

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 25TH JUNE 2015 AT 19:30 IN THE PARISH COUNCIL ROOM, ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

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

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe.
- Mrs. A. Watson and Mrs. J. Whitehead - both candidates for co-option to the Council.
- Cllr. R. Standley and Cllr. F. Whetstone (both ESCC) and Cllr. P. Dixon (WDC).

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING:-

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

Apologies for absence were submitted by Cllrs. D. Thomas, Cllr. J. Cahan and PcsO 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 those present 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. R. Standley (ESCC) reported as follows:-

B2100 Petition

Lead member meeting took place on Monday 22nd July.

- County Councillors attending the meeting, in addition to Cllr. Standley, were Cllrs. Whetstone and Tidy (Crowborough) The other Crowborough County Councillor had sent written support to the petition. Cllr Clibbens and the landlady of the Kings Arms also attended and spoke.
- There was extensive debate and discussion and there is no doubt that we got our points across. The arguments were supported by the various photographs presented.
- The Lead member accepted the problem of long vehicles, but it was recognised that finding the solution was not easy.

The outcome of the meeting was-

- That the recommendation to restrict parking spaces outside the Catts Inn would not help solve the problem and would damage local trade. Decision made not to proceed with this option.
- That signage is to be reviewed and improved to make it clear to drivers that there is a problem with long vehicles making the right turn at Rotherfield and divert them onto the preferred route. The possibility of implementing a long vehicle ban on the B2100 between Mark Cross and Rotherfield is to be considered.
- A "Keep Clear" junction box will be put in place between the entrance to the Kings Arms car park and almost to the junction.

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- The current recommended route for long/heavy vehicles is Bunny Lane, A26 and then through Western Road. Any improved signage would encourage traffic down this route but it was explained at the meeting, and in a subsequent conversation with officers, that Western Road was far from ideal as an HGV route.
- The B2101 (Bicycle Arms route.) as an alternative was not ideal, especially the junction at Argos Hill, but that further work be done on this proposal. Cllr. Standley pointed out that if this route used it would be a good opportunity to reduce traffic speeds in Argos Hill and on the B2101.
- That further work is done to investigate the possibility of re-engineering the rail bridge at Jarvis Brook to alleviate the need for long/heavy vehicles to use Rotherfield to access the Jarvis Brook industrial estate. This could also relieve Western Road.

Cllr. Standley will continue to lobby for a commitment to a date for work to take place and it was agreed that the Parish Council need to “keep up the pressure” regarding this issue. CLERK to investigate “Geo Fencing” as a means of marking the unsuitability of the route for SatNav users, also contacting the Freight Transport Association regarding the matter. Specimen letter to be drawn up to send to HGV operators recorded using the junction to suggest alternative route.

- Eastbourne and Hasting Hospital Trust. A recent Clinical Quality Commission (CQC) report was very critical of the management of the Trust, which control Eastbourne DGH, Conquest (Hastings), and Uckfield and Crowborough Community Hospitals. The criticism in the CQC report were centred on Eastbourne DGH and Hasting Conquest rather than the community hospitals but the Trust needs to make significant improvements if it is to regain the confidence of HOSC and the local communities.
- The Youth Discount Card is to have extended availability

Cllr. Whetstone (ESCC)

- Suggested that cutting back of hedges around the Mark Cross B2100 would improve visibility of “long vehicle” warning signs.
- County are having a “drive” to discourage misuse of parking “Blue Badges”.

Cllr. P. Dixon (WDC)

- Advised that he is on the Planning Committee (North) and Audit and Finance Committees for Wealden, and on a Cabinet Advisory Group for Housing.
- Waste Collection time changes have been implemented without any major issues.
- Had attended the recent “Safety in Action” session at Bowles Centre with Rotherfield Primary School.
- Cuckoo Line land near Argos Hill. Meeting to be organised with Mayfield PC and ESCC to try to progress this matter. CLERK to add to agenda of 7th July Highways Committee meeting. Cllr. Standley advised that ESCC had committed that they would not dispose of the land without reference to the Parish Councils concerned.
- Conservation Area Consultation. Clerk had enquired as to progress with this; Parish Council had submitted a response in autumn 2014? Cllr. Dixon advised that an “issues and options” document was to be published in October, nominations of buildings considered as “assets of local value” will be invited as part of the process.

d) Police Community Support Officer’s report.

