

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 TUESDAY 22ND DECEMBER 2015 AT 19:30 IN THE SCOUT AND COMMUNITY YOUTH HALL IN THE RECREATION GROUND

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. D. Thomas (Chairman)	Cllr. T. Gilbert	Cllr. L. Watts
Cllr. R. Harris (Vice Chairman)	Cllr. J. Kitchenham	Cllr. G. Watson-Smith
Cllr. G. Cahan	Cllr. A. Martin	Cllr. N. Wickenden
Cllr. C. Clibbens		

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe, Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC), Cllr. P. Dixon (WDC) and one member of the public.

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING:-

a) Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s 85).

Cllr. Curtis and Hiles submitted apologies for absence.

b) Declarations of personal, prejudicial and disclosable pecuniary interests on items on the agenda, and updates to members' register of interests.

Cllr. Martin declared a personal interest in respect of item 2e)iii as the applicant is known to him. The Chairman reminded those present that they should declare an interest if at any point during the meeting they became aware of one relating to a matter being discussed.

c) District And County Councillor's reports.

Cllr. Standley's report on County Council matters contained the following in formation

Budget

- Discussions continue with regard to the budget, and the challenges that reduced Government funding will bring have been raised on previous occasions.
- The Local Government Settlement was announced last Thursday and the detail on what this means for County is still being evaluated.
- The Comprehensive Spending Review announcement a few weeks, by the Chancellor, did contain the option for deliverers of Adult Social care to increase the precept by an additional 2%.
- Whilst a supporter of low taxation the pressures on adult social care are such that this extra 2% (appx £4.2M in 16-17) is welcome. Over the period to 19/20, this amounts to approx. an extra £20m. It will not plug the ASC funding gap but clearly helps.

Maternity Services at Crowborough

- The recent announcement that Pembury will be taking over the responsibility for the running of the maternity services at Crowborough hospital is welcome news. I have been lobbying for this to happen.
- Maternity services at Conquest at Hastings and DGH at Eastbourne were re-configured approximately 18 months ago. It was clear in that analysis that Crowborough was underutilised because expectant mothers were asked to go to Hastings for their scans. Crowborough hospital maternity is run by ESHT who run the Hastings and Eastbourne main hospitals. Mothers to be,

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not surprisingly, would rather go to Pembury for their scans and once in that system often had their babies at Pembury.

- Pembury could not cope with the numbers whilst Crowborough was underutilised. The new arrangements, once implemented, will improve care for residents in the north of Wealden.

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Gatwick

- It is disappointing that the decision on the new runway in the southeast has been further delayed, especially when the indications were that Heathrow was likely to be the favoured option. I continue to voice opposition to expansion at Gatwick for the reasons previously stated.
- Notwithstanding the decision on the extra runway ESCC are lobbying for changes to the flightpaths to reduce the noise impact on residents. This involves steeper descents on the final approach, alternating routes to lessen impact on particular areas and higher altitudes over East Sussex before the final approach.

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Library

- There is a consultation starting in January on changes in the library service. This is driven partly by cost savings and partly by the change in the way the service is used by residents.
- The majority of users are retired, part time workers or students. The growth in use of the E-Service has been 568% compared with 11% decrease in physical visits.
- The proposed opening hour changes for Crowborough are a reduction of 26%.

Monday 12.30 to 17.30 (currently 9.30-17.30), Tuesday 10.00 To 17.00 (10.00 -17.30), Wed 10.00-14.00 (9.30-17.30), Thurs 11.00-18.00 (9.30- 19.00), Fri 10.00-17.00 (9.30-19.00), Sat 10.00-17.00(9.30-17.00)

Lime Trees in Church Road

- I was asked by District Cllr Dixon to make enquiries re the Lime Trees in Church Road, which I know have the subject of discussion over the years. Rupert Clubb (ESCC Director of Communities, Economy and Transport) has responded and key points are summarised below:-
- The 9 limes trees located on Church Road in Rotherfield are licenced to Rotherfield Parish Council under a Section 142 Licence.
- I can confirm that East Sussex Highways will not remove or carry out maintenance on these trees. The Parish Council have taken over responsibility for the trees.
- Concerning a claim against East Sussex County Council by a local resident who was citing that the Lime trees outside his property were causing damage, this claim was denied. The case has been closed and our legal team are not expected to change their stance on this matter. The statement from our Liability Claims Officer, Sally Taylor was sent to you on 8th May 2014.
- The resident's claim has been denied and it is not accepted that the tree has caused the damage, which is the subject of the claim.
- Concerns were raised by our adjuster in relation to the downpipe on the property and he thinks it more likely that the damage is caused by this. Clearly there are small roots penetrating into the claimant's damp cellar however, as the adjuster has pointed out, these are not causing any damage.
- My understanding is that whilst ESCC own the trees Rotherfield PC have a maintenance agreement with ESCC to maintain them.

