

**ROWINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES OF A MEETING
HELD AT LOWSONFORD VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 13 JULY 2023 AT 7.30PM**

Present

Councillor A Coleman (Chairman)
Councillor J Coles
Councillor A Marsden
Councillor T Parker
Councillor A Pitt
Councillor T Remment
Parish Clerk – Nicola Everall
District Councillors R Hales & D Armstrong
2 members of the public for all or part of the meeting

37. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor D Weir, District Councillor K Aizlewood and County Councillor J Cooke.

38. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

39. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 June 2023

It was proposed by Councillor T Remment and seconded by Councillor A Marsden that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2023, having been previously circulated were agreed and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

40. Questions from Members of the Public

Mr R Shepherd invited all members of the Parish Council and public to attend a meeting of the Ferncumbe News Team on 19 August 2023 at St Laurence Church. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss finance and subscriptions and put forward any new ideas.

Mrs Y Joyce of Clinton House (application W22/0367) conveyed that following the refusal to grant planning permission by the LPA, Mr & Mrs Joyce had appealed to the Planning Inspectorate. Mrs Joyce asked members to consider writing to the Planning Inspector before 28 July 2023, to express their support in the application.

This was considered by Members later in the meeting under Planning Matters.

41. Report from County Councillor – Councillor J Cooke

In his absence, the Clerk Councillor Cooke's which is also appended to these minutes.

42. Report from District Councillors

District Councillor R Hales read his report which is also appended to these minutes.

43. Planning Matters

a) The following planning matters were reported.

Application Number	Application Details	Comments required by	PC Decision	WDC Decision
W22/1561LB & 1560	Oldfield Farm, Old Warwick Road, Rowington Proposed raising of roof to rear extension and installation of French windows, alterations to windows, internal alterations to layout including removal of interior wall	27/10/22	No representation	
W22/1937	Shepherds Fold, Finwood Road, Rowington Conversion of stables building to one bedroom dwelling	13/01/23	No Representation	Refused
W23/0493	The Lyons Farm House, Rowington Green, Redevelopment of farm building to provide three 'barn-style' dwellings	22/05/23	No Representation	

W23/0551 & 0552LB	Whitley Elm, Case Lane, Rowington Erection of single storey side extension, porch, 2no. replacement windows, garden wall repair and a detached two bay carport. Associated internal works	18/05/23	No Representation	No objection
W23/0574	Erection of first floor rear extension. Address: 2 Quarry Farm Cottages, Rowington Green	22/05/23	Support	Refused
W23/0586	High Chimneys Farm, Old Warwick Road, Rowington Construction of new timber framed store for the keeping of firewood and potting of Christmas trees	12/06/23	No objection	
W23/0647	Ketsoc Lawns, Nunhold Road, Pinley Green Demolition of a previous extension to the dwelling. Proposed increase in ridge height to create additional internal floorspace with the addition of two dormer windows to the front elevation	15/06/23	No objection	Granted

b) The following planning applications were considered and decided:

W23/0710 – High Cross Farm, Back Lane, Rowington - Erection of single and two-storey rear extension, and terrace.
The Parish Council raised no objection to the application, subject to the proposed extension not being in excess of 30% of the original property.

W23/0718 Holywell Farm, Holywell, Rowington - Proposed extension to existing stables, erection of new log store, solar panels
No objection

W23/0738 – Oakdene, The Cumsey, Pinley Green - Erection of a two-storey rear extension, a single storey side extension, a front porch, a two-storey front infill extension and a front dormer.
The Parish Council raised no material objection to the application, subject to the proposed extension not being in excess of 30% of the original property.

c) Appeals

Clinton House, Old Warwick Road, Rowington - Description of development: Erection of single storey dwelling Application Reference: W/22/0367 Appellant's name: Mr & Mrs Joyce Appeal reference: APP/T3725/W/23/3322154
Appeal start date: 23/06/2023

Members had initially supported this application, but changed the decision to that of 'no representation' following information from the LPA. However, on 27 September 2022 and following deliberations, members of the Parish Council agreed to stand by its original decision made in May 2022, which was to support the application.

Furthermore, given the information (above) put forward by the applicant, members were minded to submit a letter of support to the Planning Inspectorate.

