

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 29TH JANUARY 2015 AT 19:30 IN THE PARISH COUNCIL ROOM, ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. D. Thomas (Chairman)	Cllr. D. Hiles	Cllr. L. Pike
Cllr. R. Harris (Vice Chairman)	Cllr. J. Kitchenham	Cllr. A. Sharpe
Cllr. C. Clibbens	Cllr. R. Jaques	Cllr. F. Whittington
Cllr. P. Dixon		Cllr. N. Wickenden

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None.

ALSO PRESENT.

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe
- Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC), Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC) and Cllr. H. Merriman (WDC).
- Two members of the public together with two representatives of Rotherfield Scouts.

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING:-

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

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

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

- Cllr. Hiles declared a personal interest in respect of item 2a) as he is associated with the Scout Group.
- Cllr. Clibbens declared a personal interest in respect of item 2l) as he knows the owner of one of the properties involved.
- The Chairman reminded the councillors that they should declare an interest if they became aware of one at any point in the meeting.

c) District And County Councillor's reports.

- Cllr. Merriman had no new issues to feedback with an empty postbag during the past month, and no issues were raised for him to deal with.
- Cllr. Standley provided a joint County /District report regarding Gatwick Airport and issues arising from aircraft noise and the Airport's wish to expand with a further runway. He had received around 600 emails in each of his County and District inboxes raising issues and is concerned that the benefits promised by expansion may not be as great as stated.

Gatwick – Background

- The reason for the increased activity by County and District with regard to this in recent weeks has been the deadline for the Airport Commission consultation on the second runway, which closes on Feb 3rd 2015. The flightpaths and associated noise issue is not part of the consultation but there is a logical link between increasing the number of planes which a second runway would bring and increased noise over the north of the County

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Wealden District Council View

Wording in the Corporate Plan that went out for consultation in December, and came back to WDC Cabinet on the 28th for post consultation approval is “We aim to:- “recognise the importance of the economic benefits of Gatwick Airport to the District but also work to ensure any changes do not increase environmental harm, including noise, on our local communities”

WDC has not supported the second runway and the consultation response to the Airport Commission confirms that statement of no support and advances the belief that either Heathrow options are preferable.

East Sussex County Council View

ESCC are maintaining their support for the second runway and in response to criticism that the original support was a single Lead Member decision called a special Full Council Meeting on Tuesday 27th. Whilst supporting the second runway it does ask for the necessary infrastructure and opposes the narrowing of flightpaths. The wording of the resolution passed at that meeting was:-

- 1) To support the provision of a 2nd runway at Gatwick Airport, on the basis of the clear economic benefits to East Sussex and to insist on appropriate action being taken to provide the necessary infrastructure and mitigate any environmental or other negative impacts on the residents of East Sussex.
- 2) To agree that once the Government makes a decision that the Council actively engages further in the process to achieve its objectives.
- 3) On the related separate issue of flight paths, not to support a narrow, concentrated arrival flight path, and resolve that they be shared across multiple routes to provide rotating respite.

The vote earlier this week was a free vote and the motion was approved by 27 votes to 19. Cllr. Standley was unable to support the proposed motion.

The later Cabinet decision included a commitment to lobby against the narrow and lower flightpaths, which Cllr. Standley welcomed as those against the second runway had to vote against this provision in the Full Council Meeting given that it was a composite resolution.

Kent County Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough and West Sussex County Council have recently voted to oppose the second runway.

ESCC - Finance

- The Council is formulating the budget for 15-16. With a £90m saving required over the next 3 years it is expected that there will be an increase in Council Tax in the next financial year and the recommendation going to Full Council is for one of 1.95%.

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Cllr. Whetstone

- Cllr. Whetstone had also experienced a full inbox regarding Gatwick matters and echoed the comments of Cllr. Standley. The County Council had a good debate regarding the issue at the recent Special Full Council meeting without too much involvement of party politics. Whilst generally those against the proposal were from the North of the County, there were those from other areas in East Sussex who also voted against the motion.
- Had made enquiries regarding the 224 bus service that does not stop on its way through Rotherfield. He is advised that Mayfield and Wadhurst Parish Councils contribute toward this service whereas Rotherfield do not. It is believed that this is because currently the timings of the service are very close to those of the 226 service. This will not be the case after April when the services are reduced and Parish Council has written to County regarding this.

d) Police Community Support Officer's report.

