

Minutes of the Rowney Green Association meeting on Tuesday 14th January 2025 at 7:30pm



Attendees: John Cypher (Chair), Andy Dunkers (Vice-Chair), Michael Corfield (Treasurer), Cllr Alan Bailes, Cllr Steve Hornsby, Pete Cain, Brian Jones, Tim Edwards, Richard Woodward, Wendy Easter (Committee Member), James McManus (Committee Member), Maggie Moore, Will Savage, Will Grace, Richard Holt, Margaret Rollason (Committee Member), Tom Webb, Helen Hawkeswood, Martin Miller (Secretary).

Ahead of the meeting John Cypher noted that sadly Margaret Crawley had recently passed away. She had the foresight to suggest and organise the formation of the RGA around 1986 in order to influence the Ministry of Transport to route the Alvechurch bypass away from Peck Wood.

Apologies received from: Cllr Marc Worrall, Andy Ballard, Liz Ballard, Dorothy Snaddon, Steff Affleck, Hedley Brooke-Carter, Cllr Barry Thornton, Wendy Jealous, Nigel Jealous.

1. Approval of Minutes. The minutes for the November 12th were approved.

2. Matters Arising from the Meeting on November 12th 2024. It was noted that the meeting in RG Village Hall to discuss whether to place a 5G mast in the village was very well attended and after vigorous discussion there was a unanimous verdict to reject the proposal.

3. Highway Matters.

3.1 Proposal for a 20-mph limit. Worcestershire CC (WCC) had rejected the RGA proposal for a 20mph limit (speed signs model) which was the first direct communication on this proposal since it was first made in 2023. During this time Cllr Luckman had failed to inform the RGA on their discussions and the result of the traffic survey. Cllr Luckman had indicated to the RGA he would not communicate with the RGA unless there was something important to state. He had written in a monthly report to Alvechurch PC that he thought the RGA's proposal was fraudulent. Martin Miller felt that surely Cllr Luckman impugning the integrity of the RGA must have contravened the Nolan principles of public life. Will Savage concurred. John Cypher will check on this (**Action**). Will Grace pointed out that the WCC approach of waiting until an accident had happened before considering an action on the speed limit went against all the established guidelines on effective risk management.

It was agreed to escalate the complaint to WCC concerning the 20mph speed limit request from a reputable community association like ours: the County process for dealing with such a proposal was not robust and the outcomes across the county were not consistent. (**Action**) Also Cllr Luckman's performance in handling this matter had been poor and a complaint to the Bromsgrove Conservative Office or the County monitoring officer should be considered. (**Action**) Will Grace suggested informing the local MP (Bradley Thomas). It was noted that Bradley Thomas had a stated interest in improving local transport and road safety and it was suggested he could be invited to discuss this with the RGA. (For information: when the House is sitting its usually only on a Friday that MPs have time for constituency visits)

3.3 Holloway 30mph speed limit. This proposal was deferred by WCC and will be revisited after the Bordesley Hall development has been completed. There is an outstanding action/promise by Cllr Aled Luckman/WCC to remove foliage and improve signage at the Holloway pinch point

4. Planning Issues.

4.1 Bordesley Hall. Cllr Steve Hornsby indicated in a speech to the Bromsgrove planning committee that the Alvechurch PC was concerned that issues around the mix of properties to include smaller cheaper houses and the inappropriately low quality of the designs had not been addressed. Cllr Bailes indicated that a condition for the development was reinstatement of the heritage wall that the developers had

destroyed contrary to the planning approval. He will follow through to ensure this happens. Cllr Bailes will also check on the proposals for control of traffic to the site which must only access it via the Holloway and not use Storage Lane or RG Lane. It was agreed that the RGA should write to Severn Trent (copy to the Alvechurch PC Clerk) enquiring about what plans were in place to ensure the water supply to RG would be reliable given the extra demands from the Bordesley Development and the susceptibility of the pumping to fail with power cuts. **(Action)**

4.2 Proposal from Exagen for a Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage System at Weatheroak. No planning application had yet been made for this. The RGA will wait to see this before making comment. Cllr Bailes said he will raise the issue of solar farms with WCC strategic planners who should identify suitable sites.

5. Adverse Weather Resilience. On Dec 7th RG was affected by a power cut at 12:19 due to storm Darragh. On Dec 8th power was restored at 11:40 to part of the RG area with the remainder being restored on Dec 9th at 16:00. Through the RG WhatsApp Chat Richard Woodward had very helpfully identified several elderly residents who needed support with hot drinks and loan of his generator. When the Village Hall power supply was restored, Mark Easter had independently opened it up to help RG residents still without heating and power. It was agreed that the RGA Committee together with Richard Woodward would draw up a plan to help RG residents who might need assistance from the community in times of emergency situations like water cuts or power outages **(Action)**. It was agreed that the RGA should contact the National Grid for their views on the RG power outage lasting about 52 hours for some RG residents and to be sure the NG had adequate access to all their assets around RG in the event of failure in the lines **(Action)**. Cllr Hornsby stated that the Parish Emergency Plan (PEP) could have been activated with access to Hopwood Community Centre where there are camp beds, water supplies and food. However, both he and Cllr Paul Edwards (Hopwood) were unaware of the issues in RG and equally many of those at the RGA meeting were unaware of the PEP. It was agreed that Cllr Hornsby should be added to the RG WhatsApp Emergency Group **(Action)**. Tom Webb suggested that a standby generator could be purchased for the Village Hall. Cllr Bailes indicated there may be some funds available to help set up the Village Hall as a resource for times of adversity. **(Action)**

6. Crime Issues. None reported but Pete Cain reported that in a nearby village vandals were known to be tampering with electricity supplies to cause power cuts.

7. Treasurers report. There was £2,207.37 in the bank, £254.51 as cash making a total of £2,461.88. £250 remains ringfenced for Newbourne Wood information board. The £75 annual subscription to the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) is due soon.

8. Vacancy for Alvechurch Parish Councillor. Cllr Hornsby indicated there were 3 vacancies on the Alvechurch PC (Hopwood, Alvechurch Village Centre and Rowney Green Wards) leaving 9 in post. Anyone with an interest could contact him or write to the APC Clerk.

9. Any Other Business.

9.1 John Cypher stated that Bromsgrove Council must build 713 new house per annum to meet new national targets. Around 90% of Bromsgrove is green belt land. Alvechurch village is identified a prime site for development as it has both rail and motorway access with amenities in situ and the release of some of its surrounding green belt land will be expected. No potential Rowney Green development sites for green belt release had been identified .

9.2 A request is needed for Alvechurch PC to replace the grit box at the junction of RG Lane and Gravel Pit Lane. (Post meeting Cllr Hornsby has made a request to the APC office for the grit bin replacement and a refill check on others).

The meeting was closed at 20:57 hrs.

Next RGA meeting: Tuesday March 4th 2025 at 7:30pm.