

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 21ST MAY 2015 AT 19:30 IN THE PARISH COUNCIL ROOM, 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. J. Cahan	Cllr. D. Hiles	Cllr. G. Watson-Smith
Cllr. C. Clibbens	Cllr. J. Kitchenham	Cllr. N. Wickenden

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe.
- Two members of the public.
- Mr. Paul Shefford, Executive Head Teacher of Mark Cross and Frant Primary Schools.

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING:-

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

An apology for absence was submitted by PcsO Julie Pearce Martin.

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 the members that they should declare an interest if at any point during the meeting they became aware of one in connection with an item being discussed.

c) District And County Councillor's reports.

Cllr. Phil Dixon (WDC) informed the meeting that he was proud to be the new Wealden District Councillor for Rotherfield and would be pleased to assist with issues raised with him. He reported that there had been a recent local issue in Spout Hill with refuse collections with the refuse lorry being unwilling to reverse in Douglas Road. It appears however that this has been resolved locally.

d) Police Community Support Officer's report.

Report submitted and noted at the Annual Parish Meeting.

e) Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 30th April 2015 for approval as a true record, and matters arising from these minutes.

These had been approved as a true record at the 12th May 2015 Annual Parish Meeting: as the minutes for this meeting have only recently been circulated signature will be deferred until the June monthly meeting. Cllr. Clibbens had read the minutes and noted that membership of the Finance and General Purpose Committee (F & G P) had not been included, CLERK to rectify in final version. Clerk requested that any concerns or omissions relating to membership of Committee's, outside organisations or special responsibilities should be raised with him for rectifying.

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

None to report.

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2. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:-

a. Selection of successful candidate to fill the remaining Councillor vacancy in Rotherfield Ward by co-option.

Clerk reported that one application had been handed to him at the Annual Parish Meeting unfortunately past the advertised deadline of Noon on 20th of May. RESOLVED to add item to agenda of the 2nd June Planning Meeting and re-advertise for applicants with deadline of Noon on June 1st.

b. Decision regarding process for regular review of policies and other managing documents; also process to review the meeting and committee process to enhance efficiency and/or reduce meeting length/frequency.

RESOLVED that policy reviews be carried out as detailed in matrix below, CLERK to circulate current policies, also copies of any “model” documents from Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), National Association of Local Councils (NALC) or other policies.

DOCUMENT	LAST REVIEW/SET UP DATE	PROPOSED FUTURE FREQUENCY	TO BE REVIEWED BY
STANDING ORDERS	November 2014	Annual	To be determined
CLERK'S DELEGATED POWERS	October 2014	Annual	To be determined
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY	March 2012	To be reviewed as part of item 2 c) on this Agenda, then every two years	Cllrs. Curtis and Watts
COMPLAINTS POLICY	June 2011	Every two years	Cllrs. Watson-Smith and Hiles
CO-OPTION POLICY AND APPLICATION FORM	October 2014	Every two years	To be determined
GRANT AWARDING POLICY	December 2012	Every two years	Chair, Vice Chair and Cllr. Clibbens
PRE SCHOOL COMMUNITY STORAGE AREA GUIDELINES	October 2012	Every two years	Chair and Vice Chair of Recreation and Burial Committee
TREE SAFETY	May 2012	Every two years.	Chair and Vice Chair of Recreation and Burial Committee and Cllr. Wickenden
FINANCIAL REGULATIONS	November 2014	Annual	F & G P Committee

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EVENTS ON PARISH LAND	June 2014	To be reviewed June 2015 and then annually	Chair and Vice Chair of Recreation and Burial Committee
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE	June 2013	To be reviewed in conjunction with Grants Policy Review and then every two years	Chair, Vice Chair and Cllr. Clibbens
HLT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE	June 2013	To be reviewed at the June meeting of the Committee and then every two years.	Committee
LAND ACQUISITION ADVISORY GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE	November 2013	To be reviewed at the next meeting of the Committee and then annually.	Group
SCOUT HUT RENOVATIONS PROJECT WORKING PARTY	None	Terms of reference to be written	Working Party
PLANNING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE	June 2013	To be reviewed at the 23rd June meeting of the Committee and then every two years.	Committee
RECREATION AND BURIAL COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE	June 2013	To be reviewed at the June meeting of the Committee and then every two years.	Committee

