

RYHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on Tuesday 9th April 2024

Present: **Chair of the meeting** **C D Bashforth (Chair of Ryhill Parish Council)**
 Minutes taken by **C Greaves (Clerk to Ryhill Parish Council)**

MINUTES

1 Apologies

Cllr T Staves sent her apologies.

2 Welcome from the Chair of Ryhill Parish Council – Cllr Cheryle Bashforth

Noted

3 Approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 11th April 2023

Approved by a show of hands

4 Report by the Chair of Ryhill Parish Council – Cllr Cheryle Bashforth

I would like to thank the Clerk and all councillors who continued to be fully active in their various roles within the council, and on working groups and outside bodies during another very busy and challenging year. During my 35 years as a parish councillor, I have seen the role of councillors become much more complex and involved. My colleagues work as a team, have risen to the challenge and perform their duties with dedication. They have also been involved in a lot of voluntary work around the village which has saved the parish money in payments to contractors.

I would like to offer a special thanks my deputy of the last 17 years, Cllr Burnage, and also to our new Clerk, Charles Greaves, who joined us in June 2023 and worked closely with us to make a seamless transfer from our existing clerk to the present by working very hard and flexibly. I would like to thank our district councillors for continuing to work with us over the last year. Councillors Maureen Cummings and Usman Ali have attended our meetings regularly and played a very positive role in bringing our concerns to the attention of Wakefield MDC. We appreciate their hard work on our behalf.

We have many good, kind people in the parish and I would like to thank those who work voluntarily with council and for the parish. They make a big difference and save the parish money through their goodwill.

Council was involved in planning the King's coronation celebrations that took place in May through a dedicated working party of our councillors. Council contributed to the funding of the celebrations. As with the late Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations these worked extremely well and were enjoyed by parishioners.

Council commissioned the development of a new professionally designed website in 2022. This has proved to be a very useful tool for enabling freedom of information to interested parties about the work of Council and the accounting process.

The website is: www.ryhillcouncil.co.uk

Ryhill Parish Council continues to protect the green spaces in our parish boundaries as best we can. We secured the ownership of our two allotment sites and these continue to be popular with parishioners. We also maintain Ryhill Park and Stray and the old station site as areas for public amenity. We own Ryhill Park and we lease Ryhill Stray and the old station site. Ryhill Park and Stray regularly feature in photographs sent in to TV weather channels by our talented local photographers. We would like to thank the many members of the public who use the areas with respect to other users and also those who control and clean up after their dogs as requested.

As part of the King's Coronation Council joined with The Woodland Trust to acquire more trees and hedging at no cost to the parish. Planting was carried out by a working party of councillors, members of the public and Roger Parkinson of Woodland Trust in the above areas.

The parish precept has been set at £54,654 for 2024-2025, which is virtually the same as for the last 10 years. This will result in no change in the parish council charge levied on individual council tax bills. This is possible by the careful management of our finances and reserves, and despite the large and unexpected expenses that have arisen this year, with increases from every supplier of service.

We continue to fund the Safe Scheme in Ryhill because of the very positive results achieved and appreciative comments by parishioners. We pay for extra policing by our regular neighbourhood police team to deal with specific problems identified by parishioners, including speed checks, dealing with off-road motorcycles and anti-social behaviour. Their tasks and duty hours vary as complaints and issues arise. Without the Safe Scheme we would see very little police presence in the village because we are considered to be a very low crime area. Officers also work late and into the early hours so may not always be seen by parishioners but we receive a very detailed monthly report about their activities and many successes. Parishioners may contact the Clerk to the Council to suggest priorities for our officers though we know that many parishioners speak directly to officers during their patrols. The Scheme works really well because we have a Co-ordinator who has been working closely with Council for a number of years and has built up an excellent understanding of Ryhill and its issues.

The Parish Council made a donation to the British Legion remembrance wreath and gift of money.

Sports, leisure and youth services in Ryhill. We continue to support these services in the village. The governance of the sports and youth centre changed in April 2015. It operates as a charity but the day-to-day management is the responsibility of a charitable incorporated organisation, Rycroft Leisure CIO.

