

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 31ST MARCH 2016 AT 19:30 IN THE PARISH COUNCIL ROOM, ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. D. Thomas (Chairman)	Cllr. K. Curtis	Cllr. D. Hiles
Cllr. R. Harris (Vice Chairman) arrived 19:40	Cllr. T. Gilbert	Cllr. A. Martin
Cllr. J. Cahan	Cllr. L. Henrick	Cllr. N. Wickenden
Cllr. C. Clibbens		

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe, Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC), Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC) and Cllr. P. Dixon (WDC).

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING:-

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

Apologies for absence were tendered, and accepted, on behalf of Cllr. J. Kitchenham, Cllr. L. Watts, and Cllr. G. Watson-Smith.

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

None. The Chairman reminded those present that they should declare an interest if at any point during the meeting they became aware of one relating to a matter being discussed.

c) District And County Councillor's reports.

**Cllr. Standley (ESCC) reported the following:-
March 2016**

Restriction on long vehicles through Rotherfield

"The consultation of the ETRO to restrict long vehicles, except access and buses, has led to some additional restrictions. Not surprisingly, I have responded positively to the consultation and will support the ETRO when it is discussed at the lead member meeting. The ETRO will run for 12 months after which I hope it will be made permanent.

Waste

As previously reported the majority of residual waste sent to Newhaven to be used to generate electricity with less than 1% going to landfill. At the annual maintenance shutdown, the County Council had previously used landfill for that period but this year arrangements were made to take the waste to alternative incinerators. The revenue saving was £23k in addition to the diversion from landfill.

Road Safety

Wealden has one of the highest KSI rates in the country. In Early March the County Council together with Wealden District, Fire and Rescue and Police launched the "We're Keeping an Eye on You"

Based on the premise that if road users think they are likely to be reported they are more likely to obey the traffic rules and Highway Code.

The initiative brings together the different agencies and whilst they have been working together for many years this new campaign with posters and media releases will highlight that co-operation.

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Fire and Rescue are now getting more involved in road safety issues. There are now few house fires in the County and using Fire and rescue for road safety is a good use of their time

Devolution

There have been some interesting developments on the Devolution process across the country. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight who had made a joint bid now look likely to go their separate ways.

In Oxfordshire, there has been a suggestion of District Councils coming together to form unitary bodies (normally 2 districts forming a unitary) and the County Council being dissolved.

In many areas, the size of the proposed combined authority and /or the directly elected mayor has been a sticking point.

With reference to the 3SC there is a meeting of all Leaders on April 8th to discuss next steps to reach agreement between the 26 Councils + 3LEPS involved.

School Improvement

The Ofsted report on school improvement in June 2014 was not good and ESCC was judged as “ineffective”. Given that rating Ofsted returned to inspect again in November 2015. Ofsted no longer grades such inspections but their letter acknowledges improvement and does not propose a follow up visit which indicates they are satisfied with the improvements made”.

Cllr. Whetstone (ESCC).

Waste and Recycling. Cllr. Whetstone reported that any Wealden waste that is not recyclable is incinerated to provide power. In the past 30% of Wealden waste went to landfill, now the ash from the incinerating, representing <1% of the total, is now deposited in landfill outside of the County.

Cllr. Dixon (WDC).

Electoral review draft recommendations have recently been published and an item appears on the agenda of this meeting to consider a response. Changes affecting this Parish are as follows:-

- Wealden District Council. Rotherfield and Town Row to be in a new "Rotherfield and Hadlow Down" Ward, Eridge and Mark Cross to be in a new "Withyham" Ward.
- East Sussex County Council. Rotherfield and Town Row to be in a newly shaped "Wadhurst Division" , Eridge and Mark Cross to be in a new "Hartfield Division".

A recent case in involving Cheshire West and Chester Council has highlighted issues created by not having a “5 year supply” of development land. It is hoped that the north part of the Wealden DC area is given some protection from this issue by the proximity of the Ashdown Forest.

d) Police Community Support Officer’s report.

