



Rainhill Parish Council Annual Report 2021



Thank You!



Awarded for Excellence

Your Community - 2020/2021

Winners of the VE Day Decorate Your Window Competition (see page 8)



Cascading poppies made by Parishioners for the virtual Remembrance Sunday video from St Ann's Church and the War Memorial

James & Tara Joseph



Senior citizen Muriel Hughes on her 100th birthday with the cake and card from the Parish Council.
Please let us know of any forthcoming 100th birthdays!



Cllr Mark Burke, Mayor of Prescott, and Chair Cllr Howitt met in the Eco garden and discussed the opening of the Shakespeare Theatre.

John, Rebecca, Ruth & Hanna

The first of two Community Meal Donations from Ryan and the Blue Mango. Volunteers from Rainhill Community Support Group and Parish Cllrs delivered the meals to over 100 residents in May 2020 and around 200 residents in March 2021. !

Following the wonderful work of Jess and Rachel Naylor delivering 'Rainbow Cards' to residents right across Rainhill, Cllr Roscoe suggested that we could work with our primary school children in a similar way. Each of the primary school Headteachers were contacted by Cllrs Greaves, Roscoe and leads from RCSG and were all very enthusiastic in agreeing to support the scheme. The suggestion of the children creating and designing their own personal 'kindness cards' to bring a little cheer to our older residents in isolation really resonated with the school leads. This developed into an amazing partnership between young and older people through the work of the RCSG volunteer team. Each volunteer included a personalised 'kindness card' with the shopping they delivered.

Lucy & Austin Williams

Cllrs Howitt and Williams laying a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council prior to the virtual Remembrance Service.

Rainhill Parish Councillors contribution to the Scarecrow Festival.



Parish Council meetings and business continued via Teams meetings.

Good Citizenship Award winners cut the ribbon at the opening of the Dog Park.

One of the many amazing decorations by residents as part of the Christmas Tree Festival.

Rainhill Organisations and Useful Contacts

Clerk to the Parish Council Kathryn Adamson 5 Regal Drive Windle, St.Helens WA10 6BJ	Girl Guides & Brownies Diane Davies Tel: 07768 063564	Rainhill Women's Institute Mrs. E. North Tel: 0151 426 3730	Indoor Bowling Rainhill Village Hall
4F Play Centre (owned by Parish Council) Available for Sessional Hire Contact Anita Hoey (manager) anita.4fcentre@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 07948 729588	Rainhill Scouts Mr. M. Gilsenan Tel: 07722 403621	Kendrick's Cross Women's Institute Mrs R. Proffitt Tel: 0151 430 0696	Rainhill Gala Steve Clarke Tel: 07951 324 599
Rainhill Village Hall Weaver Avenue Tel: 0151 430 9338 rainhillvillagehall@gmail.com	4th St Helens Scout Group Mr. B. Lowe 20 Old Lane Tel: 0151 430 7988	Rainhill Old People's Luncheon Club Mrs. E. Benson Tel: 0151 430 9276	Rainhill Rocket JFC Charter Standard Club Mr. R. Ormston Tel: 0151 426 9080
St.Helens Council, Town Hall Victoria Square, St.Helens Tel: 01744 456789	Kidzone Longton Lane Pre-School Tel: 0151 430 0990	Royal British Legion Tom Blackburn Tel: 07742 591610	Rainhill Town FC Charter Standard Club Mr N. Thompson Tel: 07539104337
St. Ann's Centre and Parish Office View Road Tel: 0151 493 9350	Say and Play Carolyn Whitehead Tel: 07702 286493	Rainhill Ex-Services Club Bill Devlin Tel: 0151 426 4625	Rainhill United JFC Charter Standard Club Mr. P. Vose Tel: 07793 770689
Rainhill Community Library View Road Tel: 01744 677822	Little Explorers Diane Davies Scout Hut, Old Lane Tel: 07768 063564	Rainhill Recreation Club Mr. J. Rotherham Tel: 0151 426 2507	Stephenson Model Railway Group Tom Lowton Tel: 0151 430 6883
St. Ann's Church Warrington Road Tel: 0151 426 4666	Rainhill Swimming Club Jane Bowyer Tel: 07974 731377 Tel: 07377 697707 Jean Barratt Tel: 07863 821648	Rainhill Garrick Society Judith Martindale Tel: 07772 963172	Probus Club Rainhill & Prescot Chris Bean c.bean18@btinternet.com
St. Bartholomew's Church Warrington Road Tel: 01744 812127	Rainhill Musical Theatre Company Phillippa Bradshaw Rainhillmtc@hotmail.com	Rainhill Bowling Club Crown Green Bowls At Rainhill Cricket Club Eric Davies Tel: 0151 426 5818	Rainhill 'Forget-Me-Not' Dementia Awareness Support Group St Anns Centre View Road Margaret Lutner Tel: 0151 426 8040
St. James Methodist Church St James Road Tel: 0151 424 2494	St. Helens & Rainhill Junior Alliance Football League Stacey Savage Tel: 07852 656442	Rainhill Rotary Club John Chapman Tel: 0151 426 1151	
Trinity Evangelical Church Longton Lane Tel: 0151 426 7794	Rainhill Townswomen's Guild Carol Walpole 47A The Meadows Rainhill L35 0PQ Tel: 0151 426 2342	Rainhill Model Railway Club Brian Davies Tel: 01925 226266	

