

Record of Decisions: Open Meeting of the Raymond Trust - 10 February 2026

Introduction

Dave Bond, Chair of Trustees for the Raymond Trust, opened the meeting by outlining the opportunity to purchase a historic piece of Heytesbury parkland currently being marketed for sale. The land, approximately 5 acres of agricultural and recreational space, could be reopened as community parkland for the free use and enjoyment of villagers. The Parish Council and Raymond Trust trustees aim to secure this land to preserve and protect the village's green spaces.

The Chair explained that legal advice had been sought regarding the use of the Trust's funds. It was confirmed that the funds could be used to purchase land and buildings for a village hall, to be held on trust for the "**general benefit of the inhabitants and the immediate vicinity.**" While the current funds are insufficient to purchase land and construct a village hall or sports pavilion, acquiring the land would be a significant first step and aligns with the Trust's objectives to benefit residents.

Letters of Support

Letters of apology were received from 13 villagers unable to attend, all expressing written support for the proposal. Among these, Mrs Evelyn Riggs, a Heytesbury resident and original Raymond Trust Trustee, stated her belief that the proposal aligns with the Trust's aims and reflects the intentions of the original trustees. Additional letters of support were read from former Parish Councillor Ben Coombes and Caroline Stanley.

Discussion and Clarifications

The Chair opened the floor to the 84 villagers in attendance, and one observer. He addressed the following points:

- **Access:** Vehicle access to the parkland would be via the existing entrance off Main road off the A36. All other access, including to the smaller plots already sold, would be pedestrian only.
- **Land Costs:** The remaining plots for sale include "The Willows" (3 acres) priced at £145,000 and eight smaller plots (quarter acre) priced at £15,000 each. The Chair noted that the guide prices have decreased since Wiltshire County Council issued an Asset of Community Value (ACV) designation.
- **Trust Funds and Costs:** The Raymond Trust currently holds approximately £230,000 in investments. In addition to the purchase price, further costs such as legal fees, covenants, and land restoration would need to be considered.
- **Community Contributions:** While contributions from villagers are not currently being sought, the Chair acknowledged significant prior support for purchasing the land, with pledges exceeding £120,000 (excluding the Raymond Trust's contribution at that time).
- **Valuation and Legal Advice:** The Parish Council and Raymond Trust are seeking a professional valuation of the land and have consulted the Charity Commission, which has approved the Trust's intention to proceed. Legal advice is also being sought.
- **Purchase Scope:** While there is an option to purchase only "The Willows" plot, the goal is to acquire all remaining plots, totalling 5 acres.

Vote

A proposal to enter negotiations with the landowner to purchase the remaining xx parkland on behalf of the village was put to a vote. The proposal was carried unanimously with all 84 villagers in

attendance voting in favour. An additional 13 votes were added from written statements of support. There was one abstention from Mrs Fellowes, who is no longer eligible to vote as she resides outside the village.

Conclusion

The meeting concluded with unanimous support for the proposal, marking a significant step towards securing the parkland for the benefit of the Heytesbury community.