- Nothing to warrant a formal report this month. Next PCSO Surgery is Wednesday 20th April in the Courtyard Café at 15:00.

e) Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on the 25th February for approval as a true record, and matters arising from these minutes.

It was RESOLVED that these minutes were a true record of the meeting and the Chairman signed them.

f) Update regarding matters arising & action items from previous meetings. Numbers related to agenda of the February meeting.

2c) Receive and consider adopting final recommendations from Cllr. Curtis re: meeting processes.

Report to be considered under item 2b) of this meeting.

2f) Report and decision regarding lamp columns in Parish identified by ESCC as requiring replacement.

Ongoing. An item will be on the agenda of the 10th May Highways, Lighting and Transport Committee meeting to receive update and agree further action.

2g) Report and update from the Emergency Planning Group.

Report circulated prior to this meeting

2h) Report and update from the War Memorial Working Party.

Requested.

2j) Agreement of editorial text for 2016-17 Parish Guide.

Draft received from publisher and circulated to Councillors for comment and correction. These to please be sent via email to the Clerk who will forward them to the publisher on his return after holiday. Volunteer(s) required to verify contact details section.

2. TO CONSIDER INFORMATION AND MAKE DECISIONS ON ACTIONS AND EXPENDITURE AS REQUIRED REGARDING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

a) Review of the following governance documents:-

- i.** Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- ii.** Committee Terms of Reference.
- iii.** Other Governance documents.
- iv.** Frequency and responsibility of Policy and governance document review process,

Chairman acknowledged that this was a lengthy task and agreed that additional time was required to complete this. He explained he was studying the following Acts of Parliament which affected our council.

- 1972 Local Government Act.
- 1998 Data Protection Act.
- 2014 Local Audit and Accountability Act.
- 2000 Local Government Act.
- 2014 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.
- 2011 Localism Act.
- 2014 Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations.

In addition he has studied 3 Legal Guidelines published by the National Association of Local Councils

- 2013 Parish and Town Council Meeting.
- 2014 Councils' Powers to Discharge Their Functions.
- 2014 Governance and Accountability for Local Councils

ACTIONS. COUNCILLORS reviewing documents please to circulate drafts by 14th April to allow time for these to be read. CLERK to add item to April agenda to consider adoption of revised documents.

b) Final report from Cllr. Curtis' regarding "Improving Council Meetings".

At the request of the Chairman, Councillors Harris and Curtis were asked to undertake a project that would improve council meetings both in time and in substance. This to be through Members submitting issues and recommendations for evaluation. Thereafter presenting a paper highlighting a course of action. This paper was circulated at the January 2016 Council Meeting with a further request for comments to be submitted to the above named. The following is the final action plan.

THE CLERK'S ACTIONS.

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1. Consider if items are for Committees or Council and dispatch accordingly.
2. Submit all relevant material at least 48 hours before meetings allowing for planning by the members.
3. Reduce the amount of correspondence sent from Organisations that do not require action from the Council Members.
4. All minutes should highlight actions to be taken by individual Councillors or Working Parties.
5. The Clerk is not required to attend all meetings i.e. Communications and Media Committee and Working Groups.
6. The AGENDAS should be formulated with the Clerk, Chair, and Vice Chair of the Council and Committees.

COMMITTEES.

Committees need greater delegation of both Financial and Powers without Council Approval.

1. ACTION POINT Councillors Hiles and Thomas to review standing orders.
2. Where necessary establish Working groups, working to a clear brief. (This is the most effective way of delivering results) Council and Committees must track progress.
3. Committees take on more projects i.e. War Memorial working Group (seven Councillors a three Parishioners) all with clearly defined tasks.
4. Planning applications should remain with this Committee and not included in the Council Meetings.

All site visits should have recommendations as a guide to decision making by the Committee.

COUNCILLORS REPRESENTING THE COUNCIL AT EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS.