Key points from the report are as follows:-

- On return from leave had an inbox full of emails regarding parking.
- Recently issued a ticket to a vehicle parked on the yellow lines and "keep clear" markings by the Pharmacy – was observed as having been there for at least 15'.
- Pavement parking in the "Square" by the shops had been checked. It was reminded that this is only an offence if the vehicle is blocking access so that a buggy or wheelchair cannot pass, an officer considering "ticketing" for this must be prepared to justify to a court. Photos are to be forwarded of vehicles parked on the pavement by the former "George" and nearby properties.
- Criminal damage to a vehicle in South Street. This vehicle had been damaged before in this fashion and there is a suspicion that it is being targeted. Now parked elsewhere.
- Last Saturday evening an iPad was stolen from a car in North Street. Usual advice applies regarding not leaving valuables in a car and clearly visible, best thing is to remove such items when parked.
- Car broken into in Mayfield Road – believed to have been an opportunist act. Any intelligence or information regarding this and the previous two incidents will be welcomed.
- Motor bike activity reported as causing a nuisance on land in the Parish, from investigations made it is considered likely that this is a civil rather than a Police issue.
- 4x4 vehicle spotted "greenlaning" on BW53. Registration number was noted and owner is to be contacted – vehicle is registered in Carshalton.
- CCTV – has this been considered by the Parish Council? It is believed that this was looked at in the past but not progressed due to cost.
- There will be a PCSO Surgery upstairs at the Institute, North Street, on 24th February between 10:00 and 10:30
- Meeting confirmed that parking is still considered as the prime issue for focussing Police activity in the Village.

e) Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th December 2014 for approval as a true record, and matters arising from these minutes.

Copies of the draft minutes had been previously circulated to Members. It was RESOLVED that they be confirmed as a true record. Clerk apologised that he had overlooked to bring them to the meeting and will ensure they are available at the next meeting.

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

Numbers relate to agenda of December meeting:-

6b) Letter of thanks sent to Bonfire Society for organising and arrangements made with Hall re: hire cost.

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Letter of thanks has been sent to the owner of the Rotherfield Village Stores who has kindly provided the electricity for the Christmas Lights for the three years of their existence. He has confirmed that they are happy to provide this free of charge.

2. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:-

a) Report and decision on further action from meetings with Scouts and the Rotherfield Trust dealing with partnership arrangement, funding support, new lease agreement and structure for management of refurbishment project.

- The representatives of the Scouts outlined the challenges faced with the state of the current building and reasons for rebuilding rather than replacing.
- The Scouts and the Rotherfield Trust are pleased that the Parish Council had engaged in this partnership, since it offered the prospect of refurbishment of the Scout Hut commencing before all £120,000 funds were in place with a possible completion in 2015, and the potential saving of a significant amount of VAT.
- A new Lease permitting the use of the Scout Hut by other children and youth groups is being prepared by solicitors acting for the Council and the Scouts.
- Notes from recent meetings with Scout representatives, and Rotherfield Trust, together with suggested project management committee format, circulated prior to meeting.

RESOLVED to proceed with the Partnership Project and finalise team structure.

- Clerk reported that a reply had been received from NALC regarding the position on reclaiming Vat for this project. Key points are that the Council must take sole responsibility for project and funds, and that an application to HMRC must be made and approved under VAT Notice 742A for an "Option To Tax" on the property to allow reclaim.

RESOLVED Clerk to liaise with Cllr. Dixon regarding applying to HMRC and proceed with application.

NOTE - Item (2e) 2015/2016 Budget contains a Recreation Capital Item - Scout Hut Refurbishment £2000.

b) Decision on approval of grants proposed for payment by Finance and General Purpose Committee.

