

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 23RD FEBRUARY 2012 AT 19:30 IN ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. Miss N. Bolton (Vice Chair) Cllr. R. Harris Cllr. N. Wickenden
Cllr. Mrs P. Halse Adamson Cllr. J. Padfield
Cllr. C. Clibbens

ALSO PRESENT.

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

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

Apologies for absence were tendered and accepted for Cllr. R. Jaques, Cllr. L. Pike (Chair), Cllr. Mrs. A. Watson, Cllr. M Hall, Cllr. D. Thomas, Cllr. C Dennison, Cllr. C. Prince, Pcs0 Boyle and Cllr. R. Tidy (ESCC)

2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

- Cllr. Clibbens declared an interest in respect of item 6 g) on the agenda as he is supplying confectionery for the event.

3. TO RECEIVE DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS.

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

- Council budget for 2012/13 has been approved.
- There has been a large increase in referrals to Social Services because of the "Baby P" case and subsequent increase in public awareness and concerns. As a result, the service are being pro-active and intervening at an early stage to anticipate and reduce risk of problems that would in turn put further pressure on resources.
- Although the night services at Hookstead in Crowborough have been closed down, it is intended to retain day services on the site for the near future. Longer term it is the intention to provide day care services in some form in the North of the County.
- The Localism Act empowers Parish Councils to maintain a list of Parish Assets, outside groups may also nominate candidates for the list.

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

- Consultation is taking place for traffic improvement schemes in Uckfield.
- Wealden are creating a dedicated forum to assist businesses in the area.
- The Digital Switchover Team will be holding a demonstration at Morrison's in Crowborough on March 16th.

Cllr. Padfield (WDC) added the following information the District report.

- There will be no increase in the WDC element of the Council Tax for 2012/13; band "D" tax will remain at £174.00.
- In view of there being no increase in WDC Council Tax Central Government have provided a £3.5m support grant.
- East and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services are not progressing further with their merger plans; they will continue to seek ways of joint working to reduce costs.
- WDC Business focus is on agriculture and forestry currently.
- Council House rents have risen by 8.5% this year; there was no increase last year. 64% of Council House residents do receive rent assistance.
- Right to buy is to be limited to older Council properties.

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4. TO RECEIVE POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS REPORT.

Clerk delivered the following report provided by Pcs0 Boyle.

Crimes February 2012

- 31/01 Laptop stolen from unattended vehicle parked on Yew Tree Lane
- 07/02 Tractor stolen from site on Eridge Lane, was seen in Kent and driver was arrested and vehicle recovered
- 13/02 Six birch trees cut down and stolen from private land on Hadlow Down Road
- 13/02 Attempted break in to garage on Cottage Hill, offenders disturbed and tools left at scene were collected by Scene Of Crime Officers

Other

- Security firms have been calling residents in Wealden saying they are working with police in the area to improve security; this is untrue, as the Police do not recommend specific companies.
 - The digital switchover starts in East Sussex on the 7th of March
 - The Switchover Team will NEVER cold call. An appointment would have been made weeks in advance to attend and do the work.
 - Switchover team staff will wear a reflective yellow tabard and have an ID card with a photograph; their Help Scheme can arrange for a password in advance.
 - If people are unsure, they can call 0800 40 85 900 to verify the person at the door.
5. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 26TH 2012 AND MATTERS ARISING.

It was RESOLVED that there were no matters arising and that the minutes be adopted. The Chairman signed the minutes.

6. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS.

a) Ice and snow clearance on footpaths and pavements in the Parish and options for future years.

Clerk has made enquiries via SLCC of arrangements made by other Parishes for clearance with community participation and Parish Council support/organisation. Details of the "snow plan" adopted and used by Sonning Common Parish Council in Oxfordshire have been circulated. Volunteers working under the direction of the Council are believed to be covered under the Council's insurance. RESOLVED to carry forward to agenda of the 20th March Highways Committee meeting for further discussion CLERK to arrange.

b) Rotherfield St. Martin proposal to hold an event in the Village to promote the project and to encourage take up of their "model" by other Council's and Communities.

The Project is keen to promote their work in the hope that similar schemes could be set up elsewhere. They would like to arrange an event to be led/hosted by the Parish Council in a format similar to the event held at Brighton University in the autumn. RESOLVED CLERK to invite a representative of St Martin to address a forthcoming Council meeting regarding this so that Council support may be considered. Cllr. Merriman has also offered to make information regarding the Project available via WDC website.

c) Adoption of Draft Communication and Media policy for the Parish Council.

