

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 30TH APRIL 2015 AT 19:30 IN THE PARISH COUNCIL ROOM, ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. D. Thomas (Chairman)	Cllr. P. Dixon	Cllr. R. Jaques
Cllr. R. Harris (Vice Chairman)	Cllr. T. Gilbert	Cllr. L. Pike
Cllr. Mrs. P. Halse Adamson	Cllr. J. Kitchenham	Cllr. N. Wickenden
Cllr. C. Clibbens		

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

Cllr. F. Whittington.

ALSO PRESENT

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

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING:-

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

- Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Halse-Adamson, Cllr. Hiles and Cllr. Standley (ESCC).

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

- Cllr. Kitchenham declared a personal interest in item 2 e) as he is associated with St Mark's Church.
- Cllr. Wickenden declared a personal interest in respect of item 2 a) as he is compiling information regarding the alternative rebuild proposal for the Scout Hut.

c) District And County Councillor's reports.

- Cllr. Whetstone (ESCC) – Due to the election "Purdah" period, there have been few meetings hence little to report. He gave details of an ESCC Road Safety initiative, which is distributing motorcycle helmet stickers that are "QR" coded – the owners can load personal details to a website, which Emergency Services may access via the code in case of need.
- Cllr. Merriman (WDC). Standing Orders and the formal business of the meeting were suspended. Cllr. Pike and the Chairman. Cllr. Thomas, paid tribute to Cllr. Merriman who is standing down as a District Councillor and is a candidate for Bexhill and Battle Parliamentary Constituency in the forthcoming General Election He was thanked for the energetic support and assistance provided to the Parish Council and Community during the eight years of service as the District Councillor for Rotherfield Ward. Cllr. Merriman offered his thanks for the Parish's support and his card to the council bears the comment "To Rotherfield Parish Councillors, Thank you for the honour of serving alongside you all for the last 8 years. With best wishes to you all and this fantastic Parish. Huw"
- The Chairman paid tribute to Cllr. Les Pike who is standing down from the Parish Council after serving for 20 years, 6 of which were as Chairman. Tribute was also paid to Cllr. Roger Jaques who is standing down after 16 years as a Councillor, and to Cllr. Peggy Halse Adamson who has served as a Councillor for 45 years.
The formal business of the meeting then continued.

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d) Police Community Support Officer's report.

Pcso Pearce Martin attended the meeting briefly but had been called away on Police business. The Clerk presented the following report on her behalf:-

- **Parking.** This is much improved, no problems in the one-hour bay and few cars on double yellow lines.
- **Crime.** One theft from a shed in Catt's Hill. Offenders believed to have noticed a cistern in the driveway and assumed plumbing work in progress and that nearby shed held more pipes. Shed broken in to and copper piping taken. Please use shed alarms and try not to advertise that you are doing DIY to passers by.
- **Sheep worrying.** Two incidents of this, please check your garden fences and keep your dog under control.
- **Police Property Act Fund.** Has successfully applied for a grant of £150 to the St Denys "Go Forward" fund. Has submitted application for funds to assist Rotherfield Primary School in purchasing "Hi Vis" jackets for children and teachers when they walk to Church.
- **PCSO Surgery.** One surgery held at the new venue of the Courtyard Café – one visitor who raised an issue with parking. Next surgery is at this venue on Monday 18th May at 15:30.
- **Uninvited Traders.** Supply of stickers provided for display by those who wish to discourage "cold callers".

e) Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 26th March 2015 for approval as a true record, and matters arising from these minutes.

Copies of the draft minutes had been previously circulated to the Councillors and it was RESOLVED that they be confirmed as a true record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

f) Update regarding matters arising & action items from previous meetings. Numbers relate to March agenda.

2c) Signs have been produced, decision awaited regarding final locations so that posts may be installed for them.

2f) Entry submitted to Sussex Heritage Trust Awards for "The Courtyard".

2g) Plaque for the former "George" now arrived and awaits fitting.

2k) Awaiting information from my Crowborough First Responder Contact regarding funding schemes for a Defibrillator at Mark Cross other than the British Heart Foundation Scheme.

All other items either ongoing or completed.

2. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:-

a) Scout Hut Refurbishment Project.

- i. Planning consent WD/2014/1393/F for refurbishment of the Hut. Receive information from Wealden District Council regarding whether this consent would be valid if the property were to be demolished and rebuilt on the same footprint.**

WDC advice is that a new application will be required if the demolish and rebuild option is taken. It is also considered that, given the existing Scout building has an established impact which would merely be perpetuated and not intensified through rebuilding to the same scale and footprint, that issues associated with the Ashdown Forest 7km zone would not present issues.

