The three CCG's are now being merged into one!

Waste & Recycling

Early on in the Lockdown WCC took the decision to close the Waste & Recycling Tips for social distancing reasons following advice from the Government. This led to WDC not collecting green waste due to the vast increase in Grey bin waste. This Green was reinstated in May

As from Monday 18th May 2020 most WCC operated tips re-opened including Cherry Orchard in Kenilworth. In order to safely manage numbers at the centres, and to minimise the effects of traffic in the areas, WCC introduced an online booking service which is still in place nearly a year later.

Warwickshire Working Together

Across Warwickshire, individuals and groups started working closely with Warwickshire County Council to support communities and one another to get through the Covid-19 crisis.

The collective efforts of the public, voluntary and community sector with planning support from military services were able to help the county's most clinically vulnerable residents through the early stages of the pandemic. Many thousands of food parcels and essential supplies were delivered to vulnerable and isolated residents who had no means to get supplies themselves. Lots of these support services are still in place but their scope has been reduced.

Warwickshire County Council says thank you to PPE suppliers

Warwickshire County Council is grateful to local companies, charities, community groups and residents, who have been helping with the supply and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to protect frontline staff..

Warwickshire businesses re-purposed production to make a range of protective items, such as aprons and visors, while other local firms have generously donated PPE equipment. On a smaller scale, individuals and craft groups came together virtually to create 'scrub-hubs' to create supplies of PPE (see <https://scrubhub.org.uk/>).

WCC Social Distancing Proposals in Kenilworth

WCC brought forward proposals that would have closed Warwick Road. There was a huge public reaction from the town opposing the measures, principally because of the effect that the displaced traffic would have on surrounding roads.

The three County Councillors assisted by the ward District Councillors, plus the huge public outcry convinced WCC not to proceed with closing Warwick Road. However, a number of proposals including the closure of Station Road at the Warwick Road end and reducing the speed limit in Warwick Road were introduced. Some planters on Warwick Road were relocated to assist with social distancing.

County Council presses for County Wide Unitary Authority

The government's decision to recommend changes to the structure of local government for the first time since 1974 saw a flurry of activity in the County even before the publication of the White Paper which is believed it or not has still to be published.

First out of the blocks was Warwick & Stratford Districts pushing for a merger into a so called "Super District." But this was swiftly followed by the County Council Cabinet moving to press for a takeover of all Warwickshire Districts & Boroughs to form a County Unitary Authority.

Help is available for people who may be struggling to cope.

Warwickshire County Council set up a hotline on 0800 408 1447 for people who need urgent help to access food and well-being support during these difficult times.

The hotline was set to provide rapid response to people extremely vulnerable to Covid-19 and isolated without support. Despite the pausing of the Government shielding programme, and relaxing of some measures, the hotline remains a vital point of contact for people in need of help to support themselves and their family.

Coventry and Warwickshire introduce Integrated Care Records

This will mean a doctor in a hospital, or a paramedic who attends a 999 call will be able to access the same crucial information as a GP, such as details of allergies and current medications, bringing potentially life-saving benefits. With appropriate permissions and consent, this information will be available 24/7 to everyone who needs it to treat a patient.

Currently, local health and care services hold separate pieces of information about patients which isn't easily accessible between different organisations.

Great news for cycling in Warwickshire as Warwick confirmed as host for Birmingham 2022 cycling road race

The historic St Nicholas Park will host the start and finish of the cycling Road Race event at the Birmingham 2022

Commonwealth Games, offering spectators in Warwick the opportunity to see world-class sport on their doorsteps.

Approximately 160 cyclists from across the Commonwealth will take part in the two Road Race events held at St Nicholas Park.

Situated in Warwick town centre, set in 64 acres of stunning landscape, and with views of the world-famous Warwick Castle, the popular park will provide a picturesque backdrop for the event.

Mental health services

Worry and anxiety are common problems, but the lockdown situation may make this worse for some members of our community.

