



**Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross,
Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas**

**MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 30TH MARCH 2017 AT 19:30
IN THE PARISH COUNCIL ROOM, ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL TN6 3LX**

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. D. Thomas (Chair)	Cllr. A. Hardy	Cllr. A. Martin
Cllr. R. Harris (Vice Chair)	Cllr. L. Henrick	Cllr. J. Richardson
Cllr. T. Gilbert	Cllr. J. Kitchenham	Cllr. G. Watson-Smith
		Cllr. N. Wickenden

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None.

ALSO PRESENT

The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe, Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC) and two Mark Cross Parishioners in respect of item 3a).

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING: -

a) Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85)

Cllr. Hiles and Cllr. Cahan have submitted their apologies for absence.

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

- Cllr. Kitchenham declared an interest in respect of item 3a) as he is associated with the Project.
- Cllr. Hardy declared an interest in respect of item 3k) as he is involved with the organisation of the event.

The Chair reminded those present that they should declare an interest during the meeting should they become aware of one relating to a matter under discussion.

c) District and County Councillor reports.

Key points of Cllr. Standley's report were as follows: -

- Economic growth rate in the County is expanding at a greater rate than in the rest of the U.K.
- Over 2500 new business starts in the County in 2016.
- There has been a 2.7% increase in School funding but there is a concern that smaller schools may lose out on this. It is considered that the funding formula needs amendment.
- 27m is to be given to the Adult Social Care budget over the next 3 years, this will help to balance the books.
- Reported that Cllr. Whetstone is not present as he is on holiday.

d) Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 23rd February 2017 for approval as a true record.

Draft copies of these minutes have been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** that these represented as a true record of the meeting and that they be signed by the Chair.

e) Update regarding matters arising and action items from previous meetings.

Item from January 2017 Parish Council Meeting

- iv) **Adoption of revised policies, terms of reference and other governance documents.**
 No progress to report. **CLERK** to add all existing policies into "Dropbox", **ACTION** for Cllrs. Henrick and the Chairman to review and report progress at February Council Meeting.
Chair and Cllr. Henrick to update, please see item 3i on this Agenda

2. **COUNCIL FINANCES**

- a) **Receive and approve bank reconciliations and budget report as at end of February 2017 and consider any actions required.**

Reports had been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** that the bank reconciliation and budget report be accepted. CLERK to investigate and report how the £6K grant paid to the Council in respect of pitch drainage has been dealt with in the accounts.

- b) **Approval of payments by the Parish Council.**

It was **RESOLVED** that the payments listed below be made by the Parish Council.

Payee	Reference	Amount	Authorisation Ref	Transaction Detail
James and Liz Sweeney	802290	£500.00	Agreement 30/08/12	Allotment rental
Ashdown Planning Services	802341	£274.00	14th Mar. R&B 7i)	War Memorial Project fees
Swarco Traffic Ltd	802342	£243.22	HL&T 17th Jan.5 f)	Additional SID fittings
KPS Contractors Ltd	802343	£1,023.36		Gravedigging P23 & P17
Wealden District Council	802344	£288.00		Dog bins Jan - Mar fees
HM Land Registry fees	Direct debit	£6.00		Land ownership query
Newton and Frost Fencing Ltd	802345	£1,389.43	Dec 2016 F&GP 5a)	Mark X shelter balance
Konica Minolta Ltd	802346	£3.68		Final balance copying fees
1st Rotherfield Scouts	802347	£40.00		Meeting costs
T.C. Woodgate	802348	£1,160.00		Tree work costs
Rotherfield Village Hall	802349	£48.00		Meeting room hire
SSALC Ltd	802350	£66.00		Training Course
Teambase	802352	£17.99		Stationery
Phil Ireland	802353	£189.00		Sweeping / litter picking
David Peacock	802354	£180.00	R&B Feb 14th 7i)	War Memorial project costs
East Sussex ALC Ltd	802355	£953.23		Sub & NALC sub
Trevor Thorpe	802356	£1,535.02		March salary
Trevor Thorpe	802358	£109.85		Expenses & reimbursements
H M R C	802357	£498.69		March Tax & NI
	Total	£8,525.47		