Clerk reported that, if Working Parties are included, there are in the region of 50 meetings per year and it is increasingly challenging to deal with actions arising from meetings whilst preparing and circulating background information for future meetings. Points raised were as follows:-

- It was considered that the volume of meetings was appropriate.
- Endeavours would be made to improve the focus of the meetings on the agenda items to reduce meeting length.
- Councillors are expected to read background information prior to meetings.
- Minutes of all meetings are circulated to all Councillors who are expected to read them so that they are aware of issues arising and projects planned/in progress.
- Clerk will concentrate on making agenda items more focused and will include expected outcomes.

c. Community Engagement.

i. Decision regarding creation of Working Group, possibly involving outside representatives, to discuss and make recommendations regarding means of engaging Parishioners with the role and duties of the Council.

Clerk reported that he manages the Council’s website and Twitter account and puts items of interest on both where possible.

ii. This Group also to review future and format of Councillor “Have Your Say” public sessions.

Saturday morning “drop in” sessions were held on a monthly basis for a period of around two years. These ceased early this year due to sparse attendance. Venue was usually the Institute,

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with visits on an approximate 6-month basis to the Reading Room at Mark Cross Church. Clerk suggested that the "Courtyard" may be a more inviting venue for these and that joint meetings could be held with our PcsO.

Cllrs. Curtis and Watts reported that they are working on a proposal for a Business Development Initiative (BDI) group and that this will overlap with work to consider ways of improving community engagement.

It was RESOLVED that Cllrs. Curtis and Watts incorporate Community Engagement issues in their BDI work and report at future meeting.

d. Review insurance cover and quotes for renewal. Make decision regarding company for renewal.

Existing insurers ANSVAR have quoted £1482.27; comparative quote from AON is £1120.83. Brokers have offered to reduce ANSVAR price to match AON quote but only on basis that Council sign for a 5-year agreement. RESOLVED to accept AON quote and transfer business to them, cheque to be issued at this meeting for premium and CLERK to deal with arrangements.

e. Agree issues to raise at forthcoming meeting between Gatwick Airport and local Parish Council representatives.

This meeting is to be held at Crowborough Community Centre on 10th June at 19:30, Cllr. Curtis is attending as the Council's appointed representative for Gatwick matters.

f. Suggest agenda items for consideration with ESCC Highways Officers at the Strengthening Local Relationships meeting scheduled for June 17th.

RESOLVED that the following items be featured at this meeting:-

- Roadside tree and hedge issues.
- Faded condition of "keep clear" markings and other road markings in village centre.

Clerk reported that ESCC were currently running a "high profile" campaign, including radio adverts, regarding landowner responsibility for ensuring that their trees and hedges do not intrude onto highways and other rights of way.

g. Receive update from Sports Club regarding application for funding toward drainage work on lower pitch and request for funds to support this work.

Cllr. Harris informed the meeting that he had recently met with the Chair of the Sports Club. Unfortunately their bid for funding from Sports England had been unsuccessful. The South end of the lower pitch is unplayable during wet weather, Club consider that a drain needs installing at foot of batter, funded by the Council, so that the Club can then "Verti Drain" the pitch. Coppards have already been asked to investigate drains in car park that may contribute to the issues; former Councillor Pike has kindly offered to liaise with them to highlight the areas we, which investigated. CLERK to add item to agenda of 16th June to discuss and agree if funding support can be provided by the Council; £2K has already been allocated for 2015/16 to contribute toward the work, this had assumed grant application had been successful.