- ii. Receive information regarding Vat aspects of the project.**

HMRC have responded to query on this and the value or otherwise in taking up the "option to tax" in respect of the Scout Hut. Inference in their response is that, provided PC places orders and receives invoices addressed, and uses "their own funds" (including funds awarded by grants) they are able to reclaim Vat. There are concerns that the Vat involved in the project is certain to breach the current £7500 per annum limit for total recoverable VAT set by HMRC

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unless the “option to tax” is taken on the building that would also mean that rental may be liable to Vat. It is considered that until a decision is made regarding the original “refurbish and repair” proposal or the alternative “demolish and rebuild” option proposed by Cllr. Wickenden then no decision can be made regarding the best way to deal with the Vat element of the project.

A representative of the Scout Group joined the meeting at this point. They advised that the Scout Group were planning to vacate the Hut after 10th July and relocate temporarily to the Bowles Centre.

iii. Receive information regarding draft lease between the Parish Council and 1st Rotherfield Scout Group.

Draft lease circulated prior to meeting. This has been prepared by Hedley’s Solicitors who are the solicitors used by the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils and are specialists in Local Government work. The Scout Group have not yet had the opportunity to examine the lease in detail Cllrs. Roberts and Thomas have carefully studied the lease and points for discussion with the Scout Group. A copy of the Lease had been given to Andrew Fermor, this being a condition of the offer of a grant to the Scout Group by The Rotherfield Trust.

iv. Updates from Committee regarding project progress, and from Cllr. Wickenden regarding the demolition and new build proposal.

Cllr. Wickenden outlined costings associated with his proposal that demolition and rebuilding would offer better value. Costs provided indicated that, with the addition of 15% for project management, total excluding Vat was in the order of £97K. Clerk stated that if a “new build” option were to be considered further this would be subject to competitive tender under the Council’s Financial Regulations. The Scout Group have issues invitation to tender for the repair/refurbishment for which Planning Consent is already held, these will be sent direct to the Parish Clerk and the deadline for return is 5th May – none have been received so far.

RESOLVED that Rotherfield Scout & Youth Hall Project Chair, Parish Clerk Chair and the Parish Clerk, together with a representative of the Scout Group are to meet in the Courtyard Café at 1400 on Tuesday 5th May when the quotes will be opened and the figures summarised. Details will be circulated to the Councillors and a meeting of the Project Committee will take place on the 7th May discuss the quotes. An item will be added to the agenda of the 12th May Parish Council meeting to consider the quotes and detailed quotes and specifications for the demolish/rebuild option so that a decision may be made regarding how the project is to progress. The Scout Group have requested details of the specification for the new build option as they are seeking additional grant funding for the project.

b) Make recommendations for the following planning application:-

i. WD/2015/0663/F Downsview Vineyard, Hadlow Down Road, Crowborough
New access.

It was RESOLVED to recommend that Wealden District Council’s Planning Officer approve this application subject to consultation with ESCC Highways Department regarding traffic implications. The work proposed will support a rural business.

There are currently four further applications received after the deadline date for this meeting. These are as follows:-

- 1. WD/2015/0768/HR Coolain, Spout Hill, Town Row, Rotherfield, TN6 3QX**
Remove 1-metre length of hedgerow to create pedestrian access.
- 2. WD/3260/CC Rotherfield Primary School, North Street, Rotherfield, TN6 3NA**

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Conversion of roof void above 2 no classrooms to provide additional teaching space and staff office, including new dormer enclosure, "access link" between roof voids and new internal staircase.

3. **WD/2015/0922/F** Millview, Spout Hill, Rotherfield TN6 3QX
Single-storey side extension plus general alteration works together with a detached garden outbuilding
4. **WD/2015/0563/MAJ** Fairfields Farmhouse, Tunbridge Wells Road, Rotherfield TN6 3QH
Change of use from commercial fish farm to utilising ponds for recreational angling.

Applications 1 – 3 will need decisions making under the Planning and Building Committee's Terms of Reference - Areas of Responsibility, delegated powers whereby Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee plus one other member of the committee may make a delegated decision in respect of a planning application to expedite the decision making process. Item 4 may be included on the agenda of the 21st May Council meeting for consideration as the comment deadline falls after this day.

c) Consider issues to put forward for discussion at the forthcoming meeting between SSALC and the Sussex Chief Constable.

