

Draft Minutes from the Ordinary ROWDE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Wednesday 15th January 2025, 7.30pm, Rowde Village Hall

	<p>PRESENT: L Wills (Chair), J Dalley, C Greenwood, M Somerville, E Watt, Josh Wills. Cllr Laura Mayes Public audience: 14 members</p>
1.	Apologies: None
2.	<p>Register of pecuniary interests M Somerville registered a pecuniary interest in invoices for the ground maintenance work that he carries out for the Parish.</p>
3.	<p>Co-option of Sarah Rigby – vote required. It was agreed that Sarah Rigby would join the Parish Council as a Councillor. (Proposed by C Greenwood, seconded by E Watt). All Councillors were in favour. S Rigby joined the meeting.</p>
4.	<p>Chairman’s five minutes It was noted that the meeting is being recorded. The Chairman asked for anyone else who is recording the meeting to declare it. There was no response. The Chairman made a further request for everyone to be respectful of others when they are talking. C Greenwood signed the revised Code of Conduct which was agreed at the Parish Council meeting in September 2024. Other Parish Councillors signed the agreement at the meeting on 11th December 2024.</p>
5.	<p>Information on proposed development off Furlong Close, with Gaiger Brothers Nick Church spoke on behalf of the company. N Church wrote to the Parish Council in December 2024 to start the dialogue about potential development on part of the site at Furlong Close. The company likes to work with communities and listen to all sides. They are mindful of the existing neighbours to the site. There has been no decision made about the number of houses that could be built there. N Church gave some background information on the site: SSH bought the site in 2022. Care provision was moved away from single care provision and Agincare was brought in to care for the remaining residents. The CQC care rating has been restored to ‘good’. There are no plans to expand the care capacity. There are ongoing maintenance issues with the buildings themselves. The Mind Tree Café has taken occupancy of the former administration buildings and workshops. SSH with Gaiger Brothers are looking to develop the northern field, which is just over an acre in size. The size of the overall site is around 8 acres. Capital receipt money from the development could be put back into maintaining the site. N Church spoke about the government requirement to build houses under the Local Plan. Rowde has been set a target of 67 dwellings (20 have been committed). The company has been waiting for the Neighbourhood Plan to develop but the Plan has been delayed. Cllr Mayes noted that the latest government targets increase Wiltshire’s housing target by 90% to 18,506 new houses needed for the whole of Wiltshire. Q: will profit from the proposed development go into the infrastructure of Furlong Close? It was noted that there are some restrictions on the land around the site. N Church noted that there is room to deliver a good job, whilst also noting that some people will not like the idea in principle and some people will not like where the proposed development would be.</p>

	<p>C Greenwood spoke of delays with the Neighbourhood Plan. He noted that there would be a new Town Clerk in February 2025, who would carry on with this role.</p> <p>C Greenwood asked whether the development would be built as bungalows, as there is a shortage of bungalows across the county. In addition, the surrounding properties are bungalows. N Church confirmed that there have been no firm decisions made yet.</p> <p>Further concern was raised about possible drainage issues on the site. There is a culvert and ditch bordering the potential site with Silverlands Road. N Church noted that there has been ground water monitoring and infiltration testing carried out on the site from November. The potential site drains to the ditch that borders Silverlands Road.</p> <p>Constructors are required to plan for significant climate changes and drainage requirements are stringently controlled.</p> <p>C Greenwood asked about access to the site. N Church said there were two possible options: one off Marsh Lane; another through the stubs off Springfield Road.</p> <p>If anyone has any questions about the proposed development, they are invited to contact Nick Church, at Gaiger Brothers through: nick@gaigerbros.co.uk</p>	
<p>6. Mov ed from item 7</p>	<p>Wiltshire Council update with Cllr Laura Mayes, Councillor for Bromham, Rowde and Roundway.</p> <p>Cllr Mayes noted that she has discussed the overgrown condition of the pavement along Devizes Road with Parish Councillors.</p> <p><u>Information on Heart of Wessex proposal.</u> Central government is looking at devolution of local government. The new government wants every local area to have a mayor who would have a strategic oversight; drive economic growth, and improve public services, for example oversee big strategic highway projects. Local county partnerships of over 1.5 million people can be formed {Wiltshire has 0.5 million residents}. If local partnerships are not formed, there will not be access to further government funding. Wiltshire Council has submitted a letter to the Government showing their collective support for being considered as part of the Government's Devolution Priority Programme, along with Dorset Council and Somerset Council to form the 'Heart of Wessex'. The unitary councils will remain as separate councils for all day to day administration.</p> <p>The first Mayoral election would be held in May 2026. Wiltshire Council is due to hold Council elections as planned in May 2025. This will not change.</p> <p><u>Gypsy and Traveller Site Consultation:</u> The approval of this report by Cabinet has been moved to 4th February 2025.</p> <p><u>Planning:</u> Sands Lane planning application appeal: Wiltshire Council has committed to oppose the appeal. There is no further news.</p> <p>Close Lane application: the deadline for views has passed. Cllr Mayes has asked for the application to be considered by the Strategic Planning Committee if Wiltshire Council officers are minded to approve the application.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Public Question Time</p> <p>The Parish Council welcomed new residents, Laurent and Laura. They asked about vacant allotment plots. The Clerk will follow this up with them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A follow up question was asked about the Listed Building complaint. Photos have been submitted to the Listed Building Officer at Wiltshire Council. • It was commented by a member of the audience that they thought the speed camera device (SID) is facing the wrong direction. The Chairman noted that the camera captures speed in both directions, although it's warning message can only be read in one direction. It was also commented that tractors appear to be speeding through the Village. The Parish Council's response was that tractors can appear to be speeding due to their size but that they are generally speed limited. 	

