

# ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Working for the Community

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

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2015 AT 19:30 IN ROTHERFIELD MEMORIAL INSTITUTE

Before the meeting commenced the elected Councillors signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office with the Parish Clerk as witness to their signatures.

### COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. D. Thomas (Chairman)	Cllr. K. Curtis	Cllr. A. Martin
Cllr. R. Harris (Vice Chairman)	Cllr. T. Gilbert	Cllr. N. Wickenden
Cllr. J. Cahan	Cllr. D. Hiles	
Cllr. C. Clibbens	Cllr. J. Kitchenham	

### COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None.

### ALSO PRESENT

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe.
- Three candidates for Co-option to the Council.
- A representative of Rotherfield Scout Group joined the meeting later.

#### 1. TO ELECT A CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR, AND SIGNING OF THEIR DECLARATIONS OF OFFICE .

- Cllr. D. Thomas was elected unopposed as Chair of the Council.
- Cllr. R. Harris was elected unopposed as Vice Chair of the Council.

The meeting was briefly adjourned whilst the Chair and Vice Chairs signed their acceptances of Office with their signatures witnessed by the Parish Clerk.

#### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

None.

#### 3. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr. Wickenden declared a personal interest in respect of item 7i as he is collating the information and quotes to support the alternative proposal to rebuild rather than refurbish the Scout Hut.

#### 4. CONSIDER CANDIDATES FOR CO-OPTION AND APPOINTMENT TO ROTHERFIELD AND MARK CROSS WARDS.

The following have put themselves forward as candidates for the two vacancies for Councillors in Mark Cross Ward. There have been no applications to fill the vacancy in Rotherfield Ward.

- Lucinda Watts
- Graham Watson-Smith
- Jean May Whitehead

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Each candidate was permitted to address the meeting for five minutes to support their application, during this period the other two candidates left the room. The following candidates were duly elected by show of hands.

- Lucinda Watts
- Graham Watson-Smith

The meeting was adjourned whilst the new councillors signed and had witnessed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office. They were provided with copies of the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct together with a Member's Register of Interests form. Clerk reminded all Councillors present that they had been provided with the Register of Interest that must be completed and returned to the Clerk within 28 days of their taking office.

The Chairman thanked Mrs. Whitehead for her interest in applying to be co-opted as a Councillor and encouraged her to apply for the remaining vacancy in Rotherfield Ward. The Candidate for this vacancy will be selected at the May meeting of the Council on 21<sup>st</sup> May.

Standing Orders were suspended whilst the Chairman addressed the meeting regarding these following key points:-

- Wishes this to be a lively pro-active Council, with Councillor's reading briefing papers and expressing their views in the Council and Committee Meetings.
- Welcomed the new Councillors with their fresh ideas and new perspectives. His expectation is for them to challenge some aspects of our traditional thinking.
- Differences of opinion will occur which we must work through to get the best outcome for our elector. Harmony is the corner stone of an effective Council.
- The Council has a well qualified hard working Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). He will be key to our efficiency as a Council, and he is more difficult to replace than any Councillor.
- All Councillors were wished a very successful term in office.

## **5. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 30TH APRIL 2015 & MATTERS ARISING.**

Cllr. Clibbens raised that these minutes omitted to mention that he had raised the matter of item 2a) agreed at the March meeting. This had agreed that the Council would facilitate a meeting between Cllr. Wickenden and the resident who had raised concerns at the nuisance caused by trial bike events held on Cllr. Wickenden's land. Cllrs. Kitchenham and Cllr. Pike (now retired from the Council) had indicated a willingness to be present as independent parties. Clerk agreed that the notes for the minutes confirmed this but that this had not been carried forward to the printed draft copy.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following be added to the April 2015 minutes under item 1f)

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“CLERK is to contact Town Row resident raising concern regarding trial bike activity on land owned by Cllr. Wickenden off Douglas Road. This to arrange a mutually convenient meeting date for all parties, which is to be held in the Parish Council Room at Rotherfield Village Hall. The aim is for this to take place before the end of May and to broker a mutually satisfactory solution for those involved”.

Cllr. Cahan offered to be present at the meeting as she has mediation experience. Cllr. Wickenden expressed the view that, although he would attend the meeting, he had reservations as to whether it would achieve anything.

## 6. ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

### i. To elect Chair & vice Chair, and appoint members, and arrange review of the terms of reference of the following Committees and working groups.

The following appointments were made, with the Council Chair and Vice Chair as “Ex Officio” voting members of all the committees as prescribed in each of their Terms of Reference.