Railway overbridge at Jarvis Brook

Accompanied by Cllr. Whetstone he had recently met with representatives of Network Rail to discuss this, specifically the possibility of it being raised so higher vehicles could use this route to access the industrial estates nearby. Network Rail estimate that to do this would cost in the order of £1.2m and there is no operational reason for them to so and spend this sum.

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It is considered that, unless Network Rail can be persuaded that they have a “social responsibility” to undertake this work, or the substantial funding for the work can be found elsewhere, the situation is unlikely to change.

Cllr. Whetstone (ESCC) reported the following:-

Has discussed the issue of large vehicles using the B2100 between Mark Cross and Crowborough with Karl Taylor (ESCC Highways). Karl is of the view that making the junction at Mark Cross less “user friendly”, by introducing signage and a traffic island, could be another method of discouraging large vehicles to use this route.

Comment [RPC1]: Amended at 28th January 2016 Council Meeting to “Cllr. Whetstone is of the view.....”

Cllr. Dixon (WDC) reported the following:-

- The consultation periods on the Issues and Options for the new local plan is now over, but, as always, please contact me if you have any concerns on the plan and its implementation.
- I thought that the stall at the Christmas Fair, consulting the residents on the Conservation Area extension was very useful. There was of course a mix of views and I will support the Parish Council in their proposals.
- 125 new affordable homes have been built in the first 6 months of the year, which is well above the target of 50. WDC are aiming for a target of 35% affordable homes on all new developments. Council rents will be reduced by 1% per annum, which will have a negative impact on the housing budget.
- The High Court review of the Steel Cross decision, which will have an impact on the parish, is expected to take place on 27th-29th January.
- There will be a by-election in Crowborough East on 21st January, due to the sad death of Peter Cowie, former mayor of Crowborough, with candidates from Conservatives, Labour and Lib Dem.
- The Streets Ahead Team have organised a shop window display competition, for the most festive window, and Lox have put their window forward. The results will be known shortly.
- Suggests that other licensed premises in the Parish may also be considered for possible addition to the “Asset of Community Value” Register.
ACTION FOR COUNCILLORS – please consider if there are any other premises that could be nominated so that Clerk may add them to a future agenda for consideration.
- I wish all councillors a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

d) Police Community Support Officer’s report.

The Clerk delivered this report on behalf of PcsO Pearce Martin.

- Parking – patrols continue. Vehicle moved in Station Road as it was blocking the bus.
- Crime – theft of number plates from Kings Arms car park.
- PCSO Surgery – no attendees to surgery on 16 December. Next one is January 19th at 3pm in Courtyard Café.
- Events: I have given a talk to Rotherfield Beavers and attended worship at Rotherfield Church. Also attended Christmas Lunch of Rotherfield Lunch Club.

In closing may I wish you all a very Happy and Joyful Christmas. Thank you for all your support this year.

e) Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on the 26th November 2015 for approval as a true record, and matters arising from these minutes.

The minutes of this meeting had previously been circulated to the Councillors. It was RESOLVED that they be confirmed as true record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

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f) Update regarding matters arising & action items from previous meetings.

Numbers reference to the agenda of the 26th November Council meeting.

2b) Response to the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations relating to Conservation Areas was agreed at the 8th December Planning and Building Committee meeting and submitted to Wealden DC.

2e) Clerk has forwarded documents to the Councillors reviewing Parish Emergency Plan. Recent Wealden Clerk's meeting at Heathfield had an interesting presentation from Jim Foster, the ESCC Emergency Planning Officer. Digital copies of handouts will be circulated once received.

2h) Cllr. Martin reported that he is still trying to organise a meeting of the party's interested in the proposal to raise the roof of the Village Hall stage.

9. White van parked in Village centre. The saga continues, at PcsO Julie's suggestion a further report has been submitted to "Operation Crackdown" highlighting that the MOT has expired. Update on 18th December is that "The Police are considering the local authority request for authorisation to remove the vehicle.....The process for dealing with an Abandoned vehicles will not be swift". Information received today is that "The Police have declined at this time to give the local authority permission to remove the vehicle". PcsO and Clerk have both submitted two reports to "Operation Crackdown" regarding this.