Surgeries

Ward Councillors are available by telephone and email, and will arrange to visit residents by appointment.

Councillor Contact Details	Your Local Member of Parliament is:												
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Councillor</th> <th>Telephone</th> <th>Email</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cllr D Greaves</td> <td>07895 330594</td> <td>cllrdgreaves@sthelens.gov.uk</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr J Tasker</td> <td>07864 966629</td> <td>cllrjtasker@sthelens.gov.uk</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr B Grunewald</td> <td></td> <td>cllrbgrunewald@sthelens.gov.uk</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Councillor	Telephone	Email	Cllr D Greaves	07895 330594	cllrdgreaves@sthelens.gov.uk	Cllr J Tasker	07864 966629	cllrjtasker@sthelens.gov.uk	Cllr B Grunewald		cllrbgrunewald@sthelens.gov.uk	<p>Marie Rimmer, MP</p> <p>2nd Floor, Century House, Hardshaw Street, St.Helens, WA10 1QU Tel: 01744 752075 Email: marie.rimmer.mp@parliament.uk</p>
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Rainhill Rotary provides over £13,000 to support Rainhill Community



Rainhill Rotary has continued to support local charities & causes despite the cancellation of our main fundraising event- the annual Beer Festival.

Through our Dragons Den awards, now in its 10th year, 25 organisations have benefitted from funding, including:- 4f Centre, St Ann's Millennium Centre & Rainhill Riding for the Disabled. The cumulative amount for donations over the 10-year period has now reached the magnificent total of £107,592. Rotary still brought Santa to visit the streets of Rainhill and the surrounding areas during December. Because of Coronavirus, things were a little different although over £1,500 was raised. In addition, our visits with the Santa sleigh to local schools were very well received, along with bringing Christmas cheer to the village on Christmas eve. We also supported 8 local primary schools at this difficult time with our "Christmas Cracker Scheme", providing over £3,800 to pay for pantomimes, practical projects and memento photographs for the children. We are all looking forward to a more normal new year, working alongside the Parish Council and others to help in our local community. Follow us on our website, Facebook and twitter page and see what we're up to. We always welcome helpers, volunteers and anyone interested in joining Rotary.
Ian Howitt President, Rainhill Rotary
www.facebook.com/rainhill.rotary
www.rotary-ribi.org/clubs/homepage.php?ClubID=1582

Rainhill Village Hall

It's been a difficult year, but where possible, the Village Hall's financial position has been supported through the government furlough scheme, hardship grants and, where appropriate, opening the Hall to groups when they have been able to operate under government and local authority conditions.

