



**MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF ROMSLEY PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 9TH MAY 2016, 7.00PM**

PRESENT: Cllr. Arrowsmith, Cllr. Bolar, Cllr. Mrs Holloway,
Cllr. Mrs Grey, Cllr. Powell, Cllr. Tilt and Cllr. Mrs
Bestwick

ALSO PRESENT: Clerk

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 1.1 The Minutes of the previous meeting were read. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** by those able to vote that they were a true record and signed accordingly.

2. TO RECEIVE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- 2.1 As we come to the end of my first year as Chairman it is a good moment to reflect on the progress we have made since the Election of 2015 as well as looking forward to the many tasks that still lie before us.

I am pleased with the work that has been undertaken to ensure that the Council is operating in an effective and transparent way. I am particularly pleased with the rewrite of the Council Standing Orders and the establishment four year budget. Through these efforts we are able to provide the taxpayer with much greater transparency about how the Council is operating and we now have a firm financial foundation for us to deliver the roles and services that the Parish Council should be responsible for.

Another area around budgets that I am particularly pleased about is securing £9,000.00 discretionary grants. This represents a really significant increase over previous budgetary years and with public sector finances currently under such pressure it is important that we take very opportunity to bring in additional revenue to pay for improvements to our Parish. We will be using the 2015/16 grants to improve family seating around the play area as well as install a small outdoor gym at the bottom end of the park.

I believe we have also made real progress around communications. We have introduced the twice yearly Parish Council Newsletter which

has been well received in the Community providing residents with much needed information about local issues and services. We have also launched a Parish Council website which provides a modern interface between the Council and the community and again it has been well received with its audience. Face to face communications are also vitally important and as well as the monthly Monday evening Council Meeting we have also introduced Saturday morning surgeries to increase the community access to the Parish Council amongst residents that can't make the normal evening Parish Council meetings. So far two of these sessions have been held with many local residents attending. It was also good to welcome both our local District Councillors and I hope they will be able to attend these in the future.

Building the strength of our community is of continuing importance. We have made several donations to community organizations such as the Village Hall and St Kenelm's Nursery to help with their work in the community. The Council have continued to support community events such as Romstock and the Parish Show both of which continue to be popular and important community events. During 2016/17 we will be undertaking a consultation exercise to identify which other community events people would like to see organized in the Parish.

Looking forward to the coming year we will be introducing our new Parish Council Maintenance Contractor who will start to address the significant backlog of issues that is affecting our Parish. This is an important role that over time will make a real difference to the look and feel of our Parish.

Another important area of work for 2016/17 will be the continued development of our Parish Plan. This is a complex but vital document that we can use to describe to other agencies, such as local authorities, the Parish we want to live in and the services we would like to see established or protected. The Parish Plan is also an important foundation document for planning purposes and its completion will help to protect the Parish from inappropriate future development such as the expansion of Birmingham or Dudley housing. To ensure this document is relevant and effective we must involve the community in its development. To this end, during the coming year we will be distributing a Parish Questionnaire to residents as well as holding a number of additional Parish Planning Workshops so that we can capture and document a cross section of views from around our community.

The summer will see the commencement of Severn Trent's Birmingham Resilience Project that will help ensure the West Midlands has a sustainable water supply. This is a project of national

importance and as such we cannot stop its construction however by working with local residents we have been able to set up a working community with Severn Trent to discuss and mitigate and reduce some of the impacts of the design and the construction project. No one in our community should underestimate the potential impact and disruption that these schemes could cause to our parish. Throughout the coming year we will continue to work with residents and Severn Trent to ensure the parish interests are protected.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank a number of people for their hard work and support during the past year. I would like to thank the Clerk, Ruth Mullett and all the elected councilors for their hard work and commitment towards giving Romsley the best Parish Council they can. I would also like to thank the many volunteers who have helped across our community during the past twelve months and I would like to thank members of the public who have attended Council Meetings and surgeries to give their thoughts and opinions on issues that concern them.

Richard Arrowsmith
Parish Council Chair

3. TO RECEIVE REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Apologies sent and no report given.

4. TO RECEIVE REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVE

Apologies sent and no report given.

5. TO RECEIVE REPORT OF THE FOOTPATH OFFICER – APRIL 2015 – APRIL 2016

Much of the work on Romsley's paths in 2015 was connected with the Romsley Penny Fields Circular both in preparation prelaunch and in keeping the paths clear by strimming post launch. Two stiles have been replaced by metal kissing gates on Romsley Hill and paths have been regularly strimmed at St Kenelms Church and well, Illey Way and various other paths within the parish. Five guided walks have been undertaken during the period in addition to the circular walk opening and a short walk for the Rainbows Group.

Improvements to parish footpaths – stone hard core has been put down in two kissing gates on the Penny Fields circular to reduce a problem with mud. An additional cross step has been added to a stile on the Penny Fields circular in order to make the stile easier to use.

Two stiles have been replaced by metal kissing gates on Romsley Hill. Clearance of trees partially obstructing path in wood on Romsley Hill. A waymark post has been installed near Holt Farm and another installed below the Swallows Nest to replace a stolen post.

Walks – five parish walks were organised and took place last year in April, May, August, November and in January of this year with a total of 89 walkers taking part.

Romsley Circular Walk – the launch of the Penny Fields walk took place in July last year when 61 walkers enjoyed the opening walk and refreshments afterwards in the Church Hall. I would like to thank the Parish Council for their help in making the launch such a success and for their generous provision of refreshments following the walk.

Stuart Smith
Parish Path Officer

6. **TO REVIEW ANY ITEMS OF PAROCIAL INTEREST**
 - Can we ensure the website is kept up to date
 - Can we receive an update on the Car Lot at Dayhouse Bank

3. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – Monday 8th May 2017, at 7.00pm to be held at St Kenelms Primary School