

ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Working for the Community

in Rotherfield, Town Row, Mark Cross, Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 26TH JANUARY 2012 AT 19:30 IN ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. L. Pike (Chair)	Cllr. C. Dennison	Cllr. D. Thomas
Cllr. Miss N. Bolton (Vice Chair)	Cllr. R. Harris	Cllr. Mrs. A. Watson
Cllr. Mrs P. Halse Adamson	Cllr. M Hall	Cllr. N. Wickenden
Cllr. C. Clibbens		

ALSO PRESENT.

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe.
 - Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC) and Cllr. H. Merriman (WDC). Cllr. R. Tidy (ESCC) was on Council business at Wadhurst and joined the meeting later.
 - 4 members of the public.
- Before the meeting commenced the Chairman allowed a Parishioner to address those present regarding byway BW45 Great Danegate – Town Row. He is concerned that vehicles are now regularly bypassing the sleepers installed at the Southern end to restrict width with subsequent serious damage being caused to the surface of the byway. He personally does some maintenance to the drainage channels and suggests that a similar sleeper “gateway” be placed by the bench at the northern end of the byway – he is able to provide sleepers for this. CLERK to add to agenda of next meeting and will contact ESCC Rights of Way team to recommend an inspection and maintenance of the southern sleeper barrier.
- 1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (LGA 1972 s 85).**

Apologies for absence were tendered and accepted for Cllr. R. Jaques and Cllr. C. Prince. PcsO Boyle is involved with enquiries at Hailsham in connection with a recent incident there and was unable to attend..
 - 2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

The Chairman declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 6b) as he occasionally assists the contractor providing the quote.
 - 3. TO RECEIVE DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS.**

Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC) reported the following:-

 - The Council cabinet held a budget meeting today and this year the ESCC element of the Council tax will not be increasing.
 - The Council’s capital programme is to be maintained.
 - Savings are being made; this will affect the level of service that the Rights of Way team will be able to provide.
 - A recent Ofsted report on the Council’s fostering services was excellent in all categories – Cllr Whetstone is in admiration of foster parents who are dedicated to taking care of vulnerable children.
 - One third of the County’s schools are deemed “satisfactory” by Ofsted who are to change this ranking to “in need of improvement” for the future.
 - Children’s Services are to be reorganised to concentrate on intervention with problem families at an earlier stage, this is considered to provide better outcomes for those concerned.
 - A question was asked about the implications for future years of the zero increase in the Council tax for this year. The information regarding this is as follows:-
For the current financial year 2011/12 Central Government provided funds (£6m for ESCC, representing approximately 2.5% of their tax base) to Council’s who

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kept their Council Tax level unchanged; these Council's were also permitted to permanently increase their tax base by this sum. For 2012/13 a Council Tax Freeze Grant of a like sum will also be paid but only as a "one off" payment – it will not allow a permanent increase in tax base. ESCC will need to manage the "cliff edge" caused by this when calculating the 2013/14 budgets.

Cllr. H. Merriman (WDC) reported the following:-

- A Strategic Development Consultation is currently taking place regarding sites identified as having the potential for large housing developments – if WDC do not undertake such an exercise it will reduce the control that they will be able to exercise over the sites in future. If house were built, a percentage would be designated for social housing.
- Jubilee parties. 25th April is the latest date for WDC to receive applications for road closures in connection with these.
- Freedom Leisure has had their contract renewed to run Wealden's Leisure Centres. "Shake a leg" sessions are also being organised to promote exercise and activity among senior citizens in Wealden.
- Funds received from Central Government as a grant when new homes are built are to be invested in the Leisure Centres.
- The "Enjoy Sussex" website for promotion of tourism has recently "gone live".
- He is to undertake some maintenance/repainting of his noticeboard in the Village near the pharmacy.

A question was asked regarding the Social Housing proposals for the village and possible alternative sites. He is not aware of any other sites currently under consideration.

Cllr. R. Tidy (ESCC) joined the meeting toward the end and reported the following:-

- The South East Seven (SE7) is a partnership of seven Councils (Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, Hampshire County Council, Kent County Council, Medway Council, Surrey County Council and West Sussex County Council) that are committed to working together to improve the quality of services and achieving savings by the sharing of resources and property. Each has a responsibility for a particular area; East Sussex is dealing with Special Needs education, Surrey with Highways Maintenance, Kent with Waste and Brighton & Hove with I.T. services.

