

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 25TH SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 19:30 IN MARK CROSS VILLAGE HALL

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. R. Harris (Vice Chairman)	Cllr. Mrs. P. Halse-Adamson	Cllr. J. Kitchenham
Cllr. C. Clibbens	Cllr. D. Hiles	Cllr. N. Wickenden
Cllr. P. Dixon	Cllr. R. Jaques	Cllr. L. Pike
Cllr. T. Gilbert		Cllr. F. Whittington

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT.

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe.
- PcsO Julie Pearce-Martin.
- Cllr. H. Merriman (WDC), Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC) and Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC).
- Two Members of the public.
- Jo Evans, BEM, and Rachel Wood, both of Rotherfield St Martin.

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

Apologies have been received, and were accepted, on behalf of Cllr. D. Thomas, Cllr. A. Sharpe.

2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER INTERESTS.

None. The Chairman reminded the councillors that they should declare an interest if they became aware of one at any point in the meeting.

3. TO RECEIVE DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS.

Cllr. Standley (ESCC) had submitted a written report prior to the meeting, which was circulated to the Councillors. Key points of this were as follows:-

Aircraft Noise and Frequency -

Number of flights seems to have reduced, is to seek more information from Gatwick as it is suspected that a similar situation will occur next year.

Limekiln Forest

The recent fly tipping incidents add to the evidence base that ESCC require before they can take further action and he will continue to pursue this.

County Finances

Challenges faced have been highlighted in the recent monitoring report which showed that the County had fallen behind on the budget with an overspend in the 1st Quarter of £10m. Whilst some of this deficit may be retrieved over the rest of the year the shortfall in Adult Social Services of over £6m will be difficult to reverse.

Ofsted Inspection on School Improvement Arrangements

The Ofsted report was disappointing in that the Council was judged “ineffective”. It was noted by the inspectors that the improvement programme was on the right track but they felt the process needed to be advanced in the timing. County have allocated additional resources of £870k over the next 2 years.

Bus Consultation

This closes on Friday and responses can be made as individuals or by representative bodies.

He has raised the issue of co-ordinating the services from Wadhurst- Crowborough (224)-which passes through Rotherfield and the Rotherfield Crowborough service (226). The proposals by ESCC are that

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these services will both run 2 days a week – Mon – Wed and Wed – Sat respectively. The reduction in the frequency of the service will also be commented on.

“Cuckoo Line” land at Argos Hill. ESCC Highways are looking at the maintenance costs of the bridges over this, particularly the one under the A267 near the former “Bicycle Arms” for which they have responsibility. He considers that the land is more of a liability to County than an asset and does not consider the sum currently being asked for it is realistic in light of this.

Cllr. Merriman (WDC) reported the following:-

- He is continuing to make representations regarding aircraft noise concerns.
- Court Meadow Farm – the application to vary the conditions associated with this will now be considered at the next Planning Committee (North) meeting on the 23rd October.

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

- He is also dealing with aircraft noise issues, the main area affected seems to be the St John’s Crowborough area of Withyham Parish although other areas of his division did not seem to be affected.
- Perception is that the narrowing of the approach band for aircraft is intended to reduce the total number of people affected by aircraft but this would result in a lesser number of people being more adversely affected.
- Parishes in West Kent appear to be more affected than those in Sussex.
- Ofsted report on Education Authority. 10 local Education Authorities have so far been inspected by OFSTED and 8, including East Sussex, have been deemed unsatisfactory. Whilst this was disappointing, he is confident that the staff in place will improve this position.

4. TO RECEIVE POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS REPORT

- Is continuing with “high visibility” patrols in the Parish at various times of day.
- The repainted yellow lines are generally proving effective although a vehicle was ticketed on 24th September.
- Has visited School Assembly, Church and Pre School. Has presented a cheque for £200 to the Pre School from Police Community Funds, these will be used to support anti-vandalism initiatives at the Pre School.
- Street meeting recently held at Court Meadow, no members of the public attended.
- More fly tipping reported at Limekiln Forest, including a burned out caravan. Improved barriers are needed here to deter this.
- Has done further 100 vehicle checks on approaches to the village – average speeds at the laybys in Church Road were in excess of the 30mph limit. Has trained a further “Speedwatch” volunteer and is to liaise with Cllr. Kitchenham regarding possible new sites for sanction for the Group.
- In response to local concerns has spoken to a National Charity regarding a recent “doorstep” campaign in the Village. Although it had been officially sanctioned, it had caused concern to some.

5. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28TH AUGUST 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 the Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th August 2014 be confirmed as a true record and the Vice - Chairman signed them.

6. UPDATE FROM CLERK REGARDING MATTERS ARISING & ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING.

All items have been actioned and are ongoing.

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7. PRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF ROTHERFIELD ST MARTIN REGARDING THEIR DEMENTIA FRIENDLY VILLAGE INITIATIVE. THIS WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A 5' Q & A SESSION.

Cllr. Clibbens joined the meeting at this point.

- Jo Evans introduced Rachel Wood who has recently been appointed as the General Manager of Rotherfield St Martin.

Key points of the presentation were as follows:-

- Nationally there are currently 800k people with Dementia, in 10 years' time it is estimated that 1m will be affected. Currently only 3% of sufferers are in residential care.
- There are many in the Parish who suffer from Dementia or are a carer for someone affected.
- Effects on those afflicted are isolation, loneliness, marginalisation, loss of identity and a feeling of being undervalued.
- There is a lack of understanding regarding the condition and RSM wish to address this locally by creating a "Dementia Friendly Community".
- Samantha Dahman, the RSM Shop manager, has been trained as a Dementia Champion. Together with other shop volunteers, visits are being arranged to the isolated and lonely members of the community who are affected.
- Waitrose in Crowborough wish to be a "dementia friendly" store and RSM have been involved in training there.
- A Dementia Support will be meeting on the first Friday of the next 3 months involving RSM members and others in the community. Events planned include "music and movement" sessions involving different eras, lunches at the "Catts" plus arts and craft sessions.
- A Dementia Seminar, jointly hosted by RSM and St Denys Church, is to be held on Saturday October 18th in the morning. This will raise awareness of the disease and show ways we can support and help. The main speakers will be Chris Walton-Turner from Joined-Up Training and Ben Bano, Director of the Welcome Me as I Am Project. RSM's Dementia Champion, Samantha Dahman will also be there to encourage delegates to become Dementia Friends, an initiative set up by the Alzheimer's Society. Councillors are invited to attend and it is hoped that representatives of local businesses and other organisations will be present.

8. TO CONSIDER INFORMATION AND MAKE DECISIONS IF REQUIRED REGARDING ACTION FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:-

a) Conclusion of Annual Audit and External Auditors report.

This has been signed off by the External Auditors with comments regarding incorrect analysis of Precept Support Grant in the accounting statement and review of insurance cover relative to asset register. CLERK to note and review Asset Register and Insurance levels.

b) Arrangements for laying of Poppy Wreath on behalf of the Parish at the Remembrance Sunday service.

This is to be on 9th November 2014. RESOLVED that the Council Chairman and Cllr. Wickenden are to lay two wreaths on behalf of the Parish for which a £60 donation is to be made. CLERK to liaise with local RBL branch to obtain wreath and dedication cards for completion prior to the service, these to be held by Cllr. Wickenden. Cheque to be arranged for issue at October meeting.

c) Adoption of updated Standing Orders based on the NALC/SLCC model documents.

To allow more time for these to be digested CLERK to carry forward to October agenda.

d) Drinking fountain in Church wall. Suggestion by parishioner that an approach be made to the Drinking Fountain Association for restoration.

RESOLVED CLERK to contact the Association to enquire as to what assistance may be available to restore this to working order. The fountain features in the Conservation Area management plan. It was reported that the fountain had worked in the recent past, a "stop cock" under a cover nearby in the Churchyard controls water supply, the supply was turned on in the spring and off in the autumn.

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e) Meeting arrangements for 2015 – locations and frequencies.

Hall requires information for next year. RESOLVED that Council and Committee meetings are to continue at the same frequency as before with two Council meetings at Mark Cross, there is to be one less Recreation and Burial Committee meeting in the winter months thus reducing the total of these to five each year. CLERK to arrange with Hall, and Memorial Institute if necessary for any unavailable dates, and publish new timetable when dates are confirmed.

f) Request for Grant or Letter of support for Eridge Village Hall's proposed refurbishment of their toilets and provision of disabled facility.