To help with these pressures, the County Council put together mental health advice and resources to offer tips and advice at this uncertain time. These include: [Wellbeing for Warwickshire](#), [Togetherall](#), [Warwickshire Safe Havens](#) and [RISE](#) for young people. [Every Mind Matters](#) also has practical advice on how to look after mental wellbeing while staying at home. A full list of the services available can be found on the County Council website: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mentalhealth>

County Libraries

While All Warwickshire Libraries are closed for browsing, the library service has offered the 'Click and Collect' service that operated earlier this year, whereby customers can order books online or by telephone to collect from libraries across the county.

The County Council is reassuring customers that they don't need to return their library books during lockdown. All fines will be waived so people can keep hold of their books and stay safe at home.

For more information on how to access library services during lockdown, visit <http://library.warwickshire.gov.uk>, call 0300 555 8171

Kenilworth Library to get fresh look for 2021

Kenilworth Library is currently undergoing a makeover, which will give it a fresh, bright look for 2021, The library will have a complete refurbishment with a new layout, new furnishing, shelving and carpet to give it a fresh look, and it will be completely redecorated with many improvements. Reorganising the layout will make the best use of the space available.

Stanks Island and Birmingham Road improvement works.

WCC has announced the opening of the improvement works to help ease traffic congestion around Stanks Island and Birmingham Road during peak periods.

The scheme was designed to improve traffic circulation during peak periods, address traffic queues on the A46 slip roads and prepare for future predicted traffic increases. Air quality will be improved with the reduction in stationary traffic while allocation for greener travel has been made with pedestrian and cycling facilities being provided at various points throughout the works. Traffic control signals that can detect vehicles and adjust their settings to respond to fluctuations in traffic have been installed to minimise queuing and help improve traffic flow. Shared pedestrian and cycling facilities have been provided to create better links between the town centre, residential and business areas, towards Budbrooke, Hatton and the rail station.

Warwickshire County Council approves opening of children's home in the County

Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet has approved that a WCC operated, Ofsted registered, residential children's home will be opened for up to four Children in Care, in late Autumn next year. This is the first time that the county will have run such a facility since the 1980s.

Beware Fake COVID-19 Tests Warn Trading Standards

Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards is warned consumers to beware of scammers offering bogus COVID-19 tests and fake 'COVID free' certificates.

Warwickshire Trading Standards investigated a case in which a consumer may have unwittingly paid over £100 to fraudsters for a 'quick-turn-around' COVID-19 test and received a fake 'all-clear' certificate in return.

New cycle route from Kenilworth to Leamington approved by Warwickshire County Council

WCC Cabinet approved plans to develop the Kenilworth to Leamington Cycle Route scheme (K2L) to fruition - from feasibility designs, right through to finally awarding the contract for construction on this exciting new cycle route.

K2L will be a 5 km dedicated off-carriageway cycle route connecting Kenilworth and Leamington Spa along the A452 and B4115, including a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Avon at Chesford. Funding of £4.749 million from the Capital Investment Fund, was originally approved in November 2019.

New £1.5 million grant scheme will help businesses Adapt & Diversify

WCC is inviting small businesses in the retail, hospitality, tourism & leisure sectors to apply for a range of grants from its new Adapt and Diversify grant scheme.

This new fund is designed to support those small businesses most adversely affected - those in the retail, hospitality, tourism and leisure sectors and their supply chains.

Grants ranging from £2,500 to £5,000 are to be made available towards the costs of specialist advice – for example, accountants, legal advice, digital specialists – or up to £20,000 for accessing specialist expertise and purchasing equipment or refurbishing property that will help the business to diversify their offer and safeguard their immediate future and the jobs of their workforce.

£1 Million Green Shoots Community Climate Change Fund is now open for applications

On 6 October 2020, WCC's Cabinet approved the launch of a new £1 million community fund for local schemes that will have an impact on Carbon emissions and help address the climate change emergency in Warwickshire.

The fund is now open for its first round of applications, looking to support community and voluntary projects that achieve the following:

increase the adaptability and resilience of Warwickshire to the effects of climate change

reduce impacts on the environment, particularly regarding climate change

ensure funded projects benefit the wider Warwickshire community.

<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/greenshootsfund>

4. Councillors R Hales & G Illingworth - Warwick District Council

Clearly, as with all similar organisations, this has been a challenging year for the Warwick District Council.

Your District Councillors have been able to take part in your Parish Council meetings held remotely and have dealt with a number of issues in the Parish.