It was therefore RESOLVED unanimously that the Clerk should draft and circulate a letter for approval by members, for submission to the Planning Inspector to take the Parish Council's views into account when considering this Appeal.

44. Playing Field

a) Outstanding Reports – None

b) Future Inspection Dates – Councillor D Weir – 23 July 2023

c) Play Area Project/CIL

The Clerk confirmed that Kompan had agreed to commence the installation of new equipment, remove some of the old play area equipment and create the path on 7 August 2023. Works would only take place between the hours of 8am to 5pm on weekdays.

The Clerk was to arrange for the gates to be unlocked. A 20ft x 8ft container would be situated in the car park for the duration of the works.

The Clerk was to organise Play Safety to attend as soon after the works to carry out the usual Annual RoSPA inspection. It was agreed that an Official Opening of the play area should be held on a Saturday in the middle of September 2023. The closure of the play area would be notified on social media.

Bins on Playing Field

Members were asked if they could consider emptying the bins on and around the playing field when carrying out their inspections.

Fence

It was noted that the fence between Clarendon Cottage and the foot path was leaning over and would soon be likely to cause an obstruction. The Clerk was asked to write to the property owner asking if they could address the matter for safety reasons.

44. Reports from Village Halls

Lowsonford Village Hall

There were no matters to report.

Rowington Village Hall

There were no matters to report.

45. Highways, Footpaths & Transport

Incident on 17 March 2023

Councillor J Coles reported that the inquest regarding this incident was to be held on Friday 14 July and Councillor J Coles was to attend.

Litter Pick Lowsonford - Sunday 4 September from 10am to 12 noon

The Clerk had liaised with the District Council to take up the offer of borrowing litter pick equipment. Only litter picks were available, and these had to be collected and returned, which did not seem viable, considering the cost to purchase such equipment.

Therefore, it was agreed that the PC should purchase its own litter pick equipment, which could be used again and loaned out to other local organisations.

Skip at Canal Entrance – Lowsonford

The Clerk had contacted The Canal & River Trust to ask why there was a skip located at the entrance to the canal basin as it was deemed unsightly and whilst the enquiry had been acknowledged, no definitive response had been received.

46. Meetings & Training Days

Councillor J Coles attended the Warwick Rural West Safer Neighbourhood Engagement meeting on 12 July and gave an overview of that meeting, which was to engage and relay any local and current issues. The minutes of that meeting will be issued by PCSO Jack Power & PC Ben Brewster and circulated to members.

Councillor J Coles suggested that members observe the Warwickshire Connected website.

47. Car Park Ownership

The Clerk reported that the Parochial Church Council (PCC) would make arrangements to ensure that the land would be registered with the Land Registry to secure ownership to the PCC and future claims. The section owned by the Parish Council, to the right of the entrance, would be clearly stated as would the right of access to the playing field.

48. Correspondence

WALC Newsletters

WDC – Code of Conduct Training 27 September at 6.00pm

2023 Boundary Review

49. Finance

a) Paid during the month:

None

b) To be paid:

Clerks Salary	£727.05
HMRC	£202.39
Wybone Dog Foul Bin (BACS)	£259.28

Adams Tree Surgery	£804.00
Rowington Village Hall Tennis Club Licence Fee (BACS)	£450.00
Rowington Village Hall Room Hire (BACS)	£100.00
AMW Lawn Care (BACS)	£304.05

c) Received:

Tennis Club Licence Fee	£450.00
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d) Parish Notice Board

Following the report at the last meeting of the unrepairable notice board at Rowington Village Hall, members had researched various styles and costs.

It was agreed unanimously that the Clerk should order one 1100mm x 850mm aluminium board in green with a curved top. 2 x A2 poster cases and 2 x 76mm diameter aluminium posts, in green at a cost of £815.00 plus VAT.

e) Grant Funding – The Clerk had received a request for grant funding of £900 to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) as a contribution towards the mowing and maintenance costs of the grounds. £750 for St Laurence & £150 for St Luke’s.

The Chairman provided an update on Parish Councils providing funding to churches for consideration by members and relayed an important update on the issue of local councils giving grants for church property for community benefit.

There is no current case law to resolve the question of whether the 1894 LGA, which states that parish councils cannot give funding to ecclesiastical charities, but Section 137 of the LGA 1972 allows parish councils to give funding to charitable bodies.