The last report, before the virus took hold, showed our regular bookings were reaching a good level and bookings/enquiries for one-off events were on the increase due, in the main, to the appointment of Office Manager, use of social media and general promotion of the Hall and its facilities. However, life changed dramatically when the Hall had to close on the 23rd March 2020 and in the new financial year the focus had to change when financial survival became the priority. The Office manager and the sub-committee have been in touch with regular users and possible new clients throughout the year to keep them up to date with the situation. Income from room hire was nil during the three periods of lockdown, which accounted for approximately half of the year. As an essential service, four blood donor sessions were held over the twelve months. In addition to the Parish Council grant, the Hall benefited from Local Authority grants for struggling businesses in April, December and January and a limited number of groups were able to use the Hall during September, October and for most of December. These included new groups who were catering for younger people, which was a Government requirement where facilities were suitable. Hall closure has allowed for some basic maintenance to be carried out, including decorating, carpet cleaning and replacement of ceiling tiles. Funding to complete the emergency lighting upgrade had to be identified as the cost of the work had formed part of a Biffa grant application that was rejected in August. The work has remained a priority as we would be failing in our H&S responsibilities not to upgrade the system. The work was carried out in early January 2021. Plans to replace floor coverings, improve toilet facilities, carry out tree work and upgrade the stage lighting are on hold. However, the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary have remained active and have continued to manage the Hall over the year. A detailed report on Hall activities was sent to Committee members in January. Despite the difficulties experienced over the year, it is expected that Rainhill Village Hall will re-establish its reputation as a valued resource and the Management Committee look forward to welcoming groups back to the Hall in the not-too-distant future.
María Heaton, Chairperson RVH

Millennium Centre

The Millennium Centre Management Committee would like to thank the Rainhill community who so generously supported our Crowdfunding appeal last summer. It was so gratefully received, as we fully expected to have to close because of lack of revenue due to the Covid pandemic. We were the first community centre to open our doors after the first lockdown, having worked our socks off to make it Covid secure. We look forward to welcoming all our centre users back when it is safe to do so.
Joan Gorbutt

Reflections on the past 12 months from the 4F Centre Manager

Since March 2020, the centre has had limited usage, however it still needs to be maintained.

This includes the regular alarm and fire safety checks /insurances etc but also includes sanitising the equipment and spaces. Making it COVID friendly to be prepared for when we open again people. During the last year there have been brief periods where we have been able to open. Working to the best of my ability we installed sanitiser stations, spacing signs etc to continuously keep up with the changing regulations to open safely and provide for our groups and the community. I liaise regularly with our centre users and we now have new members wishing to start when it's acceptable to do so. The Centre ran a Football Holiday Club running for three days over the February half term for key workers which very quickly became fully booked (because of limited numbers due to Covid-19 regulations) and we are hoping Children's Sports Sessions and Baby Groups will also be able to return soon when we are notified it's safe to do so. Unfortunately my own activity sessions were withdrawn due to the vulnerability of the disabled young people and funding, however because of the desperate need for these sessions I am hoping eventually they will be able to run again. I am very proud of our 'Rainhill Community Centre' and desperately seeking the time when we can fully open again.
Anita Hoey
4F Centre Manager and Chairperson.



Good Citizenship Awards



Alan Ellington – was born in the 1950's, and was one of 9 children, born and brought up in Prescot. Alan married Susan in 1978 and moved to Rainhill in 1979. He has 2 daughters and has 3 grandsons. Alan served his time at the BICC in Prescot but spent the last 25 years of his career at Howdens Joinery in Runcorn. Alans main hobby is crown green bowling, and he is a member of Rainhill bowling club. He is also a volunteer for the Friends of Prescot Churchyard and Cemetery and serves on the Prescot Parish Church Council. Alan has for many years supported the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. Although he has not served in the military himself, his daughter served in the Royal Army Dentistry Corps and spent 2 years in N.Ireland. Day after day during the Oct/Nov appeal period Alan has sold poppies and other fund raising items, raising thousands of pounds for the Royal British Legion. He is a very valued member of the Royal British Legion team and has always been a very enthusiastic volunteer. Alan also volunteers for the Big Help Project at their foodbank.