Details circulated in advance of the meeting. RESOLVED that the policy be adopted, CLERK to circulate and publish on website.

d) Adoption of Draft Community Engagement Statement of intent.

Details circulated in advance of meeting. RESOLVED CLERK to carry forward to the March agenda to allow time for draft to be considered in detail.

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- e) **Agenda items for Annual Parish Meeting and format of meeting.**
RESOLVED CLERK to seek a representative of ESCC Highways to address the meeting and also investigate ways in which public input may be encouraged, carry forward to March agenda so that agenda of the APM may be finalised
- f) **Planting of a “Jubilee Oak” on Mark Cross Millennium Green.**
Licence from ESCC in respect of this area permits further planting on the Green. RESOLVED to obtain a Jubilee Oak and plaque for Mark Cross at cost of approximately £100 total, to be delivered to Cllr. Padfield who has offered to deal with the planting.
- g) **Request from Bonfire Society to hold their annual Easter egg Hunt on the Recreation Ground.**
11:00 on April 6th. RESOLVED to agree to this regular event, CLERK to forward new guidelines and conditions to the Society, no charge to be made for this community event.
- h) **Request to hold a Jubilee event on Council land at Town Row.**
Informal approach made by a resident to use the Green here for a “low key” event for residents, it is understood that similar Golden Jubilee and Millennium have been successfully conducted here. RESOLVED to agree that this event may be held, CLERK to advise organisers.
- i) **Information and further action regarding possible use of franking machine for Parish Council post.**
Information received indicates that leasing only becomes cost effective if outgoing post is at least 30 items a day. Average monthly figure for the Council is in this region and bulk of this is dispatch of monthly cheques, which would decline if online payment methods were used. Cost of outright purchase of a franking machine £299, saving average 26% on stamp rates, consumable and ongoing maintenance costs unknown. RESOLVED to keep a log of outgoing post to see if purchase would be worthwhile.
- j) **Information and further action regarding transfer of Parish documents to the ESCC central store.**
Still awaiting detailed costings from ESCC, review and amalgamate documents in the Hall basement over the summer months. CLERK to report in September regarding progress with review of papers held; will update when more detailed information regarding costs is provided by ESCC.
- k) **Production of a Parish Council Newsletter and Report for 2012.**
CLERK to circulate copy of 2010 Newsletter for information, Committee chairmen to compile information to go in the 2012 edition with a target date for compiling the new edition by the second week of April to enable inclusion of draft account figures for 2011/12. Pureprint, printers of the 2010 edition, quote an unchanged cost of £427 to print, envelope and mail based on 1400 copies and 1382 mailed. Postage would be at cost ruling at the time; in 2010, this was £350. Cllr Clibbens has offered to write to Committee chairmen requesting input and also to liaise with, and support, Cllr Dennison by outlining process and timescale to get the newsletter produced.
- l) **Ordering and installing a small commemorative plaque in the Mark Cross bus shelter to record sponsorship details.**
CLERK is to contact builder of the shelter to see if he can produce this or suggest someone who can, Councillors are invited to suggest any craftsmen they know in the area who can oblige. Progress with additional shelter at Town Row is to be on the agenda of the March Highways Committee meeting, CLERK to add.

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m) Information and further action regarding the use of “on line” methods for making payments to suppliers and change of bank.

SLCC are of the opinion that this should be acceptable provided a good audit trail is demonstrated regarding the order and authorisation of payment at a Council Meeting. SALC are of a similar opinion and add that an update should be made to the Financial Regulations to detail the checks and audit trails in place. CLERK to investigate practicalities of using existing bankers for this and to produce guidelines and update of Financial Regulations to accommodate. Investigations to continue into suitable alternative bankers and CLERK to add to agenda of May Finance Committee meeting to report progress and consider further action.

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

- 24th January and 14th February – Planning and Building Committee.
It was RESOLVED that both these minutes be adopted and that there were no other matters arising.

8. TO RECEIVE REPORTS

- **Other committees and sub-committees.**
- **Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.**

Cllr Halse Adamson reported that, in her role as Chair of Mark Cross Village Hall Committee, she had attended their recent AGM. This had raised various concerns relating to the Hall as follows:

- There is little support for the Hall from Mark Cross residents.
- There are few regular users to generate income. Insurance alone costs £800 p.a.
- Some of the costs of the hall are only covered through the generosity of residents.
- There have been resignations from the Committee and the future of the Hall is uncertain.
- Despite research, it is unclear who owns the Hall and/or Land.
- Cllr. Padfield believes that the land was donated by the Haynes family of Mark Cross for a Memorial Hall to the Great War. It seems that when the original Trustees died nothing was done to formalise their replacement.