Payer	Amount	Transaction Detail
H M Revenue & Customs	£1,478.50	VAT reclaim 1st Oct-31st Dec
Mark Cross C E School	£90.00	Grit bin contribution
Rotherfield Memorial Institute	£300.00	Bollard contribution
Rotherfield Primary School	£500.00	Rec. maintenance contribution
Tester and Jones Ltd	£426.40	Gravedigging P23
Total	£2,794.90	

3. RECEIVE INFORMATION AND MAKE DECISIONS ON ACTIONS AND EXPENDITURE AS REQUIRED REGARDING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

a) Presentation on behalf of the Mark Cross Community Centre Project.

Key points of the presentation were: -

- The project aims to make alterations to the existing Church building.
- Plan is to retain a small Chapel for worship in the converted building with the capability to expand the space for larger services.
- Future users of the building could be for coffee mornings, after school activities and other outside groups.

Progress so far is as follows: -

- Legal formalities are being completed, together with preparations for planning application.
- Information is shared via the Community Centre and Village Facebook pages, Parish Magazine and the weekly "Courier" column which has now been re-designated as serving "Rotherfield and Mark Cross".
- Finance. Various grants have been applied for and one of £28K has been agreed subject to legal agreement. Funds from the sale of the old Village Hall will also be utilised.
- Charitable status has been granted to the Project.
- Several business sponsors have been obtained.

After the presentation suggestions were made regarding various bodies who may be able assist with grant funding directly or may be idea to identify bodies who could provide funds. A professional fundraiser has been enlisted to assist with this. The meeting wished the project well and hoped it would not be long before Council meetings could again be held in Mark Cross.

b) War Memorial Project. Consider choice of design, recommendations of project team, approval of expenditure up to level of allocated budget and leadership of Project Working Party.

Copies of plans and design options have been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting. Key points are as follows: -

- A design has been chosen which has been approved by the Wealden DC Conservation Officer who is supporting the project; she is keen to see the application submitted as soon as possible, work on this estimated at 2/3 complete.
- Costs prior to Planning Approval have been cut by £1K. Wealden DC have kindly waived consultation fees for both Conservation and Planning, Planning Application fees have also been reduced by the for this project.
- Communication to the Parishioners of the project's work, and display of plans, will take place once the Planning Application has been submitted; It will be recommended that

any comments are made directly to Wealden DC.

- Cost of the Memorial and inscriptions, plus other costs, is estimated to be £18K plus VAT.
- Funds are anticipated to come from grants and sponsorship. Although some funds may come from public donations it is not anticipated that this will be a significant amount.
- Sources of Government funding are being investigated and it is suggested that Rotherfield Trust be approached.
- Suggested that the Communication and Social Media Committee deal with raising the profile of the project with the Community via the Parish Magazine and at the Annual Meeting.
- Consecration of the new Memorial is hoped to be before the end of this year.

RESOLVED the following: -

Proceed with submission of the Planning Application, communication of the aims and achievements of the project via Social Media and website, displays in local business, in the Parish Magazine and by a presentation at the Annual Meeting.

c) "Raise the Roof" project. Review proposals and consider Council's support.

This item was dealt with as second on the agenda.

Drawings and plans circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting. Council Chair has met with the architect/planning agent for the project and spoken to the Chair of the Rotherfield Players (RP) regarding this project. Key points are as follows: -

- Of the two options, available for the work it is wished to proceed the one that raises the roof by the maximum possible amount.
- They wish to proceed to the planning permission stage as soon as possible.
- Estimated total cost is in the region of £185K inclusive of VAT.
- Wish the Parish Council to agree that the Architect/Planning prepare the Planning Application and submit it on behalf of the Council. Total cost for this estimated at £400.00 and will be borne by RP.
- Believes that the application will not be brought before the Council as they are the applicants.

RESOLVED that RP be permitted to submit their application for the work which will be considered by the Council's Planning and Building Committee prior to submission to Wealden. **CLERK** to advise RP.

