

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 THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 2013 AT 19:30 IN THE PARISH COUNCIL ROOM, ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. L. Pike (Chairman)	Cllr. M. Hall	Cllr. J. Kitchenham
Cllr. N. Bolton (Vice Chairman)	Cllr. R. Harris	Cllr. D. Thomas
Cllr. Mrs P. Halse Adamson	Cllr. R. Jaques	Cllr. A. Watson
Cllr. C. Clibbens		Cllr. N. Wickenden

ALSO PRESENT.

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe.
- Cllr. R. Tidy (ESCC), Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC), Cllr. W. Rutherford (WDC) and PcsO Matt Boyle. Cllr. Merriman (WDC) arrived during the course of the meeting due to previous commitments.
- Three members of the public.

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (LGA 1972 s 85).

Apologies were received and accepted for Cllr. A. Sharpe and Cllr. C. Prince. Clerk advised that an apology was received from Cllr. Rutherford (WDC) prior to the January meeting but that this had not been noted.

2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER INTERESTS.

- Cllr. L. Pike declared a personal interest in respect of item 7 h) as he is a member of the Institute Committee.
- Cllr. Halse-Adamson declared an interest in respect of item 7 e) as she is involved in the management of the Hall.

3. TO RECEIVE DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS.

Cllr. Tidy reported the following:-

- Attended a Council Budget meeting earlier in the month at which a 0% increase budget was agreed.
- Accumulated savings of £20m will be made over the next few months.
- Some of the Officer recommendations for savings have been mitigated hence there will no change to the budgets for winter gritting and adult social care.
- The petition from Catt's Hill residents regarding the speed limit has been presented to the Chair of ESCC. Cllr. Kitchenham will be invited to attend the Council meeting at which feedback is to be given.
- He congratulated Cllr. Clibbens for his recent award in recognition of setting up the local Speedwatch group.

Cllr. Whetstone reported the following:-

- Tenders have been invited for installing superfast broadband in "non-commercial" areas of the County.
- Recently attended a meeting with other Council and Trade Union representatives to discuss matters relating to Academies in East Sussex. Over 50% of East Sussex secondary school pupils attend academies.
- It is hoped that the Bexhill – Hastings link road will, when completed, invigorate the local economy in many ways and make it more attractive to business.

Cllr. Rutherford reported the following:-

- Leaflets have been dispatched detailing enhancements to waste collections and the provision of a separate bin for garden waste.
- Wealden Parishes Conference indicated a desire for improved communication with Parishes. A separate area of the WDC website has been created to hold information of use to Parishes.

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- Last year two safety awareness events were held in partnership with Sussex Emergency Services. This year, in addition to similar events at Uckfield and Hailsham, one will be held at Crowborough Community Centre on April 11th between 10:30 and 13:00.

4. TO RECEIVE POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS REPORT

Pcso Boyle reported that a container had recently been broken into in Hadlow Down Road and a chainsaw taken. Car parts and scrap had been taken from a property in Spout Hill. It is understood that an arrest has been made in connection with a “smash and grab” of property from a village business before Christmas; He is to investigate and feedback information. CLERK is to report details of a broken streetlamp cover that is believed to have been due to vandalism and may constitute an insurance claim.

5. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24TH JANUARY 2013 FOR APPROVAL AS A TRUE RECORD AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES.

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th January 2013, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, were confirmed as a true record and they were signed by the Chairman.

6. UPDATE FROM CLERK REGARDING MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING.

Numbers related to agenda items of the 24th January meeting.

6a) Papers submitted to WDC regarding precept. Press release sent to “Courier” who featured an extract from it, also added to Council website.

6d) Clerk has spoken to Churchwarden who considers dog fouling by St Mark’s Church a nuisance rather than a major issue. WDC no longer have stocks of warning notices, Clerk will purchase some small signs to fix on leg of PC noticeboard. Issue featured in Council News for March magazine.

6e) No response to notices advertising Street sweeper vacancy – agenda item added for March Highways Committee meeting.

7. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

a) Presentation to the Council by the Twinning Association.

