

ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Working for the Community

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RECREATION AND BURIAL COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT 19:30 ON TUESDAY 12TH NOVEMBER 2013 IN THE PARISH COUNCIL ROOM, ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL.

PRESENT

Cllr. D. Thomas (Chairman) Cllr. T. Gilbert
Cllr. R. Harris (Vice Chairman) Cllr. N. Wickenden
Cllr. Miss N. Bolton

ABSENT

None

ALSO ATTENDING. The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe. No members of the public attended.

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

Apologies were received and accepted on behalf of Cllr. L. Pike, Cllr. Mrs. A. Watson and Cllr. Mrs. P. Halse Adamson.

2. TO CONSIDER APPOINTING CLLR. D. HILES TO THIS COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Hiles was not present; CLERK to contact him to enquire whether he wishes to be a member of this Committee.

3. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS.

None.

4. TO APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24TH SEPTEMBER 2013 AS A TRUE RECORD.

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of this meeting, copies of which have previously been circulated to the all the Council members, be confirmed as a true record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

5. UPDATE FROM CLERK REGARDING MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING.

Numbers relate to agenda of 24th September 2013 meeting.

10i Cemetery. New padlock and chain have been purchased, spare keys to be obtained. Chairman is to deal with Heather overgrowing adjacent graves in row H.

8i Awaiting dry weather so the barriers in the Rec. can safely be welded and repaired.

11 Update sought regarding trees in the square.

TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING MATTERS

6. ALLOTMENT ISSUES

i. Update and further action regarding signing of agreement between Allotment Association and Council.

Representatives of the Allotment Association were present and the Chairman permitted the Chair of the Association to address the meeting. The following concerns were raised:-

- There is uncertainty as to precisely which area of the land is covered by the rental agreement between Landlords and Parish. Is it the entire field or merely the area within the boundary of the allotment?
- If it is the whole area that is being rented there is the issue that there are rights of way across the site for access to the stables and field in which horses are kept.
- Current rental level assumes that landlords maintain surrounding field. It is believed that this has only been "topped" once and the Association could arrange this at lower cost, thus permitting a rent reduction.
- Current £1k rent is not sustainable, a reduction to take into account more maintenance input from the Association would allow a "maintenance" surplus to be maintained.

RESOLVED CLERK to investigate agreements to establish what area of land is actually rented and report at 28th November Council meeting.

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7. GENERAL RECREATION AND BURIAL ISSUES, AND OTHER COUNCIL MATTERS

i. **Review of grass and hedge cutting work undertaken by Contractors, update of cut schedule and decision regarding contract for next year.**

Draft circulated prior to meeting. Various amendments and updates were made to the schedule. It was RESOLVED that with reference to Standing Order 30b and Financial Regulation 11x that the recommendation of the Committee is that the Contract remain with Tollwood Garden Services without tender as they have agreed to hold prices at the current level for 2014. CLERK to send updated cut list to contractors so that prices for additional and amended areas can be established.

ii. **Review of Burial and other fees.**

Details of current charges and summary of income/expenditure figures from 2007 were circulated prior to the meeting. RESOLVED that fees be reviewed by a working party of Councillors and recommendations on future charging and conditions to be considered at next meeting of this Committee CLERK to add to agenda. CLERK to obtain comparative cost information from other local Councils with burial grounds and establish if it is legally feasible to prohibit interment of non-parishioners.

iii. **Suggestion to install former Boar's Head noticeboard in the Recreation Ground or on Hall.**

This is currently stored beneath Pre School and is of wall mounted style. RESOLVED site meeting to be held to establish best location for this and, if necessary, liaise with Hall for permission to attach to an external wall. Tony Moaby to install once final location known.

iv. **Diesel spill. Update and decision on further action.**

Councillors insurers Ansva are reclaiming the costs they have incurred (believed to be loss assessor and emergency clear up) direct. Whilst the Council's insurance did not cover the surface damage the legal costs cover held with the policy via DAS will fund action to recover the cost of removing the contaminated surfacing, replace and re line. Solicitors acting for DAS are Lyons Davidson based in Bristol, clerk considers that they have all the information to proceed and understands that an initial report is due from them shortly.

v. **Amenity Land. Update and further action regarding Restrictive Covenant to protect, recommendation to install sign indicating ownership and action on trees overhanging the site.**