They will submit a written report to the appropriate Committee. Major issues could require a recommendation. This in turn could lead to setting up a working group to develop a Council Policy. It is important that Councillors are aware of the Councils Policies, Budgets, and Actions planned/completed. Including the Minutes of Committee meetings

These actions should result in time saving and improved debate on key issues within Council.

RESOLVED that the recommendations above be adopted and implemented.

c) Annual Parish Meeting. Briefing of Chair/Vice Chairs of Committees.

- Council Chairman will not be present as on holiday, the Vice Chairman Cllr. Harris will deputise and Chair the meeting.
- Cllrs. will each introduce themselves to the meeting.
- Communications Committee meeting is to be held at the beginning of May to agree the agenda.
- It is hoped to have a keynote speaker from either Sussex Police or East Sussex Highways provided this can be organised.

d) Budget Changes and reallocation of funds for Council Approval.

The following budget adjustments were recommended:-

Rotherfield Parish Council: Budget Re-allocations / Changes 2016-2017

Cost Centre/ Category		Current Budget £	Revised Budget £
102	Communications And Media		
4151	Website	0	300
4152	Public Meetings	0	700

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4153	Facebook	0	200
4154	Advertising/Printing	0	800
4155	Annual Newsletter	1700	1000
	Community engagement initiatives		1000
201	Highways Capital Projects		
4204	2 New Bus Shelters	3500	7000
4205	Additional Car Parking	5000	0
4206	Speed Interactive Device	0	3500
202	Capital Project - Lighting		
4222	Street Lights New Installs	1000	2700
	Street Lights maintenance		2000
301 & 302	Capital Projects - Recreation And Burial		
4301	Work On Cemetery Extension	10000	1800
4317	Pitch Drainage Contribution	2500	6000
4319	War Memorial	5000	500
4365	New Play Equipment	2000	0
303	Burial Grounds Maintenance		
4360	General Maintenance	500	2400
4380	Repairs And Renewals	400	1400
4383	Trees And Hedge Work	700	1000
	Total	32300	32300

It was RESOLVED that the above cost neutral amendments be made.
ACTION: CLERK to amend/update accounts.

e) Evaluation and acquisition of a mobile Speed Interactive Device for use in 30 mph areas.

Cllr. Martin has obtained information and quotes from the supplier regarding these devices; this was circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting. It was RESOLVED that the Council purchase and install a suitable device once it has been identified. Clerk reported that Speldhurst Parish Council are in the process of acquiring a portable Vehicle Activated Sign which may be moved between sites and records vehicle speeds in addition to providing a visual reminder.

ACTIONS: Cllr. Martin to identify best option for the Parish. CLERK to obtain further information from Speldhurst PC regarding their sign and usage, also make enquiries of the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership regarding acquisition and installation of 30mph warning signs as currently deployed in Burdett Road, Jarvis Brook.

f) Council's power to appoint Trustee to Charity 306412 - Sir Henry Fermor's Church of England School.

This Primary School in Crowborough was set up very many years ago via a bequest from Sir Henry Fermor and is now in the process of converting to academy status. Clerk has enlisted the help of the SSALC Legal adviser regarding the current position with the Charity as the Parish Council, along with Crowborough Town Council, have the right/power to appoint a trustee to it. The school was owned and originally managed through a charitable trust and an approach has been made by the School enquiring as to whether we wish to exercise this power. Advice is that, whilst the Parish Council has the right and power to appoint a trustee the Charity would still be quorate if it chose not to exercise this right. RESOLVED that the Parish Council does not wish to exercise its right to appoint a trustee:

ACTION: Clerk to advise the Trust.