The meeting was adjourned whilst a representative of the Association gave a presentation to the Council that covered the following points:-

- History of the Association.
- Visits to St-Chéron. Weekend annual spring visits are held alternately annually between Rotherfield and St-Chéron. Additional walking holidays are held jointly, alternating annually between U.K. and France.
- The French visitors will be arriving for the weekend of May 17th.
- With an increasingly ageing membership more members would be welcomed, also those able to provide weekend accommodation for visitors or act as reserves in case of last minute issues.
- CLERK to highlight the work of the Association on the Council website, which has a link to the Association site.

b) Report from Chairman regarding recent meeting to discuss options for site to build a permanent base for Rotherfield St Martin.

Chair reported that RSM have enquired if there is an area of Parish owned land that may provide a site for a building of a size broadly equivalent in areas to the ground floor accommodation they currently occupy in the Memorial Institute. The only area in Parish ownership that could be used is the Amenity Land to the rear of the Surgery. Council Chairman together with a Trustee of RSM, recently visited Wealden District Council at Hailsham and discussed planning issues regarding this site with Kelvin Williams, Head of Planning, and Doug Moss, Team Leader North. WDC advised that, to consider supporting such a scheme the following conditions and issues would need addressing:-

- Any building would be for the sole use of RSM and not for public hire.
- ESCC Highways would undertake an access/parking survey – it is suggested that relocation of the centre could reduce parking and congestion issues in North Street.
- Land ownership details and conditions to be examined by WDC (Clerk has forward the information held to them).
- Car sharing and mini bus transport should be encouraged to reduce emissions.

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- Structure would need to be single storey – would there be a possibility for a link to the Surgery in both a physical sense and in provision of services, this subject to discussion and agreement?
- RSM is arranging to provide WDC planners regarding the work of RSM together with usage and traffic levels.

In response to a question, Chairman advised that RSM were aware that the vehicle access route to South Street was not the property of the Parish and that they would be responsible for liaising with interested parties in the locality.

c) Annual Parish Meeting. Response to invitations for attendance of outside organisations and information regarding advertising sites.

Acceptances received so far from RSM, Millennium Green, Pre School, Bonfire Society, Twinning Association and the Players. Sign provider advises that 40” x 60” board costs £45 plus £10 for installation and removal; he is unaware of any events planned that may occupy likely sign locations ahead of the Council, it is known that there is a Players production scheduled for the week after the Meeting. RESOLVED the following:-

- CLERK to carry forward to March agenda for decision on number/location of signs also discuss possible site in Church Road with owner.
- Chairman to discuss other sites in the Village with their owners.
- CLERK to advise village organisations that one table will allocated each for them to mount a display of their activities.

d) Update and decision on further action regarding replacement sign for the former “George”.

Cllr. Thomas is to contact Kelvin Williams, Head of Planning at WDC regarding their unwillingness to enforce retention of the sign, RESOLVED CLERK to add to March agenda to receive update and make decision on further action.

e) Alternative venue in Mark Cross for Council Meetings in view of impending closure of the Village Hall.

Cllr. Halse – Adamson reported that it is probable that the Hall will close in June to avoid a further year of insurance premium cost; they would like a letter from the Parish Council confirming that they do not wish to take over the Hall. CLERK to add item to March 12th Planning meeting regarding this. Clerk has checked availability of the Reading Room at Mark Cross Church for meetings; it is felt that it may be too small for the Monthly Council meetings, CLERK to check availability of School for evening meetings. Meetings schedule for April and May in the Hall may proceed with public attendance monitored, CLERK to report at April meeting regarding venue options.

f) Agreement of location for a textile recycling bin in the Village Hall car park.

Site visit held with Clerk, Cllr. Thomas and representative of Charity. RESOLVED to allow bin installation at side of Hall on area of grass by ramp to stage, CLERK to inform and liaise with the Charity.

g) Offer of old OS maps of Parish in return for donation to Millennium Green Trust.

RESOLVED to accept the offer of these maps for future framing and display in the Parish Council Room, CLERK to advise owner and arrange cheque for issue at next meeting, also make enquiries regard local framers.

h) Grant sum for payment to the Memorial Institute toward porch replacement costs.

RESOLVED to grant 50% of replacement cost of porch up to a maximum of £1000, CLERK to advise Institute.

i) Dates, venues and hosts for Councillor “have your say” sessions April – June.