#### • Planning and Building Committee

- Chair – Cllr. Wickenden
- Vice Chair – Cllr. Hiles
- Cllr. Cahan
- Cllr. Gilbert
- Cllr. Kitchenham
- Cllr. Martin
- Cllr. Thomas - Undertaking site visits

#### • Recreation and Burial Committee

- Chair – Cllr. Harris
- Vice Chair – Cllr. Gilbert
- Cllr. Hiles
- Cllr. Watts
- Cllr. Cahan
- Cllr. Martin
- Cllr. Curtis
- Cllr. Wickenden

#### • Highways, Lighting and Transport Committee

- Chair – Cllr. Clibbens
- Vice Chair – Cllr. Kitchenham
- Cllr. Curtis
- Cllr. Gilbert
- Cllr. Hiles
- Cllr. Watson-Smith
- Cllr. Wickenden

#### • Scout Hut Renovations Project Working Party

- Chair - Cllr. Harris
- Vice Chair – Sarah Jones (Rotherfield Scouts)
- Cllr. Wickenden (Trusted Advisor)
- Cllr. Thomas (Trusted Advisor)
- Cllr. Hiles
- Les Pike (Trusted Advisor)
- Mark Wakelin (Rotherfield Scouts)

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- **Land Acquisition Advisory Group**
- **Finance and General Purpose Committee**

- Chair - Cllr. Wickenden
  - Vice Chair – Cllr. Kitchenham
  - Cllr. Gilbert
  - Cllr. Martin
  - Cllr. Watson Smith
  -
- Chair - Cllr. Clibbens
  - Vice Chair – Cllr. Harris
  - Cllr. Wickenden
  - Cllr. Hiles
  - Cllr. Watts
  - Cllr. Kitchenam

Rotherfield St Martin are to be asked to nominate a representative to for this group.

ii. **To Appoint Council Representatives to the following organisations**

- **Rotherfield Village Hall**
  - Cllr. Gilbert
- **Rotherfield Allotment Association**
  - Cllr. Harris
- **Rotherfield Millennium Green**
  - Cllr. Curtis
- **Mark Cross Village Hall**
  - Cllr. Watson - Smith
- **Twinning Association**
  - Cllr. Thomas
- **Rotherfield Scout Group**
  - Cllr. Hiles
- **Rotherfield Bowls Club**
  - Cllr. Curtis
- **Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils**
  - Cllr. Curtis
- **Rotherfield Memorial Institute**
  - Cllr. Gilbert
- **Rotherfield Sports Club**
  - Cllr. Curtis
- **Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Group**
  - Cllr. Cahan
- **Wealden District Association of Local Councils**
  - Cllr. Curtis
- **Parish Schools and Pre Schools**
  - Rotherfield Primary School and Pre School – Cllr. Cahan
  - Mark Cross School and Brandywell Nursery – Cllr. Watts
- **Rotherfield St Martin**
  - To be advised

iii. **To make appointments to the following posts, and review or create new responsibilities and posts**

- **Emergency Co-ordinators:- Infrastructure/Utilities, Snow Clearance and Vulnerable residents**
  - **Emergency Co-ordinator – Cllr. Wickenden**
  - **Vulnerable residents** – Clerk to liaise with Rotherfield St Martin regarding how these best

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be identified and assisted in case of emergency and item to future agenda to allocate responsibility.

- **Snow Clearance** – CLERK is to enquire if our Street Sweeper will be willing to take on this responsibility on a paid basis as and when required.
- **Pond Warden**
  - Cllr. Wickenden
- **Footpath Warden**
  - Cllr. Wickenden, Cllr. Curtis and Cllr. Watson Smith
- **Smith and Fermor Charity**
  - Clerk
- **Public Transport**
  - Cllr. Curtis
- **Telecommunications – Broadband/Mobile phone**
  - Cllr. Clibbens
- **Gatwick Airport and aircraft issues**
  - Cllr. Curtis – details to be provided of forthcoming meeting at Crowborough with Gatwick representatives
  -
- **Safety inspections and public liability insurance**
  - Old Burial Ground and Cemetery – Cllr. Martin
  - Recreation Ground and Play Area – Cllr. Gilbert
- **Press Liaison and Newsletter**
  - Cllr. Kitchenham
- **Rotherfield Village Conservation**
  - Cllr. Wickenden and Cllr. Hiles
- **Business Enterprise and Tourism**
  - Cllr. Watts
- **Sussex Police - Liaison**
  - Cllr. Curtis
- **Sussex Police – Speedwatch**
  - Cllr. Kitchenham, Cllr. Watts and Cllr. Watson-Smith
- **Tree Warden**
  - Cllr. Wickenden, Cllr. Martin and Cllr. Watson - Smith

## 7. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS

### i. **Receive recommendations of the Scout Project Working Party and make decision regarding quotes received for refurbishment or rebuild of Rotherfield Scout Hut and further action.**

A briefing note for Council members had been circulated prior to the meeting, this summarised the history of the project.

