

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 18TH DECEMBER 2014 AT 19:30 IN THE PARISH COUNCIL ROOM, ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. D. Thomas (Chairman) Cllr. T. Gilbert Cllr. L. Pike
Cllr. R. Harris (Vice Chairman) Cllr. Mrs. P. Halse-Adamson Cllr. N. Wickenden
Cllr. C. Clibbens
Cllr. P. Dixon

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None.

ALSO PRESENT.

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe and Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC), and three members of the public attended.

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING:-

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

An apology was received and accepted from Cllr. A. Sharpe, Cllr. D. Hiles, Cllr. J. Kitchenham, Cllr. Whittington, Cllr. Jaques, Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC) and Cllr. H. Merriman (WDC).

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

Cllr. Gilbert declared a personal interest, as he is a neighbour of the property in item 2h) ii.

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. Standley's report

Bus Consultation.

- The analysis and recommendations following the extensive consultation were debated at the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.
- The changes will operate from next April. Cabinet approved the majority of changes; there were some alterations affecting the whole County and some in the Wadhurst Division in particular with 91% of passengers remain unaffected by any changes.
- Twenty three services previously subsidised (these were often commercial peak services and subsidised off peak) have now become fully commercial – the service is maintained and at no cost to the Council Taxpayer.
- Subsidised fares currently cost the taxpayer 81p per passenger and the new scheme reduces this to 59p. The most expensive current journey is subsidised to the tune of £11.97- from April this reduces to £4.83.
- Within Wadhurst Division a significant concern was that some school buses taking pupils to Uplands were proposed to become closed-door services that would only be used for pre-paid passengers and when the current users left the school would cease. Following representations these school services will remain as currently and be open door services run commercially although a significant part of the income will be Kent Freedom pass users and East Sussex Freedom pass users.

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- The 224 Wadhurst – Mayfield – Crowborough, which goes through Rotherfield, is currently four journeys a day three days a week and the proposal were to reduce to two journeys a day (one return trip) twice a week. This will remain a 3-day a week service with 2 return trips. It is possible that some times will change and possibly some days but overall frequency is as current. This service is supported by grants from Wadhurst and Mayfield Parish Councils.
- 226 Rotherfield – Local Crowborough service his will reduce from 6 days a week to 2 days a week (Wednesday and Saturday) but remains at four journeys a day.

Clerk advised that there would be item on the agenda of the 13th January Highways Committee meeting to discuss the cuts to the 226 service and possible action from the Parish Council to support the service.

Gatwick

- The e-mail traffic with reference to the second runway proposal remains relatively frequent, especially since the reversal of Kent Council support for it in response to concerns regarding noise issues over West Kent Parishes.
- ESCC currently supports the proposal.
- Wealden DC has not declared a view regarding the second runway. They acknowledge that the airport brings economic and employment benefits, particularly to the North of the district, also that there must be recognition of the environmental impact on residents.
- There is a general concern that Gatwick have not been entirely open regarding flight paths and volume of flights particularly during the summer; also that if changes are made to these to reduce impact on Kent Parishes it may affect Sussex ones.

BW53 Limekiln Forest.

- Matters are moving slowly forward with ESCC and it is hoped to hold a site meeting early in the New Year, also that the bollards at the Palesgate Lane end of the route will be made secure.

In his WDC capacity, Cllr. Standley advised the following:-

- The WDC element of the Council Tax will be frozen for the fifth year in succession.
- The Wealden Draft Corporate Plan for 2015 – 19 is available to view on their website and residents are invited to comment, closing date is 26th January.

Cllr H Merriman (WDC)

A summary of the report, delivered by the Clerk on behalf of Cllr. Merriman, is below:-

Planning Matters

- Cllr. Standley, in his role as Leader of the District Council, has kindly given up time to meet with the owner of Briar House Farm and it is hoped that a mutual understanding will be reached on what may be acceptable for consideration by the Planning Officers with regard to the site.
- Has been involved a planning issue on the border at Groombridge where a small microbrewery was having difficulties with planning consent due to the Ashdown Forest 7km zone of exclusion issues. This now seems to have been resolved in the favour of the brewery, but highlights the continued complexity, for officers and applicants alike, of the nitrogen issue around Ashdown Forest.