- Chair of the Recreation and Burial Committee advised that Village Hall Committee had indicated their support for the proposed work.
- Funding sources have been investigated by RP and it is not thought that funds will be sought from the Parish Council.
- It is anticipated that one of the Parish Council's conditions for the project is that the full funding will be in place prior to commencement.
- Queries raised regarding the legal position regarding the proposed work, specifically whether RP would hold claim over the portion of the building that they have funded, also regarding the VAT element of the project. It was acknowledged that the works to improve the facilities would benefit other users of the Hall and not just RP.

Clerk clarified the following: -

- The freehold of the Village Hall and the land on which it stands is owned by the Parish Council.
- A licence arrangement is in place between the Hall Committee and the Parish Council. In return for a peppercorn licence fee the Committee manage the Hall and its bookings, deal with routine maintenance and collect and retail the hire fees.
- RP are willing to fund a major enhancement by "raising the roof" at an estimated cost in the region of £185K.
- There is a need for a formal legal agreement that protects the interests of the Council, Hall Committee and RP during and after the enhancement works.

- Formal written agreement is required from the Hall Committee that they support the RP proposals.

RESOLVED the following: -

- **CLERK** to contact Council's Solicitors outlining the position as above, seeking advice on legal agreement and an estimate of the cost thereof.
- **CLERK** to write to the Hall committee seeking their formal confirmation that they support the proposed works by RP.

20:45 A member of the public joined the meeting.

Clerk introduced them to the meeting and explained that he had held a telephone discussion with them. Concern raised regarding continued pavement parking in the Village centre, and the consequent danger to pedestrians who had to walk in the road to pass it by. Standing Orders were suspended to allow the Parishioner to address the meeting. Key points raised were as follows: -

- Areas concerned is not a parking area, but a "loading bay"
- Wishes the Council to investigate the "Private Parking" signs which have appeared in his area.
- Space should always be allowed for pedestrians to pass between parked vehicles and the walls of the properties.
- Large concrete planters on the pavement also impede pedestrian access.

It was stated by a Councillor that the ownership of the area is ambiguous although HMLR plans obtained imply that the area in front of the properties is not owned by them. If the vehicles in question parked further into the road this would have a further negative impact on the traffic in the Village. Even if the land was considered as part of the public highway there is no enforcement on vehicles parked illegally. Clerk confirmed that a "mailshot" had been sent in May 2016 to the properties involved – no responses had been received.

CLERK to add item to the agenda of the 23rd May meeting of the Highways Lighting and Transport Committee to discuss and agree any further action on this matter.

Standing Orders were reinstated for the remainder of the meeting.

d) Review limits and criteria contained within Section 4 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

Copy current financial regulations circulated prior to meeting. Clerk recommends that limit applicable to Committees remains unchanged at £5K, and that the following amendments be applied for delegated powers to Committees.

- Limit to increase from £500 to £1000.
- Authorisation to be by Clerk in conjunction with Council Chair or Vice Chair, or Chair or Vice Chair of the relevant Committee.
- Expenditure to be applicable to either revenue items or minor capital items.
- Authorisation Criteria to be extended to include authorisation via email.
- Other conditions to remain unchanged.

RESOLVED that these changes to the current Financial Regulations be made as recommended above.

e) Consider request for grant support from Kent, Sussex and Surrey Air Ambulance.

£3k is in the Grant Budget for 2017/18. **CLERK** to add to agenda of the April meeting of the Finance and General Purpose Committee.

f) Agree arrangements for disposal of the remaining copies of the "Rotherfield Recollections" book.

Just over 100 copies of this publication have been located and are now stored under the

Pre-School. Book was published in 1993 resulting from research into Village history for the 1992 celebration of the foundation of St Denys' Church. **RESOLVED** that these books be disposed of on an "suggested minimum donation" basis with £5.00 agreed as the minimum. Suggested that they be displayed at the Easter Egg hunt and in Village businesses and the Surgery. Decision of destination of funds raised are to be determined at a future meeting.

