

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 ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 28TH JUNE 2012 AT 19:30 IN MARK CROSS VILLAGE HALL.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

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

ALSO PRESENT.

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe.
- Cllr. H. Merriman (WDC), Cllr. W. Rutherford (WDC) and Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC).
- Four members of the public.

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

Apologies for absence were tendered and accepted on behalf of Cllr. R. Jaques, Cllr. R. Tidy (ESCC), Cllr. C. Prince and Pcs0 Boyle.

2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

None. The Chairman reminded Councillors that, if at any point in the meeting they became aware that they had an interest in an item under discussion, they should declare it.

3. TO RECEIVE DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS.

Cllr. C. Dennison joined the meeting at this point.

Cllr. H. Merriman (WDC) reported the following:-

- Is seeking a policy clarifying what mitigation actions can be taken by applicants to enable their planning applications to progress within the Ashdown Forest 7km "Zone of Influence".
- A joint scrutiny committee meeting was held recently to consider this issue and determine from the Council's officers what the current position is.
- Core Strategy identifies areas of Wealden where building is to be permitted; whilst this protects Parishes such as Rotherfield, the current situation with this "zone" is having a negative impact on developments that may cause an increase in traffic on the Ashdown Forest.
- Is to meet with Charles Hendry, the local MP, to express fears that development in the area will be "frozen" in the area affected, is already aware of applications being withdrawn because of the "zone".
- Suggests that the Parish Council should raise concerns with the Planning Inspectorate, there is a 6-week consultation period to the end of August. CLERK is to add an agenda item to the July 10th Planning Committee meeting to agree a response from the Parish Council.
- A mitigation policy is urgently required – applicants cannot offer mitigation steps for their applications if there is no policy.

The Councillors thanked Cllr. Merriman for his efforts with this issue.

Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC) reported the following:-

- He supported the concerns and actions of Cllr. Merriman regarding the Ashdown Forest "zone".
- It is embarrassing that the Forest has received much EU funding to restore heathland but now it is considered that the nitrogen absorption is at a peak in the area.

Parish Council Website: www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk
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Telephone: 01892 664245

E-mail: rotherfieldpc@yahoo.co.uk

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- Concerned that it will be easier for larger developers to provide mitigation measures (for example “balancing” woodland areas).
- Is also concerned that the policy will be against the long-term interest of the Forest, as it will be seen to be a negative influence on the surrounding area and generate ill will.
- Had recently attended County Hall with the organiser of the Mark Cross petition concerning speeding and other traffic issues. Considered that helpful signs had been made in response by ESCC although naturally there was disappointment that the request for a 30mph limit had been declined. The installation of average speed cameras was being researched by County.
- He is chasing up issues with grass cutting on Highways land, fears that the drive to reduce costs has also reduced standards. Concerns were expressed that county lanes appeared to be regularly cut whilst busier routes were not.

The following questions and statements were made.

Q. How much EU money has the Ashdown Forest received

A. Not known, will research this and feedback.

Q. Where was the site being considered for average speed cameras in Mark Cross and are there any others in use in the County.

A. If agreed they would be on the slight hill in the village, there are no others in East Sussex. Clerk is to monitor progress with ESCC investigations into the traffic issues in the village and will chase progress; it is believed that there is a target date of two months for the completion of these studies. Cllr. Harris is to circulate a recent press article regarding the impact and use of average speed cameras.

The Chairman stated that, in his view, it was unfortunate that the undoubted contribution to nitrogen levels by traffic on the main roads crossing the Forest, and the aircraft flying above, could apparently not be mitigated. However if a local resident wished to make a modest house extension such as a “Granny Annexe” the theoretical possibility of this increasing vehicle movement on the Forest could lead to them being penalised.

4. TO RECEIVE POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS REPORT.

The Clerk delivered this report on behalf of PcsO Boyle

Crimes June 2012

- 01/06 Chainsaw stolen from shipping container on Eridge Green, no CCTV and Scene of Crime Officers attended.
- 09/06 Gardening equipment stolen from outbuilding on Chant Lane.
- 13/06 Lawnmower and strimmer stolen from van working at St Deny’s church, only left for five minutes in back of van.
- Thefts and damage Owlsbury Allotments, items include a brass tap, tools, a metal bin and damage to the shipping container.