Deadline for submission is May 15th and SSALC advise that minutes are still awaited in respect of the November meeting. RESOLVED to resubmit the issues previously raised for the November 2015 meeting in view of lack of response. Additional item to be added suggestion that Pcso's be granted additional powers to enable tickets to be issued in respect of vehicles parked obstructing the pavement, CLERK to submit to SSALC. The Chairman reminded Council that he had decided not to accept a directorship at SALC in 2014. This is because he believed SALC was no longer focused on the best interests of the one hundred parishes in East Sussex. He further believes that SALC were not taking a firm enough line with Sussex Police about the importance of more Community Police in rural area, Rotherfield being one of the most rural parishes of those in Wealden District.

d) Decision regarding quote for provision of a lamp and column adjacent to the path from North Street to the Village Hall.

Quote received from ESCC for £1851.44 to install LED style lantern with part night cell, to include connection to the Hall supply. RESOLVED to approach the Hall for a 25% contribution, and bearing the cost of the power to the light, CLERK to contact Hall regarding this matter.

e) Consider contribution toward cost of repairs to the public clock on Mark Cross Church.

Scan of invoice circulated prior to meeting – cost of refurbishment was £295. This clock was provided by public subscription to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897 and has been out of action for a while. RESOLVED that Council fund the repair cost from General Power of Competence grant budget. Cheque raised and signed at meeting, CLERK to send to repairer and update accounts.

3. RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS & MATTERS ARISING.

- 31st March 2015 – Planning and Building Committee
- 7th April 2015 – Recreation and Burial Committee
- 21st April 2015 – Planning and Building Committee

Other than where noted all of the above draft minutes have circulated to the Councillors. It was RESOLVED that these minutes all be adopted by the Full Council.

Draft minutes not yet circulated for 28th April 2015 Finance and General Purpose Committee and will be carried forward to the May agenda.

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4. TO RECEIVE REPORTS

- **Other committees and sub-committees.**
See 2a) above for information regarding the Scout Hut Refurbishment Group.
- **Councillor “Have Your Say” session and arrangements for the next session.**
None in diary – new Council is to review methods of encouraging Community Engagement with us.
- **Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.**
Cllr. Gilbert had attended recent Village Hall Committee meeting. He reported that plans for the refurbished kitchen are still under discussion, bookings and income were increasing. The Crowborough Community Centre had not created the feared negative impact on these Issues raised regarding the Council waste bin, these will be added to the agenda of the next Recreation and Burial Committee meeting to discuss. CLERK to note.
- **Clerk’s report and issues.**
None.
- **Items for next Parish Magazine column.**
Clerk reported that there were still items remaining from the list of suggestions to include in the June edition. Councillors are encouraged to email suggestions or even contributions to him for the monthly feature.

5. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

- **Bank Reconciliation as at end of March 2015 and review of expenditure against Budget to date.**
Bank Reconciliation as at end of March 2015 and budget report to date were displayed. It was RESOLVED that these documents be approved and they were signed and initialled by the Chairman.
- **Approval of Payments.**
It was RESOLVED that the following payments be made.

Payee Name	Chq. No.	Amount	Authorized Ref	Transaction Detail
Trevor Thorpe	801917	£1,523.09		April salary
H M R C	801918	£501.39		April tax and NI
Trevor Thorpe	801919	£56.09		April expenses
PJI Contract Packers Ltd	801920	£446.40		April sweeping and litter
SSALC Ltd	801921	£17.00		LCR Sub for 2015/16 New lantern column 7 Church Rd
East Sussex County Council	801922	£1,646.50	July 2014 HLT 6xi	
KPS Contractors Ltd	801923	£521.84		Excavation plot P21
Rotherfield Village Hall	801924	£34.20		March hall hire costs
Nordis Signs	801925	£93.58		Various signs
Wealden District Council	801926	£290.88		Dog bins Jan - March Mole catching Rec and Cemetery
Graham Long	801927	£123.50		
Signs of the Times	801928	£205.20	PCM March 2015 4g)	Blue plaque former "George"
Tollwood Garden Service	801929	£1,400.00		Grass cutting and groundwork

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Tunbridge Wells & Dist.

