

# 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 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2016 AT 19:30 IN THE PARISH COUNCIL ROOM, ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL

### COUNCILLORS PRESENT

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

### COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None

### ALSO PRESENT

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe, Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC), Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC), Cllr. P. Dixon (WDC), Jo Evans (Rotherfield St Martin) and Mrs. L. Henrick (Co-option candidate).

### 1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING:-

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

An apology was tendered by Cllr. J. Kitchenham, and accepted.

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

None declared. 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. R. Standley's (ESCC) report contained the following:-

- Unemployment in East Sussex is down by 14% compared to last year's figure.
- There is 4635 claiming Job Seeker's Allowance.
- 635 of these are in Wealden District.
- 5 are in Rotherfield, this figure has been constant during this year.
- He is in support of the current Sussex Police campaign against domestic violence, In 2013/14 there were 12K offences committed against women and 6K against men. Early reporting of offences is encouraged as this may prevent an escalation of occurrences.

##### Cllr. F. Whetstone's report contained the following:-

- ESCC budget. This had been passed with some slight alterations.
- Had spoken at the recent ESCC Planning meeting in support of the Mark Cross slip road closure. Is concerned that this may have the undesired effect of actually increasing vehicle movements past the schools, as the remaining part of the junction will be realigned to enable easier access.
- Eridge Station.
- He has been made aware of issues with parking here and requests for additional double yellow lines to discourage obstructive parking affecting nearby residents.
- The location of the car park at Eridge is not conducive to easy access as to gain entry to the platforms two flights of stairs need to be used.
- It is not the intention of ESCC to fill other organisation's car parks and the situation had been exacerbated recently by weekday closures of the line between Crowborough and Uckfield for platform extension work; users of the latter station, and Buxted, find it more convenient to park at Eridge than Crowborough. Hopefully when the work is completed the situation will improve.
- It was pointed out by Councillors that, even if yellow lines were marked, the Police will not be enforcing restrictions unless an obstruction is created.

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- Recommends that the matter is placed on the agenda of the June SLR meeting with ESCC Highways Officers if issues persist.

**Cllr. P. Dixon's (WDC) report contained the following:-**

**STEEL CROSS**

As you may be aware Wealden won the Judicial Review in the High Court on the Steel Cross appeal. It was found that the Planning Inspectorate's decision was not sound and was therefore quashed because he had failed to consider properly the impact of nitrogen deposits and had not considered alternative sites. This will presumably be returned to the Planning Inspectorate for a new ruling. This is a decision that has been welcomed by the Council as the Inspector's decision undermined the Core Strategy and may have led to further developer applications in the area.

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Please contact me if you have any strong concerns on applications in the Parish and I will assist you with them. Any objection must be on planning grounds and must be submitted in good time. Once the decision notice has been issued, there is no appeal.

**COUNCIL TAX**

The council has decided to increase the WDC portion of the Council Tax by 1.9%, equivalent to about 7p a week for a Band D taxpayer. The government has given rural councils some transitional relief but we will still have to find savings of nearly £1m off the budget by 2020.

**DIGITAL INCLUSION**

Wealden are working on problems of lack of access to the internet and mobile phone coverage and are conducting a survey on network availability, which is available online until 18th April.

**TOURISM**

Wealden have published their latest tourist guide for 2016, which mentions Rotherfield! Always worthwhile visiting the "Wealden do" website for information on attractions and events in the district.

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

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

**PARKING**

A number of complaints about inconsiderate parking at Eridge – the problem exacerbated by rail works and extra rail users parking at Eridge. However, the yellow lines do need repairing at the junction of A26 and Groombridge Lane. Residents are currently trying to process getting yellow lines on one side of Groombridge Lane.

**CRIME**

I attended a campsite on the border with Crowborough where youths had been shouting abuse out of a vehicle every day as they passed. Happily I managed to apprehend the suspects by waiting in a layby near the campsite. These two youngsters have now made amends to the campsite owner via Community Resolution.

**PCSO SURGERY**

No attendees for my surgery this week. Next surgery is Wednesday 16 March 3pm at the Courtyard Café.

**e) Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016 for approval as a true record, and matters arising from these minutes.**

Draft minutes have been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting. It was RESOLVED that these were a true record of the meeting and that they be signed by the Chairman.

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

Numbers reference those of the agenda of the January meeting:-

2c) Letter sent as agreed.

2g) Current governance and policy documents circulated for review as agreed. Please provide Clerk with suggested amendments/amended documents so that these may be circulated in good time for them to be viewed by all prior to the consideration at the March Council meeting.