14th January 2015 meeting of the Finance and General Purpose Committee recommended the following grants be made and that a total budget of £3500 for Grants under General Power of Competence be set:-

Recipient	Amount	Purpose
Rotherfield Sports Club	£1500	Contribution toward annual pitch maintenance work
Rotherfield St Martin	£500	General support
Rotherfield Pre School	£500 this month and a further £500 at start of 2015/16	Ground rent costs
Wealden CAB	£300	General support to Bureau
Eridge Village Hall	£1000	Contribution toward refurbishment work to toilets and provision of disabled WC.
Total for 2015/16	£3800	

RESOLVED that the above grants be made at the beginning of the 2015/16 financial year with the £1000 to Eridge Village Hall funded from General Reserve. CLERK to advise applicants and note to issue cheques at April Council meeting,

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c) Decision regarding request from Sports Club to Council for approval of design and height of safety netting around Bowls Club and possible financial contribution toward the cost.

Finance and General Purpose Committee recommended £1500 contribution toward cost be included in 2015/16 budget, RESOLVED that this was approved and that the nets should be 6m high. CLERK to advise Sports Club.

d) Decision regarding Grant Application to Sports England for funding of drainage improvements to lower pitch and inclusion of sum in 2015/16 budget toward this.

Grant request is for £25.5k plus Vat to the Sports England Protecting Playing Fields scheme, this to improve drainage as many games are having to be cancelled due to the poor condition during wet periods. As landowners the grant will need to be in Council's name and a "Restriction on Register" against the freehold granted in favour of Sports England – legal costs for this are included in the submission. Application must be with Sports England by February 9th. RESOLVED that the application and Restriction on Register is supported by the Council, additionally that the £2K recommended by the Finance and General Purpose Committee for inclusion in the 2015/16 budget toward this work be agreed. CLERK to advise Sports Club.

e) Adoption of combined budget for 2015/16 and recommendation of the Finance and General Purpose Committee in respect of Precept.

Draft budget and minutes of FG&P meeting circulated in advance of this meeting. 2015/16 Precept figure recommended by the Committee was calculated as follows:-

Precept agreed (A)	£75,236.00
Precept support grant (B)	£1,319.00
(A)-(B) Precept from WDC	£73,917.00
£ increase on previous year	£3,351.00
% increase on previous year	4.75%
WDC Council tax base figure	£1,523.50

Band "D" equivalent annual cost	£48.52
£ increase on previous year	£1.75
% increase on previous year	3.73%
£ per week equivalent	£0.93

RESOLVED that the Budget for 2015/16, and Precept of £73917.00 be agreed. Clerk and Chair completed and signed the Precept Form for CLERK to submit to WDC.

f) Review of meeting and committee processes and policy reviews.

CLERK to circulate matrix of policies and review dates to Councillors, volunteers sought to review documents that are more than 12 months past last review/adoption. Suggestions also sought for modifying meeting/Committee process to enhance efficiency and reduce meeting length/frequency. Replies within 14 days please.

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g) Decision regarding format of the May Annual Parish Meeting, advertising and guest speakers.

“Lessons learned” document circulated relating to 2014 meeting and including ideas for 2015.

RESOLVED the following:-

- Invite speaker from Gatwick Airport to discuss proposed expansion.
- Councillors to sit at front of meeting – as an election will be taking place there may be “new faces” for the Parishioners to meet.
- Tea and Coffee to be provided, CLERK to approach Bonfire Society requesting they help with this.
- Village groups to again be invited to have displays.
- Parish Magazine feature and public notices to be displayed inviting submission of questions/suggestions prior to meeting.
- CLERK to investigate source of larger name badges for Councillors.
- Microphones to be used. One by Councillor/Guest Speaker, second to be used by Councillor wishing to add comments, third to be used in audience. SALC and RSM use two people to deal with audience - one to note the order hands went up and the other to take microphone to the member of the public next to speak. Volunteers from the Council please to undertake this role.

h) St Chéron path signs. Progress report and decision on design and ordering of sign(s).

