

**MINUTES OF THE FULL ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at 7.30pm  
IN THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MANOR ROAD**

**Present**

Councillors: Mrs Blackburn (Chairman), C.Elwood (Vice Chairman), M.Lawrence, Mrs C.Codd, Mrs M. Simmons, Mrs J Geer, B Edwards, J Clark and R Benoy.

Parish Clerk: Mrs S. Denne.

Also present: Cllr Webb and Public.

**Election of Chairman and of Vice Chairman** – Election for Chairman Cllr Jenny

Blackburn. Election for Vice Chairman Cllr Chris Elwood.

**Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

1. **Apologies for absence** – Cllr Davies.
2. **Declaration of Interests** – None
3. **Declarations of Lobbying** -None
4. Minutes of the meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2013 were agreed.
5. **Session for Borough Councillors** –Councillor Webb congratulated Councillor Davies on his re-election. He informed the meeting that he was still monitoring the Cranwell Flats relocation payments. He then informed the Parish Council that he had written to Nigel Farage, raising his concerns with an article he had read in the publication ‘FIRST’ He said that it stated that new powers for the Secretary of State banning councils from campaigning on a matter of policy, or from trying to influence a local MP on it. Other powers also included banning council magazines from appearing more than quarterly.
6. **Public Open session** – A member of the public requested detailed accounts spent on the fire station so far. She also requested to see how much was spent on the allotments, the Clerk’s extra hours and the software package. She was informed that this would be presented at the next parish meeting. Another member of the public enquired about the light levels when the street lights are turned off. Cllr Blackburn informed her that this item was on the agenda.
7. **Planning Committee** – The report from the Chairman of the Planning Committee (Councillor Edwards) set out the Parish Council’s statutory responses to two applications which had been received since the last meeting.  
The Planning Committee then recommended approval by Officer delegated powers for 13/00661/HOUSE/EA1 (105 Erskine Park Road) - 13/00726/HOUSE/RE4 (41 Bowen Road).

**8. Allotment Committee** - The report from the Chairman of the Allotment Committee (Councillor Benoy) informed the meeting that due to press coverage in The Courier, there had been a take up of some allotment plots. He informed the meeting that the legal transfer of the three sites had still yet to be finalised. The notice board at Southwood Road is to be moved and one ordered for Wickham Gardens and maybe a small one for the Southwood Extension. Cllr Blackburn suggested a resident who might be able to make them. Grass cutting going well and plot owners wishing the contractor to cut the grass on their plot should contact him direct. Cllr Benoy was also trying to get the contact details of someone who would carry out strimming and rotavating.

i. To agree order and date for skips – Cllr Codd proposed that two skips at a cost £240 each be ordered for a month, starting from the May bank holiday. This was agreed. Cllr Lawrence informed the meeting that the allotments were, at present, self-funding.

**9. Village Asset Register** – Cllr Lawrence read out a list of the buildings and areas within Rusthall that the Parish Council considered to be an asset. He informed the meeting that the Parish Council had yet to receive guide lines from TWBC as to how the asset register should look and who to pass the information on to. He asked the meeting that if they thought anything within the village should go on the register, to inform the Clerk.

**10. Fire Station** – i. Cllr Blackburn informed the meeting that the survey had been carried out on the fire station and that quotes had been received for the building work. Still awaiting a damp survey. She also informed the meeting that a Change of Use form had to be completed following a Public Meeting. Cllr Codd proposed that the Parish Council go to the next stage, to call a Public Meeting. Cllr Elwood seconded this. All agreed.

ii. A Public Meeting was arranged for the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

**11. Switching off of Street Lights** – Cllr Blackburn informed the meeting that the proposed trial switching off of some street lights had included the total switch off of the A264 between the Rusthall junction and Langton Green. The Parish Council were concerned for school children and other members of the public using this area after dark. Cllr Blackburn urged members of the public to register their complaints with KCC Highways. Cllr Codd suggested that a safer solution would be a switching off between midnight and 5am. Cllr Blackburn said that she would raise the issue at the RVA meeting. Cllr Lawrence said that he did not think that there were any cats-eyes on the stretch of road. Cllr Clark suggested that Cllr Blackburn write a letter raising the Parish Councils concerns.

**12. Grant Application** - An application had been received from Friends of Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons for £210.61, to buy an Environmental Kit for St Paul's Primary School Rusthall. This was agreed.

**13. Clerk's Report and Year End Account** - The Clerk informed the Parish Council that payments were still being received for allotment plots. She also requested that a damp survey be carried out on the fire station by Gulliver's for £95 plus Vat. This was proposed by Cllr Elwood and seconded by Cllr Clarke. Agreed. The Clerk then submitted the end of year accounts and audit to the Parish Council; these were agreed and signed off by the Chairman and Clerk.