Joan Gorbutt – grew up in Childwall in Liverpool and has one sister. Joan attended Calder High School and on leaving school, started work for Civil Service (Works and Pensions). Joan met her husband Ray in the workplace and they have been married for 43 years. Joan and Ray have three children and 2 precious granddaughters. Joan is a Verger at St Ann's Church, and Chairperson of the committee that oversees the running of St Ann's Millennium Centre. Joan's hobbies include gardening, reading and sewing, and Joan adores socialising with friends and family, looking forward to doing this again soon. As a volunteer Joan has been the Baptism Co-ordinator for 20 years going out of her way to befriend and support young families. She is the Child Protection Officer and also has worked in partnership with St Ann's primary school being instrumental in the school receiving the Church School Partnership Award which they were very proud to receive. Joan took over as the Chair of St Ann's Millennium Centre Committee from 2018 and works in partnership to make sure the 'centre users' are cared for and staff organised to keep the centre running smoothly. Over the last year Joan has navigated the centre through the Covid lockdown and is one of the community's unsung heroes doing it for her love of the community and people of Rainhill.



Rachel and Jessica Naylor have lived in Rainhill all their life. They started out in the first lockdown making a few cards for the elderly people living in the bungalows in Holt Lane. They enjoyed making them so much they wanted to make and deliver more. As they delivered them, they saw what a difference their simple cards were making to people during the lockdown and how it was cheering people up. They met and chatted to so many lovely people whilst delivering (socially distanced of course). Elderly people who hadn't seen anyone for a while because they lived on their own, and others who would wave from the window or pop their head out the door to say thank you. Seeing how happy it made people, made them more determined to cover the majority of Rainhill (give or take the odd house here and there with a feisty dog behind the letterbox). Now in lockdown three, they wanted to cheer up people again. This time they chose sunshine cards which they print by hand and write at weekends and in their spare time, and then deliver when they've finished their schoolwork. Both really enjoy doing art and craft and dancing.



Sara Barlow has been the Postmaster at Rainhill Post Office for the last two and a half years. Sara was born in the 1970's and grew up with her parents and brother in Halewood, Knowsley and was educated there. Sara has one brother and is married to Robbie with four grown up children. Sara's passion for many years has been Liverpool Football Club (LFC) and is one of the 'Hillsborough Families' following a personal family loss. Sara began her working career as a brain injury therapist and in mental health support in and around the Toxteth. Following on from that, Sara ran her own business and two and half years ago purchased the Post Office. The last twelve months has been challenging for everyone but Sara quickly saw the way in which she could help the community during lockdown. She initiated the setting up of Rainhill Community Support Group. A group of willing local volunteers to go out into the community and help residents who were self-isolating. The volunteers went shopping locally, collected medication and delivered the goods and provided a listening ear to all the lonely people isolated in their homes. Sara helps vulnerable people fill in forms and with all their transactions. Sara serves the people of Rainhill with kindness, efficiency, diligence, and good humour.



Shelia Jones was born in 1964 and moved with her parents to the family home on Mossdale Drive in 1966, where her dad still lives. Sheila went to school at Rainhill High and has two grown up sons. Sheila's first job after leaving school was at the Midland Bank in Rainhill Village. She then worked at the British Consulate General in Chicago. Upon her return home she spent more than 20 years working in the private sector and is now working for the Civil Service. Sheila is a season ticket holder for Liverpool Football Club and loves travelling and spending time with family and friends. Sheila has been the PCC Secretary of St Ann's Church during the tenure of the current Vicar Alan and his predecessor Nicholas, working tirelessly over the years in

Hello - Goodbye



Welcome to Cllr Joanne Woodhouse
'Covid & first lockdown made me realise how our communities will suffer in many ways & this spurred me on to help to raise money & food donations as well as liaising with other charities & organizations to help the people of Rainhill'

Farewell to Cllr Tony Larnar
Regretfully Tony Larnar took the decision to step down due to bereavement and increased family commitments



Youth Ambassadors

2020 was the year that we all felt isolated and afraid of what could happen when we step outside, not knowing if it was safe to even speak to our neighbours. However, it has, surprisingly, also been a year of pure compassion and sympathy. People have dealt with the lockdowns in all different kinds of ways, and that includes students who have had to deal with lost school time and the hardships of no long seeing friends and family. Most students have spoken about how they are struggling to catch up with school but that doesn't mean they haven't discussed the positives of lockdown. Some of the students that have been asked about their experience during the lockdowns have mentioned that they feel they have grown closer to the family members they live with- watching films when possible and even spending time to play games together. Others said they have focused more on their mental health

fundraising and building up the social heart of the church. Sheila's work in St Ann's Millennium Centre has been outstanding and her fundraising has kept the centre afloat financially. During lockdown in recent months Sheila has worked flat out to attract funding to keep the centre open spearheading a successful crowdfunding initiative for the centre. Thanks to Sheila's hard work the centre has survived lockdown and has a future for the community of Rainhill.



