

# 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 26<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2015 AT 19:30 IN ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL

### COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. D. Thomas (Chairman)	Cllr. K. Curtis	Cllr. A. Martin
Cllr. R. Harris (Vice Chairman)	Cllr. T. Gilbert	Cllr. L. Watts
Cllr. G. Cahan	Cllr. J. Kitchenham	Cllr. G. Watson-Smith
		Cllr. N. Wickenden

### COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None

### ALSO PRESENT

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe, Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC), Cllr. P. Dixon (WDC) and four members of the public.

### 1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING:-

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

Pcso Julie Pearce-Martin, Cllr. D. Hiles and Cllr. C. Clibbens submitted apologies for absence.

#### 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. Dixon (WDC) reported the following:-**

##### **New Ward Boundaries**

- Wealden have published their proposals for new wards to reflect the reduction in members from 55 to 45. The recommendation to the Boundary Commission is that Rotherfield will be in a new ward called Hadlow Down and Rotherfield encompassing both villages. Eridge, Boarshead and Mark Cross will be included in a new ward called Withyham, which will include Groombridge, Blackham and Withyham.
- The Boundary Commission will publish their proposals in March next year and there will be a period of consultation, followed by final recommendations in September 2016. These boundaries will be used for the ESCC elections in 2017 and the WDC elections in 2019.

##### **Local Plan and Conservation Area Issues and Options**

- The consultation is ongoing and submissions must be made by 14th December 2015. It should be noted that these are recommendations and will change based on consultations and evidence collected during the process.

##### **Lime Trees**

- The Lime Trees are an important part of the village conservation area and I have stressed that I am concerned that their removal would be undesirable. However, Wealden are not prepared to put a TPO on the trees due to the proximity to the house and the ongoing dispute. The current application is just a renewal of the previous one, which was allowed.

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- The issue rests with ESCC, as the landowner, who have indicated in the past that they do not wish to allow the removal of the trees. I will be keeping a close eye on this issue.

## **Paws on Watch**

- This project has now recruited 280 members across Wealden

## **Community Grants**

- Applications for small grants must be submitted by 30th November. They must be for projects with environmental benefits to add to the enjoyment of the countryside.

Cllr. Standley (ESCC) reported the following:-

## **Devolution**

- Attended a conference of all Council leaders and Chief Executives in London recently. This was the first time that this group had met together and represented all the County and District and Boroughs that make up the “3 Counties bid” (East and West Sussex and Surrey).
- There are 2 “bids” covering the area the 3 counties as above and a separate proposal for Greater Brighton (Brighton and Hove, Adur, Worthing, Lewes, Mid Sussex and Eastbourne)
- Whilst Brighton is not part of the 3 Counties bid the other authorities are part of both proposals.
- Brighton and Hove have already signed a CityDeal with Government, in 2014.
- It would seem logical that the 3 Counties bid should proceed together with an understanding with Brighton. At this stage, both bids will be presented to Government for consideration.
- Whilst the Government are keen on elected mayors, the 3 Counties are not supportive of the idea.
- It was made clear that it was for the bidders to make their “ask” and there would be no guidance or restriction on that scope from Government.
- The deadline is tight with the presentation to Government being made before Christmas. I am leading on Public Service Transformation and will be part of the team presenting to DCLG in December.
- Once the proposals have been evaluated, and decisions made, then the method of governance and scrutiny will need to be decided.
- Any double devolution to Districts and Boroughs should and will come after the initial process.
- Whilst originally slightly sceptical on the devolution process the conference led me to the conclusion that it will happen and will change the way Local Government works.

## **Waste Sites**

There is a consultation on waste sites (not to be confused with Household Recycling sites). The last landfill site in East Sussex closed in 2013 and only amount of landfill is sent out of the County. Sites identified in the consultation are not in Rotherfield or surrounding areas.

## **Wi-Fi in Libraries**

The good news is that free Wi Fi is coming to all East Sussex libraries following a successful bid for a share in a £2.6m Arts Council Fund. Although all libraries have computer access, only 10 have wireless.

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## Boundary Review

The boundary review proposals in Wealden are that there will be one County Council Division to 3 District wards. Rotherfield stays in the Wadhurst Division but that Division loses Mayfield, and parts of Eridge, but gains Hadlow down.