All the Warwick District Council meetings including Committees have had to be held remotely although showing them live on the Council YouTube site has meant that more of the public have seen them than when they were in Leamington Town Hall. The public have been able to take part in Council, Planning, Regulatory and Licensing Committees under modified arrangements so local democracy has been maintained. Unlike some other local authorities which extended the period of office, the Chairman of the Council, Cllr George Illingworth, handed over the role in a virtual Annual Meeting last May. His successor has unfortunately had a virtual year.

Many of the services of the Council, such as collecting waste and recycling, have been maintained without pause during the year and credit is due to the teams who have adapted to the situation. Most of the office-based staff have been working from home and departments such as planning and enforcement have faced many difficulties, but all functions and services have been maintained.

A number of staff volunteered to move to the shielding hub when it was setup by the County and have ensured that people were looked after and received food and other essentials. In particular the homeless have been taken off the streets wherever possible.

From various Covid support schemes the District Council has distributed Restart Grants to date totalling £7,423,388 to 945 businesses and Additional Restriction Grants totalling £3,659,000 to 1,668 businesses severely impacted by the restrictions. This includes just under £300,000 to businesses and organisations in the Rowington area including hospitality venues and village halls. The finance team have made great efforts to get the money to where it is needed and as a result we are one of the best performing local authorities distributing a very high percentage of the available money. Credit is due to Cllr Richard Hales as Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader of the Council. The Council has not only faced increased costs in these conditions but also a reduction in income from areas such as car parks and business rates. However as part of our commitment to the Climate Emergency we are allocating £500,000 into an account to support projects such as renewable energy, including wind farms, as well lending to healthcare providers in the most economically disadvantaged areas.

Whilst we have agreed a balanced budget for next year the future is still uncertain and finances will need to be tightly managed. One way we are intending to contain costs is by closer working with Stratford on Avon District Council. We are already sharing senior officers and we are now investigating a possible merger into a Super District. Work is already underway on a combined South Warwickshire Local Plan where Cllr John Cooke plays a leading role as Portfolio Holder for Development.

5. Chairman's Report – Councillor I Henderson

The past year has probably been the most challenging in the history of Rowington Parish Council.

We have been unable to meet face-to-face since March 2020 and we have all had to become used to Zoom and associated technology in order to continue to operate. I am very grateful to everyone who has done their best to adapt to this new way of working.

We have all missed face-to-face meetings, but we have been able to operate successfully throughout the year and the Parish Council has met its statutory and other obligations. We were well prepared for this in advance of the first lock-down, having previously approved delegated decision making in certain circumstances.

I am also delighted that so many members of the public were able to join our Zoom meetings during the year and contribute to our discussions.

In the course of the last year, we have welcomed 2 new councillors (Anne Pitt and Chris Doolan) and sadly said farewell to David Lane and James Moore. We are grateful for the contribution they both made.

On a personal note, I find being a Parish Councillor quite fascinating and I'm learning a lot. We are looking for two additional Councillors, so if you can spare a few hours a month, please get in touch with us via Nicola, our Parish Clerk. It's a great way to find out more about the area and put something back into the community.

The Parish Council has met 10 times in the last year and we have published meeting agendas and minutes on our website <http://rowingtonpc.org.uk/>. All meetings are open to the public - unless we go into a short confidential session.

Rather than repeat information that is already on our website, I just want to highlight a few matters from the past year:

We have considered 10 planning applications during the year, which is much fewer than usual, no doubt due to the impact of the Covid lock-down. One application was particularly contentious and notwithstanding strongly held views by many residents, we were unable to persuade the Planning Committee to reject the application. We were grateful for the support provided to us by our District Councillors and also the conservation officer at Warwickshire County Council.

I don't want to give the impression that planning matters represent the only activity of the Parish Council. Other regular features include:

The playing field continues to be inspected on a bi-weekly basis as part of our public liability insurance obligation. This task is shared between Councillors. Planned maintenance is regularly undertaken, and reactive works are carried out when required.

The Parish Council often acts as a focal point for the reporting of local issues which are then re-directed to those at the District or County Councils. Typical issues are: potholes, damaged verges, blocked gully's and damaged signage. We also take an overview of footpaths and bridleways throughout the Parish.