- g) Repair to wall in Old Burial Ground. Receive update and quote for work required.**
RESOLVED to accept quote of £160 for this work, with a further limit of £350 for some pointing work in the area. Cllr. Wickenden has kindly offered to supply any stones required for this work and to contact contractor to advise him of these arrangements. CLERK is to contact resident, the garden of whom is bounded by this wall, to advise of her of the proposed work.
- h) Arrangements during Clerk's forthcoming absence.**
- Clerk is on leave from Thursday April 6th and will return to work on Tuesday April 18th.
 - Email out of office to be activated, this will advise that urgent matters be referred to Chair; voicemail will offer similar advice. E-mail login details will be passed to Chair and Vice Chair.
 - Minutes and agenda for the 11th April Recreation and Burial Committee meeting will be passed to Chair of the Committee to publish and issue formal summons for this meeting; deadline for this and displaying agenda in our boards no later than Thursday April 6th.
 - Minutes and agenda for April 18th meeting of the Finance and General Purpose Committee will be passed to Chair. Agenda will require publication and displaying no later than Monday April 10th (this due to the Easter Bank Holiday interfering with the "three clear days" required). Clerk will endeavour to prepare as much as possible in advance for this meeting as this is on the day he returns to work.
 - Burial plots. Plots will be allocated provisionally and advised to our local funeral directors, together with contact details. Burial ledgers to be passed to Chair for retention during Clerk's absence.
- i) Progress report re: review of Policies and other Governance documents.**
Cllr. Harris is now working with Cllr. Henrick and work has commenced on this.
- j) Approval the following in relation to the Planning and Building Committee: Scripts for meetings and policies regarding site visits and pre-applications meetings circulated in advance of this meeting.**
RESOLVED that these scripts be accepted for forthcoming meetings but with further review to be discussed and agreed at the next meeting of the Parish Council.
At recent Clerk's meeting, several Councils offered advice on "best practice" for approaches from agents or developers to hold "pre-application" discussions. Suggested response to such an approach is to invite the applicant or agent to a Council or Committee meeting to share the proposals in a meeting at which the public can be present. Thus, any accusations of lack of transparency or "behind the scenes" discussions can be avoided.
CLERK to add item to agenda of the April Council meeting to further review the scripts and agree policy on site visits and pre-application meetings.
- k) Request from St. Denys' Church to hold a Palm Sunday event on Court Meadow Green.**
Cllr. Hardy has been provided the insurance information and other paperwork in connection with this event on 9th April. **RESOLVED** that the event be approved.

4. RECEIVE AND ADOPT MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- i. 14th March - Planning and Building Committee.**

- ii. 21st March - Highways Lighting and Transport Committee.
- iii. 28th March – Communications and Social Media Committee.

Draft minutes of meetings i and ii have been circulated in advance to the Councillors. It was **RESOLVED** to note and approve the acts and proceedings of those Committee and confirm recommendations contained therein and, as far as requisite, the action taken by them. Draft minutes for meeting iii have not yet been circulated.

5. RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING REPORTS AND CONSIDER ACTIONS ARISING FROM THEM

a) Other Committees and Sub Committees.

Cllrs. Gilbert, Martin, Harris and Henrick recently met with our street sweeper/litter

picker to clarify the Council's requirements for these duties. It was a constructive meeting and an amended and concise contract would be produced to include hours and health and safety aspects and allow a degree of self-management of workload within the Council's safety parameters. **RESOLVED** that the new arrangements were agreed, **CLERK** to issue amended contract and a 2-month trial period has been agreed for these new arrangements.

b) Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council

- i. Clerk reported that a Site meeting had been held today at Mark Cross with Clerk, Cllr. Martin, Cllr. Kitchenham together with Ian Johnson and Helen Pace from ESCC and the Mark Cross resident who made the initial suggestion. ESCC recommendation is that residents are consulted on a local basis to identify their desired requirements and that the Council's Highways Contractor be engaged by the Parish Council to undertake a detailed study of what could be provided at the Parish Council's expense. CLERK is to add an "item for other Committees..." entry to the agenda of the forthcoming Recreation and Burial Committee meeting to receive the report from the site meeting and agree further action. Details of Community Infrastructure Levy payments due to the Parish were discussed and it was noted that Parishes with a Neighbourhood Plan receive 25% of the CiL payments whereas those without received 15%. CLERK to add item to agenda of the April PCM to discuss whether a Neighbourhood Plan would be of benefit to the Parish together with resource issues if it is agreed to pursue the matter further.
- ii. Cllr. Wickenden had attended the recent Wealden Parish Panel meeting at Hailsham. Wealden still consider that there is no scope for further significant development in the Parish.
- iii. Cllr. Richardson had attended a recent meeting of the Twinning Association.

c) Clerk's updates and issues.