Information received and circulated from WDC regarding planning status, any change of use or new development on the land would need full planning permission, unless the small works could be accepted as Local Authority permitted development within the scope of Part 12 of the T&CP General permitted Development Order 1995 – this allows modest items such as benches and bins to be installed without planning consent. NALC Legal Advisors consider that as land is in the ownership of the Parish Council it could only be disposed of by either the PC's consent or through a Compulsory Purchase Order. The only risk foreseen with public land of this nature is through "garden grabbing" (unauthorised extension into the area) by adjoining properties. In view of wall on border of site this is felt unlikely and would be prevented by regular inspection. NALC suggest that a notice showing details of ownership and purpose along lines of – "This area is owned and maintained by the Parish Council for the quiet enjoyment of the public – please no ball games" should be displayed. Clerk suggested that a better name than "Amenity Land" could be thought of for this site. RESOLVED Committee consider that "Court Meadow Green" is a more appropriate name, CLERK to obtain design and quote for suitable sign to be considered at the November Council meeting.

vi. **Quote for repair and refurbishment of finger post at B2101/Sheriff's Lane junction.**

JAKK quote £488.20 for repair to damage, replacement of large arm and refurbishment. ESCC confirm that they will contribute 50%. Taking into account previous expenditure and

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contributions from ESCC this will bring expenditure in this category to £1059 against £1000 budget. RESOLVED CLERK instructs JAKK to proceed with quoted work and invoice ESCC for 50% contribution to cost.

vii. Issues, concerns and further action regarding condition of trees in St Deny's Churchyard maintained by WDC.

WDC have been chased as it is understood that they were making an inspection visit to view tree causing concerns. Photos sent of area in question has been sent, WDC advise that they are aware there is a problem with the limes adjacent to the Surgery which are on their contractors list to be reduced; however emergency works are currently taking priority over all other outstanding tasks. RESOLVED CLERK to write to WDC raising concerns at the condition of the following trees:-

- Lawson Cyprus by Church Path
- Trees opposite Built House
- Trees in Churchyard by path to Old Burial Ground.

Churchwardens to be copied to see if they have any concerns and request made that Councillors and Tree Warden be present at the site visit.

viii. Request from Parishioner to improve lighting at Surgery end of Church Path.

Issue raised by a Parishioner at a recent "drop in" session that this area would benefit from lighting. It is noted that there is light illuminating this area which is currently not working, believed that this was installed as a public spirited gesture by a nearby business. RESOLVED Cllr. Wickenden to discuss this with owner of business and establish cost of Council refurbishing this.

8. RECREATION GROUND.

i. Issues and actions arising from monthly safety inspections of Recreation Ground and Play Area.

Play area: Most recent inspection dated 24th October 2013. No safety issues noted. Bins are in the process of being installed; skirt recently fitted to roundabout is primed but requires painting. RESOLVED Cllr. Gilbert is to provide a price for painting this.

Recreation Ground: Most recent inspection dated 24th October 2013. No safety issues noted. Tree work in play area has been undertaken, barrier repairs await suitable weather for welding to take place, wooden posts bordering car park are still to be replaced and secured.

ii. Update and decisions regarding new play equipment item and associated work in the Play Area.

Have asked Rotherfield Trust if they could please confirm the level of support they are able to commit toward this project and they have indicated that they should be able to provide an answer shortly. CLERK to add to agenda of next meeting of this Committee.

iii. Review of condition, wording and siting of signage within the Recreation Ground, Car Park and Amenity Land.

Several signs are damaged and require replacement, review locations and whether some may be combined, i.e. "no dogs and no golf". Indicative cost of replacement signs is between £30 - £60 dependent on size. RESOLVED site visit agreed in item 7iii above to include review of condition, wording and siting of signs so that Clerk may obtain quotes for replacements as required.

iv. Parking issues in the Recreation Ground car park and damage to verge alongside path at front of hall.

Cllr. Watson has raised issue of vans parked at front of hall and cycle damage to grass bank by entrance. It was RESOLVED that no further action was required in respect of this.

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v. **Progress and further action with proposed new access path and gate to Bowls Club.**

Committee Chairman is to discuss this with Cllr. Pike to review progress with planning this work.

vi. **Additional insurance to cover playing surfaces and drainage system of pitch, and adjacent car park.**

Insurers estimate of additional cost to cover drainage system at £168. For the car park based upon a reinstatement value of £60,000, the additional premium from now until the renewal date of the policy would be £65.73 (including tax). The annual additional premium on this value is £117.02. RESOLVED CLERK to establish if drainage system insurance is for whole year or only until renewal and proceed with adding this additional cover to the policy.

vii. **Purchase of two new padlocks for the barriers in the Recreation Ground.**

Work on barrier awaits dry weather to enable electric welding to take place safely. RESOLVED when barriers are installed CLERK to purchase suitable padlocks and additional keys.