Clerk advised meeting that, although the Chairman was not present at this meeting, he was in favour of financial support for this project. RESOLVED to provide a letter in support of the proposed work to Wealden District Council, this in support of the Hall's grant request to them; also to advise that the Council may consider a grant request in the New Year when budgets and precepts for 2015/16 have been agreed. The suggestion is to be made that the Hall seeks other quotes for the work.

g) Review of process for co-option of candidates to fill vacancies on the Council.

To allow more time for this to be digested CLERK to carry forward to October agenda.

h) Report and actions recommended from recent meeting with Mayfield Parish Council regarding the former "Cuckoo Line" land near Argos Hill.

Cllrs. Clibbens, Wickenden and Dixon recently met with three members of Mayfield Parish Council and a non-councillor member of their Footpath Committee. Neither Council currently has funds to progress with purchase at £30K figure required by ESCC. It was suggested that, should the matter progress, a Trust be formed to purchase the land with members from both Councils as Trustees. As commented in Cllr. Standley's earlier report in this meeting it is felt that the price sought by ESCC is excessive, particularly with regard to the maintenance liability for the bridges on the route that would be transferred should the sale proceed. RESOLVED that dialogue continue with Mayfield PC and ESCC regarding this matter and that an offer of "first refusal" be obtained from them. However, no financial commitment is to be made at this stage. An issue was raised regarding a "gap" in the route toward the Town Row end, Cllr. Wickenden reported that this section could possibly become a "licensed footpath" should the landowner agree. CLERK to gather background information for Cllr. Whittington regarding the history of this project.

i) Discuss and agree response and further action re. Gatwick noise and extension of runway and Council's joining the alliance of other High Weald councils regarding this issue.

Numerous reports and newsletters have been received and circulated. This is a complex issue with various groups springing up to argue their case. The Parish Council are on the circulation list for updates from the High Weald Councils Aviation Action Group (HWCAAG) which is West Kent based but with various East Sussex parishes becoming involved. The following points were raised:- during debate on this matter:-

- Many in the Parish rely on Gatwick for employment.
- How many of those complaining use planes from Gatwick?
- Enquiries in the Village centre indicate that noise is not apparent there.
- Main problems to be concerning Parishes in West Kent. Any changes should share increases in activity on an equal basis in the Gatwick flight path "zone".
- The engine "whine" associated with various A320 "Airbus" planes appears to be a problem, airlines should be encouraged to introduce the modification available to reduce this.
- The two recent consultations on the matter had not been properly distributed by Gatwick. Both had now expired so there was no scope for the Council to make further comments.

RESOLVED to write to Gatwick/Airlines concerned highlighting "engine whine" issue and encouraging commitment from them to install the modification available to reduce this.

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j) Agreement for wording of replacement sign in Playground.

This has gone missing, possibly when the new equipment was installed but there is no evidence to support this. RESOLVED that new sign worded thus be ordered and installed, CLERK to proceed without further reference provided cost of purchase and installation is not in excess of £100. Clerk recommends it be affixed to posts at each end to reduce damage risk.

**This play area is owned
and maintained by
Rotherfield Parish Council
for the safe enjoyment of children
Please report any issues to the Council.**

k) Decision regarding priorities and action for repairs to bus shelters at Mark Cross and Eridge Forstal.

Cllrs. Thomas and Wickenden have inspected these three shelters and their recommendations were read to the meeting. RESOLVED CLERK arranges the following:-

- Quote from Geoff Burrige for repair to Forstal Bus shelter (Crowborough side) to make it weather tight as this shelter appears to be sound. This should be funded from the £500 shelter repair budget.
- Quote from Geoff Burrige for a new shelter for the Forstal bus shelter (Tunbridge Wells side) as the current one is considered beyond repair although seat appears sound. This to be funded from the £2500 set aside for the Chant Lane surface works that have now been deferred to next spring. CLERK to arrange budget amendment and note to include provision for Chant Lane work in budget/precept calculations for 2015/16.
- Quote for Tony Moaby for clearance of weeds in and around the Mark Cross shelter together with urgent repairs to concrete base by screeding as it is considered that this constitutes a trip hazard. Quote to include filling of holes in roof.

l) Update and further action regarding claim relating to diesel spill in the Rec. Car Park.

