

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 23RD JULY 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. G. Cahan	Cllr. D. Hiles	Cllr. G. Watson-Smith
Cllr. C. Clibbens		Cllr. N. Wickenden

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe.
- Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC) and Cllr. P. Dixon (WDC).

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING:-

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

Apologies were submitted and accepted from Cllr. J. Whitehead, Cllr. J. Kitchenham and PcsO Julie Pearce-Martin. Cllr. F. Whetstone submitted an apology after the meeting.

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.

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

Follow up on items from June report:-

B2100

Another incident has occurred at the King's Arms junction and Cllr. Standley has made officers at ESCC aware and will follow up in writing to keep the pressure on for the investigatory work to be completed as soon as possible.

Eastbourne and Hasting Hospital Trust

As Councillors will probably have seen on the news, the Chief Executive has now resigned. The second Care Quality Commission report has not yet been published but this is expected in the next couple of weeks.

Devolution

The main topic at the Local Government Conference 2 weeks ago was devolution. West Sussex/East Sussex and Surrey have now sent a letter of intent to form a partnership. This is unlikely to be as extensive as Dev-Manchester, where the combined authority are now also responsible for the health budget, but will see greater co-operation between these authorities.

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Budget Pressures

The July Budget did not introduce any in-year reductions in central funding to Local Government, which was welcome. However, the expectation is that the Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn will see further reductions in spending on non-ring fenced Government departments, including the DCLG.

Summer Reading Challenge

The summer reading challenge for 4 to 11 year olds takes place in all libraries during the summer holidays. The challenge ends on Saturday 12 September. Children can sign up online or at any library. They read six books of their choice (printed books or e-books) and collect prizes along the way – there is no cost to enter the challenge. If the challenge is completed then children get a medal and certificate.

Employment

Job seeker allowance claimants in the County number 4183 – the lowest level since 1983 and representing 1.4% of its population.

Cllr. Dixon (WDC) report – key points.

- It was hoped that all Councillors had taken the opportunity to read recent press release regarding the 7km zone of protection surrounding the Ashdown Forest. The Court judgment on this does not change the requirement for screening of applications to ensure that they cause no significant harm to the Forest.
- Steel Cross development. The appeal against Wealden's refusal of this application bordering the Parish has been upheld. This is disappointing and if there are grounds to challenge this Wealden will probably do so.
- Council Cabinet has recommended reduction from 55 to 42 District Councillors. The recommendation has been passed to the Boundary Commission. There is various consultation stages in the process with a final decision unlikely before autumn 2016, any changes confirmed would be implemented with effect from the 2019 Council Elections.
- Wealden are organising the Food and Wine Festival at Bentley Wildfowl on the weekend of August 22nd/23rd to highlight local food, drink and cooking – admission is free.

d) Police Community Support Officer's report. Clerk delivered the report on PcsO's behalf.

July 2015

Has been on annual leave this month, so my report will be rather short.

Parking

Has dealt with a parking issue in Station Road concerning some builders' vehicles but happily this was nipped in the bud very early.

Police Property Act Fund

Happy to advise that £150 that applied for from this fund has been granted. This will pay nearly all the costs of providing Hi Visibility jackets and tabards for the children when they walk to Church and elsewhere in the Village.

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Rotherfield St Martin

I am working closely with Jo Evans from RSM on looking after a couple of very vulnerable Rotherfield residents. Would like thank formally recorded to Jo for all her support in the past few weeks and to say that Rotherfield is indeed lucky to have such a jewel in the Village.

Pcso Surgery

Most recent Surgery on 20 July was shared with the Council's Chairman. Unfortunately no one attended and raised issues. Next surgery is 24 August at 3pm at the Courtyard Café. The Chairman reported that he had agreed with our Pcso to hold joint surgeries when possible, also that thanks were due to the Courtyard for hosting, and publicising the Surgery via notices in the Café.

PRIORITIES

Pcso wishes to know if the Council wish these to remain the same, i.e. parking and Speeding.