9. ST DENYS' BURIAL GROUND

i. **Issues and actions arising from safety inspections.**

Most recent inspection is dated 31st October 2013. No safety issues noted other than grave filling which remains to be dealt with. Clerk has photographed 15 candidates, RESOLVED that these be dealt with in the spring when soil to fill will be available from excavated bank in recreation ground.

ii. **Action regarding concerns raised by a Parishioner regarding water supplies in the Burial Ground.**

Issue raised with Cllr. Kitchenham regarding this. He has cleared around the tank and tried to move the stopcock so that it can fill, it is unclear where the main supply comes from but it is assumed from the Church. Cllr. Harris is to check this on his next visit to see how easy it is to fill; the meeting thanked Cllr. Kitchenham for his efforts with this.

iii. **Tidying work required on overgrown shrubs on graves.**

Some graves have substantial shrub/bramble growth. CLERK to arrange site visit to photograph and identify grave plots requiring action so that quote for work may be obtained.

iv. **Approach from CWGC for consent to replace damaged memorial on plot 608 with a standard pattern war grave memorial headstone and request for waiver of usual fee.**

Although designated a war grave a family memorial is in place with the cross laid flat by persons unknown due to condition. CWGC wish to replace with standard War Grave headstone and will endeavour to trace family before this is done. RESOLVED CLERK to contact CWGC to authorise memorial replacement and confirm that our usual fee will be waived.

10. ROTHERFIELD PARISH CEMETERY

i. **Issues and actions arising from safety inspections.**

Most recent inspection dated 24th October 2013. No safety issues noted.

ii. **Quote for fencing of extension area and further action to prepare this for use.**

Tony Moaby has quoted £588 for 1.2m netting set in trench, two line wires supported on Chestnut stakes 3m apart with dug in strainer posts length approx. 87m. Has also quoted £500 for continuing work to hedge on Eridge side boundary, to bottom corner, continuing from bottom corner to Village side boundary £750. It is considered that rabbits will still get into site even if fenced. RESOLVED site visit to be made by Chairman and other Committee members to review commissioning of the lower area and produce a timescale for undertaking work over the next few years.

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iii. Clerk’s report from review of unused grave spaces and associated matters.

Report circulated regarding current unused plots. Average use since 2007 is 6.5 plots per year, 23 plots remain in rows M and N but lower numbered plots on “village” side of Cemetery are best used in the summer when ground conditions are dry. There are a few plots in other areas of the Cemetery that appear unused but Clerk recommends that due to ambiguity in some of the records that these remain unused. Recommend that land to form “row P” in existing Burial Ground is prepared by removal of metal sheet embedded and that preparatory work takes place over the next few years to bring the lower section into use. RESOLVED to investigate/remove metal sheet CLERK to investigate and enlist Tony Moaby’s assistance with this. Row “P” to be brought into use when required, probably within next three years.

iv. Information regarding insurance and colour of refuse bin.

No alternative bin colour is available, colour is to enable easy visibility for crews and repainting is not permissible. Council is responsible for damage or theft of bin, insurable cost is £140. RESOLVED not to include bin on insurance as excess is greater than replacement cost. CLERK to investigate contract with waste company to see if a smaller bin may be substituted or if we need to wait until contract review date.

v. Review and approval of budget and precept requested for 2014/15 for this Committee.

Information circulated prior to meeting. It was RESOLVED that the figures below be approved by the Committee for consideration by the Finance and General Purpose Committee when producing the final combined budget for the Council. This will be further considered by Full Council when finalising the Precept for 2014/15.