	<p>This has been monitored in the past by the Community Speedwatch Team and they did not find that tractors were speeding through the village.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C Greenwood updated the meeting to say that Maggie Ledbury, who manages the Community Speedwatch scheme on behalf of Wiltshire Police, has 92 areas to look after across the county. • A complaint was made about the state of the public litter bins in the village, especially the bin on Sands Lane at the junction with Cock Road which is overflowing {This is a Wiltshire Council bin. It has been reported through the My Wilts App}. • A further complaint was made about the condition of the road surface on Devizes Road, particularly in front of the bus shelter. Cllr Mayes was originally told that the road did not meet Wiltshire Council’s criteria for repair. Cllr Mayes noted that whilst the damaged surfacing may not be deep it is definitely wide. • It was reported that the missing 30mph speed limit sign is in the field adjacent to Rowde Court. It has been there for over a year. This has been reported to Wiltshire Council on many occasions. The Clerk continues to report this matter. • There appears to be a broken manhole cover on Cock Road, near to the entrance of the Village Hall. C Greenwood agreed to speak with the Village Hall Committee at their next meeting on 3rd February. • A resident asked for an update on the Cross Keys. The Chairman confirmed that they had spoken with owner, Tim Buxton. T Buxton has started to clear the area in front of the Cross Keys pub and clean the windows. The fence has been removed. There is an intention to submit a planning application for the pub to be converted to a convenience store at the end of January 2025/beginning of February 2025. The pub area may be leased by June 2025. 	
8.	<p>Review and agree the minutes from Parish Council meeting on 11th December 2024</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting were proposed by J Wills, seconded by M Somerville. All Councillors who were present at that meeting were in agreement.</p>	
9.	<p>Matters arising & actions taken from 11th December 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clerk has made a request for the Parish Steward to strim the path along Devizes Road. This is being followed up by Cllr Mayes. • The Clerk has contacted Bishops Cannings football team and asked them again to remove their remaining kit from the Playing field. • Allotment holders have been notified of the increase in allotment rents from March 2025. • The Clerk has requested a replacement street sign for Bunnies Lane again. This was first reported 6 years ago. C Greenwood spoke about the issue at the last Local Highways and Infrastructure Group (LHFIG) on Tuesday 14th January. The group have agreed to prioritise the replacement sign. • The Chairman has received asset maps from Aster. These will be used to help site the new noticeboards. • The Youth Council has confirmed that it still has a bank account for the group. • The Clerk has arranged a meeting with Rollalong, building contractor for Wiltshire Council’s development at Haymeadow Way, to discuss possible community projects. • The proposed Parish Council social event will take place on Saturday 5th July 2025, in the evening at Manor Farm, Rowde. 	
10.	<p>Precept setting</p> <p><u>Spending priorities</u></p>	

	<p>The Chairman outlined the Parish Council’s priorities for the coming year, including the purchase of The Clubhouse (repurposed mobile classroom) from Bromham Parish Council for use at the Sports field; the creation of a footpath for Tanis, and possible legal fees relating to land ownership. The ground maintenance contract is due for renewal and is expected to increase in price.</p> <p>The Clubhouse at Bromham will cost around £3.5k to purchase, with an additional £2k - £2.5k needed to move the clubhouse and set up the building with utilities. Power would be provided by the village’s generator. It is a flexible, versatile building that is currently set up with wheelchair ramps. The Clubhouse will need to have planning permission. C Greenwood has notified the planning authority that we have the intention of purchasing the Clubhouse.</p> <p><u>Agree budget and vote on precept for 2025-26.</u></p> <p>The Parish Council proposed to increase the village precept by 20%. This was proposed by C Greenwood, seconded by J Wills. All Councillors were in favour. The total amount of precept requested will be £48,970.88. This amounts to an increase of £16.32 per annum for a band D house.</p>	
11.	<p>Planning matters</p> <p><u>Progress report on new development at Haymeadow Way</u></p> <p>Drainage works along the side of Silverlands Play Area are due to start at the end of January 2025. Work to cross the large, grassed play area in Silverlands will commence when the easement has been formally agreed with Wiltshire Council.</p> <p>Residents must be registered with Homes4wiltshire to bid on one of these new properties. It can take up to twelve weeks to be registered on the site.</p> <p><u>Neighbourhood Plan</u></p> <p>Devizes Town Clerk, who has been leading on the joint Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan, has left his post. A new Town Clerk will start in February 2025.</p> <p>Rowde has been asked by the planning consultants to consult with residents about site selections for inclusion in the plan. Rowde will ask for further help to produce consultation material which can be shared with local residents.</p> <p>A member of the audience noted that without a Neighbourhood Plan, the village is very vulnerable to tilted balance and developers could build speculatively without restriction.</p>	
12.	<p>Update on grounds maintenance</p> <p><u>Review of tender bids and vote on contractor for 1st Feb onwards</u></p> <p>The Clerk sent out tender invites to five contractors. A response was received from three contractors. The Parish Council voted on the preferred contractor (five votes in favour; J Dalley abstained from the vote). It was requested that the contractor submits photos of the grassed areas after they have been cut.</p> <p><u>Update on use by football teams</u></p> <p>There are plans for Devizes Town Football Club to use the playing field pitches. C Greenwood noted that there needs to be a business plan for the playing field in place and a tariff agreed for using the pitch.</p>	
13.	<p>Playing field and play equipment</p> <p><u>RoSPA repairs.</u></p> <p>Remedial playground work needs to be scheduled.</p>	
14.	<p>Highways and footpaths</p> <p><u>Problems with closure of Conscience Lane</u></p> <p>There were problems caused by BT closing the Rowde end of Conscience Lane from 11th December 2024 to carry out emergency repairs caused by Storm Darragh. Local businesses struggled to gain access. The ‘Road Closed’ signs were not removed when the work had been completed.</p>	