Following arrangements were RESOLVED:-

- 13th April - Cllr. Pike (to confirm) in the Institute.
- 11th May - Cllr. Bolton and Cllr. Watson (to confirm) in the Institute.
- 8th June – Cllr. Harris and Cllr. Thomas, venue provisionally Mark Cross subject to support for March 9th session.

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All sessions 10:30 – 11:30, CLERK to book and publicise.

j) Date change for May Council meeting and Council Annual meeting.

RESOLVED to change date to Thursday 23rd, as the Chairman is otherwise committed. Parish Council Room unavailable, CLERK to book Institute and publicise change.

k) Comments regarding proposed extension of 30mph limit in Catt's Hill and other highway works to be funded by developer of Town Row site.

Details and plan of works proposed circulated to Councillors. ESCC advise that the "gateway" feature of the speed restriction will be consulted separately and they will ensure that bus shelters will be installed. RESOLVED that response be sent by CLERK to WDC on behalf of the Council as follows:-

- Bus layby works. Council wish to see new planting on boundary of development and new bus layby; relocating existing hedge is not suitable. Bus shelters of similar design to those at Mark Cross and Town Row to be installed on both sides of the road and provided by village contractor.
- 30mph limit extension. 40mph should be extended toward Mark Cross by the same distance as the extension to preserve "buffer" zone in accordance with guidelines that there should be a minimum 600m distance between limit changes. It is considered that vehicles approaching limit will potentially be travelling at 60mph downhill and proposed distance will be insufficient.

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

- 29th January Planning and Building Committee.
- 12th February – Recreation and Burial Committee.
- 19th February Planning and Building Committee.

RESOLVED that the minutes of these meetings be adopted.

9. TO RECEIVE REPORTS

- Other committees and sub-committees.
None.
- Councillor "Have Your Say" session.
Information already fed back at Recreation and Burial meeting and circulated.
- Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.
 - Cllr Training session at Crowborough. Attended by Cllrs. Kitchenham and Sharpe.
 - Planning Training at Crowborough.
 - Chair and Vice chair of Planning Committee attended this session at Crowborough. Host was WDC Councillor Roy Galley and Planning Officers.
 - Various matters were presented including National Planning Framework relaxations and protection offered to rural areas by AONB and Local Development plan.
 - Cllr. Kitchenham attended the Village Hall Committee meeting in his role as Parish Council representative. Leaves at rear of Hall were again raised as an issue; Council Chairman has recently cleared this area.
 - CLERK to obtain dates of Committee meetings from Sport's Club so that Council representative may attend.
- Clerk's report and issues.
 - SLCC Conference at Amex Community Stadium. Useful presentations regarding Localism and Community Right to Build, also many suppliers of services and goods. The latter are being studied by Clerk who will report on any considered worthwhile pursuing.
 - Active Play session held in Hall on February 19th. This Council funded event only attracted four children despite "flyers" being placed in school bags on our behalf by Rotherfield School.

10. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

- Bank Reconciliation at end of January 2013. Details were circulated to the Councillors and it was RESOLVED that the Chairman sign the reconciliation.
- Review of Expenditure against Budget to end of January 2013. RESOLVED that this be approved.
- Approval of Payments. Clerk reported that £250 for additional hedge cutting and £15.50 for gate repairs had been agreed under his discretionary repair/urgent work limit. Final invoice from groundwork contractor has been analysed for grass and hedge cutting, total billed by them for the

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“season” is £317 less than their initial quote for the work. Notice will be given to contractors in cheque covering letter.

It was RESOLVED to authorise the following payments:-

Payments are made using the General Power of Competence as contained in the Localism Act 2011. The Power was adopted by Rotherfield Parish Council at their monthly meeting held on 29th November 2012

