

# ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Working for the Community

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

## MINUTES OF THE JANUARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 19:30 ON THURSDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2011 AT ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL

### COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. L. Pike (Chair)	Cllr. D. Clark	Cllr. R. Jaques
Cllr. P. Halse Adamson (Vice Chair)	Cllr. C. Clibbens	Cllr. N. Wickenden
Cllr. N. Bolton.	Cllr. C. Dennison	
Cllr. J. Bowerman	Cllr. R. Harris	

**ALSO PRESENT.** 7 members of the public attended together with Cllr. R. Tidy (ESCC), Cllr. H. Merriman (WDC) and PCSO Boyle.

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

Cllr. J. Padfield, Cllr. C. Prince

**2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

None.

**3. TO RECEIVE DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS.**

Cllr. Tidy reported the following regarding the ESCC budget:-

- £100m of Government funding will be lost over the next 4 years, £37m of this during 2011/12.
- Methods are in place to deal with this, headline figures have been agreed and the details are being worked on.
- Children's Services, excluding schools, are to make £20.7m in savings. This department deals with special needs, school transport and maintaining standards.
- Youth development services are to lose 67% of funding. Efforts to help young people are to be concentrated on the 900 considered most vulnerable, the majority of these are on the Coast but it is hoped that other parts of the County will not be overlooked.
- Nursery Services will be affected, some Children's Centres may close.
- Schools will be expected to maintain their own standards with County intervention only in the most serious cases.
- School with the highest numbers of deprived children will receive the most support with funds being allocated from elsewhere.
- Connections, the career advice service, will be much reduced.
- There will reduced investment in providing short breaks for disabled and carers.
- The "Youth Bank" is to close – this provided help to create small businesses.
- Flexible revenue from investment interest and increased efficiency in collecting Council Tax has created a Flexible Reserve of £4m . £1.5m of this will be allocated to Children's Services for youth and carer respite. Balance to be retained for drawing upon over the next 2 years.

A question was asked regarding the discontinuation of the Youth Bank, is this to be replaced by Social Enterprise and what other areas will be covered from this source?

Answer given that meetings have been held with the voluntary sector but plans are in their early stages. There is to be no funding reduction this year to the sector, with small reductions in the following years.

Cllr. Merriman (WDC) reported the following:-

- Government grants to WDC will be cut by 28% over the next two years.
- Efficiency savings have generated £1.8m and there will therefore be no rise in the WDC element of the Council tax.
- Census is due to take place on March 27<sup>th</sup>, census form collectors are being recruited.
- Cases have been reported of bogus callers claiming to represent WDC seeking to acquire bank detail for a spurious Council Tax refund.

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## 4. TO RECEIVE POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS REPORT

The following incidents were reported:-

- Vehicles stolen from Sheriff's Lane and Eridge Station.
- Mobile phone stolen from a customer in a local public house.
- Heating oil thefts had occurred locally in Wadhurst and Maynard's Green. Police advice is to fit a lock to their tank and also not to keep the tank full.

## 5. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 14<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2010 & MATTERS ARISING. It was AGREED that these minutes be adopted and that there were no matters arising. The Chairman signed the minutes.

## 6. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS

### a) Receive declaration of acceptance of office from new Councillor.

Cllr. Anne Watson signed her declaration of acceptance of office and was welcomed to the Council.

She will serve the Rotherfield Ward; Cllr. Dennison is to serve Eridge and Mark Cross Ward. CLERK to update records.

### b) Presentation from a representative of Mayfield Parish Council regarding project to continue BW92 as a permissive bridleway along the formation of the former "Cuckoo Line" in the Argos Hill area toward Rotherfield. Consider request for support with this project.

Cllr. Bramwell of Mayfield Parish Council addressed the meeting regarding this project. Key points of the project are as follows:-

- Feasibility study into the route, owned by ESCC, took place early in 2010. Whilst scheme is feasible, no County funds are available to help.
- It is considered that up to £100k may be required to bring the scheme to fruition, bulk of this is hoped to come from grant sources. Once funding in place timescale of 2 years for completion is considered realistic.
- Support has been forthcoming from WDC, ESCC and the Local Access Forum.
- Scheme would be separate from Mayfield Parish Council, project title is "Mayfield and Rotherfield Community Heritage Trail". Mission statement is to transform the route into a heritage trail for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Plans include information boards, picnic areas and benches.
- The route is level and wide, easily accessible from 3 points.
- Complements existing rights of way in the Parishes and offers a traffic free route between them via the 60m tunnel under the A267 near the former "Bicycle Arms".
- Phase 1 is to arrange an ecological study of the route and seek change of use permission from WDC. Funding bodies would then need to be aware that there is support for the scheme locally.