Because the law is unclear this can discourage parish councils from providing funding for churches, in case they attract a legal challenge. Ultimately it would be for the courts to determine any prohibition from the 1894 Act. Any court action is likely to be expensive and time consuming which is why Parliament should clarify the point with a specific provision in legislation. Such an amendment would repeal/amend Section 8 of the 1894 Act and in doing so remove the barrier to a parish council, should it wish to do so, providing financial assistance to a church or any other religious body building/s.

A full report from the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance a group within Historic Alliance, has provided reams of evidence of refusal by parish councils to provide financial assistance or grants to churches and the subsequent financial problems this has caused for many smaller parishes with churches and land which are not only important to local residents, but also of national importance.

The Church of St Laurence is Grade 1 listed and dates back to mediaeval times.

Whilst researching Historic Buildings, the Chairman discovered the case of Norton Lindsey Parish Council who had been making a grant towards the church clock, the church meeting room and the churchyard.

However, in February 2020 the PC was informed that this was illegal. It minuted a decision to campaign for a change in the law and set up a working party to research the issue. The Working Group produced one of the most interesting discussion documents HRBA have encountered, which includes transcripts of emails discussing various legal points and brings home the reality on the ground of the uncertainty in the law, when the Parish Council of a small village is told that regular grants, they have been giving are illegal.

As a result of this work in January 2021 Norton Lindsey Parish Council decided to proceed with the grants, writing a careful minute to justify the decision.

The Government has now agreed to table its own amendment to the 1894 Act under the Levelling up and Regeneration Bill.

This will address the existing confusion in law. This proposed amendment is supported by NALC, SLCC, the equivalent body in Wales, the Church of England, the Catholic Church, the Methodist Church etc.

The law needs to be clarified so that Parish Councils can make grants based on public benefit, not of the religious affiliation of the organisation which happens to own the property concerned.

In the absence of any definitive case law at this present moment in time, it is proposed that Rowington Parish Council make payment towards the grounds mowing at St Laurence Church / St Lukes Church as has been the case for over 30 years.

This payment will be reviewed annually by the Parish Council, pending any new Government legislation.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor A Marsden and seconded by Councillor J Coles and RESOLVED unanimously to grant the PCC a total of £900 towards the mowing and maintenance costs for St Laurence & St Lukes.

50. Parish Events

Village Show at Fleur de Lys – 5 August at 2.00pm
Mikron Theatre at Rowington Village Hall 19 August at 7.30pm

51. Items for the Next Agenda

No matters were raised.

52. Future Meeting Dates

Thursday 10 August 2023 (Provisional)	Rowington Village Hall
Thursday 14 September 2023	Lowsonford Village Hall

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.00pm.

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

Report from County Councillor J Cooke

Stay safe in the sun this Summer

During the summer we may be spending more time outside, this is great for wellbeing as including more activity into daily routines and being outside in nature can help to reduce stress and improve mood. However, remembering to stay sun safe is important, don't forget to;

Drink plenty of water, low sugar squash or make your own ice lollies.

Make sure sunscreen is at least factor 30, not past its expiry date and applied regularly when outdoors.

Avoid physical exertion and being in direct sunlight in the hottest parts of the day.

Take lots of water with you if you are travelling.

Never leave children or animals alone in a closed, parked vehicle.

Warwickshire's Strategic Economic Plan opens for public views

Warwickshire's Strategic Economic Plan is an abridged document that links to a survey and highlights the work that the county and its partners are doing with three pillars that are key to developing an economy that is fit for the future that will grow and create jobs for all of the county's communities and will be sustainable and contribute to the county's net zero carbon emission targets.

Feedback will be incorporated into a broader final economic strategy for the county.

The Ambitious Growth pillar encompasses supporting businesses with high growth potential to start or scale ie grow organically at a manageable rate and a future economic strategy will seek to increase the numbers of businesses accessing finance. It highlights how the county council will continue to foster research and development.

The infrastructure of the transport system and digital connectivity and ensuring that land supply meets the needs of growth are key aspects.

Talent – attracting and retaining it with high-quality employment – is integral to Warwickshire's growth and there are plans to work with the Department for Business and Trade to investigate potential for exporting.

Leamington Farmer Given Suspended Prison Sentence and Banned from Keeping Animals

A Leamington Spa farmer who committed a number of animal health offences including causing unnecessary suffering to a ewe that had to be euthanized has been handed a 16 week prison sentence, suspended for 12 months and banned from keeping animals. The prosecution was brought by Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards.