We continue to support our two local churches – St Luke's in Lowsonford and St Laurence in Rowington, the village halls in Rowington and Lowsonford and the Parish Records, with regular donations.

We also co-ordinate weekly inspections of the two defibrillators located in the Rowington and Lowsonford Village Halls. This is part of the requirements of the insurance cover that goes with the equipment. We also replace the pads and batteries on a regular basis.

The Parish Council's website, www.rowingtonpc.org.uk is an important source of information and we encourage everyone to visit the site regularly. Many of us use the Nextdoor Rowington App and find that useful for communicating urgent or local information. Approximately 67% of households within the Parish are signed up to use the app and we successfully used the emergency broadcast facility once during the year in order to warn residents about particularly high levels of Covid infection in January 2021.

One of the few benefits from the lockdown is that levels of burglary and associated crimes in our area are much lower than in previous years. There is no room for complacency and we continue to monitor crime rates on a monthly basis.

The highlight of the year has been the receipt of approximately £90,000 in Community Funding. We have a number of exciting projects currently being considered and hope make to make some decisions about this over the next few weeks.

Finally, I must thank my fellow Councillors and Nicola Everall our Parish Clerk for their support over the last 12 months. I'm also very grateful for the support provided by our County and District Councillors: John Cooke, George Illingworth and Richard Hales.

It's been a challenging year but we're now in a strong position to move forward as the lockdown restrictions are slowly being lifted. I'm very much looking forward to resuming face-to-face meetings and engaging directly with residents once again.

6. Reports from Organisations

Lowsonford Village Hall – Maurice Daw

Lowsonford Village Hall has been closed since March 2020 due to the Covid restrictions. It is hoped to open from May 17 2021, but this depends on the Trustees approving new policies and procedures, a risk assessment and a track/trace system. The Hall is open for the May local elections, under the jurisdiction of Warwick District Council. The Hall has received financial support during this period from Warwick District Council. He Trustees are grateful for this help and, in particular, the advice from Councillor Hales.

Whilst the Hall has been closed, the hall has been inspected daily as part of the insurance conditions. The mains water pipe has been replaced after a major leak, and new heaters installed. The Helen Darby room is being upgraded in early June. This completes the full refurbishment of the Hall. The Trustees are grateful for the support of Rowington Parish Council and a plaque has been erected to thank the benefactors of the programme inside the Hall. Once the Hall is open, the Trustees will be grateful for any bookings, advertising or word of mouth support to get the Hall being used again.

Rowington Village Hall – Stephen Williams (read by the Clerk)

There is little to report because the hall has been closed since March 2020 as a result of the Government restrictions relating to the Covid pandemic.

As a result, income has been confined to grant aid received from the District Council. This has enabled the hall to meet its liabilities in relation to the provision of services etc.

It is hoped that with the gradual relaxation of restrictions it will be possible to reopen the hall in May or June so that some activities can be enjoyed again.

Allotments Association – John Greenaway

I am sure that last year was one of the most difficult and extraordinary of all time. Corona Virus has devastated many lives and adversely affected us all. I am pleased to say however that in spite of this terrible virus the Allotments were able to remain open throughout. It was deemed that there was plenty of room to allow social distancing and so members were, with sensible precautions, able to attend their plots and carry on the general maintenance of the allotment ground.

It is with great sadness though that I have to report the loss of one of our oldest friends and members Lionel Deeley who died in the early hours of 20th December. Lionel eventually lost his long and very brave battle with cancer and he will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

With the loss of Lionel our membership is down to 11 with Mark taking over Lionel's half plot for the coming year. We will, when Corona restrictions are lifted, re allocated his plot to one of the people on our waiting list. As Mark has paid the rent on Lionel's plot for last year our income has remained at £280.00. This being made up of 11 half plots @ £20 and 2 full plots @ £30. (David Ashcroft is currently maintaining his daughters plot.)