Questions were then asked by the Councillors:-

- How is access to be gained into Yew Tree Lane?  
New owners of the land involved have agreed "in principle" to a permissive bridleway connecting to FP33.
- How many users were anticipated?  
This would be subject to a survey to be arranged.
- How much would the scheme cost?  
Estimated at £100K – largest expense is ensuring that the tunnel under the A267 is safe. A major survey of this by ESCC is scheduled this month with results to be available in February, it is hoped that this will show a reduction in the estimated cost.
- How much had Mayfield PC spent on the project?  
Around £1K on some clearance work, plus £800 for the ecological survey. Intention is that the balance would be grant funded.

The meeting was adjourned to allow members of the public to speak.

An Argos Hill resident whose garden backs on to the route made the following points:-

- Concerned that residents were not consulted regarding the scheme, although in principle is not against the whole idea.
- Considered that in the current economic climate funding would not be forthcoming to permit completion.

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- ESCC wants route to be a properly planned and engineered cycleway. Present plans for a bridleway would render the surface unsuitable for cyclists and hence it is considered that the money spent so far has been wasted.

Clarification was given of the clearance undertaken so far. This was to enable the condition of the route to be more clearly seen and was not intended to be the finished clearance job.

Another Argos Hill resident spoke:-

- He is strongly against the plan to turn the route into a formal bridleway. It would reduce the surface to a quagmire and render it useless for walkers.
- The tunnel would not be safe for walkers or horses unless it were lit.
- The route by the Rotherfield tunnel mouth is very wet; there are deep drainage pits there that would be a potential hazard unless fenced.

The meeting recommenced and it was RESOLVED that support would be considered again once detailed costings were available for the scheme.

**c) Agreement of budgets and signature of Precept Request for 2011/12 Financial Year for submission to WDC.**

The total net expenditure figure in the budget for 2011/12 is £66210. After taking into account budgeted expenditure not made during 2010/11, a precept of £52500 was recommended at the recent Finance and General Purposes Committee. This represents an increase of 2.94% on the previous year's precept of £51000. Based on the factors provided by Wealden District Council the recommended precept for 2011/12 will cost a Band "D" property in the Parish £33.64 p.a. in Council Tax, an increase of 53p over the 2010/11 figure of £33.11. The Precept figure of £52500 was AGREED and the form was signed for CLERK to submit to WDC. Cllr's Bolton and Dennison wished it to be noted that they voted against the proposed increase.

**d) Request for contribution toward provision of solar safety lighting in public footpath between Surgery and Church Road through the Churchyard.**

Powers are available under Section 3(1) of the Parish Councils Act 1957 to contribute toward this.

£100 is requested by the Church toward total cost of £300 to light this footpath for the benefit of the Community. It was AGREED to grant £100, CLERK to arrange.

**e) Requests for grant support from the Rotherfield St Martin Project, Wealden Citizens Advice Bureau, Samaritans and Eridge Village Hall.**

At the recent Finance and General Purposes Committee, the following grants were recommended:-

- i. Rotherfield St Martin – grant of £1750 for 2011/12 on the basis that no further grant requests be submitted from them during the financial year. It was RESOLVED that the Council in accordance with its powers under sections 137 and 139 of the 1972 LGA should incur expenditure of £1750 for this grant which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with expenditure. CLERK to arrange for issue of grant cheque at April Parish Council meeting.
- ii. Wealden CAB - £250 to be made under powers granted by S142 (2a) of the 1972 LGA. Grant request has been received and relates to this financial year. It was RESOLVED to make a grant of £250 using this power, CLERK to arrange for issue of grant cheque at February meeting.
- iii. Samaritans, £50 grant. A higher figure of £100 was proposed and it was RESOLVED that the Council in accordance with its powers under sections 137 and 139 of the 1972 LGA should incur expenditure of £100 for this grant which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with expenditure. CLERK to arrange for issue of grant cheque at February meeting.
- iv. Eridge Village Hall. £1500. Accounts have been submitted, monies are required for refurbishment of WC area and provision of disabled facilities. It was RESOLVED to make a grant of £1500 to the Hall under powers given by S133 of the 1972 LGA, CLERK to arrange for issue of grant cheque at April Parish Council meeting.