Mr Ewan David Wells (age 64) of Main St. Hunningham, Leamington Spa had already pleaded guilty to three Animal Health offences in December 2022 and appeared at Coventry Magistrates Court on 29th June 2023 for sentencing.

The offences spanned a period between 1st March 2019 and 1st March 2022 and were discovered following visits to the farm by Trading Standards Animal Health Officers and Veterinary Inspectors. One offence related to causing unnecessary suffering to a ewe and the other two to failing to take such steps as were reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure that the needs of animals for which he was responsible were met to the extent required by good practice.

Views sought on Warwickshire's refreshed Education Strategy

The County Council is currently reviewing its existing strategy and seeking views on whether the proposed principles and priorities are the right ones to inform the direction of travel on education until 2030.

The proposed principles within the refreshed strategy are:-

Enabling the Best Outcomes for All – The Council will lead, facilitate and enable partnership working so that learners can reach their potential, find fulfilment and participate in their communities.

Aspiration and Inclusion – The Council is committed to equal opportunities for all learners; taking a strengths-based approach, to enable learners and their families to be resilient.

A Learner-Centred Holistic Approach – The Council will put learners at the centre of service design to ensure it can provide the most appropriate support, ensuring their journey is supported through complementary and not competing services.

Early Identification and Help – The Council builds in, at the design stage, ways to identify need early, recognising that prioritising prevention and early help is likely to deliver more effective outcomes for learners and families, and at the same time likely to be an efficient use of Council resources.

High-Quality Service – The Council will provide timely and reliable service, with clear and helpful information in line with its statutory duties to all its customers – whether they are families, schools or the wider public.

Effective Partnership – The Council will work across the whole of Warwickshire’s education system to facilitate meaningful and effective partnerships.

Residents can complete the survey here:-

<https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk/insights-service/education-strategy-2023-2030/>

Barnardo's to lead SENDIASS in Warwickshire Empowering Families and Supporting Children

Warwickshire County Council is pleased to announce that effective from July 1, 2023, Barnardo's, the UK’s largest children’s charity, has been appointed as the new service provider for the Warwickshire SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice, and Support Service).

SENDIASS is a vital service that empowers parents, carers, and young people by providing essential information, impartial advice, and expert guidance regarding the legal aspects of SEND support. The service plays a pivotal role in ensuring that parent carers and young people are empowered and fully understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to the Code of Practice, thus enabling them to make informed decisions and actively participate in their SEND journey.

With a shared commitment to providing exceptional support to families and promoting the well-being of children and young people, Barnardo’s is well-positioned to seamlessly continue the essential work of SENDIASS, building on the strong foundation laid by KIDS, the previous provider.

For more information on the new Barnardo’s SENDIASS service click www.warwickshiresendiass.co.uk

Warwickshire County Council is asking for the thoughts of parents and carers in the region who currently, or may in the future, use childcare such as childminders and day nurseries.

Childcare plays a crucial role in supporting families and ensuring the wellbeing of children. It enables parents balance work and family responsibilities, provides a stimulating environment for early childhood development and offers opportunities for children to socialise with others. However, the needs of parents and carers will differ depending on their circumstances. Through this survey, the council aims to gather valuable insights and experiences to support the future development of childcare services across the county.

[Completing the survey online](#) should take no longer than 10 minutes.

Expanded Safe Haven service to provide improved mental health support to Coventry and Warwickshire residents

The new Safe Haven Coventry and Warwickshire service will provide community-based, non-clinical support for those who have feelings of mental health and emotional distress.

Designed for residents age 16+years across Coventry and Warwickshire, and for those times when life challenges start to overwhelm and impair daily living, the service will provide open access drop-in support and will supplement existing NHS mental health crisis or emergency care by increasing the ways in which local residents can access mental health support. It will also help relieve pressure on other mental health services by allowing for earlier interventions.

Building on the existing Safe Haven provision that started in 2018, Coventry and Warwickshire Mind will be expanding the service to better support under-served communities and, following review and wider engagement with local service users, develop aspects of the service to meet identified needs such as easier navigation, more widely accessible face-to-face support, and a ‘no-appointment-necessary’ approach.