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

**a) Select successful Candidate for Co-option to the Council to fill the current vacancy.**

Cllr. Martin declared a personal interest as he undertakes work for the applicant. In accordance with the Council's Co-option policy members of the public present left the meeting whilst the candidate was discussed by Councillors. It was **RESOLVED** that Mrs. Louise Henrick be co-opted to fill the current Councillor vacancy in Rotherfield Ward. Mrs. Henrick was welcome to the Council and the meeting was briefly adjourned whilst the Clerk witnessed the signature of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office document.

**ACTION** Clerk to update Council records and contact list for publication and display in noticeboards and via Social Media.

**b) Recommendations of the Report of the Wealden Parish Remuneration Panel for 2016-17.**

Report circulated prior to meeting. Cllr. Clibbens noted that due to increasing workloads being passed down to Parish Councillors and that it may at some point be appropriate for these to be paid. Cllr. Standley (ESCC) was requested for his input on this matter based on his experiences as both a County and District Councillor. His opinion was that, even if the policy is adopted, this does not compel the Parish Council to then pay allowances to Councillors but would allow them be claimed if decided in future.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendations of the Panel be adopted but that at present no allowances will be paid to Parish Councillors.

**c) Receive and consider adopting final recommendations from Cllr. Curtis re: meeting processes.**

Final document is nearing completion but was not available in time for this meeting. Council Chairman stated that he viewed the review of Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference as key to increasing Committees' delegated powers and financial responsibilities, and as a high priority to be completed in time for review at the March PCM. This work would support Councillor Curtis recommendations.

**ACTION** Cllr. Curtis to circulate completed draft document and Clerk to add to March Council meeting agenda for consideration.

**d) Consider supporting Rotherfield St Martin's application to WDC for a shared Parish Council and RSM Community Warden part funded by Sussex Police and WDC.**

Cllr. Curtis is currently awaiting more information from RSM before this can be properly considered. Application form from RSM, together with Chairman's comments, was circulated prior to the meeting. Jo Evans of RSM gave a presentation regarding the proposal and the aspiration that funding from WDC would enable the employment of a befriender to support the vulnerable in the Community. **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council fully support this proposal and that a letter of support be provided for the application.

**ACTION** Chairman and Cllr. Watts to draft letter for presentation via Clerk to RSM.

**e) Highways Lighting and Transport Committee. Review Chair and Vice Chair arrangements in view of increasing workload for this Committee.**

Cllr. Clibbens has tendered his resignation as Chairman of this Committee due to increasing workloads from his business, also the increasing workload being placed on this Committee. Cllr. Martin has indicated his willingness to take over as Chairman and it was **RESOLVED** that he be appointed unopposed to this role. The following were also **RESOLVED**

- Cllr. Watson-Smith be appointed unopposed as Vice Chairman.
- Councillors Clibbens and Kitchenham are appointed as "Advisors to the HLT Committee".

The Council thanked Cllr. Clibbens for his work as Chairman of this Committee over the past years. Cllr. Henrick indicated that she would like to be a member of this Committee.

**ACTION CLERK** to update records, and add item to agenda of 10<sup>th</sup> March Highways Committee meeting to consider appointment of Cllr. Henrick to the Committee.

**f) Report and decision regarding lamp columns in Parish identified by ESCC as requiring replacement.**

- An inspection undertaken on behalf of ESCC reveals that column 34 in Catt's Hill is in need of urgent replacement at a cost of £1236.71 plus VAT, this for a 6m LED lantern replacement (current column is 5m). To save a substantial cost from EDF if the column removed fully prior to a decision on replacement Clerk has authorised that it be "chopped off" at 2m and the power supply made safe at a cost of £126.

The inspection also advised that 11 further columns in various locations are recommended for replacement within a year. Concerns were expressed that the condition of the lights had been identified by ESCC inspection before they reached the stage where urgent action was needed and the following actions were **RESOLVED** for the Clerk.

**ACTION**

- Add item to agenda of forthcoming Highways Committee meeting to agree what action is to be taken regarding replacement with consideration given to the actual benefits of the lights identified in relation to their locations with the view to possible removal.
- Concerns to be raised with ESCC Lead Member for Highways regarding the inspection regime for these items; also querying why, with regular maintenance under contract by ESCC, so many columns suddenly had less than 1 year remaining before replacement was essential.
- Details of report to be obtained from ESCC so that condition of other lights may be established.
- Cover offered by our ESCC maintenance contract to be established.