The Scout Project Working Party had recently met to discuss and review the three quotes received in response to the invitation to tender for the project. Their recommendation to the Council is that the quote from Inca Projects be accepted. Details are as follows:-

- Building will have a new roof, with wall cladding inside and out replaced.
- Expected life of refurbishment is 50-60 years.
- Cost of building work will be £72680 plus VAT at 20%
- Cost of external insulation will be in the order of £16K plus VAT at 5%

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- Contingency and project management costs are not included, it is considered that a figure of 5% is reasonable for contingency and the contractors will “self-manage” much of the work.
- Satisfactory references had been provided by Inca.
- Quality assurance regarding the work to allow release of payments will be undertaken by Cllr. Wickenden and Mr. Les Pike. Both have many years’ experience of the building and civil engineering industry.
- Cllr. Wickenden has withdrawn his proposal and costings for a demolition/rebuild as this could not compete in cost terms with the rebuild option for which planning permission has been obtained.
- It is considered that a “worst case” total cost for the project is £125K.
- Grant funding of £100k has been promised by the Rotherfield Trust (offer expiring in 2016), £5K or more from the Scout Group and £5K from the Pre-school; other sources of grant funding are still being pursued.
- Details of the draft lease are to be considered by the Working Party.

Standing Orders were suspended at this point to allow the Scout Club representative to address the meeting. They were delighted to have reached this point in the project, will be vacating the building in July, and will use alternative temporary premises whilst the work is in progress. Chairman stated that this “one time” opportunity should be seized.

The following was RESOLVED:-

- a. CLERK to advise Inca Projects that their quote has been accepted at the figures previously noted. Unsuccessful quotes associated with both the refurbishment project and rebuild option are to be advised and thanked.
- b. Parish Council is to commit up to £15K in support of the project if required, funds to be taken from reserves and/or reassessment of budgets and capital projects for this year.
- c. Further investigation is to be undertaken by CLERK to see if VAT element of project can be reduced or eliminated.

Cllr. Wickenden wished it noted that he had voted against the proposal as he had envisaged that the Council should have not been required to support the project financially. The Chairman thanked both Cllr. Wickenden and Cllr. Hiles for their work in gathering information for the demolish/rebuild option; this had served to focus that the initial proposal was the most cost effective in view of the funds available.

**ii. Resolution granting all Councillors serving on Rotherfield Parish Council dispensation to speak and vote on the Council’s budget and setting of the precept for the remaining term of this Council.**

Clerk explained that the 2007 Code of Conduct provided dispensation for Councillors to discuss and set budgets and precepts. The 2011 Code makes no such provision and it is therefore necessary for Councils to pass a resolution confirming dispensation regarding Councillor’s interest in these matters; it is considered that all Councillors have a pecuniary interest as it will affect the Council Tax they pay. It was RESOLVED that the Council will grant to all Members a dispensation to speak and vote at any relevant meeting on the approval of the budget, and the making of the precept, for the duration of the Council.

**iii. Resolution to adopt the General Power of Competence as contained in the Localism Act 2011.**

This Power enables qualifying Councils greater freedom to spend money for the benefit of the Parish without having to rely on specific powers to do so. The Secretary of State has laid down the requirements of eligibility that are three-fold:

(1) Two-thirds of the Council has been elected,

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(2) The Clerk is qualified and

(3) The Clerk has undergone training in the general power of competence through CiLCA module 7 of 2012.

Clerk confirmed that he fulfils criteria (2) and (3). Ten Councillors have been elected unopposed to the Council which fulfils the two-thirds criteria, there being 13 seats in total. It was RESOLVED that this power be adopted for the term of the Council.

**iv. Decision regarding a means to recognise the service provided to the Parish by long serving members who have stood down from the Parish Council.**

CLERK to defer this item to the June agenda.

**8. TO RECEIVE DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.**

- Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May - Annual Parish Meeting – 20:00 Rotherfield Village Hall
- Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May – Monthly Council Meeting – 19:30 Parish Council Room, Rotherfield Village Hall.

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

- Training requirements – New Councillors please advise clerk of dates for New Councillor training courses with choice of dates if possible.
- Ton Moaby is fixing the posts for the St Chéron Twitten signs and will be liaising with David Peacock regarding final details of the installation in time for Friday's unveiling.
- Cllr. Curtis had been approached regarding the possibility of a Cenotaph style war memorial for the Parish. CLERK to update him with information regarding existing proposals for this.
- CLERK to update Cllr. Watts with speed issues in Mark Cross, Cllr. Kitchenham to update her with Church and Village Hall matters.
- CLERK to update Cllr. Watson-Smith with situation regarding feasibility of constructing a roadside footpath between Rotherfield and Jarvis Brook.
- Cllr. Gilbert has kindly offered to clean the fingerpost at the Redgate Mill Lane/Cowford Bridge junction

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 22:10

**10. PUBLIC FORUM.**

None.

**Confirmed as a true record at the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015 meeting of the Council**

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