

ROOTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Working for the Community

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RECREATION AND BURIAL COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT 19:30 ON TUESDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2014 IN THE PARISH COUNCIL ROOM, ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL.

PRESENT

Cllr. D. Thomas (Chairman) Cllr. T. Gilbert Cllr. L. Pike
Cllr. R. Harris (Vice Chairman) Cllr. N. Wickenden
Cllr. Miss N. Bolton

ABSENT

ALSO ATTENDING. The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe and six members of the public.

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

Apologies were received and accepted on behalf of Cllr. P. Halse-Adamson.

2. TO CONSIDER APPOINTING CLLR. J. KITCHENHAM AND CLLR. D. HILES TO THIS COMMITTEE.

It was RESOLVED to appoint Cllrs. Hiles and Kitchenham to this Committee and they joined the meeting at this point.

3. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS.

Cllr. Pike declared an interest in item 9 iii) as he occasionally assists this contractor.

4. TO APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12TH NOVEMBER 2013 AS A TRUE RECORD.

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of this meeting, copies of which have previously been circulated to the all the Council members, be confirmed as a true record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

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

Numbers refer to the agenda of the 12th November 2013 meeting.

7 iv) Clerk has contacted the Solicitors acting for DAS, Lyons, who report that letters were sent on the 6th February to the owner of the vehicle and signatory of the indemnity forms regarding the diesel spill incident and subsequent claim.

7 vii) Clerk has again chased WDC to arrange a site visit involving the Council and Church representatives.

7 viii) Cllr. Wickenden has reported that the owner of the premises adjacent to the path has kindly agreed to repair/replace the light on the property which will light this section of the path.

8 ii) Play equipment in Rec. Site visit recently undertaken with representative of contractors who will be installing this.

8vii) Protective covers have been welded onto the barriers in the recreation ground to impede any removal attempts. New locks have been purchased and it is suggested that the barriers are repainted in the spring.

At this point the Chairman permitted a representative of the group present to make a statement to the meeting raising concerns regarding matters arising in the aftermath of the diesel oil spill that damaged the car park adjacent to the Recreation Ground on July 24th 2013. The key points were as follows:-

- It is considered that the letter sent to the signatory of the indemnity required by the Council in connection with the event was hostile.
- The letter was not in accord with the expected culture and behaviour of the Council and breached the Code of Conduct.
- It is requested that the letter be rescinded.
- Clarification is sought regarding the decisions made that authorised the sending of the letter.

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- A written request is to be made under the Freedom of Information Act for information regarding the claim in progress, and a written formal complaint is to be submitted regarding the Council's actions.

CLERK to deal with ROI request, gather information regarding complaint and add item to agenda of the 27th February Council Meeting relating to the matter.

TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING MATTERS

6. ALLOTMENT ISSUES

i. Update and further action regarding signing of agreement between Allotment Association and Council.

A meeting was held with the owners of the site at their home on Monday 10th February. Cllrs. Thomas and Harris were in attendance together with representatives of the Allotment Association. Key points were as follows:-

- Association consider that cost of maintenance of hedges and grass area surrounding the allotments by the owners, which the Association understand to be £500 of the £1000 rent, is excessive and they would be happy to take this over as they feel that they can undertake the work at lower cost.
- Owners stated that rent had been £500 pa for many years and the recent increase to £1000 reflected the real market rent for the land. This sum included £150pa for the maintenance work by the owners' contractor effectively making the rent £850 pa...
- All plots are now let, subject to owners agreement it may be possible to create two more.
- Plan has been drawn up by the Allotment Association, it was clarified that their rental was not limited to the area containing the plots but also the surrounding grass area used for storage, access to allotment gates together with the shed and car parking.
- Association could consider an approach to the Rotherfield Trust for a grant for capital items such as rabbit fencing and lawn mower.
- The landowners continue to demonstrate strong support for the Association.

RESOLVED that CLERK arrange following:-

Add item February agenda to consider Council only charging £850 rent to associate for next financial year.

Review and publish draft agreement between Association and Council to take into account changes suggested at previous meeting, and incorporate new plan.

7. GENERAL RECREATION AND BURIAL ISSUES, AND OTHER COUNCIL MATTERS

i. Information regarding Contractors grass cutting costs for 2014.