**g) Report and update from the Emergency Planning Group.**

Group has looked at risks of snow or flooding causing major disruption, plus other causes such as cattle disease and power interruption. The following items remain to be investigated:-

- Vulnerable and housebound people in the Community – this to be discussed with Rotherfield St Martin.
- Availability of a "4x4" group to help during times of snow.
- What support is given by utility providers to the vulnerable in the community when utility supplies are interrupted?

**ACTION.** Group to provide written report for circulation at the March Council meeting, CLERK to add item to agenda of this meeting.

**h) Report and update from the War Memorial Working Party.**

Council Chairman updated the Council regarding this project; he is now of the view that external rather than Parish Council funding should be sought for this project, and that the £5K included in the 2016/17 should instead be reallocated to the Highways budget. The initial meeting of this Group was attended by 3 Parishioners (2 of them British Legion) and 7 Councillors. It scoped out the project, including

design options, likely costs, sources of funding and a plan to test Parishioners' support. Council Chairman was voted into role of Group Chairman and the Meeting assigned 17 actions to Members.

**ACTION CLERK** to add item to March PCM agenda to consider reallocation of budget and add item to April agenda to receive progress report from the Working Group. Draft report of the Group is to be circulated to all Councillors.

**i) Information regarding Clerk's Holiday dates, and arrangements for meetings during these periods.**

- Currently agreed is Monday 1<sup>st</sup> August to Friday 19<sup>th</sup> 2016. P&B meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Requested 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> April (P&B meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup>, agenda for 12<sup>th</sup> April R&B needs posting no later than the 7<sup>th</sup>).
- Requested 31<sup>st</sup> May – 3<sup>rd</sup> June (no meetings but agenda for P&B meeting of the 7<sup>th</sup> needs posting no later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> June).

RESOLVED that these dates be agreed.

**j) Agreement of editorial text for 2016-17 Parish Guide.**

Circulated to Cllrs. in advance of the meeting. RESOLVED that Cllr. Watts add some amendments to the text to raise the profile of Mark Cross, and that this be forwarded to the Clerk for final check and submission to publisher.

**k) WD/2015/2852/F Hadley Cottage, High Cross, Rotherfield, Crowborough, TN6 3QB.**

Self-erect conservatory on the rear of the property, supplied by Conservatory Land.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to the Wealden District Council Planning Officer dealing with this application that it be APPROVED, as it will enhance the facilities of the property.

**l) WD/2016/0190/F Saxon View, Tunbridge Wells Road, Mark Cross, TN6 3PL.**

Extension and alterations.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to the Wealden District Council Planning Officer dealing with this application that it be APPROVED, as it will enhance the facilities of the property. The increased size will still be within the scale of the neighbouring properties.

**3. TO RECEIVE AND ADOPT COMMITTEE MEETINGS MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING.**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016 – Planning and Building Committee.
- 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016 – Communications and Social Media Committee.
- 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016 – Recreation and Burial Committee.

Draft minutes of the above meetings have been circulated and it was RESOLVED that they all be adopted by the Council.

**4. TO RECEIVE OTHER REPORTS**

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

War Memorial Working Party – see 2h) above.

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

Cllr. Gilbert has attended the recent meeting of the Village Hall Committee at which no items of concern to the Parish Council were raised.

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

Is compiling an action log and will complete and circulate when workload permits.

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

- Article re: vehicle speeding and what action is feasible to address this.

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- Report to be featured in May edition regarding the War Memorial project.  
Clerk reminded the meeting that the deadline for submission of articles is around mid-month for the edition published on or around the first of the following month.

## 5. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

- **Bank Reconciliation as at end of January 2016 & review of expenditure against Budget to date.**

Credit Balances as at 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016:

**Current account** £47,803.98

**Deposit account** £36,624.54

Credits listed below are included in these balances. £20K to be transferred from current to deposit account.