Other issues

- Parking checked outside General Store - 26/06 from 1030 there was 2 cars but both gone by 1130.
- All crimes in area can be viewed on www.police.uk.
- He has researched some background to a recent RTC on the B2101 near Sheriff’s Lane involving a minibus and two horses, one of which was slightly injured. Parties involved had been interviewed, it was concluded that there was no criminal actions involved and it would be dealt with as a civil matter between insurers.

Concerns were expressed that there did not appear to have been any ticketing of vehicles parked on the pavement on Station Road. CLERK is to write to local inspector requesting

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that more resources and powers be given to Pcsos to take enforcement measures against such vehicles. Ian Johnson of ESCC Highways is to undertake a parking assessment of Station Road and in Church Road adjacent to the Lych Gate to see if there is any case for yellow lines.

Cllr. Merriman is involved with the selection process for his party's candidate for the role of elected police commissioner; he invited questions to be sent regarding issues such as this so that the candidates could consider them.

5. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 31ST MAY 2012 AND MATTERS ARISING.

Clerk advised that the salary cheque figure shown in item 12 of these minutes was incorrect and should be the lower figure of £1070.95 as paid. This alteration was made in manuscript to these minutes and it was RESOLVED that there were no other matters arising and that they be adopted. The Chairman signed the minutes.

6. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS.

a. Report and possible further action regarding petition from Mark Cross residents in respect of speeding and other highways issues in the Village, and request to change to road layout by the Church.

A copy of the report from ESCC Highways to the Lead Member in respect of the recent petition has been circulated to the Councillors. ESCC conclusion and recommendation arising from this is-

- Speed limit to remain at 40mph on the A267 through the village, existing repeater sign locations to be assessed with a view to providing some additional signs and roundels on the road to make drivers more aware.
- Investigate cost of improving the VAS in the village, re-aligning junction by the School and providing gateway features at each end of the village, this to be discussed with the Parish Council to assess their financial viability.
- Parish Council to discuss with Sussex Police to see if further speed watch locations can be authorised.

Cllr. Whetstone is to forward a copy of the minutes from this meeting for the Clerk to circulate. Ian Johnson and Michael Higgs from ESCC had been spotted in the village undertaking some investigation work. A request was again made for some Speedwatch volunteers to come forward from Mark Cross.

b. Adoption of Code of Conduct made under Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011. Update and further action regarding Members declaration of interests.

A copy of the draft code together with various supporting notes and documents have been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting. Despite numerous attempts, Clerk has been unable to determine from WDC whether existing members will need to sign a new Declaration Of Acceptance Of Office. A new Register of Interests form will require completion by all members, clarification still awaited from WDC regarding the format of this. It was noted that the draft Code of Conduct provided by WDC refers to some additional wording, he has been unable to establish from them whether this is yet to hand. Cllr. Merriman has offered assistance to progress this and CLERK will carry forward to the 10th July Planning and Building agenda in anticipation that the information will have been received by then.

c. Co-option of new Councillor to serve Eridge and Mark Cross Ward.

James Kitchenham was co-opted on to the Council to serve this Ward and he signed his Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting. The Councillors welcomed him to the Council, he expressed his sadness that the vacancy had arisen through the death of John Padfield who had served the community well for many years and in a variety of roles.

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d. Consider re-appointment of Gwen and Tony Pritchitt as Internal Auditors for 2012/13 and received second audit report for 2011/12.

Copy of the report has been circulated in advance of the meeting. Clerk is to attend to the items noted by auditors, it was RESOLVED that they be re-appointed for the 2012/13 financial year and the Clerk is to confirm this to them.

e. Information regarding ownership of Town Row Green.

Copies of papers detailing the abortive effort to register this land in 2004 were circulated in advance of the meeting. These shows the land is included in the Register of Common Land maintained by ESCC; this does not prove ownership of the land, only a claim to ownership. It was RESOLVED that CLERK undertake a Land Registry search to see if title had been registered, if not a meeting is to be arranged with the nearby landowners to discuss the desirability of it being registered in the interest of the community. Cllr. Whetstone is to forward information to the Clerk regarding registration of land as a Village Green.

f. Information and further action regarding hedges overgrowing public highways

- Chairman has spoken to owner of hedges in North Street, one of which has now been cut – CLERK to send letter of thanks.
- Cllr. Wickenden advised that the large Beech hedge adjoining fp31a New Road-Station Road is to be cut back and fencing provided.
- Hedge in Station Road near Biddenden Farm has been cut as requested.
- Cllr. Wickenden is to speak to owners of the hedge adjacent to the phone kiosk by the Old Post Office, BT has advised that this will be repainted in the summer and cutting back of the hedge will assist this.
- Hedge at Mark Cross near VAS is to be mentioned to our Highways Steward for a visit as it impedes visibility for vehicles emerging from nearby properties and hinders visibility of the VAS.

g. Approve amendments to Annual Return as requested by External Auditors.