Solicitor reports that quote received of £3K for core sampling. Recommends that Coppards be asked to quote again for replacement of whole area of rear section of car park and separately for solely the area on which the oil was spilled. These figures to be forwarded to Solicitor to assist with possible negotiation upwards of offer figure from insurers. CLERK to arrange with Coppard's and forward information to Solicitor.

m) Information/cost regarding possible hire of "gully sucker" to clear roadside drains in Parish.

- Coppards. Quote for a combined road sweeper/gully sucker is £50 ph minimum 5hrs, plus £120 for removal and proper disposal of waste "off-site",
- Woollard Plant Hire (Hailsham). For same type of vehicle as above cost is £35 ph minimum 4 hrs to include travelling time. £80 per load for waste disposal. Suggest for gully work to have a second man to assist with clearing, £15 ph extra.
(All prices plus Vat).

Concerns expressed that we should not be paying twice for this work, a gully emptier would be needed for a day and a detailed schedule of gullies affected would need to be prepared.

RESOLVED CLERK to draft a letter to ESCC Head of Transport with copies to ESCC lead member and local County representatives. Letter to express dissatisfaction with standard of drain clearance work by their contractor who do not provide an adequate service and are not held accountable for their deficiencies. If work is not undertaken within a month Parish Council will arrange for it to be done and cost passed on to County.

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- n) **Information and further action re: claim in respect of diesel spill on the Rec. car park.**
Item duplicated in error.

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

- 9th September 2014 – Highways Lighting and Transport Committee
- 16th September 2014 – Planning and Building Committee

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

10. TO RECEIVE REPORTS

• Other committees and sub-committees.

None.

• Councillor “Have Your Say” session and arrangements for the next session.

- Next session is 4th October as part of the afternoon events in the Village Hall associated with the Carnival. Cllr Hiles has volunteered to attend; event is open between 13:30 and 17:00.
- 11th October 2014 session is in the Reading Room at Mark Cross Church – 10:30 – 11:30.
- No members of the public attended the “Have Your Say” session in the Institute on the 13th September. CLERK is to arrange for sessions on Saturdays December 13th and February 14th in the Institute 10:30 – 11:30 with an item to be added to the February agenda to review the format and future of these public “surgeries”.

• Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.

- Cllr. Gilbert attended the monthly meeting of the Village Hall. Issues discussed of concern to the Parish Council related to the Council’s bin being left out and the hedge next to the hall, which needed a cut. A sound insulating panel is to be provided for the serving hatch. Hire business has been good and the solar panels are working well.
- Cllr. Hiles attended a meeting of the Sports Club. Issues of concern to the Parish Council were the safety nets at the bowls club, which stop cricket balls – these are in need of repair/replacement.

• Clerk’s report and issues.

- Clerks meeting attended at Heathfield – presentation from WDC re: Election in 2015.
- Application for match funding from the ESCC “Community Self-Serve” scheme for closure of the “one way” section of slip road opposite Mark Cross Church has passed first stage of approval; it will now be considered by the Highways Lead Member for final approval.
- Vehicle Activate Sign. Installation delayed due to discussions as to desirability of a solar powered unit for the northbound sign – cost saving due to avoidance of having to provide mains supply Highways Officer involved has concerns of insufficient sunlight in desired position to make it effective.
- Application submitted via the WDC “Community Dividend” scheme for funding toward a new Church and Community noticeboard at Mark Cross; also a picnic bench for the grass area opposite Church and School.
- Arrangements are being made to remove the smaller bollards alongside the A267 by the extended parking area and provision of planting to impede vehicles who may wish to drive on this area. Bollards in front of the parking area are to be replaced with examples that are more robust.
- Concrete area under the bus shelter opposite Mark Cross Inn is to be repaired and weeds removed. Roof will also have some attention. Although regular service buses do not call here, it is used by the school bus.