Parliamentary Selection

- Cllr Merriman advised that he has been selected to stand in the 2015 General Election as the Conservative Party Parliamentary Candidate for Bexhill and Battle, the boundary of which is a short distance from his home. The sitting MP, Greg Barker, is retiring.
- Will continue with Parish duties until the day that he stands as an MP.

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- Gave thanks to the Parish Council and community for their support during his eight years as a District Councillor, his love of this role had fuelled the desire to take the "next step up". Also gave thanks to those who had given their good wishes for the future.

d) Police Community Support Officer's report.

- Parking – no issues created because of the opening of the new Café.
- Three tickets issued in respect of vehicles parked on double yellow lines.
- Parishioner had experienced the wing mirror of her car being broken off twice, on the pavement side of the car. Enquiries made locally regarding this.
- Some graffiti issues had again been experienced at the Pre School, CCTV has now been installed.
- Two new volunteers have been trained for Speedwatch. Efforts continue to get additional sites authorised for this.
- Is to undertake further speed checks in Church Road if an unmarked car is available.
- Late arrival at last month's meeting caused by RTC on Five Ashes Road. Driver was 5 times over the "drink-drive" limit and had a 3yr old passenger.
- Vehicle damaged in Mayfield Road by a car that did not stop. Vehicle did return later to exchange details with owner.
- Doorstep caller apprehended, held no pedlars licence and came from Nottingham. Warned against this activity, which is disconcerting to many, particularly if undertaken after dark.
- A boisterous dog knocked over a resident in the woods. Owner traced and dog now rehomed.
- Suspicious male noted loitering in Millennium Green area recently. White in his 20s, brown hair seen wearing pink t-shirt, black joggers but no jacket or shoes. May be a vulnerable person and if spotted please report via 999.
- No attendees at recent St Peter's Mead street meeting but no issues were raised via some "door to door" calls by Pcco in the locality; noise issues here have not recurred.
- Is to hold two surgeries at Rotherfield St Martin on 16th January and 24th February.
- Is taking a few days leave over the Christmas period.
- Thanked the Parish Council for their letter to the PCC praising her high quality community policing. Consequently, Sussex Police Chief Constable presented an award to her.

e) Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 27th November 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 this Meeting be confirmed as a true record and the Chairman signed them.

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

Numbers refer to agenda for November meeting:-

2a) Further signatures obtained and intention is to present petition at the February ESCC Full Council meeting. Matter has featured in the "Courier" and ESCC officer investigating hopes to have firm proposals to discuss with Council and ultimately hold public consultation on proposal for a weight limit.

2i) Site visit held with Village Hall Chair to agree site for installing Defibrillator. Contractors have been contacted and chased with a view to arranging a site meeting to discuss this and options for possibly providing lighting to the path from North Street to the Hall so that quotes may be provided.

2. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:-

a) Note information regarding National Pay award.

Information circulated regarding this award prior to the meeting, Scale Point 28 applies. Clerk's Contract is based on the NALC/SALC models and follows the national pay structure that confirms that nationally agreed "cost of living" increases take place automatically.