**f) Comments received in respect of consultation of New Road and Hornshurst Road households regarding possible introduction of "part night" lighting, and further action.**

The 93 households in New Road and Horsegrove Lane have been sent letters regarding the proposal, 14 (15%) have replied and all are in favour of the scheme. 44 letters have been sent to the residents of Hornshurst Road and no comments have been received, although it is understood that the letters have been

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received. It was RESOLVED to progress with both schemes, CLERK to obtain detailed quotes for work required from ESCC for consideration.

**g) Flooding in Village Hall car park.**

Problem resolved by Coppards whilst they were undertaking the extension work in the Hall car park. They have jetted the drains and installed an additional inspection cover. It is believed that the drain runs into a soakaway to the right of the Chestnut trees.

**h) Parish arrangements for gritting of paths in snow.**

Clerk is enquiring of Mayfield PC as to what their arrangements are for co-ordinating voluntary efforts to undertake this, including costs and insurance implications. Resident of Court Meadow has sent letter on behalf of her neighbours highlighting the hazardous state of the pavements in the area and requesting grit bin for which they have offered to contribute toward. Many comments have been received regarding icy pavements and requesting grit bins for other areas of the village. CLERK to review possible sites for grit bins and prepare information for consideration at March Highways meeting.

**i) Consider any locations in the Parish for inclusion in the ESCC Local Flood Survey.**

The fields by Eridge Station and area between the Huntsman and Railway Cottages were suggested.

**j) Information regarding outstanding items relating to the Pre School new build.**

Parish solicitors are still pressing ESCC for completion of lease and the first rental cheque. Clerk noted that the "hi vis" markings have now been added to the barrier and post, also that doors to Community Storage area have now been backed to make them watertight.

**k) Request from Sports Club for installation of disclaimer signs in the Recreation Ground and Village Hall for surfacing of path alongside Hall.**

In view of the extension to the car park the sports club have requested that additional liability disclaimer notices be located alongside the car park. It was RESOLVED not to install further boards but to suggest that Club provide some portable "sandwich boards" that could be displayed when matches were taking place.

Village hall have requested that consideration be given to surfacing the path alongside the hall as this is considered a safer route to the rear of the building for pedestrians particularly now that the pre school is operational. It was RESOLVED not to surface here but to review should drainage issues still persist.

**l) Information regarding Annual Parish Meeting scheduled for April 20<sup>th</sup>.**

Last year only 3 posters were displayed as poster boards had been stolen from the Milk Lodge lay by – alternative site suggested at foot of bank by Milk Lodge. Prices for this year are unchanged at 60" x 40" £45 plus £10 fitting and removal. AGREED to install only 3 boards this year, Cllr. Clibbens is to provide information of an alternative supplier for vinyl notices to see if these would show a cost saving. AGREED to invite PC Iain Tompsett to present information regarding Speedwatch at the meeting.

**m) Correspondence and invitations inviting a response.**

- **Royal British Legion** – details and invitation to organise a 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary "Poppy Party" over the weekend of 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> June. It was considered that the Legion local branch would arrange this.
- **CPRE Sussex** - Request for financial assistance toward cost of opposing a housing development at Polegate. It was considered that this was a matter for individuals to contribute if they wished.
- **PCSO Matt Boyle** – Invitation to send a representative to the next Joint Action Group meeting to be held on Tuesday April 12<sup>th</sup> at Heathfield Fire Station at 10:00. CLERK is to attend this.

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

- 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011 – Planning and Building Committee.
- 18<sup>th</sup> January 2011 – Finance and General Purpose Committee.

It was RESOLVED that these minutes be adopted and that there were no matters arising.

**8. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE FOLLOWING**

- **Other committees and sub-committees.** SLR meeting held recently, this was considered to have been constructive with much useful information provided regarding Speedwatch.
- **Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.** Opening of Pre School was attended by Chair and Clerk.
- **Clerk's report, issues and updates on work in progress.**
  - CiLCA portfolio has now been submitted.
  - Article noted in "Courier" regarding Ham Lane in Burwash, which had received 50% funding from EU monies via ESCC for resurfacing work. Coincidentally a letter has also been received

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from a resident expressing concern at condition of Chant Lane and requesting repairs. Have spoken to Clerk at Burwash and Matthew Harper at ESCC. He is awaiting information regarding next year's funds allocations for capital works, will investigate and report whether any funds may be available. Ham Lane is an unadopted road with footpath status and serves around 25 residences, a pub and the village recreation ground (not PC owned). Total cost of works proposed are £6K to repair around 60m of surface, balance of funding has been found by donation from brewery, housing associations and residents.