It was agreed that these two priorities remain, also that Pcso be asked to keep an eye on the Recreation Ground during summer evenings for any antisocial activity and illicit alcohol consumption. CLERK to advise.

e) **Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on the 7th and 14th July for approval as a true record, and matters arising from these minutes.**

25th June minutes omitted in error, these will be carried forward to the August agenda for signature. The minutes of the 7th and 14th July have been circulated to the Councillors and it was RESOLVED that they both be signed by the Chairman as being a true record of these meetings.

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

Numbers reference the minutes of the 25th June meeting:-

2b) Items purchased and ready for presentation.

2i) Airport Commission's report was released on 1st July. Cllr. Curtis recommended that any public meetings regarding Gatwick Issues be deferred until the autumn; by then the impact of any noise issues over the summer will be known.

8) Signs ordered, Hall advised and requested to include information in booking conditions that these spaces are for "blue badge" holders only. Tony Moaby has been asked to rectify the rocking slab in the front of the Cemetery Memorial Wall.

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

a) Report and recommendations from recent inspection of the Recreation Ground.

- Clerk has recently identified a missing bollard toward the bottom of the car park and asked Tony Moaby to replace, also noted that the fence at the top of the bank to the lower pitch needed some maintenance; this is the Sports Clubs responsibility.
- A site has been identified for future use by the Scouts for fire lighting practice, and a further area is to be set aside for tent pitching exercises.
- A recent inspection of the Recreation Ground by Chair and Vice Chair had highlighted a concern regarding a sightscreen, this had not been laid flat thus raising the fear that it could be pushed over and cause injury. Clerk had not had the opportunity to write to the Cricket Club asking that this be dealt with but it was noted that the screen had now been laid flat.

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- Concerns that various items of sports equipment, particularly football goals, floodlights and sightscreen are being stored untidily on the old tennis court area, this restricts space available for possible future community uses and hinders Council's Contractors grass cutting.
RESOLVED CHAIRMAN to draw up a plan showing designated areas for inclusion in the addendum to the new Scout Hut lease, and diagram of required storage arrangement to communicate to the Sports Club. They are to be advised that any redundant items must be removed within ten days, CLERK to action.

- b) **Support for joint approach with other Wealden Parishes to set Wealden DC a challenge to make their consultation documents easier for Councils to read, understand and respond.**
This issue was raised at the recent WDC Clerk's meeting and it was requested that confirmation be obtained from individual Councils that they are happy to support this. The District Councillors present was invited to comment. It was agreed that, wherever possible, such documents should be in "Plain English", and preferably with a summary of main points. However, this must not compromise the legal aim of the document and, particularly for consultations regarding planning matters; care must be exercised, as there are lawyers who specialise in identifying ambiguities in wording that could lead to the whole purpose of the document being compromised. It was RESOLVED that the Council supported the aim of the WDC Clerk's meeting to encourage all consultations to be easy to read and understand, with summaries of key points.

- c) **Update and information on recommended action to raise the profile of every Councillor with our Parishioners, and scope, benefits and cost of updating Council website.**
PowerPoint presentation shown by Cllrs. Cahan and Watts. This outlined benefits and costs of from various providers to produce an updated website. RESOLVED that this project be progressed with the new website being designed and hosted by parishcouncil.net. The Chairman, together with Cllrs. Cahan, Curtis and Watts, are to form a working group to provide recommendations of the "high level" content requirements, with further action to be agreed at the September meeting of the Council, CLERK to add item to agenda. Examples of Cllr. Profiles were circulated; Cllrs. are requested to produce their individual profiles within 7 days and forward to Clerk. Cllr. Watts is to take photographs of the Councillors to accompany these on the website. Cllrs. Cahan and Watts were thanked for their efforts with this project.

- d) **Council's response to the Consultation on the Proposed Modifications to the Wealden District Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan. Final date for receipt of response is 17th August.**
Documents circulated prior to the meeting. RESOLVED that the Parish Council do not support the modifications as will result in fewer affordable homes being built in the District and Parish.