#### 14. Cheques/Payments

	ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT	MAY 2013	
<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Cheque Ref</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
KALC	100133	1261.13	Subs
HMRC	100134	93.31	Tax and NI
S. Denne	100135	798.71	April Salary
URC	100136	30.00	Hire of Hall
S. Denne	100137	22.19	Stamps Stationery
KMJ	100138	21.00	Photo Copy
Viking	100139	37.06	Stationery
Viking	100140	44.96	Ink
Orange	DD	34.50	Mobile
J McNeice	100141	1678.00	Village Signs
D Rusbridge	100142	82.80	Grass Cut x 2
Unipar Services	100143	2334.00	Dual message Sign
SLCC	100144	145.00	Subs
South East Water	100145	15.64	Water Wickham Gardens
South East Water	100146	9.38	Water Southwood Road
<b>Total Payments</b>		<b>6,607.68</b>	

#### 15. Consideration of any urgent business

- a) Cllr Blackburn informed the meeting that Nourish, a local food bank, would be speaking at the RVA on the 15<sup>th</sup> May.
- b) Cllr Blackburn informed the Parish Council that the 'Bag it and Flag it' morning was being held on the 18<sup>th</sup> May, to meet at Common View.
- c) Annual Parish Meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May, Louise Woollen 'Collective Switching' to speak.
- d) Rusthall Lodge holding their Annual Fair from 2pm to 4pm on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

- e) Cllr Blackburn spoke about the Newsletter being produced by the Rusthall Club. It might be possible for the Parish Council to donate £100 per issue. To be made an agenda item for a future meeting. They would be looking for people to deliver the magazine, especially in the Denny Bottom area of Rusthall. Cllr Benoy and Cllr Blackburn to write articles for the next issue.
- f) Cllr Edwards informed the Parish Council that he had spoken to Mike Bassett, Chair of the RC&YP who had received the grant cheque for £3,400 which, although was thankfully received by Mike Bassett, he felt that comments contained in covering letter both unnecessary and unworthy. The Parish Council wanted greater transparency of accounts - openly available on request. Cost of trips, numbers of children attending and reduce number of trips and distance travelled. This weekend trip made to Arras, France - part of Great War Remembered project to trace war graves of Rusthall soldiers. Members of travelling party included Sheila Rusbridge (Jockey Farm) and Clive Roberts (author of Rusthall's Fallen). Cost of trip (petrol and ferry crossing) was shared between 10 travelling members. Yet another example of mini bus being used for the community. There is a trip planned for Space Centre in Cambridge costing youth £20 per head -partly subsidised by RC&YP. When Mike Bassett gave his presentation to the Parish Council in November last year he offered open invitation to councillors to either become trustees or visit library site any Tuesday evening to observe - so far no takers! Another condition the Parish Council wanted was to charge membership fee but was decided not to, from its conception, so that no youth would be excluded on the grounds that the family were unable to afford it. This sounds rich coming from the Parish Council who are quite willing to budget for £6,000 p.a. running costs for proposed fire station building (which council tax payers of Rusthall are already contributing) without expecting any income. When the Borough Council discontinued funding to the RC&YP it wasn't because we had a Parish Council, but all youth funding was stopped throughout borough as cuts were needed. The Parish Council didn't think twice about funding the fire station project (£2,428 so far) yet decide to cut back RC&YP funding and Cllr Edwards felt that the Parish Council should have awarded them the full £5,400 that TWBC used to pay - after all, this is Rusthall council tax payers' money!
- g) Cllr Edwards informed the Parish Council that the RC&YP were disappointed regarding payment of allotment fees as they were being asked by the Parish Council to pay more for six months than TWBC charged for whole year. Bearing in mind RC&YP have had income slashed by £2,000 how can the Parish Council expect them to pay so much? This garden is also used by reception classes of St Paul's school, who visited last Thursday to plant vegetables and bulbs and will return throughout the year to observe progress of their efforts. The TWBC recognised this and gave special concessions. Cllr Edwards felt that the Parish Council should continue to charge them £39.50 the same as before. Clerk to put on Allotment Meetings Agenda.
- h) Cllr Edwards informed the Parish Council that he had spoken to Clive Roberts regarding cleaning of War Memorial at Rusthall church. Mr Roberts informed Cllr Edwards that the principal conservation officer, Mr Mark Stephenson, at TWBC was holding up procedures as he had not responded to his letter of 24th January. Cllr

Edwards tried to speak to David Jukes on Monday, but he was unavailable so he spoke with Mr Stephenson who claimed that he had not received the letter, but miraculously found it whilst Cllr Edwards was talking to him and promised to respond to Clive Roberts, which he did that afternoon. Clive can now proceed with his project and has asked if the Parish Council can look after the £1,000 that he has received so far in donations, in a designated account, so that the funds can be seen to be held in a secure place and that he can take advantage of the Parish Council being able to reclaim the VAT. If he is in a position to carry out all of the procedures necessary to complete the project, he will be about £500 short of his target and wondered whether he could put in a claim for a grant from the Parish Council. Clerk to speak to Mr Roberts about depositing money with Parish Council and sending him a grant form.

- i) Cllr Benoy requested that the public session in a Parish Meeting be moved to near the end of the meeting. Clerk to alter agenda accordingly.

The Meeting ended at 8.45pm