As per our tenancy agreement our rent is reviewed every 3 years the next review being due at the end of this year. Our current annual ground rent is £229 which we pay to the Parish Council who in turn pass it on to the Almshouse Charity who are the land owner. When our rent is paid we have a surplus of only £51 inevitably this proves to be insufficient to pay our annual expenses such as equipment service, petrol/2 stroke, shed paint, hedge cutting, clear up days etc. We therefore send out a second invoice half way through the year to make up any deficit.

This usually results in our total annual rents being £40 per half plot and £50 per full plot which is approximately the national average, in fact Warwick district Council state on their web site that their biggest allotments cost no more than £30 per annum.

It is essential that we maintain our membership as without the help of many strong willing hands we would be unable to continue to maintain the allotment grounds, hedges and ditches as we have done since 2008. There is no doubt that since Rowington Allotment Association was formed we have greatly improved the ½ acre of ground that the allotments are on. Our willingness to be good tenants is demonstrated by, in spite of not being responsible for the hedge and ditch on the south side of the land; we have in fact trimmed the hedge, cleared the ditch bank and dug out the ditch every autumn. This alone has saved the land owner many thousands of pounds over the 12 year period. I believe that anyone visiting the grounds could have no doubt how much the plots are used and what an important facility the allotments are to Rowington and surrounding communities. We do have a waiting list but when people enquire about an allotment they are told that as there are only 13 plots it could be some time before one becomes available.

Regretfully because of Corona Virus we have been unable to hold our usual meetings at which we would normally discuss any matters of concern and decide on current issues and ways that we may continue to improve our facilities. We have however been able to continue to hold two working days last year, one in spring and one in autumn. This allowed us to ensure the upkeep and continual improvement of the allotment grounds as previously detailed.

We have a grass cutting rota that helps to ensure that the communal grass is cut each week but as you may be aware the installation of a ground based heating system for the bungalows has resulted in a great deal of the communal grass path in front of the bungalows being churned up. This will need considerable work to rectify. Our belief is that it will need to be dug over and new top soil added to allow new turf to be laid. This work is the responsibility of the Almshouse Charity who have via Mike Wade promised to get their contractor to carry out the repair. Until this is done we will continue to mow what grass there is.

We only have a 12 month lease agreement with the Parish Council, and so can be given, via the Charity, a years notice at any time. This is something that we have asked to be re negotiated as 12 months is far to short a period for an allotment agreement. I will again be taking this up with the P.C. and if necessary with the Arms house Charity.

We believe that the allotment grounds are an extremely important part of our village life and are grateful for the continuing support of the community and the Parish Council in ensuring their growth and continuation.

Thanks to all our members who have gone out of their way to carry out necessary jobs throughout the year, special thanks to Freda who continues to maintain our wildflower garden, to Mark who has done such a good job with Lionel's plot and to Sue who keeps the muck heaps topped up each year bringing bags of horse manure most days in her own car.

As already stated, we are very keen to ensure that the allotments, that we have all worked so hard to improve over the last 12 years, continue to be well maintained and that they remain an important asset for Rowington and the surrounding area.

For any further information or to be added to the waiting list please contact either John or Sue on 01564 784352.

Cricket Club – Mr B Taylor (read by the Clerk)

After 134 years Rowington CC is still going strong.

One matter of preplanning, may concern the Queens 70th Jubilee next year. The Cricket Club will try and keep the Sunday of the relevant week free in case the village wants to do a celebration as we did for her 60th.

Jane Ryland Charity – Stephen Williams (read by the Clerk)

During the course of the past 12 months the Charity has made grants to assist a number of residents of the parish for essential home improvements, laptop computers, chiropody, travelling expenses, heating costs etc. Grants were also offered to the Lapworth Surgery volunteers to cover delivery of prescriptions and the cost of car journeys to vaccination centres. There were no major payments for projects at village halls, churches or other local institutions because of the Covid pandemic. As usual, the Charity sent Christmas payments to those residents considered to be in need of some financial help. We maintain adverts on notice boards and hope that these will bring those in need of help to our attention.

Churches of St Luke & St Laurence PCC – Mrs D Dillon (read by the Clerk)

2020

As a result of the Coronavirus epidemic, as with many other organisations, activity within our churches has been severely reduced. From 22 March regular services ceased to protect both church officers and parishioners

This report provides an update on not only our regular activities, but also on what is going on behind the scenes to ensure that your churches continue to be a support to the Parish community.