- e) **Receive recommendations from Land Acquisition Advisory Group**
It was RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the discussion regarding this item under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. The matter involves approaches to local landowners regarding possible purchase of land for Community use and the landowners will be approached directly by the Council. Minutes of 14th July meeting, of the Group, containing recommendation details, were circulated to Councillors in advance of the

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meeting together with the Committee's terms of reference. RESOLVED that approaches be made as per the minutes of this meeting, CLERK and Cllr. Wickenden to action.

f) Arrangements for dealing with Council matters regarding urgent attention during Clerk's absence

i. Recreation and Burial matters

Burial Records to be passed to Chairman for safekeeping and local funeral directors to be advised and allocated two empty plots each in case of need. RESOLVED that CLERK liaise with Chairman regarding this.

ii. Scout Hut Refurbishment project

Cheques to be completed for the three stage payments, to be released once work involved has been "signed off". Details of schedule circulated. RESOLVED that completed cheques be held and issued in accordance with this schedule subject to work stage being signed off as satisfactory.

iii. Compilation and publishing of agenda for the August Council meeting.

Draft agenda to be compiled and passed to Chairman for additions, issue of summons to Councillors and display in notice boards no later than Saturday 22nd August.

g) Response to ESCC regarding request by the Catts Inn that seating be permitted outside their premises.

Photos and other information circulated prior to meeting. Chairman has discussed situation with the managers who stated that the outside seating had made a positive impact on trading. Other businesses in the Village with whom the matter had been discussed considered that it would contribute to the village. Cost of the ESCC licence to allow the seating would be £240. RESOLVED that Chairman speak with the lessor regarding this matter and, subject to further discussion and approval, the Parish Council may contribute toward the licence fee.

h) Parish Council representation at the Wealden District Association of Local Councils and at the AGM of the East Sussex ALC Ltd.

RESOLVED that Cllr. Curtis be the Parish Council's representative to the WDALC and that Cllrs. Thomas and Watson-Smith be the Parish Council's representatives to the East Sussex ALC Ltd. CLERK to advise these organisations.

i) Information and proposal to form a Council supported Business Development Initiative Group.

Cllr. Curtis has done the initial work on this and has met with the Chairman to discuss potential benefits. Council remains fully behind this initiative and a report from Cllrs. Curtis and Watts will be carried forward for delivery at the September Parish Council Meeting.

j) Review of existing signatories to bank account and appointment of additional signatories.

According to Santander, current list of signatories is as follows:-

C.Prince

L. Pike

N. Bolton

P. Halse Adamson

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All of whom are no longer on the Council. Recommend that forms submitted to remove them from accounts; this will save them the trouble of them writing individually. Other signatories held in their records are:-

R. Harris

C. Clibbens

T. Thorpe

N. Wickenden

Cllr. Thomas is not listed, although there is a paper trail of letters to Santander from December 2013 from us confirming that Cllr. Thomas is to be a signatory and that Cllrs. Halse Adamson and Harris were to be removed. RESOLVED that Cllr. Gilbert be added as a signatory to the account, he is to complete form and return to Clerk for action. Despite not being stated on the form Santander's call centre have confirmed that photocopies of the id documents required are acceptable. Clerk's recommendation is that after Scout Hut project is completed and September precept received from WDC we transfer banks.

k) Update regarding plans for the future Mark Cross Village Hall.

As Cllr. Kitchenham has tendered an apology for absence for this meeting this item is to be carried forward to the August agenda.

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

The meetings of the Highways, Lighting and Transport, and Planning and Building Committees scheduled for the 7th and 14th July respectively were redesignated as Council meetings to allow further discussion regarding the Scout Hut project. These minutes have been dealt with under item 1e) above.

4. TO RECEIVE REPORTS

• Other committees and sub-committees.

– **Land Acquisition Advisory Group**
See 2e) above.

– **Scout Hut Renovations Project**
Work has now commenced on site.

• Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.