Vera McCale has lived in Rainhill since 1950 and has one son. She married her late husband David at St Anns Church in 1963. Vera spent her working life as a school secretary at Tower College for many years. Hobbies include dancing and fell walking in the Lake District. Vera ran a successful Dance School for over 30 years, supported by her pianist Irene Bache, giving many local youngsters a life-long love of ballet and tap. She put on annual shows in the Village Hall with the proceeds going to local charities. Vera was introduced to the Rainhill Townswomen's Guild (TG) by her mother in law back in 1967 and has since served on the Committee in many various roles. Vera has served hundreds of cups of tea and coffee at Rainhill TG Coffee Mornings and Christmas Bazaars and is presently a tap-dancing teacher to a group of Rainhill TG members called the 'Rainhill Tappers' which she set up over 12 years ago. Vera very much enjoys the camaraderie of the Townswomen's Guild and how they all look out for each other by regular 'keeping in touch' phone calls. Vera is also a very good neighbour always willing to go the extra mile by shopping, posting letters, visiting sick neighbours – always with a smile and a kind word. During these difficult times, she is a very valuable member of Rainhill Townswomen's Guild and the Rainhill community.



Jessica Benyon was born in Whiston Hospital in 1993. Attending Thatto Heath Primary School, Sutton High Sports College, Carmel College and Edge Hill University. Jessica lives in Rainhill with her parents and younger brother. After graduating with a BA Honours in Early Years Education Jessica became the Children and Families Leader at a local church in St Helens for six years, then becoming Under 11's Lead Co-ordinator at a church in Liverpool. Jessica also works part time for the charity Imagine as their Playgroup Co-ordinator, as well as running my Children's Entertainment business 'I Wish Parties By Jess'. Jessica is passionate about the performing arts and acted in some famous stage schools and appearing as an extra in a BBC drama and in various amateur pantomimes and in a musical production of Les Misérables. During the first lockdown of this pandemic, Jessica did her daily walk dressed as a Disney Princess to brighten up the days of the children who had to stay at home. Jessica received thanks and encouragement from parents, carers and elderly residents. Jessica had the exciting opportunity to be filmed by BBC NorthWest Tonight twice due to winning an Everyday Heroes Award in the Summer last year.



Jessica McDonald Jessica's family are all from Liverpool and Rainhill. She has been fund raising since she was 5 and has sang on many great stages including the Liverpool Empire and St. George's Hall. In March 2020 during the first lockdown Jess decided to cheer up her neighbours every Thursday by singing in her street after the clap for carers (her version of "you'll never walk alone" having millions of views on social media. Jess has sung lead vocals on a charity song call "rainbow of love by Jess mcdonald and friends" raising money for the nhs. Jess is part of Band Aid Liverpool and released another charity single at Christmas singing "do they know it's Christmas" raising money for Shelter and the homeless people on Merseyside. Jess is receiving this award for all her amazing fundraising achievements and supporting her community. Jessica's nhs song is still available to download on all major platforms with 100% of the proceeds going directly to nhs charities together.



Dave Perryman was born in the 1970's, lived with his family in Huyton and attended St Thomas Beckett school. At 17 years of age, Dave joined the Royal Air Force coming out aged 21. He trained and served his time with Manweb as an electrician and spent a number of years self-employed. Dave enjoys spending time with his partner Tricia and their two sons. He also enjoys football coaching and some years ago joined Whiston Junior School as a football coach. This led to him setting up 'Mersey Juniors' Football Club, through which he met one of the School Governors from Longton Lane Primary School here in Rainhill. Dave approached the Headteacher to offer a free 'After School' football club, which has now been running for 5 years. Dave has always sought funding for his activities so that there is minimal costs for parents. The Club fund everything else including kits, training equipment, pitch furniture, sessions, coach education and league fees. Dave's philosophy is that if you have to pay to access football then you are immediately excluding some of the children that need this most. Dave has also organised activities for children such as "Ninja Warrior" in Wigan for a team building day, which the team absolutely loved. Dave is true a role model for the boys which is evident in the respect they show him. Not only does he run the after-school club at Longton Lane Primary School, he also gives up his time 2 nights in the week and on Saturday and Sunday, so other local children get the chance to play football and let off steam - all for free.