RESOLVED CLERK to seek quote from David Peacock for producing metal sign(s) based on an Anglicised version of the signs provided by St Chéron for their path. Cllr. Wickenden has kindly offered to cut back the hedge at the New Road end of the New Road – King’s Arms twitten to make space for one of the signs.

i) Decision on response to ESCC consultation on making the “zig-zag” markings outside Rotherfield School legally enforceable.

Details and plan circulated. RESOLVED CLERK to respond to ESCC advising that Council will be unable to support this proposal unless the markings are extended to cover the current one car gap to the car park entrance, and to the Hornshurst Road junction for the markings on the opposite side of North Street; this on the ground of Council’s concern for safety of pupils and parent at the school. Cllr. Standley to be copied in to response.

j) Decision for Clerk’s Training for end of year accounts processes.

RESOLVED to approve “one to one” on-site training by software provider for first year of use – cost £470 plus Vat.

k) Revision to Clerk’s leave dates.

NOTED that booked dates of 16th – 20th February will be not now be taken and instead holiday taken at Easter – dates to be confirmed at February Council meeting.

l) Decision on action to discourage inconsiderate parking in The Square, Rotherfield.

Information received from ESCC regarding legal status of section from “Lox” to Church Path was circulated. This indicates that under the UK Highways Act 1980 Section 31 the section forms part of the Highway. Dedication of this as Highway is presumed by ESCC as it has been enjoyed by the public as a Right of Way and without interruption for a full period of 20 years. The Highways Act Section 137 makes it an offence to block or wilfully obstruct the Highway, and Section 143 makes it an offence to erect any structure inside highways boundaries and ESCC have powers to remove. RESOLVED the following:-

Cllr. Clibbens to approach owner of property where post and chain has been erected to discuss removal. CLERK to draft letter for hand delivery to residents in vicinity of the Square requesting that they do not park on the brick pavement as this is likely to damage it, nor should they park blocking the right of way between the Church Path and “Lox”. Cllr. Clibbens and Kitchenham to

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review drafts. Effectiveness of this action to be reviewed so that stronger measures may be considered if necessary. Cllr. Pike abstained from voting on this matter.

m) Decision on size and style of ownership signs for bus shelters.

Drafts circulated, RESOLVED that colour, style and wording are agreed with alterations as noted, CLERK to order 6 signs at indicative cost of £16 each and arrange for installation by Tony Moaby, “no smoking” signs are already held for installation at same time.

Cllr. Clibbens left the meeting after this item was discussed.

3. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

- 13th January Highways Lighting and Transport Committee
- 14th January Finance and General Purpose Committee
- 27th January Planning and Building Committee

Minutes of the above meetings have been circulated to the Councillors and it was RESOLVED that they all be adopted by the Full Council.

4. TO RECEIVE OTHER REPORTS

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

- 6th February – Cllrs. Thomas, Harris, Pike, Wickenden and the Clerk met with representatives of the Scout Group to discuss the refurbishment project for the Scout Hut.
- Cllr. Thomas also held meeting with Rotherfield Trust to discuss grant funding for the project. Information regarding both meetings has been circulated.
- Site meeting held at Mark Cross between Cllrs. Thomas, Clibbens, Kitchenham and representatives of ESCC Highways; this to receive information and progress with “match funding” project to close off the “one way” slip road. Details reported at 13th January Highways Committee meeting.

• **Arrangements for the next Councillor “Have Your Say” session.**

The Chairman and Vice Chairman are to host this on Saturday 14th in the Institute between 10:00 – 11:00 CLERK to post notices to advertise this and add item to February meeting agenda to review format of these meetings.

• **Items for next Council News in the Parish Magazine.**

- Concerns regarding pavement parking.
- May Election – raise profile of this and offer information to those who may wish to consider becoming a Parish Councillor.

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

- Cllr. Dixon had attended a meeting of the Twinning Association.

• **Clerk’s report and issues.**

None.

5. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

• **Clerk’s report regarding Bank Reconciliation as at end of December 2014, budget report to date and any financial matters requiring the Council’s attention.**

- These had been circulated in advance of the meeting. There were no matters to draw to the Council’s attention and it was RESOLVED that these documents be approved and they were signed by the Chairman.