Although the main prices are to be as per 2013 there are some new areas of cut for which Clerk is seeking clarification of prices to enable completion and signature of the usual annual agreement. In view of the unlikelihood of ground conditions improving significantly Clerk has requested that the hedge cutting in Rec. and Cemetery proceeds. Clerk has requested Sports Club to advise of any change to the arrangements and cost for cutting the playing surfaces.

ii. Review of Burial fees, terms and conditions for Funeral Directors and plot holders.

iii. Information and action regarding Council employing a contractor for grave digging and charging to Funeral Director or including in our fee structure.

iv. Review residence eligibility criteria for Cemetery fees or restrict use for Parishioners only.

These three items were considered together and the following was RESOLVED:-

- New fee structure proposed by the Committee Chairman, and Cllrs. Harris and Wickenden is adopted and published, fees to take effect from March 1st. Increase in all fees is to cover costs associated with maintaining the Cemetery and St Denys' old burial ground and contribute toward the expansion of the Cemetery on to the Council owned lower field to provide capacity for parishioners in the years ahead.

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- Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services advice is that higher charges to non-parishioners are justifiable as parishioners will have already contributed to Cemetery costs through the Parish Council element of their Council tax.
- CLERK to contact contractors used by Crowborough Town Council to establish their charges for grave digging on the basis that this is arranged by the Parish Council in future with the cost passed on to the funeral directors concerned.
- Local funeral directors to be contacted to advice that we with them to use an alternative gravedigger to the one currently used as there are concerns regarding H&S aspects of his work and the condition of graves after they have been infilled.

v. Amenity Land/Court Meadow Green. Recommendations from NALC Legal Advisor regarding changing name of site on the deeds.

Response received from NALC, their comments have been passed to WDC to establish if any formal action is required in view of use of land. WDC hold responsibility for dealing with the naming of streets and other areas under the Public Health Act 1925.

vi. Quote for replacement of lantern unit on column 90 near Surgery in response to concerns regarding poor illumination provided by it and light spill into adjoining property.

RESOLVED to accept ESCC £130.64 plus Vat to replace existing lantern with one of the free issue second-hand units currently available, to include part night cell. CLERK to arrange and obtain estimate of time scale for installation.

vii. Request for installation of screening fence panels on edge of Court Meadow Green.

Photos of area in question circulated to Councillors. RESOLVED to refuse this request as the work in the Green will rejuvenate the shrubs which, together with the reduction of the surgery funded work to their boundary hedge, has restored the original open aspect to the Green and permits regular maintenance as the hedge grows and thickens.

viii. Offer from Parishioner of a memorial bench and to decide possible location

RESOLVED to accept offer and suggest that bench be situated in the corner of the Recreation Ground by clubhouse and to be of recycled material type for ease of maintenance, permission also granted to scatter ashes by bench. CLERK to research suitable bench styles and liaise with family regarding a site visit. Council to arrange purchase and installation of bench. CLERK to contact family who have also offered bench for this area to enquire progress.

8. RECREATION GROUND AND CAR PARK.

i. Issues and actions arising from monthly safety inspections of Recreation Ground and Play Area.

- Play area last inspected 30th January – no safety issues noted.
- Recreation Ground last inspected 30th January – no safety issues noted.

ii. Parishioner suggestion for a skate park in the Village.

Copy of letter from resident circulated to Councillors. This has been suggested in the past and at one point funds were earmarked for such a project. It was RESOLVED to look again at this matter and research likely costs/possible locations. CLERK to investigate and acknowledge suggestion.

iii. Decision regarding format of annual safety inspection from Wicksteed.

It was RESOLVED to arrange for accompanied annual inspection option with detailed risk analysis at a cost of £86 plus Vat, Clerk to arrange with Wicksteed and Cllr. Thomas.

iv. Decision on removal of bank and other improvements to the Play Area.

Cllr. Pike had made a site visit yesterday with the Contractor who will be installing the new play item. Due to ground conditions it was RESOLVED that it may prove necessary to

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postpone installation to avoid damage to the surface of the Rec. Contractor stated that, even if work did not start until April an Easter target date for opening would still be possible. Site visit to be arranged with Tony Moaby to discuss quote for removal of bund adjacent to play area and use of some of the soil for grave filling at St Denys' old burial ground, CLERK to review graves requiring infilling.

v. Progress and further action with proposed new access path and gate to Bowls Club.

RESOLVED CLERK to contact Robert Chesterton to discuss drawing up plans for this work and likely cost involved so that quotes may be obtained for groundwork and extending path.

vi. Action to deal with water ingress under the door to the storage area under the Pre School.