Scan of letter and accompanying document circulated prior to the meeting. Clerk explained the amendments, he considered that the details of the figures had been fully documented in the papers accompanying the Annual Return and that the additional fee imposed by the External Auditors was not justified; he will raise this in the covering letter to accompany the document. RESOLVED that the alterations be made and the Chairman initialled them.

h. Adoption of any recommended amendments and updates to the following policies and governing documents, and suggestions for any additional managing documents.

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| •Standing Orders | •Freedom of Information | •Grants |
| •Financial Regulations | •Complaints | •Press and Media |
| •Community Engagement | | |

It was RESOLVED that there were no amendments required to these documents, CLERK to arrange for reviews to be spaced through the year in view of the volume of papers involved.

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

- 15th May -Recreation and Burial Committee
- 29th May - Planning and Building Committee
- 19th June - Planning and Building Committee
- 26th June -Recreation and Burial Committee

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8. TO RECEIVE REPORTS

- **Other committees and sub-committees.**
 - Chair and Clerk had attended a meeting at Wadhurst hosted and arranged by Cllr. Tidy (ESCC). This enabled representatives of Parishes in his district to meet with the Chief Executive of ESCC and raise issues with her.
 - As a consequence of this meeting Cllr. Tidy had arranged and hosted a meeting at Bells Yew Green with Karl Taylor (Assistant Director of Operations, Transport and Environment) to discuss highways issues, the Chairman and Cllr. Clibbens attended. Speeding is not part of his remit, subjects covered at the meeting were fingerposts and improvements to pothole repair processes and organisation to enable a more cost effective and durable repair. Lack of feedback/acknowledgment of issues raised by Parishes was a key concern for those who attended. Installation of 30mph repeater signs is also an issue. Highways are governed by the 1984 Road Traffic Regulations Act regarding this but understand Parish concerns, it is suggested that the local MP is lobbied to see if an amendment could be made to the Regulations allowing discretion with this matter to permit these. CLERK to add to agenda of next Highways Committee meeting to consider representation on this matter.
 - Clerk and Cllr. Clibbens attended a meeting at Heathfield with Gary Humble from ESCC and are representative of May Gurney who will be undertaking drain repair on Catt's Hill at the beginning of August. Main topic was improving signage to show that Station Road will still be open for access to Spout Hill and Yew Tree Lane. Unfortunately, the survey results for the rest of the drains on this road have not yet been interpreted so it may mean that a further closure will be required.
- **Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.** None.
- **Clerk's report and issues.**
 - Has researched cost of storage at site in Crowborough, they charge 1.4p per archive box per day (£5.11 per annum) for storage. Clerk aims to check boxes in Village Hall basement prior to July meeting, this to identify number and candidates suitable for shredding. Storage may also be possible in the area beneath the Pre School.
 - New Councillor training – a course is being held at Littlehampton July 31st 18:00 – 21:00 or a more comprehensive day course is being run by SALC at Leeford Place near Battle. Saturday September 22nd 09:00-16:00 at a cost of £87.50. Cllrs. Kitchenham and Halse – Adamson are to check their availability for the Battle course and let Clerk know if they wish to attend so arrangements may be made.
 - Is attending training session re GPC next week with a view to completing the CiLCA module required to enable the use of this power by the Council.
 - Primary School advise that a member of staff was injured in the Recreation Ground recently, ambulance attended and it was recommended that a key be held by the School to enable opening of the pitchside barrier if emergency access was ever required. CLERK is to arrange the cutting of a key for the School and one for the Chairman to hold.

9. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

- Bank Reconciliation at end of May 2012. The RFO presented the figures, and these were agreed and signed by the Chairman
- Review of Expenditure against Budget to end May 2012 and year-end. . The RFO provided the summary figures to Councillors and relevant detailed figures to the Committee Chairmen.
- Approval of Payments. After explanation it was RESOLVED that the following payments be made:-

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CHEQUE NO	PAYEE	DETAILS	AMOUNT
801426	Trevor Thorpe	Clerk's salary for June	£1,060.35
801427	H.M.R.C.	Tax and N.I. for June	£274.57
801428	Trevor Thorpe	Clerk's expenses for June	£50.90
801429	Jim Gander	Street sweeping for June	£81.39
801430	Rotherfield Village Hall	Hall hire fees for May	£63.70
801431	Rotherfield Sports Club	Grass cutting for June	£315.00
801432	Konica Minolta	Photocopier lease and usage	£68.92
801433	Teambase	Stationery	£30.00
801434	Rotherfield St Martin	Annual support grant	£1,500.00
801435	Gwen Pritchitt	Audit fee for second 2011/12 visit	£194.50
801436	Will Clark	Cutting of lower field at Cemetery	£48.00
801437	Vision ICT Ltd	Website hosting 8/11-7/12 and 8/12-7/13	£299.40
Total			£3,986.73

CREDITS

PAYMENT FROM	DETAILS	AMOUNT
Santander	Bank interest - May	£60.76
Dignity Funerals Ltd	Ashes interment fee	£100.00
Millennium Green Trust	Contribution toward dog bin emptying	£25.57
ESCC	Registration fee for lease ESCC - Pre School	£50.00
Total		£236.33

10. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE GENERAL

- Notice of Open Day at the Queen Alexandra Hospital Home 14th July.
- Letter of thanks from Argos Hill Windmill Trust for recent grant toward restoration.
- Update from South East Water regarding water situation.
- Letter of thanks and progress report from Crowborough Community First Responders. They have attended nearly 200 incidents this year already, in addition to Crowborough they have been called to Rotherfield and other villages. CLERK is to contact them to offer including a link to their website on the Council site.
- Offer from Rotherfield family to fund a bench in the Recreation Ground. To be added to July agenda to consider style and site.
- Notice of Pre School Quiz night 14th July.
- Confirmation from the Post Office that the Rotherfield office will be relocated to the Stores.

CIRCULARS AND MAGAZINES

- **WDC** – Parish Bulletin issue 17.
- **Sussex Review** – Summer 2012.
- **St Chéron-en-bref** – No 286 .
- **LCR** – Summer 2012.

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ROOTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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11. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS.

- These were passed to the Chair for inspection and signature.

12. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- 10th July – Planning and Building Committee.
- 17th July – Highways Lighting and Transport Committee.
- 19th July – Monthly Council Meeting.
- 31st July – Planning and Building Committee.

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

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

- Water leak at Peeps Lane/Cottage Hill junction has been reported to Highways Steward who in turn has raised the issue with South East Water, they have confirmed that it is an issue for them to deal with.
- Clerk reported that printing of the annual report and newsletter had been authorised by him.
- Cllr. Clibbens asked if there was a volunteer to take over the operation of the Speedwatch team as it was becoming an increasing demand on his time.
- It was reported that the Knotweed on fp37 adjacent to Jameah was now virtually impassable. In addition, two stiles on fp43 Catt's Hill – Spout Hill continue to deteriorate and now constitute a hazard. CLERK to follow these previously reported issues with ESCC ROW team.
- The Chairman hopes to clean the "Football Foundation" sign at the entrance to the Rec. prior to the Royal Visit.
- Cllr. Wickenden is to contact the owner of the "George" sign.

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 21:25.

14. PUBLIC FORUM.

- Q. What actions are proposed by the Parish Council in response to the ESCC report resulting from the petition, and at which meeting would this be discussed?
- A. No further action would be taken until ESCC had reported on the various proposals and an idea of likely cost, and who would bear it, was given. Discussion of this would be either at a Council monthly meeting or at a bi-monthly Highways Committee meeting depending on the timing of the response.
- An appeal was again made for Mark Cross residents to put their names forward as Speedwatch Volunteers.
- Concerns expressed at the standard of hedge cutting undertaken by County contractors, and by owners of hedges. It was explained that, as a last resort and if felt appropriate, an enforcement notice could be issued by ESCC and if no action taken by a private owner, they could arrange cutting and pass cost back to owner.

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

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