- g) **Response to the draft ESCC Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2016 – 2016**
Circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting, decision required regarding whether Council wish to respond. RESOLVED that Cllrs. Henrick and Watson Smith review the document and pass their recommendations to the Clerk regarding comments on the strategy.
- h) **Electoral Review of East Sussex - Draft Recommendations re: County and District Councils**
Circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting, decision required regarding whether Council wish to respond.
RESOLVED that the Council support the recommendations of the Review.
ACTION: Clerk to send response.
- i) **Arrangements during Clerk’s forthcoming holiday absence.**
- Chair of Planning and Building Committee to have Council laptop and relevant papers for the 5th April meeting of the Committee.
 - Recommendations on the applications to be sent to planning@wealden.gov.uk
 - Email and phone messages to be set up advising that the Chairman should be contacted if the matter is urgent.
 - Agenda for the 12th April Recreation and Burial Committee meeting will be published before Clerk departs for holiday.

3. TO RECEIVE AND ADOPT COMMITTEE MEETINGS MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING.

- 8th March 2016 – Highways Lighting and Transport Committee.
- 15th March – Planning and Building Committee

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

- 22nd March – Communication and Media Committee. Updated press release re: 2016/17 precept awaited before circulating these draft minutes.

4. TO RECEIVE OTHER REPORTS AND CONSIDER ACTIONS ARISING FROM THEM

- **Other committees and sub-committees.**
War Memorial Working Group. Cllr. Watson Smith is to forward the illustrations of memorials provided by a Parishioner.
- **Report from the Emergency Planning Committee**
This was circulated in advance to the Councillors.
- **Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.**
 - Cllr. Gilbert attended the monthly meeting of the Village Hall committee. Reported that concerns had been raised regarding manhole cover installed when Hall was built, associated drains is easily blocked. Parking matters were also raised.
 - ACTION Clerk to investigate original agreement with the Village Hall to determine responsibility for the drain issue.
 - Cllr. Martin attended a meeting of the “Raise the Roof” project, which is investigating the heightening of this over the stage area. Minutes of the meeting were circulated to Councillors.
 - Cllr. Harris held a site meeting in the Old Burial Ground, this to discuss concerns about a leaning memorial and other safety issues. Details will be reported at the forthcoming Recreation and Burial Committee meeting.
- **Clerk’s updates and issues.**
 - Clerks meeting at Heathfield. Various issues and concerns aired and information obtained regarding War Memorials and street light testing- this has been circulated.
 - Raised concern regarding workload and the need to “manage expectations” regarding less urgent matters. Wishes to encourage “self-help”, particularly regarding highways issues which can be

reported direct via “Fix My Street” which sends details to authority responsible with copy to Clerk via email.

- Considers that current workloads and meeting frequency, even with Planning and Building Committee meeting arrangements amended, are unsustainable in the medium term without an additional “pair of hands”.

- **Items for next Parish Magazine column.**

Update re: footpath and rights of way matters and key points agreed at the recent Highways Committee meeting.

5. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

- **Bank Reconciliation as at end of February 2016 and review of expenditure against Budget to date.**

- Clerk reported the following financial matters:-

- Wealden DC had submitted Non Domestic rates bills for the Old Burial Ground £137.94 and Parish Cemetery £217.80. As in previous years Wealden has applied 100% small business rate relief therefore no payment is due from the Parish Council.

- Bank credit balances as at 29th March were as follows:-

- Current account £22,715.53

- Deposit account £56,637.60

These figures do not reflect the cheques authorised and issued at this meeting.

- Vat reclaim has been submitted for £2745.66 for the period 1st December 2015 – 31st March 2016.