	Budget 2013/14	Expenditure to end of October 2013	Draft 2014 - 15
Capital Work			
Preparatory work to commission Cemetery Extension Area			5000
Removal of bank adjacent to Play Area			1000
New Playground Equipment			10000
Additional litter bin	1,000	441	150
New entrance and path to bowls club	2,500	0	3000
TOTAL	3,500	441	19,150
Recreation Grounds			
Grounds Maintenance Contract playing surfaces Sports Club	2,400	2,205	2500
General Repairs & Maintenance	3,000	2,882	3000
Grounds Maintenance Contract - Recreation Ground	4,000	2,920	4000
Grounds Maintenance Contract – Amenity Land Court Meadow	850	600	850

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	Budget 2013/14	Expenditure to end of October 2013	Draft 2014 - 15
Allotments rental	1,000	558	1000
Car Park Repairs	500	500	500
Play Area	2,000	725	500
Dog Bins - Millennium Green	600	254	800
Litter picking	800	342	1000
TOTAL	15,150	10,986	14,150
<i>Less School Contribution for Recreation Ground</i>	500	0	500
<i>Less Allotment Rent Income</i>	500	935	500
<i>Less Millennium Green Dog Bin contributions</i>	150	63	150
<i>Less Other credits</i>		60	
RECREATION GROUND NET EXPENDITURE	14,000	9,927	13,000
 Burial Grounds			
Gen Maintenance	1,000	383	1000
Grounds Maintenance Contract	4,700	3,480	4700
Repairs & Renewals	500	200	500
Tree and Hedge Work	1,000	700	1000
Water Supply	50	57	100
Rates	100	0	150
Other improvement works		0	1500
Bin emptying costs			180
TOTAL	7,350	4,820	9,130
<i>Less Burial Fee Income</i>	3,500	3,275	3500
<i>Less Other credits</i>		180	
BURIAL GROUNDS NET EXPENDITURE	3,850	1,365	5,630
 RECREATION AND BURIAL GRAND TOTAL	 21,350	 11,733	 37,780

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

- Lining at Eridge and in Village. Eridge lines will be painted on a Sunday as soon as there are suitable weather conditions. ESCC advise that they should be able to incorporate a short extension to the Rotherfield School “zig zags” to take them up to the Rec. entrance – work still

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continuing on revised specification. Will add the short extension to the lines near Kennedy Brothers to the “waiting list” for when there is next a formal notice due for works elsewhere in the locality.

- SLCC suggest that Councillors present, absent and apologies for absence are recorded and Clerk will introduce this for future minutes.
- Please advise Clerk when you wish to visit 6/6a High Street to view “work in progress”.
- RSM AGM Monday 18th November at 2.00pm at the Village Hall. Congratulations are due for the recent award of £1000 from the Centre For Social Justice.
- Drainage and sweeping. ESCC advise that gully emptying will take place this month, response awaited from WDC re: street sweeping. Drainage issues in vicinity of Brecon Terrace were raised at “drop in” session by nearby residents, issue reported to Highways last Thursday, Steward has passed it to drainage team to deal with; contact had also been made by one of the water companies as complaints had gone to them. No estimate as to when it will be dealt with though it is assumed work will take place as above. Clerk hopes to attend Clerks meeting at Polegate next week when Rupert Clubb from ESCC will be present to hear Highways issues raise by Wealden Parishes.
- Southern Water has acknowledged receipt of concerns raised by Parish Council concerning Town Row outfall. Area Officer is to inspect and report back with target date of 20th November.
- Snow gritting – Cllr. Watson will be temporarily unable to assist from January 5th –a “leaflet drop” in the Village centre and elsewhere is suggested to raise awareness of Parish Council efforts to keep pavements clear and encourage more volunteers. CLERK to add to agenda of November meeting.
- Clerk has recently had a demonstration of the Alpha Accounting system provided by RBS Systems. Clerk will report his views at November meeting and circulate reports kindly provided by a nearby Council showing how information is presented.
- Village Hall bins. Concerns raised that Hall waste is being placed in the small bin intended for Parish Council waste from the Recreation Ground. It is considered that this is a communication issue between Hall and hirers, Cllr. Kitchenham is to mention at the next Village Hall committee meeting.
- Bird box in Station Road Car Park has been damaged beyond repair. CLERK to approach WDC for a replacement box to be placed in a more suitable position.
- It is considered that more members are required on this Committee to help with workloads. Cllr. Kitchenham has kindly offered to join, CLERK to note and add to next agenda of this Committee for consideration.

12. TO RECEIVE DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF THIS COMMITTEE.

- 11th February 2014 at 19:30 Parish Council Room Rotherfield Village Hall.

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 22:40.

13. PUBLIC FORUM.

None.

Confirmed as a true record at the 11th February 2014 meeting of this Committee.

_____ Chairman _____ Date