### d) Police Community Support Officer's report.

Clerk presented the following report on behalf of Pcs0 Pearce-Martin.

#### CRIME

- Two attempts at forcible entry into a garage in Eridge Lane and a barn in Eridge Lane. Nothing stolen.
- There has been a spate of vehicles being broken into in the Eridge Lane and Hornshurst Wood car park. Cars left parked (possibly by dog walkers) have had their windows smashed and articles stolen. Pcs0 has put up signs in the car park and is making regular patrols all along Eridge Lane – when a Police vehicle is available. Please can you advise everyone parking their car NOT to leave valuables on view and report any suspicious vehicles to 101.

#### PCSO SURGERY

- No one attended my surgery on 16th November at Courtyard Café. Next surgery is 16th December 3pm at Courtyard Café.

### e) Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2015 for approval as a true record, and matters arising from these minutes.

The minutes had previously been circulated to the Councillors. It was RESOLVED that they be confirmed as true record of the meeting and they were signed by the Chairman.

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

Items either remain ongoing or appear on this agenda for updates and further action to be decided.

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

### a) Receive updates and agree any further action required in respect of the Scout Hut project; Consider request from Scout Group to contribute toward the rental costs incurred by them due to delay in completion of the lease.

**(This item was dealt with as third on the agenda)**

The Chairman reported that the Project had been completed. A final Project Financial Analysis had been prepared by him and previously circulated to Councillors, and the following key figures were highlighted. All figures are net of VAT, which HMRC has refunded to the Council, and are 100% sums, although the Council has retained 5% of the builders invoice value for 6 months to covering snagging.

- Project Budget	£115,000	note 1.
- Project Estimate	£102,200	note 2.
- Project Contingency 10%	£10,200	note 2.
- Maximum Project Cost	£112,420	
- Actual Project Total Cost	£109,280	

Note 1. Rotherfield Trust Grant £100,000 + Parish Council £15,000 max

Note 2. The basis of the Rotherfield Trust Grant July 2015.

- The Project has been completed £3,140 below the Maximum Cost.
- The Project has used £7,080 of the £10,200 Contingency.
- The Project has been completed £5,720 below the Project Budget.
- The Council has spent a Total of £9,280 of the £15,000 it placed in the Project Budget.

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The Chairman reminded Council that a detailed quotation indicated the cost of demolishing the Scout Hut with no rebuilding was £19,400 and that the insurance value of the refurbished building was £300,000.

The new Lease between Council and the Scout Group will be signed by Council Chairman and Vice Chairmen, and witnessed by the Clerk, within the next week. It was RESOLVED that the Council would not contribute to the additional rental costs sought by the Scouts.

**b) Agree Council response to the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Document.**

**(This item was dealt with as second on the agenda as Parishioners present wished to address the meeting on this matter.)**

Information regarding the proposal to extend the Rotherfield Conservation Area and to introduce a Conservation Area in Eridge was circulated to Councillor's prior to the meeting.

A Parishioner potentially affected by the proposal, Mrs. Louise Henrick, addressed the meeting regarding the impact that this could have to both property owners and businesses in Rotherfield. It was considered that the views of those potentially affected by these proposals should be sought and the following was RESOLVED:-

- i. A working group to be formed with Cllrs. Wickenden, Cahan and Martin from the Parish Council, and Cllr. P. Dixon from WDC who had been involved with the Parish Council response to Wealden's 2014 consultation regarding Conservation Areas when a Parish Councillor.
- ii. They are to be joined by Mrs. Henrick. Another Parishioner, and former Councillor, who was involved with the original creation of the Rotherfield Conservation Area, will be approached to see if they wish to provide input.
- iii. The Group will discuss and agree a draft response for presentation to the Planning Committee.
- iv. This will be considered at the Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December meeting of the Committee to form the basis for the response to the Consultation, deadline for which is 14<sup>th</sup> December.
- v. Councillors will be present at the St Denys' Christmas Fayre on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December with information regarding Wealden's proposals. Parishioners will be encouraged to submit their views to WDC with copies to the Parish Council.