	<p>Contractors will be re-laying the road surface on Conscience Lane soon.</p> <p><u>Complaints about new BT telegraph poles – Rowde Court Road</u></p> <p>This is part of the scheme to bring fibre internet into the village. C Greenwood updated the meeting that all the telephone poles will have fibre points on them for people to connect to them. It was asked whether it would be effective to complain about the siting of the new telegraph poles. The Parish Council agreed that it would not achieve anything.</p>	
15.	<p>Finance Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly bank reconciliation & monthly invoices for December 2024 <p><u>December 2024 invoices</u> (total: £4,232.51)</p> <p>Admin costs: £1,835.68</p> <p>Ground's maintenance: £555.94</p> <p>Christmas: £40.89</p> <p>Donation: £1,800</p> <p>Payment of invoices was proposed by C Greenwood, seconded by J Wills. All Councillors were in favour.</p>	
16.	<p>Allotments</p> <p><u>Review of quotations for fence repair</u></p> <p>Three quotations were received to replace some posts in the fence that borders the allotments with the car park.</p> <p>Parish Councillors voted to accept the preferred contractor.</p> <p><u>Allotment rents</u></p> <p>A resident has requested to know the cost of a quarter plot from March 2025. It was agreed by the Parish Council that a quarter plot would increase from £15.00 to £17.50 per annum.</p> <p>A question has been asked about the maintenance of the memorial plot on the left at the entrance to the allotment site. It was noted that this plot is maintained collectively by some allotment holders.</p>	
17.	<p>Community engagement</p> <p><u>Update from Village Fete Committee</u></p> <p>The date for the fete has changed to Saturday 31st May, due to a potential clash in the local calendar. The team are planning a fund-raising event, a Vintage Cream Tea, on Saturday 29th March in the Village Hall. There are also plans to hold an Open Gardens in the village on Saturday 28th June if residents would like to be involved.</p> <p>There is now an events email: rowde.events@yahoo.com if you would like to get in contact.</p> <p><u>VE day 8th May</u></p> <p>St Matthew's Church has contacted the Parish Council and asked about plans to commemorate VE day on 8th May 2025. L Wills offered to speak with Rowde Primary School about possibly hosting a joint event.</p> <p><u>Facebook posts</u></p> <p>There have been Facebook posts about overflowing public bins in the village.</p> <p><u>Christmas tree</u></p> <p>Thank you to the Parish Councillors who put up and took down the village Christmas tree.</p> <p><u>Update on installation of noticeboards</u></p> <p>The Parish Council is waiting to hear back from Aster about permission to site the new noticeboards.</p>	LW
18.	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>A letter has been received from Silverwood School asking if students can come into the village to take part in the Great Litter Pick Litter. Students are hoping to be in the village between 21st March - 6th April 2025.</p>	

	<p>J Dalley noted that the Parish Council and members of the Village were to be invited to look at the new buildings at Silverwood School. It was noted that part of the pavement along the main road outside of the school was cleared but the remainder was left in an overgrown condition.</p> <p>The Parish Council commented that the speed limit has still not been reduced outside of Silverwood School and remains at 50mph. It was noted that a Traffic Regulation Order to reduce the speed limit could take up to 18 months.</p>	Clerk
19.	<p>Date of next Parish Council meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next meeting Wednesday 12th February 2025, 7.30pm, Rowde Village Hall. <p>Everyone is welcome to attend all meetings.</p>	

A reminder that all requests for work/or goods must be presented to the relevant Committee first for authorisation.

Signed: Chairman Date: