



Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross,  
Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

# ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2018 IN ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL

### PRESENT

#### ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCILLORS

- Cllr. R. Harris (Chair)
- Cllr. L. Henrick (Vice Chair)
- Cllr. J. Cahan
- Cllr. G. Farmer
- Cllr. T. Gilbert
- Cllr. N. Glynn
- Cllr. A. Hardy
- Cllr. D. Hiles
- Cllr. J. Kitchenham
- Cllr. A. Martin
- Cllr. J. Richardson
- Cllr. G. Watson-Smith
- Cllr. N. Wickenden

#### COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

- Cllr. Robert Standley – East Sussex County Councillor for Wealden North East Division
- Cllr. Francis Whetstone – East Sussex County Councillor for Forest Row and Groombridge Division
- Cllr. Phil Dixon – Wealden District Councillor for Rotherfield Ward

31 Parishioners also attended the meeting.

#### 1. Apologies for absence.

None – all Parish Councillors were in attendance.

#### 2. Introduction of Parish Councillors.

The Councillors and Clerk introduced themselves to those present and gave a brief description of their roles and responsibilities within the Council.

#### 3. Minutes of the 2017 meeting.

These were agreed and signed by the Chair.

#### 4. Reports from District Councillors and County Councillors.

Key points of Cllr. Standley's report were as follows: -

- Financial situation remains "challenging" with grants to County Council's from the Government reducing over the past few years.
- £100m has been saved by ESCC over the past 10 years, more savings need to be made.
- 2/3 of Council's budget goes to adult and social care which is demand led. Government is looking at solutions as funding via Council Tax cannot be sustained.

Clerk: Trevor Thorpe, 82 Fermor Way, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3BJ

Tel: 01892 664245. Email: [clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk)

Parish Council Website: [www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk) Twitter [@rotherfieldpc](https://twitter.com/rotherfieldpc) and on Facebook



## Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross, Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

- Pressures on infrastructure continue with potholes a prime example – more needs to be spent but where is it to come from? Full solution is that the roads need to be rebuilt/resurfaced.
- More teams are being deployed to deal with potholes, it was acknowledged that there is often frustration when some potholes are filled but other ones in the vicinity are ignored.
- Please report Highways issues via the East Sussex Highways website and make Cllr. Standley aware of any issues arising if repairs do not take place.
- Some administrative cost savings have been made by sharing “back office” functions with Brighton City and Surrey County Councils.
- Unfortunately, most of the easy cost savings have been identified and made.

The key points of Cllr. Dixon’s report were as follows: -

- Work is ongoing to update the Wealden Local Plan which dates to 1998. It is hoped to publish the Plan by June, review by the Council in July, public consultation to take place in the autumn prior to passing to the Planning Inspectorate. As well as housing matters the plan covers infrastructure and employment.
- Less financial resources from Central Government has encouraged Wealden in developing services that will generate income for the Council; a commercial strategy has been created to achieve this.
- The crematorium being built on the outskirts of Horam will generate income.
- The Council has invested in the Vicarage Field development in Hailsham – this will enable the inclusion of small housing units as a part.
- A Housing Company has been created by the Council to develop smaller housing units that prove unattractive to developers.
- The Kier waste collection contract is approaching its end and the tendering process has begun. There are concerns with Kier’s service levels.
- A charge for garden waste collection is to be introduced.
- The work of various volunteer groups in the clearance of litter and roadside waste is acknowledged. It is hoped that the recent law change regarding litter may have a positive effect. In future litter deposited from cars will no longer require identification of the individual dropping it to enable a conviction, responsibility will now rest with the vehicle’s registered owner.
- The lack of visible policing in the north of Wealden remains a concern; the remaining Pcsos are based at Polegate.
- HGV ban. When in place it has been confirmed by Sussex Police that it will be enforced via “Operation Crackdown” to which online reports may be submitted.

During the following questions and answer session these issues were raised:-

### **Proposed closure of the ESCC Wadhurst and Forest Row Household Waste Recycling Sites.**

- Consultation ended recently and a 2000 signature petition had been signed by Wadhurst residents opposed to closure of their site.
- Cllr. Standley stated that he was opposed to the closures. It is considered these would not necessarily lead to increased “fly tipping” as the bulk of this is of builder’s waste.

Clerk: Trevor Thorpe, 82 Fermor Way, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3BJ

Tel: 01892 664245. Email: [clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk)

Parish Council Website: [www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk) Twitter [@rotherfieldpc](https://twitter.com/rotherfieldpc) and on Facebook



## Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross, Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

- There is a fear that there could be an increase in traffic through Rotherfield by those from the Wadhurst area accessing the Jarvis Brook tip. There could also be issues relation to Ashdown Forest with additional traffic crossing it from Forest Row to access the tip.

### 5. Parish Council Chairman's report.

- Cllr. Thomas stood down as Chair and resigned from the Council in May of last year. Thanks were due to him for his work on behalf of the Parish during his time with the Council.
- Two new Councillors, Glen Farmer (Mark Cross and Eridge Ward) and Nicola Glynn (Rotherfield Ward) have been co-opted to the Council during the past year.
- The Chair gave an overview of how the Council functions, commencing with a summary of his duties: -
  - First point of contact is generally our Clerk who advises on and investigates queries on behalf of residents and Councillors, organises meetings (more than 40 each year) and their business and manages council records and correspondence.
  - He is also responsible for managing the finances of the Council.
  - Technology plays it part in the Council's work. Accounting records are computerised and the change to making payments "on line" rather than by cheque has recently been made.
  - Clerk has undertaken four training courses/briefings so far, this year on accounting processes, cloud based document storage, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Creativity and Time Management.
- The Chair thanked the Clerk on behalf of the Council.
- Regarding the Council itself it can facilitate actions for the benefit of the community which in the current environment of financial stringency at County and District level may mean taking on matters which would normally be dealt with by them. It can also give grant support to organisations that aid the Parish residents.
- The Councillor's span a wide range of skills and are currently involved in a variety of projects, some of which are listed below: -
  - Rotherfield Surgery.
  - War Memorial project.
  - Liaising with ESCC and their contractors regarding building defects affecting the storage area beneath the Pre-School.
  - Traffic calming measures within the Village.
  - Renovation work to the Old Burial Ground behind St Denys' Church.
  - Response to the proposal by Frant Parish that the part of Rotherfield Parish in Eridge be transferred to them.

The Chair thanked the Councillor's for their hard work and commitment for the Community, also the Parishioners that support them in their work.

Regarding the Council's finances it was acknowledged that the Precept had increased considerably this year. The increase is to support the wish of the Community that they want to save the Surgery and a GP presence to remain in the Village. At the February meeting of the Council, it was agreed to increase the precept to accommodate this.

Clerk: Trevor Thorpe, 82 Fermor Way, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3BJ  
Tel: 01892 664245. Email: [clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk)

Parish Council Website: [www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk) Twitter [@rotherfieldpc](https://twitter.com/rotherfieldpc) and on Facebook



## Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross, Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

The Chair also thanked our District and County Councillors for their support, special thanks are also due to Cllr. Dixon for his efforts regarding the Community Governance Review (CGR) and the Frant Parish Council proposal regarding Eridge. He will be representing our Parish at the meeting of the Wealden District Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> at which this matter will be discussed as part of the CGR. Thanks were also given to our Street Sweeper/Litter Picker and his assistant.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that all the Council's meetings and Committee meetings are open for the public to attend and each has a public forum at which Parishioner may raise issues for consideration by the Council at a future meeting.

### 6. Presentations from Committee Chairmen.

#### i. Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Cllr. Henrick, Chair of this Committee, conducted the presentation of which the key points were as follows.

- Expenditure on capital projects was low during the 2017/18 Financial year as projects for which funds had been allocated in the Precept had not taken place although these are still "in the pipeline".
- The increase in the Precept for 2018/19 is due to making provision for the costs associated with the purchase of the Rotherfield Surgery freehold.

The following questions were raised.

- What will happen with the funds allocated toward the Surgery purchase costs should the project not go ahead?  
The funds would go into reserve and used to minimise any precept increase when agreeing the budget for 2019/20.
- How will improvements to the Old Burial Ground be funded?  
An application has been submitted for a grant from the Sussex Lund Fund to cover these costs.
- What is the intention with the discussed Rotherfield to Jarvis Brook path for which funds are still allocated in the Budget?  
The quoted cost for the proposal for a complete footpath for this route was not affordable and the modest sum in the budget is to undertaken minor tidying/improvements to the roadside to enhance the safety of those who wish to walk this route.

#### ii. Communications and Social Media Committee.

Cllr. Hardy, Chair of this Committee, conducted the presentation of which the key points are contained in the "PowerPoint" slides held on the Parish Council's website.

The following question was raised.

- Village organisations have a Councillor allocated as their liaison point with the Parish Council. Who should be approached to arrange this?  
Organisation to please contact the Clerk so that arrangements can be made.



## Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross, Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

### iii. **Planning and Building Committee.**

Cllr. Hiles, Chair of this Committee, advised that during the year to the end of March 2018 the Committee had considered and made recommendations on 82 applications of which 66 (81%) had been agreed by Wealden District Council.

He recommended that any Parishioners potentially affected by a Planning Application should ensure that their views are made known to Wealden District Council either by letter or via their website.

### iv. **Recreation and Burial Committee.**

Cllr. Gilbert, Chair of this Committee, reported that it had been a busy year for this Committee. Several Councillors and their relatives had provided labour over several winter weekends to undertake extensive tidying and clearance of the Old Burial Ground behind St Denys' Church. Grant funding is being sought to enable further work toward the aim of creating a "quiet area" here.