2. TO CONSIDER INFORMATION AND MAKE DECISIONS ON ACTIONS AND EXPENDITURE AS REQUIRED REGARDING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

a) Agree Dispensation for duration of this Council to enable Councillors to discuss and agree Budget and Precept without the need for them to obtain formal dispensations regarding pecuniary interest.

Clerk has reviewed the issue and determined that the Council's code of Conduct as adopted at the 30th August 2012 Parish Council Meeting, 10 (2) (c) vi covers the matter. It is therefore not necessary to pass a separate dispensation for Councillors to deal with Budget and Precept at the commencement of a new Council.

b) Note comments and actions from 2015/16 November half year audit visit report.

Report circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting. Clerk reiterated Auditor comment that it is important that minutes are not only signed at the end after approval as a true record, but that each page is initialled immediately under the last line of text, this to reduce risk of fraudulent alteration. Auditors comment that they base their fee on the Councils Income and this year's is therefore higher than previous years due to the substantial grant sum received in respect of the Scout Hut refurbishment. CLERK to investigate costs for previous years and report to Councillors.

c) Proposal for formation of a "Communications and Media Committee".

Draft terms of reference for this Committee circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting.

Cllr. Cahan summarised the purpose and aims of the Committee.

- It would enable Council communication matters to be dealt with separately.
- It would consolidate effort and reduce Clerk's workload.
- Meetings would be held on an "as and when" basis and managed by the Committee Chair and Vice who will undertake production of minutes.

RESOLVED the following:-

- i. Draft terms of reference, with inclusion of Clerk's suggestion regarding inclusion of provision for Chairman' casting vote, to be adopted and published.
- ii. Members of the Committee to be as follows:-
 - Chair – Cllr. Cahan.

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- Vice Chair – Cllr. Hiles.
- Committee members – Cllrs. Curtis and Kitchenham.

ACTION FOR CLERK to liaise with Cllr. Cahan to advise formalities required for agenda and calling of meetings and arrange publication of Terms of Reference.

d) Review of Council's Co-options policy.

Current policy circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting. Suggestion received that paragraph 6 is amended so that discussion prior to vote is permitted. RESOLVED that section 6 of the current policy as adopted at the 30th October 2014 Council meeting be revised to read as follows (new text italicised bold) :-

*“At the co-option meeting, candidates will be given five minutes maximum to introduce themselves to Members, give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a Member of the Parish Council. The process will be carried out in public session, **after which the candidates and any public present will be excluded by a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960 CHAPTER 67 para. 2. Councillors will then discuss the candidates prior to a vote being taken in the normal way.**”*

ACTION FOR CLERK to update and circulate amended policy to Councillors.

e) Planning matters for consideration and agreement of any comments to the Planning Officer.

- WD/2015/2594/LBR** Great Dewlands Farm, Dewlands Hill, Rotherfield TN6 3RU
Retrospective application for minor alterations to approved listed building consent WD/2014/2162/LB (demolition of existing conservatory and erection of link attached single-storey kitchen/ garden room extension including minor internal alterations).
The meeting RESOLVED to recommend to Wealden District Council's Planning Officer that this application be APPROVED subject to consultation with the Conservation Officer.
- WD/2015/2447/F** Owlsbury Accident Repair Centre, Hadlow Down Road TN6 3RG
Replacement access.
The meeting RESOLVED to recommend to Wealden District Council's Planning Officer that this application be APPROVED as it will support a local business and improve safety of the entrance on to the Highway.
- WD/2015/2533/F** Kingsbury House, Five Ashes Road, Rotherfield TN6 3RS
New access for residential storage building.
The meeting RESOLVED to recommend to Wealden District Council's Planning Officer that this application be REFUSED on grounds of concern that the new entrance will create a road safety issue.

3. TO RECEIVE AND ADOPT COMMITTEE MEETINGS MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING.

Draft minutes of the following meetings had been circulated to all the Councillors in advance of this meeting:-

- 24th November – Recreation and Burial Committee.
- 1st December – Finance and General Purpose Committee.

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- 8th December – Planning and Building Committee.

It was RESOLVED that these all be adopted by the Full Council.