**c) Agree Council response to the draft East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Sites plan.**

Comment deadline is 23<sup>rd</sup> December. Cllr. Standley confirmed that this plan did not affect the Parish and it was RESOLVED that no response was required to it.

**d) Agree Council response to the ESCC Local Transport Plan - Draft Implementation Plan 2016/17 - 2020/21**

Comment deadline is 18<sup>th</sup> December 2015. Cllr. Kitchenham is to review the document and draft a suggested response.

**e) Emergency Plan and Co-ordinator(s) – consider formation of working group to draft/update plan for consideration by the Council.**

RESOLVED that Cllrs. Wickenden, Martin and Watson Smith form working group to devise a draft plan for consideration by Full Council. Cllr. Watson Smith to liaise with Rotherfield St Martin regarding "persons at risk" in the Parish.

ACTION CLERK to circulate to the Working Group any information, in either paper or digital form, to assist with their work.

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- f) **Consider renewal of Ashdown Forest Tourist Association Membership to take advantage of “Early Bird” discounted fee of £110.**  
Organisation had been joined last year on a one-year trial basis. RESOLVED not to continue membership, CLERK to advise the group.
- g) **Consider report and recommendations of Working Party reviewing meeting procedures.**  
Aim of the group is to make meetings shorter and more effective, and to give Committees more powers to make decisions. An update will be given at the December Council meeting with the full report and recommendations presented at the January Council meeting.
- h) **Consider request from Rotherfield Players for permission and grant support to raise the roof height over the stage at Rotherfield Village Hall.**  
**This item was dealt with as first on the agenda as members of the Players were present to address the meeting and answer questions regarding the project.**
- Details circulated to Councillors prior to meeting.
  - Representative of the group summarised the potential benefits gained to both them and the Hall if the roof is raised to allow height of stage to increase, thus improving sight lines for audiences.
  - Estimated cost of the work in the order of £100K. Players have some funds available toward this and are to approach Hall and Rotherfield Trust to see if they are willing to contribute.
  - As the Hall is owned by the Parish Council, and to enable recovery of VAT, the project will need to be in their name.
- RESOLVED that the Council support this project. ACTION Cllr. Martin to work with the Players to establish what planning permission may be required and CLERK to establish terms of licence agreement between Council and Hall.

### 3. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS & MATTERS ARISING.

- 10th November - Council meeting incorporating Highways Lighting and Transport Committee.
- 17th November – Council meeting incorporating Planning and Building Committee.

The draft minutes of the above meetings have been circulated to all Councillors and it was RESOLVED that they be adopted by the Full Council. Minutes of the 24<sup>th</sup> November Recreation and Burial Committee meeting have yet to be compiled and circulated.

### 4. TO RECEIVE REPORTS

- **Other committees and sub-committees.**  
The Land Acquisition Advisory Group met on 17<sup>th</sup> November and enquiries regarding possible sites for community use are to be progressed by the Clerk, who is to ensure that all Councillors have a copy of the recent minutes.
- **Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.**  
**The Council has been represented at recent meetings of the following Parish organisations.**
  - Rotherfield Village Hall Committee.
  - Rotherfield Bowls Club.
  - Rotherfield Sports Club.
  - Rotherfield Millennium Green Trust.

No new matters had been raised at these meetings requiring attention or action from the Parish Council.

- The Council Chairman visited the recent meeting of the Rotherfield Friendship Club in the Village Hall; approximately 50 senior citizens attended this. Chairman endorsed the decision

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made at the October Council meeting to make a grant of £250 to support the Club's valuable work. ACTION FOR CLERK to raise cheque for issue at the December Council meeting.

- Cllr. Kitchenham had attended a site visit with representatives of Consultants engaged in surveying the possible route of a roadside path between Rotherfield Village and Jarvis Brook. Commented that grass was overgrowing the roadside making the route event more hazardous to walk, CLERK to investigate and request Will Clark to cut back.

- **Clerk's report and issues.**

None.

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

- List of projects being considered for next year, subject to confirmation by Council.
- Update re Rotherfield – Jarvis Brook path.
- Projects for future consideration.
- Scout Hut.