The services remain the same and councillors from Ryhill Parish Council are members of the management teams and are trustees. We are very pleased with the progress that has been made during its first years as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with the management team securing funds from outside bodies to improve building and services. We are very pleased with the continued success of our local teams.

Hanging baskets, bulb planting and planters. We are committed to improving the look of the village. However, the provision may change this year. This is because of circumstances beyond our control. The lamppost columns which currently have features are due for safety inspection by Amey this year. We were told that the cost to parish council would be £100 per column which would be £2500, a very large slice of our annual budget. Due to the hard work of Cllr Cummings Wakefield MDC has now agreed to cover this cost but the testing will not take place in time for the hanging baskets to be replaced and planted. Amey had also requested that the contractors take down, test and replace the hanging basket brackets at a cost to parish of several thousand pounds. Again, this was a large sum of money which would take another huge slice out of our budget that would not result in any improvement that would be “seen” by parishioners. There is no guarantee that columns will pass safety standards for features and the test will need to be repeated again in the autumn for Christmas tree features. Any licence following the testing will be for 3 years and will result in further testing in 2027. As a result of all these unknowns, a working party of councillors was set up to consider different ways of providing planting and additional Christmas trees and lights. The outcomes were agreed by Council at the March meeting. The scheme will be dependent on permissions being granted by Wakefield MDC and/or other landowners for siting of additional planters and Christmas trees. We already have quite a number of planters around the village. Siting of the planters is dependent on health and safety issues. All planters are included in the twice-yearly planting programme funded by Council though some adopters choose to pay for the planting themselves. We thank all adopters on behalf of the parish. The planters’ scheme is a cost- effective means of improving the appearance of the village.

Council continues to provide winter rock salt for the bins that we have purchased over the last few years. The siting and filling of the bins is one of the roles undertaken by our village caretaker.

The defibrillator for our village is located outside St Paul’s Methodist Church. It is used approximately once every fortnight. The pads for it are provided and funded by Ryhill Parish Council and Cllr G Booth cleans and resets the device after its use.

Provision of Christmas tree and lamp post features. This has been taken over by the parish council over the last few years using funding from our precept. We undertook this with the kind cooperation of St Paul’s Methodist Church. We have found that the tree and lights provision is much more cost effective this way even though this involves a lot more time and effort from councillors. We had many positive comments about the tree and lights and will provide the same again this year. Once again, last Christmas, we had Christmas features on the lamp posts throughout the village. This is dependent upon risk assessments of lamp posts by Amey. These are due for testing in autumn this year and there is no guarantee that the columns will pass the safety requirements set by Amey.

We may have to reconsider how we provide the Christmas celebration provision should some or all of the columns used for features not meet the requirements. This might include the provision of additional Christmas trees and lights at other locations in the village. This will be dependant on permissions being granted by Wakefield MDC and/or other landowners but we are working on this already.

We continue to fund our own village caretaker who undertakes a wide variety of tasks on behalf of the parish council. Our caretaker is John Hope and you may see him around the village as he carries out his tasks. These tasks are often those that are no longer provided by Wakefield MDC. John strims around seats and some paths, he stencils the pavements to encourage dog owners to clean up after their pets, sites and refills the grit bins.

Cheryle Bashforth MEd, BA(Hons) PGCE LCGI
Chair of Ryhill Parish Council

5 Public question time

- 5.1 Planters** – a request was made for planters on George Street. The Chair replied to say that suggestions for locations were welcome and should be sent to the Clerk for consideration when the council reviews its provision.
- 5.2 Allotment** – a query was made over the waiting list for allotments. The person was informed that they are now 2nd in line for any allotment that becomes available on Cemetery Road (providing they continue to meet the eligibility criteria).
- 5.3 Email address** – a query was made over the use of the email address of the Clerk to Ryhill Parish Council. The email is ryhill.clerk@gmail.com and is for everyone to use (subject to the council's policies).

6 Date, Time and Venue for the next Annual Parish Meeting

6pm at St Paul's Methodist Church, Chapel Street, Ryhill on Tuesday 8th April 2025

C R Greaves

Charles Greaves
Clerk to the Council
Ryhill Parish Council

Noted

Signed as a true record

Noted

Date