4. TO RECEIVE OTHER REPORTS

- **Other committees and sub-committees.**

Land Acquisition Advisory Group – Clerk reported that he has written to the representative of the owner of one of the sites identified and, with the assistance of Cllrs. Harris and Gilbert, is continuing with efforts to identify ownership of another unregistered section of land off Station Road.

- **Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.**

Cllr. Gilbert represented the Council at a recent meeting of the Village Hall Committee. Concerns were raised that damage is being caused by cars parking to the newly installed gas boiler vents at the rear of the Hall. ACTION for Cllrs. Gilbert and Harris to investigate and report suggestions for a solution at the 9th February meeting of the Recreation and Burial Committee, CLERK to add item to agenda of this meeting to discuss and agree remedy.

- **Clerk's updates and issues.**

- Clerk attended recent Clerks Forum at Heathfield. This included an interesting and useful presentation regarding emergency planning; papers from this will be circulated when received.
- Clerk has booked onto a morning course at Eastbourne on 20th January run by 3VA – "Social Media marketing". This clashes with the meeting with East Sussex Highways, apology for absence tendered in advance.

- **Items for next Parish Magazine column.**

None suggested at meeting, Councillors please advise Clerk by 10th January if they have any suggestions for matters to be covered, this for the 1st February edition. At suggestion of Cllr. Watts CLERK is to investigate new Village Diary being proposed by the Magazine and if our meetings and other activities such as surgeries could be included.

5. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

- **Bank Reconciliation as at end of November 2015, and review of expenditure against Budget to date.**

Clerk reported that Bank credit balances as at 21st December 2015 were as follows:-

- Current account £ 54,203.31.
- Deposit account £ 12,591.11.

These figures do not take into account the payments scheduled below. Once the current VAT reclaim of £2,666.36, and final grant payment from Rotherfield Trust of £14500.00, are received, Clerk will arrange to transfer surplus funds back to the interest bearing account from current account.

- **Approval of Payments.**

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be made.

Chq. date	Payee Name	Cheque No.	Amount	Transaction Detail
08/12/2015	Tangent Space Ltd	802047	£420.00	Final PM fees invoice 100552
22/12/2015	Trevor Thorpe	802048	£67.25	Expenses
22/12/2015	Trevor Thorpe	802048	£29.00	Non VAT reimbursements

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22/12/2015	Trevor Thorpe*	802048	£13.20	Reimbursements with VAT
22/12/2015	Trevor Thorpe*	802048	£39.60	Reimbursement with VAT
22/12/2015	Trevor Thorpe*	802048	£89.99	Reimbursement with VAT
22/12/2015	Trevor Thorpe	802049	£1,516.00	December salary
22/12/2015	H M R C	802050	£496.99	December Tax and NI
22/12/2015	3VA	802051	£35.00	Training course
22/12/2015	Konica Minolta Ltd*	802052	£49.32	Copier lease and usage
22/12/2015	Mark Cross Memorial Hall	802053	£25.00	Hall hire March & Sep. 2015
22/12/2015	Gwen Pritchitt	802054	£307.00	1st Audit visit 2015/16
22/12/2015	Rotherfield Village Hall	802055	£46.40	November Hall hire
22/12/2015	Society of Local Council Clerks	802056	£187.00	Annual subscription to SLCC
22/12/2015	JAKK Country Furniture Designs *	802057	£1,518.00	Fingerpost repair and refurb.
22/12/2015	Rotherfield Sports Club	802058	£325.00	December pitch maintenance
22/12/2015	Rotherfield Friendship Club	802059	£250.00	Support Grant
22/12/2015	PCC of St Deny's Parish	802060	£20.00	Stall at Christmas Fayre
22/12/2015	Phil Ireland	802061	£528.00	Nov & Dec litter & sweeping
22/12/2015	Festive Illuminations	802062	£650.00	Install/remove and add. kit
Total Payments			£6,612.75	

Payments marked* include VAT, which will be recovered by the Council.

List of Receipts

Name of Payer	Amount	
Tester and Jones Ltd	£35.00	Inscription fee L21
Total Receipts		£35.00

6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee – 11th November meeting minutes.
- Sussex Police- update on plans for “new model for local policing”. CLERK TO CIRCULATE
- The Clerk magazine – November 2015 edition.
- ESCC – Mark Cross – Road Traffic Regulation Statutory notice for closure of Mark Cross slip road and making school “zig zag” markings enforceable.