Clerk delivered following report on behalf of our PcsO:-

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PARKING

Cars have been reported blocking the pavement in Station Road. Both these drivers have been spoken to. It is suggested that if you see a car completely blocking the pavement, take a photograph and report to Operation Crackdown.

CRIMES

Theft of a trailer at Mark Cross. The thieves were opportunists and hitched up the trailer in daylight from a driveway – the window of opportunity was less than an hour. The thieves even closed the gate after themselves. Please mark all your property especially valuable items and keep a note of serial numbers.

SCHOOLS

Has visited Rotherfield pre-school and given them the chance to sit in a real police car! Will organise this for the primary school before the summer holidays.

VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

We have a couple of vulnerable residents who have come to my notice. Rotherfield is very lucky to have the RSM charity with whom I am working closely, to protect and support these two women.

PCSO SURGERY

I have had just one visitor at last two surgeries. Reporting speeding in Station Road, which will be looked at with the Community Speedwatch Team; also a problem with cars parking over dropped kerbs near the school and blocking the path into Highgate. These two areas may be suitable for consideration for white lines.

MEETINGS

Attended the new Local Action Team meeting in Crowborough and will be liaising with Cllr Keith Curtis, also attended the SLR meeting in Rotherfield.

Next PCSO Surgery is on Monday 20 July at 3pm at the Courtyard Café.

- e) **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th May and 21st May 2015 for approval as a true record, and matters arising from these minutes.**

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

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

Numbers reference the Agenda of the 21st May 2015 meeting.

2b) Current policies have been circulated. Working group to review?

2f) SLR minutes yet to be typed and circulated. Clerk has reported trees in Station Road to ESCC/Highways Steward for action.

2g) Discussed at 16th June Rec. and Burial meeting, minutes yet to be typed and circulated. It was reported that former Councillor Les Pike would be submitting a report regarding Coppard's findings resulting recent visit to investigate drains in the recreation ground.

Chant Lane – the long awaited surface improvements have now taken place and Coppards have been asked to clear the drain at the Station Road junction end.

2. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:-

- a) **Consider selection of a candidate from those applying and present at this meeting for Co-option to fill the vacant Council seat in Rotherfield Ward.**

Application forms circulated to Cllrs. prior to the meeting. Both candidates gave a presentation to the meeting and a vote was taken which resulted in Jean Whitehead being chosen as the successful candidate.

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The meeting was adjourned whilst the Clerk dealt with the signature of the Acceptance of Office document. Both candidates were thanked for their interest and submitting applications.

b) Arrangements for recognition of the “long service” Councillors who stood down from the Council at the recent election.

RESOLVED CLERK to investigate and report cost of engraved glassware to be presented to the three former Councillors concerned, and report back at next meeting. Item to be added to July meeting regarding this.

c) Resolution to agree and sign off the Annual Return prior to scrutiny by the External Auditor.

Papers circulated prior to meeting. It was RESOLVED that the Vice Chair sign these and this was undertaken. CLERK to submit to external auditor.

d) Progress report from Scout Hut refurbishment project. Decision regarding arrangements for progressing the project and payment of invoices when work commences.

Clerk recommends that the 7th June Highways meeting is designated as a full council meeting to enable resolutions to be passed regarding signing of contracts and other papers relating to the project. The Vice Chairman reported that total cost of project was £90500 to which must be added Vat of £15400. £17000 of project cost is for external insulation that will attract Vat at the lower rate of 5%. Paid Vat advice has been obtained that clarifies that Vat will be recoverable. Clerk referred the meeting to minute 7 i) of the 12th May Council meeting that summarised the position and resolved the way forward with the project. RESOLVED that the project proceed on the basis that the Parish Council fund initial invoice pending payment of the Rotherfield Trust Grant of £100K. CLERK to advise Council's insurers that cover will need to be temporarily extended to cover the Hut once vacated by the Scouts with the cover terminated once confirmation received from the Scouts that they have cover in place for the refurbished property.

e) Receive information and quotes for work Church path by Lych Gate to improve wheel chair access. Decision regarding project and possibility of contribution toward work from the Council.