Services

From 22nd March 2020 our regular services were suspended by the Church of England and the government to protect church officers, church goers and parishioners.

We did hold a Covid safe service on Remembrance Sunday and a service on Christmas Day though sadly without any carols being sung due to current restrictions.

This year a service was held on Easter Sunday which was attended by 21 people which was heartening.

Reflecting the national approach, we are slowly unlocking church activity with 2 services a month planned until June when we will agree the way forward. Details of services for April and May are posted on the church noticeboard and are also widely publicised on our Facebook page.

St Luke's Icon Centre

Due to restrictions this has also been suspended. It is hoped that the group will re-commence in June.

Maintaining our churches

There is always work to be done to ensure that our churches are well maintained and ready to provide a warm welcome to our Parishioners. Whilst the church has been closed we have been able to have extensive work done. The church has been completely re-wired and the old and aged lighting system has been replaced with the latest LED technology to take us forward in the 21st century! The difference is spectacular and we hope for works to be finished by the end of April.

Work on the leaky roof has been rectified, though we have recently lost a number of slates during the winter weather which will shortly be replaced.

We very much appreciate the contributions received from Parishioners last year towards these works.

Baptisms, Wedding and Funerals

Sadly, most of the life event activity was suspended during this year. However, we have re-arranged four weddings which will take place this summer and we have a baptism booked in for October. We continue of course to conduct funerals and burials in line with current Covid restrictions.

Should you require any of these services please contact Di Dillon at di.hibbs@btinternet.com or on 07979915983.

Rowington bell ringing band

Sadly, the bells have been silent for too long but once again we hope restrictions will be lifted from June and you will hear the bells being pealed at the weddings.

Should you be interested in joining the bell ringing team (or indeed just having a go!) please contact Graham Hames at grahampeterhames@aol.com.

School Visits

Again, these were suspended in 2020. We hope these will resume when it is safe to do so for all parties. These provide a unique hands-on opportunity for pupils to explore the church and the grounds and to learn how to pray and understand the role of the church in the community.

Out-reach activities

This work has also been suspended as a result of Covid. However, as soon as we can we will continue to support the Coventry Food Bank and the Cathedral School Project in Uganda through our fund-raising activities.

Ferncumbe News

Ferncumbe News is edited in our Parish but serves the whole North Ferncumbe Benefice with news, events and interesting articles about what's going on across our villages.

We know that many of you have missed the FN dropping on your doormat during the past year. Re-start dates are currently under discussion including how we ensure that our loyal team of volunteers who deliver the magazine are kept safe. All we can say is 'Watch this space'!

St Laurence Facebook

St. Laurence's Facebook pages are very active and updated on a daily basis by our editor, Jude Palmer. Here you can find prayers, latest updates from the Diocese and Coventry Cathedral and all news relating to St Laurence.

In addition, the pandemic has provided an opportunity to expand our offering including: Bible readings every Sunday; a nightly prayer at 7.00pm; LIVE Compline services on a Thursday at 7.30pm with copies of the service posted for you to follow and Monday morning muses at 9.00am.

Look out also for the glorious pictures of the church and churchyard taken by Jude as she walks the dog.

Facebook has provided a much needed link and support for many people. If you'd like to keep in touch, please find us at [@stlcrw](https://www.facebook.com/stlcrw)

Fundraising

We are very fortunate to have such a beautiful and historic building at the heart of our village.

As a Grade 1 listed building, St. Laurence is an expensive building to maintain, keep safe and open. When we can we have many regular fundraising activities which help towards the funding of works and maintenance :

300 Club

This is managed by Amy Simpson and Jude Palmer who we thank for all their time in administering the Club. We hope to continue to grow our membership as this is a key fundraiser for the church accounts – and you can win £25 a month! See details on the church noticeboard.

Bring & Buy Parish Book Sales

This has for many years been a regular source of income to support the church funds and we know it is much appreciated. Clearly these have had to be suspended and we are unable to confirm at this time when it will be safe to re-start. As soon as we can we will let you know.

In the past we have been able to support projects close to our hearts at St. Laurence – locally to help raise funds for books for Northleigh House School, and for the book project at the Cathedral School out in Uganda.