The meeting congratulated Cllr. Tidy on recently receiving an M.B.E. in the New Year Honours list.

4. TO RECEIVE POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS REPORT.

The Clerk presented the following information provided by PcsO Boyle.

Crimes December 2011

- 09/12 Serial 0270 garage broken into, tools stolen from property on Yew Tree Lane.
- 13/12 Serial 0466 camera stolen from property on New Road, house was left insecure.
- 18/12 Serial 1043 attempted garage break in on New Road, garage alarm was triggered while owner was out nothing taken.
- 21/12 Serial 0716 Criminal damage to lamp owned by council on the B2101.

Crimes January 2012

- 20/01 Serial 0592 Diesel stolen from jerry cans at a property on Fordbrook Hill
- 20/01 Serial 0646 Outbuildings were broken into on Eridge Lane. Industrial fly press, tools, set of county crawler tracks and a grain grinding mill were stolen

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Other

- SID activity 12/01/2012 Station Road, Rotherfield 1210 to 1240 hours, 30mph limit, the following speeds were noted:-
37, 33, 26, 24, 33, 32, 30, 45 39 36 34 24 17 29 27 31 26 33 38 37 49 40 22 30 27 35 41 41 46

Parking outside General store

- 04/01/2012 from 0830 to 1000 no cars overstaying limit
- 11/01/2012 from 1500 to 1630 no cars overstaying limit
- 26/01/2012 from 1215 to 1330 cars stopping for ten minutes or so and moving on.
- Had two reports of heating oil thefts this month in Mayfield, contact PcsO if you would like any crime prevention advice on this.

5. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 15TH 2011 AND MATTERS ARISING.

It was RESOLVED that there were no matters arising and that the minutes be adopted. The Chairman signed the minutes.

6. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS.

a) Agreement of 2012/13 Budget and Precept, and signature of Precept form for submission to Wealden District Council.

Clerk advised that despite assurances that the provisional cost for the 2011 Election would be in the region of £1500 the final bill has come out considerably less at £662.16.

It was RESOLVED to accept the proposed budget for 2012/13 as detailed in the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting of January 10th and to approve a precept request of £54755 to Wealden District Council. This represents an increase of 4.3% on the previous year's request of £52500 and, based on the factors provided by Wealden District Council, the recommended precept will cost a Band "D" property in the Parish £34.96 p.a. in Council Tax, an increase of £1.32 p.a. (approximately 2.5p p.w.) over the 2011/12 figure of £33.64.

The Clerk and Chairman completed the form that is to be dispatched to WDC.

b) Action proposed regarding Chestnut Tree affected by Honey Fungus in the Recreation Ground.

RESOLVED to accept quote of £375 for this work, CLERK to arrange with contractor for work to take place during February half term week.

c) Information from Rotherfield School regarding "Olympic" celebrations and request for short-term road closure for a parade.

This will be for a period of around 20' on a June weekday to allow a procession from the Millennium Green to the School. RESOLVED to support this proposal and for Chairman to contact Head Teacher regarding arrangements and application to WDC by School. Cllr. Merriman(WDC) is to investigate and provide a contact point within WDC for arranging closures.

d) Consider updates and adoption of amended wording suggested by internal auditors in respect of the following documents:-

i. Standing Orders

Page 24, limit for tendering reduced to £3000 to be consistent with Financial Regulations.

ii. Financial Regulations

Page 1 3iii, "per any one transaction" added to clarify position regarding Clerk's £250 "emergency" spending limit.

iii. Grant Policy.

"If possible" to be removed from beginning of sentence regarding annual accounts at foot of application form.

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RESOLVED to accept suggested amendments, CLERK to arrange to amend documents, add to website and circulate updated copies to Councillors.

e) Diamond Jubilee

i. Information and possible sites for planting under the “Jubilee Oak” scheme.