RESOLVED Cllr. Pike to investigate cost of providing and installing a wooden sill to eliminate this issue, CLERK to ask litter warden to add clearing of drains here to his work list for the Rec.

vii. Quotes for providing and installing new signage and noticeboard in the Recreation Ground.

viii. Quote for additional bollards and repairs to damaged bank at car park entrance.

Also in respect of items iv and viii above, CLERK to arrange site with Cllr. Thomas and Tony Moaby to investigate requirements and quotes for work.

ix. Request to reserve car park for exclusive use in connection for two wedding receptions in the Hall – June 7th and July 26th.

Two Parishioners have approached to see if the car park by the Hall could be reserved for wedding receptions on the afternoons of these dates. RESOLVED not to grant permission as car park is open to all and should not be restricted. CLERK to advise applicants.

9. ST DENYS' BURIAL GROUND

i. Issues and actions arising from safety inspections.

- Burial Ground last inspected 29th January – no safety issues noted.

ii. Tidying work required on overgrown shrubs on graves.

Clerk awaits "weather window" to visit and photograph so that quote may be obtained for this work.

iii. Quote for work to the trees and hedges in the Churchyard adjacent to the boundary of Court Meadow Green and grant to the Church to undertake the work.

Quote received from Tony Moaby of £180 for this work. RESOLVED that Council offer to arrange and fund this work by way of a grant to the Church as it will benefit them and further improve the prospect of St Denys' from Court Meadow Green. CLERK to contact Church.

10. ROTHERFIELD PARISH CEMETERY

– Issues and actions arising from safety inspections.

- Burial Ground last inspected 27th January – no safety issues noted.

– Suggestion for "sub soiling" of unused section to improve drainage.

- Cllr. Harris suggested that this process may assist drainage of the lower field.

RESOLVED CLERK to carry forward to April agenda for consideration of this and means of identifying course of water main running across lower field.

– Suggestion for Extension of path by hedge to the Remembrance Wall.

RESOLVED CLERK to investigate cost of resurfacing existing path parallel to Eridge Lane also extending to Wall of Remembrance. Cost of extending lower path to also be investigated.

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

- Cllr. Pike is to progress the production of the holders for the plaques for the "Jubilee Oaks"

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completed Register of Member's Interests form to WDC.

3. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS.

- Cllr. Pike declared an interest in respect of items 8 iii), 10 iv) and 11 i) as he occasionally assists this contractor.
- Cllr. Dixon declared an interest in respect of item 6 i) as his wife is an allotment holder.

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4. TO APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11TH FEBRUARY 2014 AS A TRUE RECORD.

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It was RESOLVED that the minutes of this meeting, copies of which have previously been circulated to the all the Council members, be confirmed as a true record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

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

From Mark Road and Mark Cross Millennium Green. It will be an urgent expenditure allow me to proceed with purchase as it is feared that strimming may damage these young trees refer to agenda of February 11th meeting:-

6 i) Grant cheque has been sent to the Allotment Society who thank the Council and in particular the Chair of this Committee for their support. Our allotments will be open as part of the Rotherfield Open Gardens Day on behalf of the church roof fund on 20th July. They will review the agreement between the Council and the Association.

7 viii) Bench has been ordered. Clerk visited Rec. yesterday with donor of bench and position by the NW corner near the play area has been agreed. Included in the play area contractors schedule.

8 ii) Clerk has made some enquiries of Grewborough TG regarding their skate parks and costs. Proposal has been mentioned on the Council's monthly page in the Magazine comments and suggestions have been invited surgery and feature in next Parish News in March "Magazine".

8 v) Site meeting to be arranged regarding works proposed to amend entrance to Bowls Club.

8 vi) Cllr. Pike is to progress with the wood strip for the floor to the storage area under the Pre School works for the progress committee, and consequent meeting length, was increasing.

12. TO RECEIVE DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF THIS COMMITTEE. TO CONSIDER INFORMATION AND MAKE DECISIONS REGARDING THE FOLLOWING MATTERS

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

- i. Update and further action regarding signing of agreement between Allotment Association and Council.

13. PUBLIC OPINION
None. Agreement sent to Secretary of the Society along with our grant cheque. Have asked that they sign and return or clarify their outstanding issues with the proposed agreement. CLERK to monitor and chase for completion of this long outstanding matter.

Confirmed as a true record at the 8th April 2014 meeting of this Committee.

_____ Chairman _____ Date