- A question was raised regarding improvements to the path to the Bowls Green. Cllr. Gilbert advised that the materials had been purchased for this and a contractor is being sought to install it.

### v. **Highways, Transport and Lighting Committee.**

Cllr. Martin, Chair of this Committee, requested that Parishioner's report any incidences of anti-social driving, speeding or vehicles over 9.9m be reported to the Sussex Police "Operation Crackdown" website or that full details be provided to the clerk (ideally with a photograph accompanying) so that he may report.

The following questions were raised by those attending: -

- What is being done regarding damage to the verges at Castle Hill caused by Contractors undertaking building work?  
Cllr. Martin advised that contractors had made good the damage.
- Water main work in the fields next to Rotherfield Hill – what is the duration of this?  
Cllr. Glynn advised that, according to a conversation she had with one of the Contractors, this was due to take nine months. Clerk will make enquiries of South East Water and obtain more details to share.
- Installation of a dropped kerb by the "Copper Kettle". This long-awaited project will be taking place during the Summer. Concern was expressed that similar kerbs such as the one in North Street were often blocked by parked vehicles. This was acknowledged but in the absence of Police enforcement a remedy is unlikely.
- What is happening CCTV installation on the King's Arms and repairs to the damage caused by large vehicles to it.

Cllr. Martin expressed frustration that listed building/conservation issues raised by Wealden District Council meant that this site was unsuitable and an alternative was being sought. Clerk is to contact the King's Arms regarding their plans for repairs to the lorry damage. Clerk also reported that he is writing to owners of large/articulated lorries passing through the Village and thanked his 3 regular "lorry spotters" for their efforts in recording details of these. He would welcome ownership details, registration numbers and ideally a photo of any such vehicles if safe and practical to do so. Because of a letter to the Tesco Chief executive regarding their lorries, and



## **Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross, Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas**

those of their contractors, passing through the village he has spoken with their Transport Compliance and Standards Manager. He has promised to raise the profile of the length restriction with those delivering to the store and requested that details of such vehicles be sent to him.

### **7. Smith and Fermor Charity Report.**

Clerk summarised the aims of this small local charity and gave broad details of recent applications. He invited applications from individuals or groups in need of modest sums to apply, qualification is that applicant must live in either Rotherfield Parish or Crowborough Town Council area.

### **8. War Memorial project report.**

Cllr. Hardy's report contained the following key points.

- The target figure for fund raising had been exceeded and he thanked those who had made donations.
- Order has been placed with stonemasons and a meeting will take place shortly to agree the final list of names, also formalise the arrangements for the dedication of the memorial and the ceremony to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armistice.
- Construction will commence with the installation of the base slab, this will take place after the annual fund-raising event held by the Friends of the Surgery on the August Bank Holiday.

### **9. Surgery project report**

Key points of the report from Cllr. Henrick were as follows: -

- The Council was acting to preserve a GP presence in the Village due to the overwhelming public opposition to the closure of the Surgery.
- Discussions had taken place with the Partners regarding the proposal and the area of the property which they would need to retain for their purposes.
- A rental contract is being drawn up between the Council and the Practice.
- Planning permission was originally granted for the building for use as a GP surgery.
- Support has been promised from the Rotherfield Trust toward the cost associated with initial building/conversion work that may be required to allow the use of surplus space for other medical/care purposes. The Trust were thanked for this.
- Property and valuation surveys have been undertaken on the premises by the Parish Council at their expense.
- The Partners and Council are keen to progress with the purchase. of the premises by the Council. The NHS High Weald Lewes Havens Clinical Commissioning Group (HWLHCCG) are involved in the process as they need to determine the rent that will be paid by them to the Council for the Surgery space.
- In the unfortunate event of the arrangement not continuing beyond two years Wealden District Council planners have confirmed that this will have demonstrated that the property is no longer viable for its intended use and alternative use for the premises/site may be permitted.

The following questions were raised:-

Clerk: Trevor Thorpe, 82 Fermor Way, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3BJ

Tel: 01892 664245. Email: [clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk)

Parish Council Website: [www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk) Twitter [@rotherfieldpc](https://twitter.com/rotherfieldpc) and on Facebook



## Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross, Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

- Is the main hold up to progress due to the HWLHCCG?  
Lack of information from them regarding rental income was delaying matters.
- What is the position regarding public access to the site.  
It will be unrestricted and this will be verified by our solicitor.
- Why do the valuation figures differ?  
One is Commercial Valuation based on the property, not its use. The desire of all parties is that it remains a GP surgery.

The meeting closed at 21:30 with applause from those present.

.....Council Chair.....Date

Draft minutes subject to confirmation