Cllr. Hiles declared a personal interest in the following item as his house is one of the properties affected by the issue.

Cllr Standley (ESCC) joined the meeting at this point from attendance at the Frant Annual Parish Meeting. His report focused on the large vehicle issues in Rotherfield village centre and the forthcoming June meeting with the ESCC Highways Lead Member at which the Highways Officer's report responding to the recent petition on the matter. He has recently had a meeting with Highway's Officers and summarised possible options and their associated issues as follows:-

The problem of access to Industrial estates on the Rotherfield side of the Jarvis Brook railway bridge exacerbates matters as the bridge is too low for large HGV's to get under.

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Possible solutions

1. HGV's routed down the Bicycle Arms Road – Would alleviate the problem at the King's Arms right turn and may increase chances of a lower speed limit, which residents regularly raise as an issue. However, the extra HGV traffic could be seen as a trade-off. HGV coming into the village from this direction would hit the pinch point past Court Meadow.
2. Palesgate Lane upgraded to take HGV to access Industrial estates on this side of bridge. HGVs to be routed down Bunny Lane /A26 and then Palesgate Lane. Local Opposition and cost of approx. £7-8m which is unlikely to be forthcoming
3. Lower the road at Jarvis Brook – Cost unknown as is whether technically possible but guesstimate of approx. £1-2m.
4. The problem of damage to the Kings Arm is often vehicles reversing as their route is blocked as traffic coming from Crowborough direction is blocking the highway due to parked cars outside Catts Inn. Removing parking 3 /4 spaces would make it easier for HGV to turn.
5. Additional signage to encourage HGV to take Bunny Lane route/ A26 and then down Western Road. Unpopular with residents on the B roads particularly Western Road.

The favoured approach from ESCC is to trial solution 4, which reduces parking on the High Street and eases traffic flow. The traffic flowed better when the temporary lights were up when scaffolding place. It was pointed out that the traffic lights affected trade in Rotherfield Stores adversely. The temporary removal of parking would be for 6 or 12-month period to test the scheme.

The meeting considered that the loss of parking spaces in the village would have an adverse impact on business and that option 1 would be the most effective. CLERK to add item to the 9th June Highways Lighting and Transport agenda so that matter may be properly discussed and preferred solution to the matter decided in readiness for the meeting with ESCC on June 22nd.

The meeting expressed its concern at this continuing issue with listed buildings in the Village Conservation Area. The King's Arms are not able to now insure against vehicle strikes due to their frequency. The most recent strike had, for the first time, caused internal damage to the building as well as substantial damage to the exterior.

Cllr. Standley also provided details source of VAT expertise within AiRS who may be of assistance with the Scout Hut VAT issues.

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

4. TO RECEIVE REPORTS

- **Other committees and sub-committees.**

None.

- **Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.**

Cllr. Harris reported that he had attended the "Courtyard" to represent the Council during the visit of the judges for the Sussex Heritage Trust award, entry to which was sponsored by the Council.

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

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None.

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

Clerk reported that the “cut off” date for submission of items for publication is generally around the 20th of the preceding month. It is hoped that some “stand alone” articles may be submitted from the Parish Council in respect of future projects, this in addition to the Clerk’s monthly feature.

5. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

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

Clerk highlighted that budget figure of £3500 for grant expenditure had been exceeded, report of transactions to be circulated. Item to feature on June agenda to reallocate budgets to cover, Election costs currently budgeted at £5K and it is considered that final figure will be considerably less than this. CLERK to note.

It was RESOLVED that the reports were approved.