- Laptop computer will be provided for us by WDC at no charge to assist with e-planning consultations, laptop due to be received in March.
- Gary Saunders ESCC advises that a further replacement tree will be planted on the Hornshurst Road/North St corner; he believes that they have planted two replacements unsuccessfully.
- Village maintenance team visited the Parish in December, whilst most of the jobs requested have been undertaken a few remain and Clerk has chased Highways to see whether these will be done.
- Hadlow Clerk has contacted us regarding proposal from WDC to pass maintenance cost on to residents of Parishes who have a closed burial ground, 6 other Parishes are affected in addition to Hadlow Down and ourselves. According to recent "Courier" article Rotherfield households would pay an additional £6.73 p.a. if the scheme were implemented.
- One quote received for Royal Wedding commemorative ware. Cheapest would be mugs at £2 each, this to include a personalised message. CLERK is to investigate cost of providing these for all under 12 in the Parish and add to February agenda for consideration.
- Southern Trains advise that news on funding for car park extension schemes across their system is to be decided May/June.

## 9. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- Bank Reconciliation as at end of December 2010. The RFO presented the figures, which were agreed and signed by the Chairman.
- Review of Expenditure against Budget to end December 2010. The RFO provided the summary figures to Councillors and relevant detailed figures to the Committee Chairmen.
- Approval of Payments. It was AGREED to withhold the cheque for hedge cutting as items remain outstanding, CLERK to advise contractors. After explanation it was agreed that the following payments be made:-

CHEQUE NO	CHEQUE PAYABLE	DETAILS	AMOUNT
801210	Trevor Thorpe	Clerk's salary for January	£861.56
801211	H.M.R.C.	Tax and N.I. for January	£224.01
801212	Trevor Thorpe	Clerk's expenses for January	£161.43
801213	E.S.C.C	50% contribution toward Mark X car park repairs	£3,635.00
801214	Jim Gander	January street sweeping	£78.75
801215	G. R. Burridge	Fingerpost for Nap Wood	£120.00
801217	Suffolk ACRES Services	Additional insurance premium for benches.	£50.31
801218	Tollwood Garden Services	Hedge cutting	£1,422.00
		<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,553.06</b>

Please note that cheque 801215 was spoiled

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## CREDITS

PAYMENT FROM	DETAILS	AMOUNT
Paul Bysouth/Dignity	Interment fee	£130.00
Millennium Green Trust	Contribution toward dog bin fee	£28.92
H.M.R.C	Vat reclaimed 1/9/10 to 31/12/10	£974.59
Santander Bank	January interest on 4711394	£59.96
Paul Bysouth/Dignity	Memorial inscription fee	£30.00
E.S.C.C	50% Contribution Dewlands Hill fingerpost repair	£22.50
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,115.97</b>

## 10. TO RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE

### General

- **Millennium Green Trust** – Thank you for assisting with dog bins.
- **Rotherfield School Council** – Request for dog bin by school rear entrance. CLERK to acknowledge and add to February Agenda.

### Circulars and magazines

- **Clerks and Councils Direct** - January 2011 issue.
- **The Clerk** – January 2011.
- **Saint-Cheron en Bref** – No. 270.
- **English Rural Housing Association Bulletin** – Winter 2010.
- **Sussex Ramblers** – Now Open January 2011.

## 11. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

These were presented to the Chairman for signature.

## 12. DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February – Planning and Building Committee, Memorial Institute.
- Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February – Recreation and Burial Committee.
- Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February – Planning and Building Committee.
- Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> February – February Council Meeting.

Except as noted the above meetings are in Rotherfield Village Hall at 19:30.

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

- A New Road resident has approached Cllr. Padfield to raise concerns about water running across the road.
- CLERK to enquire of ESCC Highways regarding ownership/responsibility of area of New Road where it adjoins Station Road.

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

## 14. PUBLIC FORUM. None.

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

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