PLANNING DECISION NOTICES

- i. **WD/2014/1565/MEA** Land At Walsh Manor Farm, Walshes Road, Crowborough TN6 3RB
Development of 160 residential dwellings including 56 affordable dwellings, comprising 2 no., 1 bed apartments, 31 no, 2 bed houses, 75 no., 3 bed houses, and 52 no., 4 bed houses, together with associated access and parking provision, open space and play areas. Proposed change of use of agricultural land to suitable alternative natural green space (SANGS) with provision of associated car parking facilities.
Although this falls just outside the Parish, the Council submitted the following comment in September 2014 “It is concerned that the development will lead to an increase in traffic in Western Road and onward to the B2100 through Rotherfield Parish. It considers that there should be more 1 and 2 bedroom houses in the development and fewer larger properties.

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- ii. **WD/2015/2186/LB** 1 Hamsell Manor Cottage, Sham Farm Road, Eridge Green TN3 9JB
Replacement of 6 no. windows at the front of the property.
Parish Council recommended approval, Wealden District Council refused application.
- iii. **WD/2015/2241/FR** Heathfield House, Town Row Green, Rotherfield TN6 3QZ
Retrospective application for 92kw (400 x 230 watt) solar PV panels on barn.
Parish Council recommended approval, Wealden District Council approved application.
- iv. **WD/2015/2358/F** The Barn, North Street, Rotherfield TN6 3NA
Demolition of three existing garages; conversion and extension of existing barn (presently used as a workshop) to form a single dwelling.
Parish Council recommended approval, Wealden District Council approved application.

7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

Inspection sheets for playground and Recreation Ground received and signed by Chairman. No issues noted requiring action by the Council nor have members of the public raised any. Cemetery and St Denys' inspections have been undertaken and Inspection sheets will be brought to next meeting.

8. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- i. January 12th Planning and Building Committee - Parish Council Room 19:30
- ii. January 19th Highways, Lighting and Transport Committee - Parish Council Room 19:30
- iii. January 20th Strengthening Local Relationships meeting with ESCC Highways 09:30 -11:30 -
Scout Hut
- iv. January 28th Monthly Council Meeting - **Scout Hut 19:30**

Clerk requests that any agenda items for the 20th January meeting be sent to him by the 8th so that they may be forwarded to ESCC.

9. REPORT DETAILS OF ITEMS AND ISSUES NOTIFIED TO CLERK IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING FOR INVESTIGATION, FURTHER ACTION OR FOR FUTURE AGENDA.

- Clerk reported that completed listed building consent application has been sent to WDC in respect of proposal to install CCTV on the King's Arms to capture details of large vehicles.
- Cllr. Martin reported that he is setting up a meeting with a local specialist to inspect lower football pitch and receive report for suggested actions regarding drainage for consideration at February meeting of the Recreation and Burial Committee. CLERK to add agenda item.
- Cllr. Clibbens has visited owner of Village business who has requested further limited parking areas in the Square. Although the Council have not supported the initial request it was suggested to the business owner that other individuals and businesses who consider that this would be of benefit should contact the Council with their views and concerns. CLERK to add item to agenda of 19th January Highways Committee to discuss, also add agenda item for this meeting and the SLR regarding extension of existing double yellow and access protection white lines in North Street and elsewhere; this as a result of recent demolition of Memorial Institute porch by a delivery van.

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 20:50.

10. PUBLIC FORUM.

Parishioner present raised the following concerns:-

- Barn conversion recently granted planning permission in North Street. Disappointed that the Parish Council had not raised objection to creation of two windows in the elevation facing North Street.
- Gully in the High Street between Highgate Florist and "The Courtyard" remained blocked and gullies on Rotherfield Hill needed clearing. CLERK to investigate and report Village gully, gullies

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on Rotherfield Hill have already been reported and Cllr. Clibbens noted that he had seen them being cleared today. Clerk again encouraged all to familiarise themselves with “Fix My Street” website and use it to report issues directly – details are automatically passed to Parish Council from these reports.

- Lack of action on a solution to the issue with large vehicles passing through the Village via King’s Arms corner. Clerk report that ESCC Officer investigating measures to address this has consulted with various freight organisations that have not raised any objections to restrictions. ESCC propose to introduce a temporary restriction, subject to statutory consultation, with the view of making it permanent if no issues arise. Officer will be attending the 19th January Highways Committee meeting to give further details.

**Confirmed as a true record at the 22nd December 2015 meeting
of the Council after amendment**

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

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