## 5. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

- **Bank Reconciliation as at end of October 2015, and review of expenditure against Budget to date.**

Clerk reported that Bank credit balances as at 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015 were as follows:-

- Current account           £69889.56.
- Deposit account           £12586.45.

These figures are not adjusted to include the cheques issued at this meeting.

- **Approval of Payments.**

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be made.

### List of Payments made between 01/11/2015 and 27/11/2015

Date Paid	Payee Name	Chq. No.	Amount	Authorisation Ref.	Transaction Detail
		Direct			
06/11/2015	HM Land Registry fees	Dr	£6.00		Search fees**
		Direct			
10/11/2015	HM Land Registry fee	Dr	£6.00		October search fees**
18/11/2015	Inca Developments Ltd	802033	£3,420.00	PCM 17/11/15	Invoice 4 - Scout Hut project*
26/11/2015	Trevor Thorpe	802034	£1,516.00		November salary
26/11/2015	H M R C	802035	£496.99		November Tax & NI
26/11/2015	Trevor Thorpe (one cheque)	802036	£65.80		Non VAT expenses
26/11/2015	Trevor Thorpe		£6.95	Clerk	C'boro Shoe Repairs padlock*
26/11/2015	Trevor Thorpe		£51.60		Plans for Scout Hut lease*
17/11/2015	Trevor Thorpe		£198.00		Vibrant Energy Matters Ltd*
26/11/2015	Weller's Law Group	802037	£720.00		Legal fees Scout Hut Lease*
26/11/2015	Coppard Plant Hire Ltd	802038	£60.72		Sign Hire*
26/11/2015	Creasey's Group Ltd	802039	£1,890.00		VAT Advice*
26/11/2015	Inca Developments Ltd	802040	£8,482.28		Final Invoice heating install*

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26/11/2015	Tollwood Garden Service	802041	£1,470.00	Sep., Oct. & Nov. Grass and Hedge cutting
26/11/2015	Graham Long	802042	£144.00	Mole Catching*
26/11/2015	Rotherfield Village Hall	802043	£34.80	October Hall hire
26/11/2015	Teambase	802044	£74.36	Ink cartridges*
26/11/2015	AON UK Ltd	802045	£54.75	Scout Hut insurance cover short term
26/11/2015	Rotherfield Sports Club	802046	<u>£325.00</u>	November pitch cutting
	Total Payments		<u>£19,023.25</u>	

- Payments marked\* include VAT, which is recoverable by the Council.
- \*\*Erroneously entered in cashbook twice, to be corrected

## 6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- SSALC Newsletter
- Saint-Chéron en Bref edition 323
- War Memorials Trust November 2015 Bulletin
- Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee – thank you note for recent contribution toward costs.
- CPRE Countryside Voice Winter 2015

## 7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

These were signed by the Chairman. No issues were noted as requiring attention by the Council, nor have any been raised by the public.

## 8. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December – Finance and General Purpose Committee.
- Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December – Planning and Building Committee

The above meetings are in the Parish Council Room, Rotherfield Village Hall, and start at 19:30.

- Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December – Monthly Council meeting
- Due to temporary closure of the Village Hall for the kitchen refurbishment, it is proposed to hold this meeting in the newly refurbished Scout Hut. CLERK will arrange and confirm to Councillors.

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

- Cllr. Martin has contacted a drainage contractor who has undertaken work for a local rugby club. They will be contacting the Council to arrange inspection of lower pitch at the Rec. to make recommendations regarding drainage improvement work.
- CLERK to investigate white van parked in village centre for approximately a month and which has recently acquired a "Police Aware" sign.
- Reported that two vehicles are parking near the crest of Castle Hill and are considered as creating a traffic hazard.
- Chairman reported that he has written a letter to Madame Jocelyne Guidez, Mayor of our twinned town of St. Chéron. This letter expressed sympathy on behalf of the Council and Parishioners to the families, loved ones and friends of those killed or injured in the recent bombings in Paris. He had received a letter of thanks from the Mayor; both letters have been circulated to the Councillors and the Twinning Association.

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The formal business of the meeting was closed at 21:35.

## 10. PUBLIC FORUM.

None.

**Confirmed as a true record at the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 meeting of the Council**

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