Three quotes received, each varying in price and works proposed to achieve the aim of improving access. RESOLVED that quotes be passed to Church for their consideration with the suggestion that dropping the kerb would also be beneficial. The latter would require consent from ESCC. No commitment regarding contribution from Council has been made.

f) Engaging with the Community:-

i. Decision regarding future arrangements for “Have Your Say” public drop in sessions.

Cllr. Cahan is championing this and currently absent, CLERK to carry forward to July agenda.

ii. Councillor volunteers sought to be interviewed for the Parish Magazine.

Volunteers for this please put their names forward to the Cllr. Watts who is liaising with Parish Magazine on the matter.

iii. Decision regarding starting a Facebook account for the Council and updating of Press and Media policy to include rules and guidelines for use.

Specimen policy provided by another Council relating to Social Media use was circulated in advance of the meeting. RESOLVED that Cllr. Watts is to continue research into use in conjunction with Clerk; item to be added to July agenda to consider setting up account and adopting a separate Social Media policy. CLERK is also to investigate what permissions, if any, may be required for the Council to place advertising within their bus shelters.

g) Resolution to clarify permitted usage of the Recreation Ground Car Park.

Evident from Facebook comments that there is confusion as to use permitted of the car park adjacent to the Recreation Ground, some believe it is solely for use of Hall and Rec. users. The meeting RESOLVED

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that it be confirmed that the Car Park was intended for anyone to use. CLERK is to investigate feasibility of introducing a “permit parking” scheme to allow dedication of some space for resident use.

h) Resolution to appoint Cllr. Curtis, and another Councillor volunteer as the Parish Council’s representatives at the Wealden District Association of Local Councils, and at the AGM of the East Sussex ALC Limited.

Due to error interpreting SSALC requirements, a new resolution is required. Cllr. Curtis wished to discuss this with the Chairman to establish the reason for him standing down from both organisations before committing to being the Council’s representative. CLERK to carry forward to agenda of July meeting.

i) Report from Cllr. Curtis from the recent meeting in Crowborough with Gatwick Airport representatives. Decision on further action resulting from the meeting.

Cllr. Curtis represented the Council at this meeting at the Crowborough Community centre, together with Councillors from Hartfield, Withyham, Frant and Wadhurst Parish Councils and senior representatives of Gatwick Airport. It is understood that the Airport Commission will be announcing recommendations shortly with regard to increasing airport capacity. It was RESOLVED that once firm information is known about plans that may affect the area that the Council should arrange and host public sessions to hear the views of Parishioners regarding the matter. Space has been offered at the King’s Arms regarding this.

j) Report and recommendation from Cllrs. Curtis and Gilbert regarding meeting with Bowls Club to discuss condition of refurbished netting and release of cheque for payment for this.

Cllrs. Curtis and Gilbert have met with the Club. They are satisfied that the issues identified with the nets have been rectified and that the payment promised may be made RESOLVED CLERK to release to the Club the cheque issued at the May Council meeting.

k) Information regarding preparations for 2016 Parish Guide.

Clerk has been contacted by publishers of the 2014/15 edition to discuss preliminary plans for the next edition. Clerk has suggested contact again in the autumn but in the interim welcomes suggestion from Cllrs. for items and articles for inclusion, together with suggestions for businesses who may wish to advertise within. Cllr. Wickenden suggested including a footpath map of the Parish.

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

The draft minutes of the following meetings have been circulated to the Councillors:-

- i. 2nd June 2015 – Planning and Building Committee.
- ii. 9th June 2015 – Highways Lighting and Transport Committee.
- iii. 16th June 2015 – Recreation and Burial Committee.
- iv. 23rd June 2015 – Planning and Building Committee.

It was resolved that minutes i – iii be adopted by the Full Council. Cllr. Wickenden noted that the minutes of the 23rd June Planning Meeting failed to acknowledge that he had declared an interest in an item. A correction will be proposed at the 14th July meeting of this Committee.

4. TO RECEIVE REPORTS

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

None.