Timetable for end of year, Annual Return and audit.

- i. Annual Return must be "signed off" by the Council at a meeting and minuted for submission to external auditor no later than 12th June.
- ii. Accounting Software provider RBS scheduled to visit on May 16th to run end of year processes.
- iii. Have contacted our internal auditors requesting that they visit between the 16th May and the May monthly meeting.
- iv. Mention has been made in the past of the wish to meet internal auditors to discuss accounting procedures. Clerk advised that specific details of the issues to be discussed should be provided as they may not be matters that are relevant to them. List to be provided by Councillors of queries to be raised with our accounting software providers.
- v. Workload is still an issue. Acknowledged that some items had been introduced (posting of agenda by Councillors for example) to save work. Considers that extra resources will

need providing if a "Parish Plan" is envisaged, weekly average hours worked since start of the year is just over 35 hours against contracted 33 hours.

d) Suggestions for items for next edition of the Parish Magazine

Cllr. Henrick will feature the War Memorial Project in the forthcoming edition, Chairman to provide details.

6. RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE

- Clerk Magazine March 2017.
- St Chéron-en-Bref – Avril 2017.
- WDC Non-domestic rates bills for the Old Burial Ground and Parish Cemetery – as in previous years 100% Small Business Rate Relief has been applied by WDC and there is nothing to pay.
- Clerks and Councils Direct – March 2017.
- Request for grant funding from the Tunbridge Wells and District Samaritans. Clerk will add to list of Grants for consideration at the April Finance Committee meeting.
- Action in Rural Sussex – information regarding their Neighbourhood Planning Services.
- Glasdon – Products brochure. Various "Village Gateway" designs within.
- Email from the Twinning Association sharing news of the itinerary for the forthcoming visit of the twinning group from St Chéron.

7. RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOKS AND REPORTS

No issues have been identified in the reports as requiring further action, nor have any issues been raised by the Public. Three wooden posts are missing on the Rec. boundary, Cllr. Harris has offered to assist Cllr. Watson Smith in reinstating these and they were thanked for this.

8. RECIVE DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

APRIL MEETING DATES: -

4th – Planning and Building Committee.

11th – Recreation and Burial Committee.

18th – Finance and General Purpose Committee – End of year and Grant agreements

25th – Planning and Building Committee.

27th - Monthly Council Meeting.

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

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

- Clerk to contact up the Sussex Rail Partnership for details of membership, these to be passed to Cllr. Hardy.
- No applicants received so far for the Councillor Vacancy for Mark Cross Ward.
- Council will have a stall at the Easter Egg Hunt.
- Cllr. Henrick wished items added to the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of the Recreation and Burial Committee. These were to provide information regarding the "Lund Fund" and how to apply for funds from this source, also to add item re: response to the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign re: a consultation.
- Cllr. Gilbert reported that the new Mark Cross litter bin was full, this in part to the large quantity of litter and empty gas cylinders discovered. Clerk has reported this apparent anti-social activity to Sussex Police.
- Signs have arrived to further raise the profile of the wish that dogs are not exercised

on the Recreation Ground or Court Meadow Green.

- Cllr. Hardy is to be married on April 8th 14:00 and Councillors are welcome to join him at the Church for this celebration.
- Cllr Watson-Smith is commencing work on the wildlife verge at Mark Cross
- Clerk confirmed that the broken bollard outside Mark Cross church has been reported to East Sussex Highways.
- Cllr. Wickenden has cut grass on bus stop on Catt's Hill.
- Cllr. Wickenden reported that St. Peter's Church are to replace the vandalised boundary fence with a more substantial version.

The chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 22:25.

10. PUBLIC FORUM

None.

..... Chair.....Date