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- **Approval of Payments.**

Details were circulated prior to the meeting and it was RESOLVED that the payments below be approved.

Date Paid	Payee Name	Cheque No.	Amount Paid	Authorized Ref	Transaction Detail
29/01/2015	Trevor Thorpe	801875	£1,504.92		January 2015 Net Salary
	H M R C	801876	£509.86		January 2015 Tax and NI
	Trevor Thorpe	801877	£56.77		January 2015 Miles/phone/room
	Trevor Thorpe	801877	£15.00		Computer Studio
	Information Commissioner	801878	£35.00		DP registration renewal
	Ashdown Forest Tourist Assoc.	801879	£135.00	PCM Nov 2014	Joining fee and annual sub
	Wealden District Council	801880	£242.40		Dog bins Oct - Dec 2014
	L D Pike	801881	£33.58	HLT July 2014	L D Pike
	L D Pike	801881	£41.95		Sussex Country Gardener
	L D Pike	801881	£4.54		Parker Building Supplies
	L D Pike	801881	£15.00		L D Pike
	William J Clark	801882	£216.00		Work - Cemetery & roadside
	Festive Illuminations	801883	£495.00		Christmas light installation
	Rotherfield Village Hall	801884	£34.20		December Hall hire costs
	PJI Contract Packers Ltd	801885	£511.20		Sweeping and litter picking
	A.C. Moaby	801886	£775.00		Tree and other works
	Rotherfield Pre School	801887	£500.00		2014/15 Grant
	Tollwood Garden Service	801888	£870.00		Hedge cutting St. Denys'

Total Payments £5,995.42

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6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE. MAGAZINES, CIRCULARS AND INVITATIONS

- St-Chéron en Bref – No 313 and January 2015
- Wealden District Council – 2014 Community and Regeneration Team newsletter.
- The Clerk Magazine – January 2015.
- Clerks and Council Direct – January 2015.
- Spa Valley Starter – Winter 2014/15. **INVITATIONS**
- ESCC – Invitation to Management of Rights of Way and Countryside sites – Stakeholder engagements sessions
- Invitation to Action in Rural Sussex – Community Leadership Training Sessions.

Councillors wishing to attend please contact Clerk to make arrangements.

7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

These were signed by the Chairman. No issues requiring action noted, or concerns raised by the public relating to Parish land. Cllr. Harris is to inspect the Play Area whilst Cllr. Gilbert is away.

8. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- Tuesday 10th February 2015 - Recreation and Burial Committee.
- Tuesday 17th February 2015 - Planning and Building Committee.
- Thursday 26th February 2015 – Monthly Council meeting.

The above meetings are in the Parish Council Room at Rotherfield Village Hall starting at 19:30.

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

Cllr. Kitchenham raised the following matters:-

- “Unsuitable for Motors” sign at entrance to Chant Lane is in need of refurbishment.
- Birch tree near Millennium Green entrance noticed as being blown into adjacent telephone/power cables during recent high winds.
- Pothole on B2100 near Palesgate Lane has a traffic cone wedged within and is hazardous.

CLERK to investigate and report above to ESCC Highways.

- Untidiness alongside pavement in Station Road. Street sweeper is only scheduled to clear as far as Hornshurst Steps – CLERK to note to obtain quote to clear grass and other debris from section below the Steps in the spring.
- Cllr. Wickenden reported displaced sett near Town Row Bridge, this had caused damage to a car tyre. CLERK to investigate and report to ESCC.
- Cllr. Harris had noted a resident exercising dog in St Denys’ old burial ground – considers that sign is easily missed. CLERK to add item to agenda of forthcoming Recreation and Burial Committee to discuss additional sign.

10. PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR THE CLERK IN THE MONTH AHEAD.

- Endeavour to conclude outstanding insurance claim for diesel spill in car park.
- Conclude installation of Defibrillator.

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 22:00.

11. PUBLIC FORUM.

A member of the public commented that the Precept increase for a band D Property and the % increase over 2014/2015 was appropriate for what the Council planned.

Confirmed as a true record at the 26th February meeting of the Council

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

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