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11. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

- Bank Reconciliation as at end of August 2014 and review of expenditure against Budget to date. Clerk reported that, although balances were low now the following receipts are due shortly:-
 - Second precept instalment of £36K - paid by WDC today and due to be received via BACS within next few days.
 - Vat reclaim of £2182 - this was submitted over a month ago and has been chased, as they do not usually take this long.
 - £10K grant from Rotherfield Trust for the play canopy. This will be placed in the deposit account when received.

It was RESOLVED that these reports be approved and the Chairman signed them. Clerk is to check details of the budget sums featured for the Allotment income and rental as featured in the reports, as these appear incorrect.

- **Approval of Payments.**

It was RESOLVED to make the following payments:-

Details of Cheques issued

Payee Name	Cheque number	Amount	Transaction Detail
Trevor Thorpe	801817	£1,478.20	September salary
H M R C	801818	£491.95	September Tax and NI
Trevor Thorpe	801819	£62.50	September expenses non vat
Trevor Thorpe/Sussex Stationer	801819	£0.99	Expenses/reimbursement VAT
Trevor Thorpe/Newmans	801819	£99.99	New printer /scanner
Trevor Thorpe/Studland	801819	£3.49	Pegs for plot marker
Trevor Thorpe/Newmans	801819	£14.99	Printer address labels
Nordis Signs	801820	£152.09	Signs for Rec.
SSALC Ltd	801821	£72.00	Chair's Networking Day
Wicksteed Leisure Ltd	801822	£844.61	Repairs to play items
K S & S Air Ambulance	801823	£250.00	Grant support
Teambase	801824	£74.36	Print cartridges
Direct365Online Ltd	801825	£283.61	Cemetery bin and DOC paperwork
Konica Minolta Ltd	801826	£41.08	Photocopier rental
British Heart Foundation	801827	£400.00	Contribution toward AED
Rotherfield Village Hall	801828	£45.60	Hall hire for August
PKF Littlejohn LLP	801829	£360.00	2014 External audit costs
James & Liz Sweeney	801830	£500.00	September Allotment rental
Rotherfield Sports Club	801831	£315.00	September Rec cutting
PJI Contract Packers Ltd	801832	£381.00	September sweeping and picking
A.C. Moaby	801833	£300.00	Bollards in Rec and bus stops
Tollwood Garden Service	801434	£790.00	September grass and hedge work
Total Payments		£6,961.46	

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Payments are made using the General Power of Competence as contained in the Localism Act 2011. The Power was adopted by Rotherfield Parish Council at their monthly meeting held on 29th December 2012.

12. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

CIRCULARS AND MAGAZINES

- SLCC – The Clerk Magazine September 2014
- RBS Systems – list of charges for 2015-16

13. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

These were signed by the Vice Chairman. No safety issues were identified in these reports and no issues or concerns have been reported by the public.

14. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- 7th October – Planning and Building Committee.
- 14th October – Recreation and Burial Committee – Rotherfield Memorial Institute.
- 28th October – Planning and Building Committee.
- 30th October – Monthly Council Meeting.

Except where marked all meetings are in the Parish Council Room, Rotherfield Village Hall and start at 19:30.

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

- Paper copies of the newly published Parish Guide were available at the meeting and copies were passed to those present. The delivery to the Parish is to be via Royal Mail during w/c 6th October. Clerk is to arrange separate dispatch of around 120 copies to TN3 postcodes in Parish (Danegate and Eridge area) which cannot be dealt with by bulk delivery.
- Around 900 copies will remain available for distribution by the Council and suggestions and assistance from the Councillors for this will be appreciated. Clerk is to send a copy and letter of thanks to the Parishioner who kindly provided the bulk of the photographs for the publication.
- Clerk reminded that, apart from his time spent gathering information, Local Government Publishing Ltd had done most of the work involved with this project and the cost was covered by their advertising income.
- Cllr. Pike reminded that there will be road closures in the Village 19:00 – 23:00 due to the Carnival.
- CLERK to circulate information regarding gates to the Church Path, which are yet to be reinstated.

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

To compile draft Clerk's Delegated Powers document and updated Financial Regulations.

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 21:50.

17. PUBLIC FORUM.

None.

Confirmed as a true record at the 30th October 2014 meeting of the Council

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