- **Approval of Payments and signature of Direct Debit for auto enrolment pension payments.**

### List of Payments, cheques and receipts for February 2016 meeting

Date Paid	Payee Name	Chq no.	Amount	Authorisation	Transaction Detail
18/02/2016	Information Commissioner's Office	Direct debit	£35.00	Jan 2016 PCM	Annual subscription
25/02/2016	Trevor Thorpe	802077	£1,516.00		February salary
25/02/2016	H M R C	802078	£496.79		February tax and NI
25/02/2016	Trevor Thorpe	802079	£53.79		February mileage/expenses
25/02/2016	SSALC Ltd	802080	£13.60		2016 Good Cllr. Guide
25/02/2016	Rotherfield Village Hall	802081	£23.20		January room hire
25/02/2016	Teambase	802082	£23.99		Teambase
25/02/2016	Lucinda Watts	802083	£87.00		Reimbursement for Facebook ads
25/02/2016	Dixon Hurst Ltd	802085	£2,282.28	Sep. 2015 PCM	Rotherfield-Jarvis Brook path
25/02/2016	A.C. Moaby	802086	£365.00		Maintenance/repair work
<b>Total payments</b>			<b>£4,896.65</b>		

### List of receipts - current account

	Payer	Reference	Amount	Transaction Detail
23/02/2016	Rotherfield Primary School	ROTH1002	£500.00	Contribution toward pitch care
<b>Total Receipts</b>			<b>£500.00</b>	

### List of receipts - deposit account

01/02/2016	Santander Bank		£12.55	January interest
<b>Total Receipts</b>			<b>£12.55</b>	

## 6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee – minutes of their recent meeting including suggestion re: bus shelters at Eridge Station – item added to the agenda of the forthcoming Highways Committee agenda.
- Sussex Heritage Trust Awards 2016 – request for nominations, closing date 8<sup>th</sup> April.
- Tower Mint – Details and sample of HM Queen Elizabeth 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday commemorative medals.
- Sussex Police – information and invitation to 1<sup>st</sup> April meeting to present and discuss the Local Policing Plan. Those wishing to attend please advise the Clerk.

## PLANNING ITEMS

- **TM/2015/0251/TPO** Crown reduce by 20% and cut back branches to boundary on one Lime Tree within Tree Preservation Order (Rotherfield) No 17, 2002  
The Priory, North Street, Rotherfield TN6 3LX (information only).  
**WD/2015/2771/F** Holly Grove Farm, Castle Hill, Rotherfield, TN6 3RR  
New entrance driveway A/W.
- **WD/2015/2265/F** Shannon House, Eridge Road, Boars Head, East Sussex TN6 3HD  
Proposed detached garage A/R.
- **WD/2015/2533/F** Kingsbury House, Five Ashes Road, Rotherfield TN6 3RS  
New access for residential storage building R/R.
- **WD/2015/2583/LB** 2 Chapel Cottages, Church Road, Rotherfield, TN6 3LF  
Provision of breathable coating to rear elevation A/R.
- **WD/2015/2742/F** Land Adj Kilnside, Tunbridge Wells Road, Mark Cross TN6 3PP
- The erection of two semi-detached dwellings. a reduced scale submission following the withdrawal of original submission. A/A.
- **WD/2015/2808/F** Bramley, New Road, Rotherfield, TN6 3JR  
Double storey side extension incorporating room in roof. A/A.

## 7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

No items identified as requiring action by the Council, and no concerns raised by Parishioners.

## 8. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016 – Highways Lighting and Transport Committee
- 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016 – Planning and Building Committee
- 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 – Communications and Social Media Committee. CLERK to confirm that meeting room has been booked.

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

31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 – March Council meeting. Currently scheduled to start at 19:30 in Mark Cross Village Hall but there is uncertainty as to whether room will be available if sale has completed. Clerk advised that the Parish Council Room was available and this will be used as the venue for this meeting.

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

- **CLERK** to enquire of other Parishes if they record their meetings as an aid to compilation of minutes and if this reduces Clerk's workload.
- **CLERK** to request mole catcher to undertake further visit to the Recreation Ground.
- **CLERK** to liaise with Cllr. Watson Smith to arrange visit of representative of company providing planters to give a presentation at the forthcoming Recreation and Burial Committee meeting.
- Councillors are encouraged to send photos of their activities undertaken for the Parish so that these may be added to Twitter and Facebook.
- **CLERK** to add item to April agenda regarding possibility of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme for the Parish.
- Reports received of increased large vehicle activity on Sheriff's Lane. Considered that this may be due to roadwork activity on the B2101.
- Clerk reported that street sweeper has found a broker to cover increased Public Liability Cover at £10m but has requested increase in hourly rate to cover this.

**ACTION CLERK** to add to agenda of 8<sup>th</sup> March Highways Committee meeting to consider this and matters relating to H&S associated with the work.

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 22:10

**10. PUBLIC FORUM.**

None.

**Confirmed as a true record and signed at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 meeting of the Council**

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