Parish quizzes.

The Parish Quiz went on-line via Zoom at Christmas! It was greatly enjoyed by all who took part and provided us with a sense of some normality. It is hoped that we will soon be able to enjoy the hospitality of The Rowington Club once again.

Special events

We are happy to host special events at St Laurence.

If you would like to hold a fundraising event at the church, please contact the Church Wardens.

Rowington Parish Church Council

Would you like to join us and play a significant part in the life of your parish church? There are currently a number of vacancies on the Parish Church Council. As a PCC member, you can help to decide what 'promoting the whole mission of the church' looks like in Rowington. PCCs are responsible for caring for the church buildings, for the parish's finances and for safeguarding, among other things.

If you could spare a few hours a year to support your local church, please contact the Churchwardens or message via our Facebook page.

We look forward to welcoming you at our churches and to your continued support during these challenging times.

Old Folks Party Fund – Mrs A Pitt

At our last meeting , Thursday 9th January 2020 , the Committee were planning trips and events for our guests to enjoy throughout the year.

A fund raising tea and cake event at Wren Hall in April, a Summer trip to Bourton on the Water in June, All Sorts Sale in September , ending with Christmas luncheon on 9th December.

As Covid 19 gathered momentum and claimed more victims, we all just wanted to stay safe and prayed that our guests did too. Christmas cards were sent out, hoping to see everyone and meet up in 2021.

On 2nd March 2021, we sent a card to Brian Dalby, he and his wife Sue are the caterers for all our events, and we had been told he'd been hospitalised with Covid, but thankfully was making a good recovery.

We are hopeful that some form of celebration will be permitted this Christmas 2021 as we are fully aware of the isolating impact these lockdowns have had on our dear guests.

Rowington WI – Mrs J Hames (read by the Clerk)

We have managed to keep together the ladies of Rowington W.I. despite the pandemic causing havoc in the community. My committee and I have organised walks, picnics in members gardens, pub lunches, when permitted, and croquet with tea and scones on the lawn. This was during the warm summer months, but during the Winter and indeed this Spring we have had to resort to online meetings.

Fortunately, all but two of our members are on the internet, which means that I have been able to keep in touch with them weekly. Zoom has played a large part in our committee meetings, our monthly meetings and indeed our A.G.M., and has helped us all to keep in touch over the last twelve months. At Christmas our committee took gifts round to the members, which were gratefully received and much appreciated.

Until we can again meet in the village hall and the ladies feel that it is safe to do so, we shall continue with our meetings online.

Royal British Legion – Ian Henderson

Due to the lock-down we have not been able to have any of our usual social events this year.

I am delighted that we were able to lay wreaths at both St Mary's Lapworth and St Laurence Rowington on Remembrance Sunday, but sadly we were unable to have standard bearers present.

We were able to do some socially distanced fund raising and amazingly raised over £3,000 for the annual Poppy Appeal. Great credit is due to the new Poppy Appeal organiser - Mrs Sarah Marsden.

May I just remind everyone that we would welcome new members. It is not necessary to have served in the Forces to be a member of the Legion, but just to be an adult in sympathy with our aims and objectives.

Almshouse Charity – Roger Shepherd

The Charity has ownership of 19 properties in The Avenue and Beech Close, of which 13 are single occupancy and the remainder are doubles.

The Trustees were aware that the cost of running each heating system, using old fashioned electric heaters was becoming more expensive, and the Trustees, therefore agreed to join the Green Energy revolution by installing a Ground Source Heat Pump System in each property, which in simple terms is drawing warm energy from the ground to provide hot water to heat the radiators.

Each property had a bore hole drilled to a depth of 100 metres to draw up the warm air. The drilling began in October 2020, which was a slow process due to the wet weather and confined spaces. There were further problems with the supply of heat pumps due to Covid, and the final five properties will be completed in May 2021.

So far, heating bills, have been vastly reduced.

7. Public Forum

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Mr J Greenaway enquired as to the progress regarding proposed plans at Playing Field and the Chairman confirmed that historical covenants were being investigated with the Land Registry to ensure full compliance.

The formal meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed.....Designation Date.....