and tried to improve their diets, as well as trying to read more. Many have also spoken about how they enjoyed going out on walks with a friend and it really helped get their mind off of the situation at hand. They explained that the summer improved how they felt about the lockdown as they could go into their gardens and enjoy the sun after everything that had happened. Students have tried to make the best of the past year and not let it drag them down as best as they can and it seems to be working for the most part. Still, there are still some people who aren't sure how to cope and hopefully they will try some of the ideas students have had. A big thank you to all the teachers at Rainhill for going the extra mile. Online learning is difficult but has prevented us from being too far behind. The school has been testing students and staff and we would like to thank the testing volunteers who have got involved to get us back to school. We are all looking forward to getting back.
Imogen & Erin, Parish Council Youth Ambassadors

Rainhill Parish Council - Annual Report 2021

VE Day 75 Commemoration 8th – 10th May 2020

Owing to the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic, community-based plans to commemorate the VE Day 75th anniversary had to be severely curtailed. The Parish Council therefore decided to commemorate the end of WW2 in a different way. A range of 'on-line' activities was put together for residents to engage with. The Parish Council launched a 'VE Day75 Window Display' competition and received an amazing number of photographs from participating residents and their families. Three winners were chosen and each received a £10 gift voucher from a local Rainhill business.

75
VE DAY
75th ANNIVERSARY
8-10 MAY 2020

Commemorate the end of WW2
by celebrating at home
and following Social Distancing rules.

Friday 8th May 2020

11am 2 Minutes Silence on your doorstep.

3pm Churchill speech shown on BBC.
3pm Toast:
"For those who gave so much,
we thank you".

4pm Tea & Scones (or Coffee & Cake).

6pm Dinner and raise your glass to your neighbours.

8pm VE Day 75:
The People's Celebration.

9pm Nationwide Sing-a-Long to
"We'll Meet Again" with Royal
British Legion after the
Queen's address.

Children
RAF Teach children aged 4-7 to be more able to commemorate VE Day
See www.raf.org.uk/teach-children-learn-ve-day
Plan from the distance - Supporting the BBC campaign for commemorating
the 75th anniversary of the end of World War 2, where young people can read in their set work to share with the nation.
The Anniversary website will be free to access for the whole weekend, and that
year's product www.2020ve.com will be live for the whole month.

NHS
Rainhill Parish Council
Royal British Legion

Rainhill Parish Council COVID Response

The last 12 months have been challenging for all of us as our country and village was devastated by the impact of COVID-19.

Those who suffered loss, those impacted by the illness and delayed procedures, those in clinical isolation, those struggling with job security or career changes, those juggling working from home with home schooling, and those who continued working in a variety of essential roles throughout – from the NHS to teachers and support and canteen staff, chemists, delivery drivers, postal workers, supermarket employees, the list goes on, and our thanks and thoughts are with you all.

We are also grateful to the army of volunteers that Rainhill seemed to create, almost overnight. People of all ages and from all walks of life, who continue to volunteer their services as the Rainhill Community Support Group, from food shopping, chemist runs, meal deliveries, and more recently, volunteering at the Vaccination hubs and testing centres. We must also thank the village for the little acts of kindness, already touched on in the Chair Report, and the Coach & Horses for the daily blackboard humour. It has truly been the acts of unselfish kindness, big & small, that have brought joy to our Village during this challenging time.

We must acknowledge the difficulties experienced by our local businesses, many of which were forced to close for lockdowns 1,2 & 3 - some of which have managed to continue trading by being able to adapt to each new set of rules wherever possible by changing their business models and continuing to invest in their commitment to Rainhill. The support and friendship between all of the businesses across Rainhill has been clear to see. As we slowly move out of lockdown, we look forward to seeing a renewed force of support from us all as our Village businesses reopen.