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- b) **Decision on request for grant toward Village Hall hire cost for Senior Citizen's Annual Lunch.**
Cllr. Pike declared a personal interest at this point, as he is Chair of the Bonfire Society who organised and fund this annual event providing lunch for around 100 Senior Citizens from the Parish. Hire cost is advised to be £61.20 RESOLVED that Parish Council cover this cost, CLERK to request Hall to add this to the next invoice for meeting room hire and write to advise Society and thank for their efforts.
- c) **Decision regarding request from Friends of Rotherfield and Brook Surgeries to hold their annual August Coffee Morning on Court Meadow Green.**
Papers circulated prior to meeting. RESOLVED to grant permission, Clerk apologised for omitting to include request to fund £75 toward public liability cover for this annual community fundraising event and will add item to January agenda.
- d) **Adoption of amendment to communication policy to allow signature of certain letters by the Council Chair.**
RESOLVED that this policy document be amended to allow Chairman's signature for letters of thanks or congratulation from the Council; all letters will continue to be issued by the Clerk. CLERK to amend policy and publish.
- e) **Agree Council's comments for WDC Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan Consultation.**
Cllr. Hiles had submitted written comments that the policy only applied to sites over 1.6ha or 5 properties. Whilst it is considered that there is little scope for sites of this nature in the Parish the principle of the plan to make provision for affordable housing should be supported. RESOLVED Clerk to respond accordingly to the consultation.
- f) **Christmas Lights. Proposed vote of thanks to those responsible for facilitating these.**
RESOLVED that letters of thanks be sent under Chairman's signature to the Chair of the Bonfire Society and the owner of the Stores for their support and assistance for the lights.
- g) **Agree Parish representative(s) as point of contact with Rotherfield School, Head teacher and Governors.**
It was RESOLVED that the Council Chair and Cllr. Pike be the contacts for School matters to receive information regarding future plans, CLERK to advise School. It is acknowledged that confidentiality regarding staff and pupils precluded attendance at Governors meeting.
- h) **Consider comments for the following planning applications.**
- i. **WD/2014/2469/FR** Wealden Farm, Hadlow Down Road, Rotherfield, TN6 3SA
Mobile agricultural animal field shelters for agricultural holding.
The Committee RESOLVED to recommend that this application be APPROVED by Wealden District Council's Planning Officer as it will assist with the efficiency of this Parish agricultural business
 - ii. **WD/2014/2455/F** 5 Orchard Cottages, Station Road, Rotherfield TN6 3HT
Proposed two storey rear extension, internal alterations and raised patio area.
The Committee RESOLVED to recommend that this application be APPROVED by Wealden District Council's Planning Officer subject to consultation with neighbours. It is recommended that the raised patio is removed from the proposal.
 - iii. **WD/2014/2392/F and 2393/LB** Renby Oast, Eridge Green, TN3 9LG
Attic conversion and associated works, alterations to fenestration and new terrace.
The Committee RESOLVED to recommend that this application be APPROVED by Wealden District Council's Planning Officer subject to consultation with the Conservation Officer, as it will improve the facilities of the property.

Parish Council Website: www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk
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- iv. **WD/2014/2398/F** Renby Oast, Eridge Green, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 9LG
Erection of garage within curtilage of listed building.
The Committee RESOLVED to recommend that this application be APPROVED by Wealden District Council's Planning Officer subject to consultation with the Conservation Officer, as it will improve the facilities of the property.

3. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

- 25th November – Recreation and Burial Committee
- 2nd December – Finance and General Purpose Committee
- 9th December – 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.

Land Acquisition Advisory Group. This met after the 9th December Planning Committee meeting and will meet again after the 28th January meeting. Information is being gathered by Rotherfield St Martin to discuss with the Planning Officers what may be acceptable by way of a permanent base being built for them subject to availability of a suitable site. Views were expressed that the Ashdown Forest 7km zone would block this.

• Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.

- The most recent meeting of the Village Hall Committee clashed with the November Council meeting hence Cllr. Gilbert was unable to attend. He had viewed the minutes and advised that there were no items requiring attention by the Council.
- The Chairman had recently held an informal meeting with a local business regarding possible financial support for the proposed closure of the one-way slip road at Mark Cross; written confirmation is awaited regarding this. ESCC are to provide Match Funding for the project.

• Clerk's report and issues.

Wealden Clerks meeting attended at Heathfield on 10th December. Bullet points from this meeting circulated to Councillors.

5. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

- Clerk's report regarding Bank Reconciliation as at end of November 2014, budget report to date and any financial matters requiring the Council's attention. It was RESOLVED that these documents be approved and they were signed by the Chairman.

• Approval of Payments.

- It was RESOLVED that the payments below be approved.