Details obtained from English Woodlands regarding trees available under this scheme. RESOLVED to obtain an Oak Tree and commemorative plaque to be placed at top of Hornshurst Road to replace the dead Oak planted by ESCC, new tree to be sent to Cllr. Bolton’s address. It was suggested that a tree also be obtained for Mark Cross Millennium Green, CLERK to investigate whether permission would be required from ESCC from whom the site is held under licence by Parish Council and add to agenda of February meeting for discussion.

ii. Request from Bonfire Society to light the Beacon on Jubilee Day.

The Chairman declared an interest at this point, as he is also Chair of the Bonfire Society. RESOLVED to agree to this request, CLERK to arrange letter to Society confirming this.

iii. Offer from St Denys’ to collate information regarding Jubilee Events via the Village Diary.

RESOLVED to accept offer, CLERK to acknowledge and add details to the Council’s website.

f) Leave days request from Clerk.

Wednesday 15th – Friday 17th February 2012. These dates were AGREED.

g) Information regarding storage of Council records.

Clerk considers that storage of old papers in the Village Hall basement is unsatisfactory and that our obligations regarding document retention would best be met by transferring them to the ESCC central storage facility at Newhaven. Is investigating requirements and costs of this with a view to reviewing what is held locally before arranging transfer to ESCC. CLERK to report at next meeting when further information is available, item to added to agenda.

h) Information regarding the Rotherfield Trust.

This Trust is managing the income from the sale of “Carisbrooke”, the former Abbeyfield site for the benefit of Village projects. RESOLVED to add details to the Council website subject to Trust’s agreement, CLERK to contact.

i) Wording of the Council’s contract with the new ground-working contractors.

Copy circulated prior to meeting and it was RESOLVED to accept document after some changes were made to the wording. CLERK to update and arrange for signature by Chairman prior to sending to Contractor.

j) Progress with enquiry of WDC re: displays in closed shops.

WDC advise that they need information regarding owners/landlords to enable them to seek permission and that there may be a cost involved. RESOLVED CLERK to research this information and forward to WDC.

k) Final wording of article for Parish Magazine regarding overgrowing foliage.

RESOLVED to accept wording and submit for publication, also add copies to Council noticeboards and website.

l) Advance plans for format of Annual Parish Meeting May 16th and prior publicity.

RESOLVED to continue with existing poster provided who confirms that cost will be £45 per board plus £10 set up/removal cost, this is held from last year. Sites to be as previous years namely Village Centre, Town Row and Mark Cross. CLERK to add item to discuss agenda/format of meeting to agenda of February meeting.

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- m) **Any correspondence or invitations requesting a response.**
None.

7. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS & MATTERS ARISING.

- Recreation and Burial Committee 6th December 2011.
- Planning and Building Committee 13th December 2011 & 3rd January 2012.
- Finance and General Purposes Committee 10th January 2012.
- Highways Lighting and Transport 17th January 2012.

It was RESOLVED that an addition be made to the public forum section of the Finance Committee meeting to reflect comments made by Cllr. Thomas. It was RESOLVED that all these minutes be adopted and that there were no other matters arising.

8. TO RECEIVE REPORTS

- **Other committees and sub-committees.** None.
- **Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.** None.
- **Clerk's report and issues.** None.

9. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

- Bank Reconciliation at end of December 2011. The RFO presented the figures, which were agreed and signed by the Chairman.
 - Review of Expenditure against Budget to end of December 2011. The RFO provided the summary figures to Councillors and relevant detailed figures to the Committee Chairmen.
 - Approval of Payments. After explanation it was RESOLVED that the following payments be made:-

CHEQUE NO	CHEQUE PAYEE	PAYMENTS DETAILS	AMOUNT
801360	Trevor Thorpe	Clerk's salary for January	£1,045.91
801361	H.M.R.C.	Tax and N.I. for January	£293.83
801362	Trevor Thorpe	Clerk's expenses for January	£59.67
	Adjustment	Cheque issued twice to internal auditors in November and December	-£194.50
801363	Wadhurst Parish Council	P.O.W.B. training course for Councillors	£60.00
801364	May Gurney	Direction sign to R.S.M.	£25.80
801365	JAKK	Replacement finger for Clackham's Lane fingerpost	£391.86
801366	Wealden District Council	Dog bin emptying Oct - Dec	£267.84
801367	L.J. Head	Supply and fit drain off to tap in Cemetery	£37.56
801368	Rotherfield Village Hall	Hall hire fees for October and November	£29.60
801369	Teambase	Stationery	£74.68
801370	Graham Long	Mole catching in the Cemetery	£92.00
801371	Mark Cross Hall	Hall hire fees for meetings	£20.00
801372	G.R. Burridge	Replacement bus shelter at Mark Cross	£2,658.00
801373	Jim Gander	Street sweeping for January	£78.75
801374	Konica Minolta	Photocopying lease	£41.08