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

- Cllr. Clibbens – Attended and spoke at ESCC Lead Member meeting as detailed in Cllr. Standley’s report under item 1c).
- Clerk and Chairman. Attended recent Monday session of Rotherfield St Martin and gave a presentation of “what they and the Council do” to 45 members.
- Wealden Clerk’s meeting – Clerk attended this at Heathfield

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- Cllr. Wickenden attended the Wealden “Parish Panel” meeting at Hailsham.
 - Cllr. Curtis – Gatwick Airport meeting as reported above.
 - Cllr. Curtis. Local Action Team meeting at Crowborough Fire Station. This is a joint meeting between local Pcsos and Councillors to discuss items of local concern. Main local crime source seems to be from allotment sheds and our Parish Pcsos has raised concerns at unavailability of transport to move between local communities. CLERK to investigate if sponsorship of transport, possibly jointly with Mayfield, may be possible
 - Cllr. Gilbert attended meeting of the Village Hall Committee.
- **Clerk’s report and issues.**
 - Continues to “firefight and plate spin” and is conscious that there are many loose ends remaining untied, currently four sets of minutes to type and circulate and outstanding actions to deal with. It is hoped that situation will improve short term as next week is meeting free, the first for around six weeks. Longer term considers that assistance may be required on a permanent basis to enable service levels to be maintained and support the plans for the Council to take a more proactive role in engaging with Parishioners to identify issues, which can be addressed by us or by others.
 - **Items for next Parish Magazine column.**

Clerk will include a feature on pavement parking and raise profile of twitter and Facebook accounts.

5. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

- Bank Reconciliation as at end of May 2015 and review of expenditure against Budget to date. It was RESOLVED that these be approved.
- Approval of Payments. It was RESOLVED to approve the following payments:-

Payee Name	Chq no.	Amount	Authorisation	Transaction Detail
Tollwood Garden Service	801968	1,340.00		Grass cutting - June
Trevor Thorpe	801953	1,516.00		Clerk's Salary for June
H M R C	801954	496.99		Tax and NI for June
Trevor Thorpe	801955	111.03		June Expenses/reimbursements
Trevor Thorpe	801955	6.60	Clerk’s delegated power	Reimbursement Inc. VAT
Gwen Pritchitt	801956	206.50		2014/15 Audit
Oliver Noakes	801957	6,436.80	Oct 14 PCM 7e)	Path Work in Cemetery
Signs of Style	801958	171.00		Signs - Annual Parish Meeting
Nordis Signs	801959	106.14		Various Signs
Rotherfield Village Hall	801960	49.00		May Hall hire
Konica Minolta Ltd	801961	41.08		Copier lease Jun-Aug
Teambase	801963	21.52		Paper and pins
Teambase	801964	17.14		Envelopes
William J Clark	801965	255.00	Clerk	Topping Rec., cemy., highways
PJI Contract Packers Ltd	801966	583.20		Street sweeping & litter pick
A.C. Moaby	801967	2,220.00		Rec., Cemetery and other work
SSALC Ltd	801962	180.00	Clerk’s delegated power	New Councillor Training

Total 13,758.00

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6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- Saint-Chéron en Bref – June 2015 edition.
- Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS) Neighbourhood Planning Services information.
- Spa Valley Starter – Issue 54
- WDC – Streets Ahead Newsletter Issue 2.
- WDC – Invitation to Parish Conference at Hailsham 23rd September.
- CPRE- Notice of AGM 16th July at West Dean House, Chichester.
- The Kent and Sussex Air Ambulance Trust – Thank you event 13th August.
- Scout Group – Invitation for Councillors and Clerk to attend “Hog Roast” by the Scout Hut.

7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

- These were signed by the Vice Chairman. CLERK to investigate/take action regarding condition of path at the entrance to the old burial ground. No other health and safety matters were noted and none has been raised by Parishioners.

TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- 7th July – Council Meeting/Highways Lighting and Transport
- 14th July – Planning and Building Committee
- 23rd July – Monthly meeting of the Council.

All meetings in the Parish Council Room, Rotherfield Village Hall, starting at 19:30.

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

- CLERK to add item to the July Agenda regarding proposal for a business development initiative Group.
- Concerns were raised regarding misuse of the disabled parking bays at the front of the Hall. CLERK to write to Village Hall to request that information regarding the bays be provided to all hirers and that should be used by “bona fide” blue badge holders. Condition of current signs to be investigated to see if they require improvement/replacement.
- Paving slabs loose by Wall of Remembrance at the Cemetery. CLERK to ask Tony Moaby to repair.

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

Reduce/clear work backlog.

The formal business of the meeting was declared closed at 22:15

PUBLIC FORUM.

None.

Confirmed as a true record at the 1st September 2015 meeting of the Council

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