

Who's who on Rothley Parish Council

Rothley Parish Councillors are as follows: -

Percy Hartshorn, (Chair)
Roger Gross (Vice Chair)
Andy Brettle, Claire Cole, Graham Hall, Steve Mitchell
Barry Simons and Doug Sutherland

We are keen to have a full complement of councillors (currently 2 vacancies exist) and would welcome applications from any local resident who feels that they have the time to come and share their views on a wide range of local issues. The minimum commitment would be attending monthly meetings on the third Monday of each month for approximately an hour and a half.

Administration

We are pleased to welcome to the newly created post of Deputy Clerk, Pamela Campbell-Armstrong.

Pam joins the staff listed below: -

Parish Clerk	- Gail Newcombe
Administrative Assistant	- Sara Fleming
Head Caretaker	- Steve Tomlinson
Caretaker	- Jennifer Cornish
Caretaker	- Bernadeta Skubala

Neighbourhood Plan

The Rothley Neighbourhood Plan will be written by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on behalf of the Parish Council and will help to influence how the parish evolves over the next 12 years. The Plan is about the use and development of land within the whole of the civic parish.

The laws and guidelines under which we are working require us to follow a complex process with many steps. In mid-March a major milestone was reached with the distribution of a comprehensive questionnaire across the parish. The aim of this exercise was to ensure that the Plan, when eventually written, accurately reflects the views of residents. We are grateful to all those who took the time to respond. By the time you read this, the results of the questionnaire will have been analysed and we will be preparing an open event so that residents can see the outcome.

Once written the Plan needs the approval of Charnwood Borough Council before finally being subject to a referendum open to all Rothley residents.

Rothley Centre Developments

The last Rothley Post (Mar/Apr 2017) mentioned recent parish council discussions about a possible new Rothley Centre on land adjacent to the community library. This has been an ambition of the Rothley Centre Management Trust for the past 10 years but has not progressed because of a lack of funding. The Trust has recently submitted a bid for lottery funding but there is as yet no firm decision to go ahead with the project and refurbishment of the existing Rothley Centre remains an alternative possibility. There would be a consultation process with Rothley residents before any decision to proceed with building a new Centre. The parish council has identified the following advantages and disadvantages of any possible scheme.

Advantages: -

- The present Centre is owned by Charnwood Borough Council and leased to the Rothley Centre Management Trust. A new building would be owned by Rothley Parish Council or a dedicated local charitable trust and there would be long term security.
- There would be no rental cost and the building would be cheaper and more eco-friendly to run.
- The new Centre would have a car park of similar size to the existing Rothley Centre car park so there would be a potential increase in parking if Charnwood Borough Council agreed that all or part of the existing car park could be retained for public use.
- There might be a potential new health centre or other desirable development on the site if Charnwood Borough Council agreed.

Disadvantages: -

- Spending a large sum could be seen as a lost opportunity to spend money on possibly higher priority projects.
- The existing car park might potentially be lost if an agreement could not be reached with Charnwood Borough Council to retain all or part of it for public use.
- There would be a loss of open space adjacent to the library.
- There could be an unknown and possibly undesirable development of the existing site if an agreement cannot be reached with Charnwood Borough Council for a development in line with residents' wishes.
- The Village Hall would be sold to raise funds.

Exploratory discussion will be held with Charnwood Borough Council shortly to explore some of these issues.

Cemetery Developments

Garden of Remembrance

Areas for residents to spread ashes are nearing completion. Granite is to be given free by Tarmac of Mountsorrel and will form a central feature with small shrubs planted up amongst the white stone chippings.



Garden store

A small storage unit at the back of the cemetery chapel has been lovingly renovated and turned into a useful store for basic cleaning materials for the community to use whilst tending the graves of loved ones. Please contact the parish council if you wish to use this facility as it requires a door code either by calling into the office or ringing 0116 2374544.

It will be available to use from mid-April.

Badgers

We have now made some progress with the local ecologist and have taken advice from Natural England. We will hopefully be looking to install a small electric fence as a temporary measure to separate the cemetery from the badgers sett without causing any harm to the badgers. This should hopefully protect the cemetery from further damage as we understand it has been a distressing time for relatives visiting loved ones.

We will also look at reseeding the damaged areas of grass at the appropriate time.

There are also some other proposals which we are working towards with William Davis as a long term solution. We will keep residents updated in due course.

War Memorial

The War Memorial has been given a clean. Granite blocks have been steam cleaned along with all the surrounds. The rolls of honour have been re gilded and the lime joints between the granite blocks repointed. The whole edifice has also been given a coat of biocide in order to prevent moss build up. This was funded by the local charity, The Harry Hames Trust.



Finance

Perhaps we should start by saying that parish councillors are unpaid, including the Chairman.

Most of the parish council's income comes from the 'precept', which is the parish's share of the council tax paid by Rothley residents. This currently works out at a little over £50 per year for a Band D house. Charnwood Borough Council calculates this figure by dividing the total precept by the 'taxbase', which is essentially an estimate of the number of households expected to pay council tax in the year in question.

The parish council is required to set a budget each year and the precept is calculated from the budget. For next year we set a budget to cover the additional costs arising from the increasing number of houses in the parish - over 800 new houses have been built in the last few years or are currently being built and this increases the demand for the services we provide. For every new house being added to the taxbase the precept increases by about £50 per year without any increase in the tax for each household. Our intention was to set the budget and therefore the precept at a level which would lead to an increase of about 2% for each household. At the time we were required to do this CBC was unable to provide us with a figure for the taxbase for next year and we were obliged to make our own estimate. Unfortunately CBC's estimate was lower than ours (we think too low) leading to an apparent increase in the precept of over 5% for each household. Although this sounds high it is actually only about 5p per week for each household. As long as there are no major unexpected additional costs in the next 12 months we would expect the increase to be much lower or possibly even zero next year.

Our total budget for 2017/18 is approximately £140,000 distributed under the following main headings: -

Wages (caretaker/cleaners, Clerk, admin)	30%
Open spaces (mowing, maintenance, repairs)	26%
Village Hall	11%
Rothley Centre (grant from RPC)	9%
Operating costs (insurance, rent, training etc.)	7%
Cemetery	5%
Administration (equipment, phones, IT etc.)	3%
Street lights (the few owned by RPC)	2%
Other	7%