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801375	Information Commissioners Office	Registration fee	£35.00
Total			£5,017.08

CREDITS

PAYMENT FROM	DETAILS	AMOUNT	
Santander	Bank interest - January	£60.65	
Sussex Country Gardener	Sponsorship of replacement Mark Cross bus shelter	£2,215.00	
Dignity Funeral Services	Plaque space fee	£80.00	
Tester and Jones	Right of burial and interment fees	£650.00	
Dignity Funeral Services	Memorial inscription fee	£30.00	
Total			£3,035.65

10. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE GENERAL

- Applause Rural Touring – January – May 2012 programme
- WARR Partnership – Winter 2011/12 News
- ESCC – Notice of proposed submission to Government of the Waste and Minerals Plan.
- South East Water – Water resources updates December 2011 and January 2012.
- Wealden DC – Response to issues raised by PC regarding removal of sign from building in the Conservation Area. CLERK to add to agenda of next Planning and Building meeting for discussion.

CIRCULARS AND MAGAZINES

- Saint-Chéron en Bref – No 281
- SLCC – Clerk Magazine January 2012.
- Clerks and Councils Direct – Issue 79.
- Wealden DC – Parish Bulletin 13.
- Sussex Area Ramblers – Now Open January 2012.
- CPRE – Fieldwork magazine Winter 2011.

11. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS.

12. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- Planning and Building Committee – Tuesday 14th February.
- Recreation and Burial Committee – Tuesday 21st February.
- February Council meeting – Thursday 23rd February.

The above meetings will be held in the Parish Council Room, Rotherfield Village Hall, starting at 19:30. The Chairman gave advance notice that he will be absent from the Recreation and Burial Committee meeting on the 21st and probably the February meeting on the 23rd.

13. TO RECEIVE URGENT ISSUES FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDA.

- Richard Hammond (ESCC Bridge Section) has been contacted regarding two recent vehicle strikes on Town Row Bridge. Inspector has visited site. Work is due to take place on the Bridge early in the new financial year, this will involve overnight road closures.

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- Contractors have been noted cutting the hedge on the “inland” section of the Station Road footpath near Chant Lane. Roadside hedge remains uncut, CLERK to advise ESCC as it is considered that this is their responsibility.
- Cllr. Wickenden is liaising with ESCC Highways regarding possible tree work in Catts’ Hill to take place during forthcoming period of closure.
- Clerk has spoken to Cllr Jaques who is recovering from his recent spell in hospital. A card is to be sent on from the Councillor’s.
- Clerk advised that the Village Maintenance Team of ESCC is still operating and that a request form had been received to nominate Highways related tasks suitable for a two-man team. Is currently checking Parish fingerposts, many of which require cleaning, and would welcome suggestions for other tasks, form must be submitted by February 29th. Clearing of gulleys in Station Road was put forward together with checking and cleaning road signs in the Parish.
- The proposer of the resolution regarding the Social Housing Development at Town Row pointed out that the draft minutes circulated did not reflect the Parish Council’s full recommendations. These should also include the conditions that the developers fund the extension of the 30mph speed limit to a point further up Catts’ Hill and that mature trees should either be planted or resited to provide privacy by screening adjoining properties from the development. It was agreed by the meeting that the resolution be amended thus as the next Planning Committee meeting is after the deadline for submission of comments. CLERK to ensure that these items are included in the Parish Council’s comments when submitted to WDC.

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 21:35.

14. PUBLIC FORUM.

- The Village Hall has requested that leaves be cleared from the rear car park. Chairman has offered to deal with this.

.....Chairman.....Date