CLERK is to add an item to the Agenda of the March meeting (which is to be held at Mark Cross) to discuss the future of the Hall and possible Council involvement, also research ways of formalising ownership should thought be given to disposal. Cllr. Merriman has suggested that the WDC Head Legal Officer be contacted for suggestions regarding this matter.

- **Clerk’s report and issues.**
 - Sports Club have been contacted regarding the missing seat frame, they have no information. They request that that the April – October monthly payments for cutting of the pitches at the recreation ground be £315, CLERK to add to agenda of March Council meeting for consideration.
 - Information is being gathered and compiled for the forthcoming Highways Committee meeting. Police confirm that the driver of the van involved in the RTC with a bus at Mark Cross in November has been charged and recently convicted of drink driving at Eastbourne Magistrates Court in connection with the incident. It was suggested that the Highways meeting be held at Mark Cross Hall due to the various Highways related issues ongoing there. CLERK to establish whether Hall is available for this.

9. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

Bank Reconciliation at end of January 2012. The RFO presented the figures, which were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

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- Review of Expenditure against Budget to end of January 2012. 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:-

CHEQUE NO	CHEQUE PAYABLE	PAYMENTS DETAILS	AMOUNT
801376	Trevor Thorpe	Clerk's salary for February	£1,046.11
801377	H.M.R.C.	Tax and N.I. for February	£293.63
801378	Trevor Thorpe	Clerk's expenses for February	£118.36
801379	Wicksteed Leisure	Play area annual safety inspection	£54.00
801380	Rotherfield Village Hall	Hall hire fees for February	£60.00
801381	Wealden District Council	Fees for May 2011 Elections	£662.19
801382	East Sussex County Council	Conversion of street lights to "part night" operation	£1,049.90
801383	Jim Gander	Street sweeping for February	£105.00
801384	Will Clark	Hedge cutting cemetery	£36.00
801385	A.C. Moaby	Tree and bench work in Recreation Ground	£514.00
Total			£3939.19

PAYMENT FROM	CREDITS DETAILS	AMOUNT
Santander	Bank interest - February	£60.70
H.M. Treasury	Interest on 4% Consol holding	£29.74
H.M.R.C.	Vat reclaimed 1/11/2011 - 31/1/2012	£923.82
Zurich Insurance	Insurance claim for Mark Cross bus shelter	£1,200.00
Millennium Green Trust	Contribution toward dog bin emptying costs	£27.90
Total		£2,242.16

10. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE GENERAL

- **Blue Cedar Homes** – Information regarding sites suitable for retirement housing.
- **SALC** – Dates for forthcoming training courses.
- **Rotherfield Primary School** – details of Jubilee Street Party and fair.
- **East Sussex Fire and Rescue** – Details of deferral of merger between East and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services.
- **South East Water** – Drought Plan.
- **Rotherfield St Martin** – Details of Summer Fayre.

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CIRCULARS AND MAGAZINES

- Sussex Area Ramblers – February 2012 “Now Open”
- Wealden DC – Parish Bulletin 14.

11. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS.

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

12. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- Planning and Building Committee – Tuesday 6th & 27th March.
- Highways Lighting and Transport – Tuesday 20th March.

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

- March Council meeting – Thursday 29th March, 19:30 in Mark Cross Village Hall.

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

- A member of the public present was permitted to address the meeting to give her views on the response to the WDC Strategic Site development review. As information was not available at the time to discuss this matter which was on the Agenda of the 14th February Planning Committee meeting wording was agreed at this meeting for submission to WDC in time for the 17:00 24th February deadline. CLERK to action response.
- The Catts’ Hill road closure is to be added to agenda of the forthcoming Highways Committee meeting to discuss issues arising from the closure. CLERK is to obtain a report from ESCC of the findings of the drainage survey undertaken during the closure, it is believed that this will show that repair work is needed resulting in a further closure.
- The Highways drain clearing team have visited Station Road and have again missed the drain in the entrance of Chant Lane. This has been queried with them and it is understood that traffic control is needed to undertake the work safely; a return visit is scheduled.
- Four Speedwatch sessions have been held in February, the lighter evenings means that the evening “rush hour” may now be covered.
- WDC have set up a working party to discuss the problems created by parking in the roads near to railway stations. Cllrs. Padfield and Howell are part of this and will be looking at the issues at Eridge and Frant stations respectively.

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

14. PUBLIC FORUM.

- None

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