This collaboration of Rainhill people, is testament to the growing strength and unshakable force of our community, one we as a Parish Council are incredibly grateful for.

Flowers Lift Spirits



The Spring bulbs and Summer flowers in our verges, along with the Winter and Summer barrier troughs, add to the attractiveness of the Village and lift our spirits.

However, at this time when there will be many exceptional calls on the precept, do you think that the considerable costs involved are the best use of revenue? Let us know what you think by emailing rainhillpc@hotmail.co.uk



Pumpkin Festival

Another of our new Village annual events was the Rainhill Pumpkin Festival which saw Rainhill homes and gardens decorated for Halloween.

The level of pumpkin carving and imaginative decorations were an absolute joy to see whilst walking or driving. Thank-you to everyone who took part last year, and here's to an equally spooky Festival this year!

Feedback from the Vice Chair of the Eco Garden

2020 started normally for the ECO garden. We prepared to tackle weeds and mares tails, as usual, and even had a couple of committee meetings before the virus restrictions came into force.

Members met in very small socially-distanced groups to carry on normal maintenance when the weather allowed. Unfortunately, we could not hold our Easter event, nor our plant sale as Rainhill Gala was cancelled. Restrictions allowing, we hope to have a plant sale in the garden this year. Sadly, October saw the unavoidable cancellation of our 'Spooky' Halloween event which has become popular in recent years. Our photo competition, with entries displayed for public vote, could not take place this year either. Instead, a display of previous entries was made available on our Facebook page @RainhillEcoGarden. Hopefully, more people will be encouraged to enter in the future. In the autumn we did manage one short committee meeting to plan the seed-sowing. Fortunately, the wildflowers were sown in a speedy session one Saturday. That should give the garden its usual attraction in the summer. Since then, the poor weather, and the fact that several members are still shielding, our activity in the garden has been limited. We were not able to do the hoped-for planting to provide winter colour, which remains an objective. We are grateful to the efforts of those people who have continued to keep an eye on the garden and do litter collections including a younger member of our community. Once we are able to, we very much look forward to getting back into the Eco Garden and welcome anyone who wishes to volunteer in helping us maintain it. Members usually meet at the Garden once a fortnight on a Saturday morning. If you would like to join us please feel free to come along once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, or you can email us for further updates or information on rainhillcogarden@outlook.com.

Challenging Times

As we look back over this difficult and challenging year, Rainhill has come together as a community in some amazing ways to support each other.

There have been wonderful acts of leadership, generosity and resilience. The applause for our NHS and the nursing staff in our care homes was widened to teachers, police and any frontline workers who cared for the public. Sacrifices were made by people choosing to go out to help and choosing to stay at home to protect themselves and others. In the streets around our town the volunteers co-ordinated from our PO stepped up to deliver food and shopping to those housebound. Numerous acts of kindness great and small made sure that people isolated in their own homes did not feel forgotten. We phoned our neighbours and our friends to check they were okay. "How are you?" was a question asked with more honesty and concern than usual. Technology might have helped us stay connected but what we have learnt to value above all else and never take for granted again, is real human contact. We have learnt what that loss of contact means for people who have to live with it day in, day out and it has made us a more compassionate and caring community. Throughout this year, everyone has felt themselves vulnerable in some way. We have all lost something or someone or have been affected. We are all carrying some form of grief, whether through illness, loss of earnings, lost opportunities, bereavement or isolation, everyone shared the strain. But what this year has exposed is the inequalities in our society with some having been impacted harder. While we likened some to superheroes, these superheroes were human and they too had lost loved ones and colleagues and carried the emotional and physical burden of long draining hours. The full impact of this pressure on our society will only become apparent as we come out of the crisis. The strain on many ordinary people has been enormous building up to a mental health overload in the coming months. Our community is now stronger and better connected than it has been for many years and we will need that community strength to carry one another. We'll still need to ask that question "How are you?" with just as much honesty and concern as before and the stronger sense of compassion in our community that has carried us through will be needed just as much as we come out of this crisis as it was while we went through it.



Rev. Alan Conant