Payee Name	Cheque No.	Amount	Authorized Ref	Transaction Detail
Trevor Thorpe	801864	£1,546.40		December salary
H M R C	801865	£537.55		December tax and NI
Trevor Thorpe	801866	£19.84		Dec. exp. phone call and room
Trevor Thorpe	801866	£46.49		Dec mileage costs
Trevor Thorpe	801866	£55.67		Dec. reimbursements

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Nordis Signs	801867	£80.64	Replacement livestock signs
Konica Minolta Ltd	801868	£41.08	Dec - Feb Copier hire
East Sussex County Council	801869	£190.40	Clerk delegated Streetlight Lantern & shield
Rotherfield Village Hall	801870	£45.60	November hall hire
Physio-Control UK Sales Ltd	8018712	£430.80	Oct 2014 PCM 7 c)
Teambase	801872	£24.90	Paper and document pockets
PJI Contract Packers Ltd	801873	£442.80	Nov/Dec Sweeping and litter
JAKK Country Furniture Designs	801874	£1,170.96	HLT July 14 & Nov 14 Fingerpost repairs and repaint
Total Payments		<u>4,633.13</u>	

6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

Magazines and Circulars

- Local Council Review 2014
- Saint-Chéron en Bref – No 312

Other Correspondence

- UK Debt Management Office – advice that our holding of £1487.40 in holding of £1487.40 in 4% Consolidated Stock will be redeemed and the par value paid to us on or after 1st February 2015.

Planning Decisions

Approved

- **WD/2014/2161/F & 2014/2162/LB** Great Dewlands Farm, Dewlands Hill, Rotherfield TN6 3RU Demolition Of Existing Conservatory And Erection Of Link Attached Single-Storey Kitchen/Garden Room Extension Including Minor Internal Alterations.
- **WD/2014/2223/F** Stitches Farm Barn, Sham Farm Road, Eridge Green TN3 9JB Modifications to internal layouts, new rooflights, new window and door openings, modifications to entrance screen and relocation of parking area.
- **WD/2014/2251/F** Preston Pastures, Argos Hill, Rotherfield TN6 3QG Two storey side extension with decking to the rear, new dormer window and reduced window opening to front elevation.

All of the above applications had been recommended for approval by the Planning and Building Committee; no notices of refusal or withdrawn applications have been received.

7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

8. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

January 2015

- 6th Tue Planning and Building Committee
- 13th Tue Highways Lighting and Transport Committee
- 21st Wed SLR meeting with ESCC Highways Officers 09:30

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- 27th Tue Planning and Building Committee
- 29th Thu Monthly Full Council

All meetings to be held in the Parish Council Room, Rotherfield Village Hall, starting at 19:30 other than where shown. Clerk is hoping that the 6th January meeting may not be needed and will advise if this is the case.

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

- Property in Mayfield Road. Issue raised at a recent meeting re: hedge overgrowing the pavement. Clerk has contacted selling agents who will pass our concerns regarding this to the vendors.
- Collapsing manhole cover in centre of Station Road near Hornshurst Steps, reported to ESCC. Southern Water responsibility, they have now affected repairs.
- School have cleared the path from the school playground to the Station Road, this has been unused for some time. The path needs resurfacing, Clerk has established that ESCC as landowners may have responsibility for this and have advised school. An item will be on agenda of 13th January Highways Committee meeting to discuss School's request for support to lower speed limit outside the school to 20mph and add other speed awareness measures outside the school such as speed cushions.
- CLERK to investigate and report hedge in Station Road that is obstructing the pavement.
- Cllr. Dixon reported no attendees at the recent "Have Your Say" session. Future format and publicity to be reviewed at January meeting.
- Noisy manhole cover reported at foot of Catt's Hill, CLERK to investigate and report.
- Clerk advised that he is on leave 22nd – 24th December.

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

- No actions identified.

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 21:05 and invited those attending to the traditional buffet provided by him.

11. PUBLIC FORUM.

None.

Confirmed as a true record at the 29th January meeting of the Council

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