

RUSHWICK'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 MAY 2025 AT 8.00 PM IN RUSHWICK VILLAGE HALL

IN ATTENDANCE: Seven parishioners were present at this meeting.

1. Welcome: Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Jenkins, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone.
2. Apologies for Absence: Cllr Haywood, Cllr Hemsworth and District Cllr Peter Whatley - Received.
3. The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8 May 2024 were approved as a true and correct record. No matters arising from these approved minutes.
4. Annual Report from the Parish Council
The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance.
There has been much focus on the SWDPr and we await the results from the hearing.
The play area has undergone major improvements with the installation of new play equipment
It continues to be well used, and maintenance is regularly carried out, thanks to the help and efforts of Cllr Hemsworth.
Thanks, were also expressed to Cllr Williams for all his efforts in keeping the footpaths clear of overgrown vegetation and responding to parishioners' complaints.
Cllr Barry Staff successfully co-opted onto the Parish Council.
There are two vacancies available for co-option.
5. Police Report: Report from PC Jon Hand: - The crime figures below are from 17.04.2024 to 26.04.2025

The below crime figures are from 17 th of April 2024 to the 26 th of April 2025. Crime Type	Number
Burglary (residential)	2
Burglary (business)	1
Harassment	11
Assault (no injury)	5
Assault (injury)	2
Criminal Damage	10
Public Order	4
Theft	7
Interference motor vehicle	2

Firstly, in relation to anti-social behaviour we have had eleven incidents reported to Police this year. These figures are six higher than last year. Four of these incidents are in relation to anti-social driving of a specific vehicle which has now been dealt with. Two of these incidents are part of a neighbour dispute. The remainder of the incidents are mainly made up of vehicle nuisance and youth nuisance.

The crime figures for this year are considerably higher than those of last year. This is for two clear reasons. Firstly, the way we record certain incidents has changed. Neighbour disputes will likely be recorded as harassment now which would not have been recorded as such last year. Some ASB incidents are now recorded as assaults, to give this further context, the other day I had to record an assault whereby a child threw a plastic sphere over a six foot fence that hit someone and caused no injury. This is because of Home Office crime recording rules.

These figures also take into account the new Bloor Homes estate over the A440 and the Regency Gate estate which have now been occupied for a full year, these are both included under our figures for Rushwick.

To give the theft figures some context. Three of the thefts are parcels stolen from doorsteps left by delivery drivers. Three of the complaints of damage were in relation to the new play equipment in the park, this prompted targeted patrols in the area. In relation to the assaults, they were all in a domestic setting apart from three which were against Police Officers upon arresting suspects.

In the community, last year we have attended at the school summer fete, PC Stanley has attended coffee mornings and while there has spoken to local residents there about their concerns. Several hours of foot patrol has also been conducted on the area, at all times of the day.

6. County Councillor Report: Chris McSweeney, newly appointed County Councillor, offered a brief introduction. He confirmed the next WCC meeting is on 22 May 2025 where the Administration of the Council will be structured. He briefly spoke about Devolution and Unitary Authority and its impact, confirming there will be many changes and challenges ahead.
7. District Councillor Report: Peter Whatley and Sarah Rouse

‘ Sarah Rouse and I are sorry to miss the Annual meeting, but we hope that the evening is rewarding for all.

The Government’s local government reorganisation will see MHDC cease to exist in April 2028, replaced by a restructured “unitary” county council which will take on the 6 current Districts’ functions, plus a new, higher level of government at regional level. In other words, two levels of administration will replace today’s two levels – just at more cost and more remote from all of us, the council taxpayers.

The geography and number of councils at the new levels is under active discussion, but there is no consensus between current councils or between MHDC councillors. Sarah and I believe a single unitary council for Worcestershire is the most cost-effective solution for council taxpayers. We remain focused on what is important for residents locally. Ultimately, the Secretary of State will announce a solution very late this year.

In the interim, MHDC is attempting to use the reserves set up over many years to benefit residents who paid for those reserves. The alternative would be to hand them as a gift to the new unitary authority, which will inherit the current county council’s debts and will need to channel cash from council taxpayers in MHDC and Wychavon to Bromsgrove and Redditch.

Your parish council has access to MHDC's funding schemes and can channel requests from other parish organisations. Alas, we as individual councillors cannot apply directly, though we can help the PC. Do please make funding requirements known to the parish council.

In parallel with all this, the revised South Worcs Devt Plan (SWDPr) has gone to the Planning Inspectorate for review and checking. We were pleased to be able to highlight to the Inspectors the lack of reality concerning Rushwick's proposed 1000+ housing allocation, especially the required transport infrastructure. Before SWDPr went to the Inspectors, the Rushwick proposal had been formally assessed as "not viable", the only major housing proposal in SWDPr in that status. For "non-viable", read "too expensive to deliver" with major costs coming from the need for often promised railway station.

MHDC's current administration has continued to push for SWDPr's acceptance, despite the issues around Rushwick and other sites. In terms of Rushwick's housing scheme, MHDC's planning department's suggestion is to have a frequent bus service to and from Worcester until a station arrives. We have asked – but not had answers – as to who will pay for that service and how the many buses needed will reach Worcester in rush hours.

That said, even if SWDPr is approved by the Inspectors and subsequently MHDC's councillors, the Labour government's hugely increased targets for new house building will mean an SWDP update will need to start immediately. On the revised targets, MHDC currently has only a two-year housing land supply. Other Districts are in a similar situation. That means it is very difficult legally to oppose housebuilding projects.

Neighbourhood Plans still afford some protection, though they are undoubtedly time consuming for PCs to achieve.

Away from these "big ticket" topics, Sarah and I have supported residents with a wide variety of issues. Planning issues, including advocating at Planning Committee, pursuing Worcestershire CC highways and drainage problems, council tax issues and footpath blockages all spring to mind.

It is a privilege to represent you: we will continue to do so vigorously for as long as higher levels of government permit.'

8. Statement of Unaudited Accounts 2024/2025

The Clerk confirmed the Annual Accounts for 2024/2025 have passed their Internal Audit inspection and are now being prepared to be sent to the External Auditor for further inspection and conclusion.

As of 31.03.2025 the total bank balance is £132,594.89. No further questions.

The Chairman thanked parishioners for their time attending this meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.38 PM.

Sharon Dunn
Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Tel: 07815468928

Signed Date