The service takes a ‘single front door’ approach so access to this all-age service will be through a single phone number, a single website and open-access drop-in venues.

The new service, which starts on Saturday 1st July 2023, is commissioned by NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board and is being operated by Coventry and Warwickshire Mind. For more information go to www.cwsafehaven.org.uk

Warwickshire County Council launches a Social Fabric Fund

An innovative new fund that will invest in the power of communities has been given the green light by Warwickshire County Council.

The £2.5m Warwickshire Social Fabric Fund will provide a route to explore the development of local projects and initiatives that will have a positive impact on communities.

The fund will look to allocate resources across the county to areas where they can have the most impact and will empower communities to be part of the solution; focusing primarily on the 22 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) identified in the Countywide Approach to Levelling Up.

The Social Fabric Fund supports the Council's commitment to harness the power of communities to create opportunities and tackle inequalities, building on the strengths and assets that already exist.

Through the fund there will be dedicated support available to communities to develop proposals that look to invest and build social infrastructure, this could cover a range of services and facilities that meet local needs and contribute towards creating a good quality of life.

WCC is working with Heart of England Community Foundation to operate the fund.

The fund will be complemented by dedicated community workers, provided by [Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action](#) (WCAVA) who will work proactively within neighbourhoods to provide support with their funding proposals.

The Social Fabric Fund has a total value of £2.5million with an indicative split of 40% revenue and 60% capital funding and will run over two years up to 31 March 2025.

More information about the Social Fabric Fund is available on the Heart of England Community Foundation website: www.heartofenglandcf.co.uk/warwickshire-county-council-social-fabric-fund/

Report from District Councillors

New Council Administration & Councillors for Abbey & Arden

After the May election the council now has a new Green-Labour administration. The councillors for Abbey and Arden are:

Kyn Aizlewood – Kyn.aizlewood@warwickdc.gov.uk

David Armstrong – David.armstrong@warwickdc.gov.uk

Richard Hales – Richard.hales@warwickdc.gov.uk

Please feel free to contact us with any issues. In Abbey and Arden we are particularly focusing on development of the South Warwickshire Local Plan and making sure we have the chance to hear the views of local residents. Further information is available at:

www.southwarwickshire.org.uk/swlp/faqs.cfm

WDC No Mow May

Contractors continue to work flat out to catch up with grass cutting across the district, following Warwick District Council's participation in the 'No Mow May' campaign.

This is the first time that the Council has committed to the national 'Plantlife' scheme, whereby mowing in many areas was suspended in May, a key time for the nurturing of plants and insects, with additional cuts rescheduled for later in the season. The move follows the declaration of an ecological emergency last year and is in line with many other local authority areas across the country.

However, the cold weather in the early spring combined with a warm May has meant that the volume and scale of the workload when cutting was resumed on 5 June has been far greater than anticipated, with crews also facing a number of mechanical issues.

Whilst progress has been much slower than the green spaces team would have wished, their aim is to prioritise areas where there are safety concerns, such as road junctions and communal areas.

As part of a review of the scheme residents were invited to take part in a survey for which more than 4200 responses have been received.

Royal Pump Rooms – Customer Service Update

At their first full meeting Warwick District Council's new Cabinet approved the design and budget for the previous administration's plan to relocate the Council's Customer Service operations.

These will be relocated to the Royal Pump Rooms in Leamington Spa.

In making their decision a detailed analysis was made of the feedback and questions raised by members of the public and regular users of the current facilities.

The change to the location of the Council's services will follow the vacation of its current HQ at Riverside House later this year and the transfer of the office space to Saltisford, Warwick, where a lease will be taken with Warwickshire County Council for use of the building.

A requirement for the continuation of face-to-face customer provision in a town centre location and a need to reduce overall running costs has prompted the Council to see how it can make more effective use of the public buildings in its ownership including the Town Hall and Royal Pump Rooms.

Detailed plans for an enhanced customer services operation have been put forward. With no suitable rooms available in the Town Hall the best solution was found in the Pump Rooms which offers more accessible spaces and has a visitor information centre and library already established.

Councillors also needed to balance the needs of existing customers, exhibitors and other members of the local arts community who trade in the shop and gallery, with those who will require confidential support from the Council in areas such as housing and finance, with future consultation with stakeholders proposed in order to seek an appropriate alternative location for the retail space.