- **Approval of Payments.**

It was RESOLVED to approve the following payments:-

Date Paid	Payee Name	Chq. no.	Amount	Authorisation reference	Transaction Detail
01/05/2015	Hampshire Turret Clocks Ltd	801938	£295.00	April 2015 PCM 2 e)	Repairing Mark X clock
21/05/2015	H M R C	801941	£496.99		May Tax & NI
21/05/2015	A.C. Moaby	801942	£272.00	March 2015 PCM/Clerk	Work in Millennium Green & Old Burial Ground
21/05/2015	Trevor Thorpe	801943	£69.75		May expenses
21/05/2015	Trevor Thorpe	801943	£41.40		Papers-Annual Parish Meeting
21/05/2015	Trevor Thorpe	801943	£15.56		APM refreshments and batteries
21/05/2015	Trevor Thorpe	801943	£66.00		Stamps and HMLR plans
21/05/2015	David Peacock	801944	£306.00	PCM March 2015 2c)	Twitten St Chéron signs x 2
21/05/2015	Konica Minolta Ltd	801945	£19.87		Copier use March - May
21/05/2015	RBS Software Solutions	801946	£740.66	PCM Jan 2015 2 j)	Annual Fee and EOY Closedown
21/05/2015	Teambase	801947	£74.36		Ink cartridges
21/05/2015	Rotherfield Village Hall	801948	£45.60		Hall hire for April
21/05/2015	KPS Contractors Ltd	801950	£499.20		Gravedigging P22
21/05/2015	Tollwood Garden Service	801951	£1,550.00		May Grass cutting/groundwork
21/05/2015	Trevor Thorpe	801940	£1,516.00		May salary
21/05/2015	Rotherfield Sports Club	801949	£1,044.23	PCM Jan 2015 2 c)	Bowls Club safety netting
21/05/2015	AON UK Ltd	801952	£1,120.83	PCM May 2015 2 d)	Annual Insurance Premium
	Total		£8,173.45		

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6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- Rotherfield St Martin – Letter of thanks for support grant
- Sustrans – Letter of thanks for support donation.
- Tunbridge Wells and District Samaritans - Letter of thanks for support donation.
- Rotherfield Pre School - Letter of thanks for support grant.
- Society of Local Council Clerks – May 2015 Clerk magazine.
- Clerks and Councils Direct – May 2015 issue.
- St Chéron en Bref – May 2015

7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

There were no H & S issues identified within requiring action, and no issues have been raised by the public regarding council owned property.

8. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- Tuesday 2nd June – Planning and Building Committee.
- Tuesday 9th June – Highways Lighting and Transport Committee.
- Tuesday 16th June – Planning and Building Committee.
- Wednesday 17th June – Strengthening Local Relationships meeting with ESCC Highways, 09:30 in the Parish Council Room
- Tuesday 23rd June – Recreation and Burial Committee
- Thursday 25th June – Monthly Council Meeting

These meetings are all, except where noted, in the Parish Council Room at Rotherfield Village Hall and start at 19:30, all are welcome to attend.

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

- Clerk reported a possible delay to the implementation of the Mark Cross slip road closure scheme as ESCC now consider that a traffic order is required for this. Cllr. Thomas is to advise the local sponsor for this scheme, Clerk has responded to ESCC expressing disappointment that this issue has been raised at a late stage.
- Clerk reported that it is hoped to have an update from the VAT account regarding the VAT issues associated with the Scout Hut project.
- CLERK to contact ESCC to enquire as to the purpose of the surface work proposed for Town Row/Spout Hill and the B2101.
- CLERK is to request that Will Clark “top” the thistles in the Cemetery lower field.

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

To satisfactorily manage the six meetings occurring this month.

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 21:40

11. PUBLIC FORUM.

Mr. Paul Shefford, Executive Head Teacher of Mark Cross and Frant Primary Schools, addressed the meeting. He summarised plans, subject to consultation, for the two schools to be made a “Federation”; also proposed improvement work to the Reception Class accommodation at Mark Cross School. Substantial funding has been provided by the Diocese toward the project but there is still a funding gap of £15K to be found. Suggestions were made as to possible sources for this.

Confirmed as a true record at the 25th June 2015 meeting of the Council

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

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