- **Approval of Payments.**

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be made:-

Date Paid	Payee Name	Cheque no.	Amount	Transaction Detail
01/03/2016	Deposit Bank A/c	Funds Tfr	£20,000.00	Surplus funds to deposit a/c
31/03/2016	Trevor Thorpe	802084	£1,516.00	March Salary
31/03/2016	H M R C	802087	£496.99	March Tax and NI
31/03/2016	Trevor Thorpe	802088	£142.98	March expenses/reimbursements
31/03/2016	C.D. & J. Jeffries	802089	**£288.00	Picnic bench for play area
31/03/2016	East Sussex County Council	802090	**£136.00	Make safe lamp 34 Catts Hill
31/03/2016	D. Jenkins	802091	£600.00	Tree work various
31/03/2016	East Sussex County Council	802092	£2,427.80	Streetlight for Hall car park
31/03/2016	Rotherfield Village Hall	802093	£46.40	Hall hire February
31/03/2016	SSALC Ltd	802094	£17.00	LCR subscription
31/03/2016	East Sussex ALC Ltd	802095	£930.64	ESALC & NALC Subs 2016-17
31/03/2016	e-mango	802096	**£705.60	New website setup & service
31/03/2016	Teambase	802097	**£97.34	Stationery items
31/03/2016	James & Liz Sweeney	802098	£500.00	March allotment rental
31/03/2016	Wealden District Council	802099	**£945.36	Dog bin costs Jul - Mar
31/03/2016	Coppard Plant Hire Ltd	802100	**£1,614.00	Work in Rec. Car Park
31/03/2016	Wicksteed Leisure Ltd	802101	**£24.49	Parts for equipment maintenance
31/03/2016	Konica Minolta Ltd	802102	**£62.68	Copier lease & usage

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31/03/2016	East Sussex County Council	802103	**£5,297.03	Streetlight costs – energy and maintenance
31/03/2016	Phil Ireland	802104	£1,071.00	Street sweep and litter pick
31/03/2016	Rotherfield and Mark Cross Bonfire Society	802105	£10.00	Stall at Easter Egg Hunt
Total payments			<u>£36,929.31</u>	

Receipts

Date	Payer	Amount	Transaction Detail
02/04/2016	Dignity Funerals Ltd	£125.00	Memorial fee for P19
Total Receipts		<u>£125.00</u>	

Payments marked ** include VAT which is recovered by the Council.

Thanks were given to the Communications and Media Committee who had arranged the stall at the Easter Egg Hunt, and attended on Good Friday to represent the Council at this Village event.

6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee – minutes of 9th March meeting.
- The Clerk Magazine March 2016.
- Local Council Review – Spring 2016.
- Spa Valley Starter – Spring 2016.
- CPRE Sussex Review Spring 2016.
- Clerks and Councils Direct – March 2016.
- St Chéron-en-Bref – March/April 2016

7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

The Burial Ground checklists had not been brought to the meeting and will be dealt with at the next Council meeting. Checklists for the Play Area and Recreation Ground had been completed and were signed by the Chairman. No issues requiring action were noted, nor have any been advised to the Council by residents.

8. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- 5th April - Planning and Building Committee.
- 12th April - Recreation and Burial Committee.
- 19th April – Finance and General Purpose Committee.
- 26th April - Planning and Building Committee.
- 28th April – Monthly Council Meeting

All of these meetings are to be held in the Parish Council Room, Rotherfield Village Hall, and will start at 19:30. Members of the public and press are welcome to attend.

9. REPORT DETAILS OF ITEMS AND ISSUES NOTIFIED TO CLERK IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING FOR INVESTIGATION, FURTHER ACTION OR FOR FUTURE AGENDA.

- Clerk has printed out the ESCC poster regarding consultation on the proposed long vehicle ban, and posted in Council noticeboards and bus shelter displays. Councillors to please advise Clerk if they able to display additional posters so that these may be printed.
- Collapsed fence panel adjacent to Old Burial Ground has been repaired. Clerk has established that the Parish Council are responsible for this boundary, which pre-dates the Court Meadow development.
- Slip road at Mark Cross is now closed off with some “tidying up” work outstanding. Letter of thanks to be sent to sponsor when final invoice received.

- ACTION for CLERK to investigate insurance position re: recent damage to the Scout Hut believed to have been caused by contractors collecting Pre-School waste bin.
- ACTION for CLERK to send letter of thanks to Les Pike for his offer to assist in tidying spoil at the Cemetery and for other work that he undertakes for the Council and Community. The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 22:05

10. PUBLIC FORUM.

None.

Confirmed as a true record and signed at the 28st April 2016 meeting of the Council

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