Samaritans	801930	£200.00	Feb 2015 PCM 2e)	Support grant
Sustrans	801931	£100.00	Feb 2015 PCM 2e)	Support grant
Rotherfield Village Pre School	801932	£500.00	Jan 2015 PCM 2 b)	Support grant
Eridge Village Hall	801933	£1,000.00	Jan 2015 PCM 2 b)	Grant toward disabled WC
Wealden Citizens Advice	801934	£300.00	Jan 2015 PCM 2 b)	Support grant
Rotherfield Sports Club	801935	£1,500.00	Jan 2015 PCM 2 b)	Pitch maintenance support
Rotherfield St Martin	801936	£500.00	Jan 2015 PCM 2 b)	Support grant
A.C. Moaby	801937	£675.00		Various works

Total Payments £11,634.67

Receipts

Date	Payer	Description	Amount
07/04/2015	Dignity Funerals Ltd	Gravedigging cost P20	£416.00
27/04/2015	Dignity Funerals Ltd	Ashes interment fee L17	£85.00
27/04/2015	Dignity Funerals Ltd	Inscription fee G11	£35.00
30/04/2015	Dignity Funerals Ltd	EROB and interment fees P22	£711.00
01/04/2015	East Sussex County Council	Fingerpost repair contribution	£75.00
23/04/2015	H M Revenue & Customs	Vat reclaim Jan - Mar 2015	£1,770.15
23/04/2015	hlw Keeble Hawson	Fee for researching claim info	£125.00
27/04/2015	Tester and Jones Ltd	Memorial inscription fee M22	£125.00
08/04/2015	Wealden District Council	Streets Ahead Grant	£500.00
30/04/2015	Wealden District Council	Precept & Grant 1st instalment	<u>£37,618.00</u>
Total Receipts			<u>£41,460.15</u>

6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- Ashdown Forest Tourism Association – April 2015 Newsletter
- Saint-Chéron en Bref – April 2015
- CPRE Countryside Voice – Spring 2015

7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

These were signed by the Chairman. Other than noting there are graves requiring filling in the Old Burial Ground there were no Health and Safety concerns noted, nor have there been any such issues raised with the Council.

8. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- 12th May 2015 – Annual Council Meeting – Rotherfield Memorial Institute 19:30.
- 20th May 2015 – Annual Parish Meeting 20:00 Main Village Hall.
- 21st May 2015 – May Council Meeting – Parish Council Room, Village Hall 19:30.

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

- Twinning Committee and unveiling of St Chéron twitten signs. This will take place on Friday May 15th at 19:00. Any Councillors who wish to attend please advise for catering purposes.
- Parish Newsletter. Committee reports still awaited – Clerk advised that it was unlikely that newsletter will be published before June. Millennium Green wish to take up offer of fliers (provided by them) to be included in the mailing – CLERK to note.
- Whilst one of the potholes near Chant Lane junction has been filled satisfactorily two remain unfilled – CLERK to investigate/report.
- CLERK to report to ESCC that white centrelines and 30mph carriageway roundel in Mayfield Road are now virtually invisible and require repainting.
- CLERK to request Tony Moaby to remove angle iron in hedge near entrance to Old Burial Ground as this may cause a hazard to contractors.
- Cllr. Wickenden reported that he had attended the St George’s Day parade at St Denys’ as part of the Royal British Legion.
- Critical comments had been received regarding appearance of the Lime Trees pollarded by WDC Contractors on St Denys’ and Court Meadow Green boundary. Clerk reported that he had also received a comment that the pollarding had not been severe enough. CLERK to check with Churchwarden that they are happy with the work, also investigate hole in shrubs near the Surgery, this believed to be where the contractors had located their chipper. Chairman had inspected Court Meadow Green and considered that the tree contractors had left it in a tidy condition.
- Blue Plaque for the former “George” inn has now arrived and awaits installation. CLERK to add item to agenda of May meeting to consider further candidates for plaques.
- Cllr. Pike thanked the Councillors present for their help and support during his years as a Councillor. He advised that he would be unable to attend the Annual Parish Meeting as he has been honoured with an invitation for him and his wife to attend a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on the same day. He was congratulated on this deserved tribute to his services to the local community, both as a Parish Councillor and as a part of other local organisations.
- The Chairman thanked the Clerk for his hard work in supporting the Council.

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

- Clerk reported that May will be a busy month with Elections, New Councillors and the Annual Parish Meeting.

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 21:10

11. PUBLIC FORUM.

None

Confirmed as a true record at the 12th May 2015 meeting of the Council with the amendment below

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

TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 30TH APRIL 2015 & MATTERS ARISING.

Cllr. Clibbens raised that these minutes omitted to mention that he had raised the matter of item 2a) agreed at the March meeting. This had agreed that the Council would facilitate a meeting between Cllr. Wickenden and the resident who had raised concerns at the nuisance caused by trial bike events held on Cllr. Wickenden’s land. Cllrs. Kitchenham and Cllr. Pike (now retired from the Council) had indicated a willingness to be present as independent parties. Clerk agreed that the notes for the minutes confirmed this but that this had not been carried forward to the printed draft copy.

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