CHEQUE NO	PAYEE	DETAILS	AMOUNT
801537	Trevor Thorpe	Clerk's salary for January	£1,253.85
801538	H.M.R.C.	Tax and N.I. for January	£405.01
801539	Trevor Thorpe	Clerk's expenses for January	£138.00
801540	Teambase	Stationery	£17.94
801541	Graham Long	Mole catching recreation ground and cemetery	£169.20
801542	William Clark	Hedge and verge cutting Rotherfield Hill	£168.00
801543	Crowborough Town Council	Councillor briefing and update session	£60.00
801544	Wealden District Council	Dog bin emptying Oct - Dec 2012	£276.48
801545	Rotherfield Village Hall	Hall hire - January	£40.80
801546	SALC	Subscription for Local Council Review magazine	£16.00
801547	St Marks Church PCC	Donation for use of Reading Room	£10.00
801549	David Harman	Donation for Cemetery water supply and use	£100.00
801550	Barcombe Landscapes	Grass and hedge cutting	£2,061.60
801551	Konica Minolta	Photocopying charges Dec - Feb	£22.04
801552	A.C. Moaby	Hedge cutting and gate repairs in Rec	£1,465.50
Total			£6,204.42

Please note that cheque 801548 is spoiled

CREDITS

PAYMENT FROM	DETAILS	AMOUNT
Santander	Bank interest - December	£61.36
H.M. Treasury	Half year interest on holding of 4% Consols Stock	£29.74
Total		£91.10

Clerk advised that, based on cheques issued above and estimated expenditure for March, a transfer of £10,000 from deposit to current account was required and the relevant instruction was signed.

11. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

Letter/e-mail

- Rotherfield Friendship Club – Thanks for grant support and invitation to attend
- WDC/Boundary Commission – Advice that Parliamentary constituency boundary review is now postponed until 2018.

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- CPRE Sussex Countryside Trust – Notice of AGM 10th July and programme of tours and talks for 2013.
- Information Commissioners Office – confirmation of renewal of registration.
- WDC – Advice of increase in weekly dog bin emptying charge to £4.95.
- WDC – Report of Wealden Remuneration Panel – CLERK to place on agenda of March meeting for consideration.
- Sussex Heritage Trust – Information regarding 2013 awards.
- Mark Cross Hall – progress report regarding research into deeds and title.

Magazines and circulars.

- Sussex Area Ramblers – “Now Open” February 2013.
- Wealden Parish Bulletin – February 2013.
- St-Chéron en Bref – No 293.
- SALC – February Newsletter.

12. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

- These were presented to the Chairman for signature. No significant issues were noted by the inspections and the public have raised no issues or concerns.

13. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- 12th March – Planning and Building Committee
- 19th March – Highways Lighting and Transport Committee. (Mark Cross Village Hall)
- 28th March – Monthly Council meeting

All meetings start at 19:30 and, other than noted, are in the Parish Council Room, Rotherfield Village Hall.

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

- Cllr. Merriman (WDC) reported that he would be considering the planning application for the land at the rear of “Little Oak”. He is also keen to see the Catt’s Inn reopened. In response to a question regarding concerns about apparent relaxation of the National Planning Framework his personal view was that Wealden were in a stronger position than some Authorities as their adopted Core Strategy allocated specific areas where development was to be permitted. Whilst not being complacent on the issue this greatly restricted any “loopholes” and could mean that developers may seek these elsewhere in districts that did not have an adopted Core Strategy.
- At the recent Parish Panel meeting, it was noted that one Wealden Parish had raised their precept by over 100% albeit from a far lower base figure.
- CLERK to chase progress with potholes in Sham Farm Road near Stile Bridge.
- Cllr. Hall submitted a resignation letter to the Chair, as he is likely to be relocating abroad for work. He thanked all present for their support. CLERK to advise WDC.
- CLERK is to review Financial Regulations and suggest changes to increase transparency in obtaining quotes for smaller contracts.
- CLERK to add agenda item for forthcoming Planning meeting to agree areas of grass requiring cutting by contractors prior to the “official” “start of their contract on April 1st.”

The Chairman declared the formal meeting of the business closed at 21:55.

15. PUBLIC FORUM.

- It was reported that the request to ESCC for a diversion of Peeps Lane 24a was not being progressed due to objections received.
- With regard to agenda item 7 b) it is recalled that when the Court Meadow development was proposed some 30 years ago retention of the view of the southern aspect of St Denys’ Church was considered an important issue by many. The “Amenity Land” area was retained to provide a break between the Church and Court Meadow and to preserve this view. Aspirations for any development on this site should be clarified to avoid compromising this.

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

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