Cllr. Gilbert reported the following from the recent meeting of the Village Hall Committee:-

- Hedge at side of Hall needs to be cut more often as it impedes access to the bins. CLERK to note and advise contractors accordingly.
- Not practical to share bin costs. Hall bin is larger and is emptied weekly and the Hall are unable to reclaim Vat unlike the Council. Cllr. Gilbert has masked the "Recycling..." wording on the Council's bin to eliminate confusion.
- Hall is to investigate outside lights which are permanently on, and generating a complaint from a nearby property. External lights relating to fire exits are required to be on permanently.

• Clerk's report and issues.

None.

• Items for next Parish Magazine column.

Cllr. Harris is to be interviewed by Cllr. Watts for the September edition. It is suggested that clarification of the actual cost to the Council of the Scout Hut project is clarified in this as figures being quoted anecdotally are in excess of the actual amount. It was mentioned that, if the time

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expended by the Council, Clerk, Rotherfield Trust and the Scouts Group had been fully costed it would be a considerable sum.

5. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

• Bank Reconciliation as at end of June 2015 and review of expenditure against Budget to date.

Clerk reported that the summer months were when the Council's spending was the greatest. The footpath work in the Cemetery, and Chant Lane improvements had cost in excess of £10K after allowing for the reclaimable VAT element, a £500 contribution toward the latter project has been agreed by ESCC. The cheques issued for the three stage payments of the Scout Hut project had distorted this month's figures, as the cost will be covered by the grant from Rotherfield Trust and reclaim of the VAT element by the Council. Review of budgets will take place at September meeting to agree transfer between budget headings. Clerk is to arrange transfer of £45600 from deposit account to current; this is made up of the first stage payment and its VAT, plus the Vat element of the second and third stage payments. Once the project has finished and funds received from Rotherfield Trust and HMRC for the VAT element monies will be transferred back. RESOLVED that the bank reconciliation and budget report be approved.

• Approval of Payments.

Clerk advised that he has written and telephoned provider of the picnic benches to get an invoice from them, also make arrangements for a cover for the Cemetery Bin – no response received yet. It was RESOLVED that the following payments be made:-

List of Payments to be made between 23/07/2015 and 29/08/2015

Date Paid	Payee Name	Chq. No.	Amount	Transaction Details
23/07/2015	Trevor Thorpe	801970	£1,516.00	July Salary
23/07/2015	H M R C	801971	£496.99	July Tax and NI
23/07/2015	Trevor Thorpe	801972	£100.48	Expenses, mileage, phone, room
23/07/2015	Trevor Thorpe	801972	£40.99	Leaflet holders A5*
23/07/2015	Trevor Thorpe	801972	£93.72	Long service gifts*
23/07/2015	Trevor Thorpe	801972	£7.97	Stationery items*
23/07/2015	Rotherfield Sports Club	801973	£1,300.00	Pitch cutting costs
23/07/2015	BBS Building Control Ltd	801974	£400.80	Building Control Costs*
23/07/2015	SSALC Ltd	801975	£60.00	New Cllr. Training*
23/07/2015	Vision ICT Ltd	801976	£156.00	Website hosting and support*
23/07/2015	Direct365Online Ltd	801977	£431.23	Bin fee and doc. Costs*
23/07/2015	Coppard Plant Hire Ltd	801978	£450.00	Drain clearing hall car park*
23/07/2015	Coppard Plant Hire Ltd	801979	£5,796.00	Chant Lane surface work*
23/07/2015	East Sussex County Council	801980	£455.64	Replacement lantern*
23/07/2015	Wealden District Council	801981	£315.12	Dog bin emptying Apr – June*
23/07/2015	Redgate Mill Fencing & Timber	801982	£3,720.00	New bus shelter Eridge Forstal*
23/07/2015	PJI Contract Packers Ltd	801983	£417.60	July sweeping and picking*
23/07/2015	Tollwood Garden Service	801984	£930.00	Grass and hedge work July
23/07/2015	A.C. Moaby	801988	£630.00	Work in Recreation Ground

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23/07/2015	Rotherfield Village Hall	801989	£69.00	Meeting room hire June
30/07/2015	Inca Developments Ltd	801985	£34,200.00	Scout Hut Project*
13/08/2015	Inca Developments Ltd	801986	£34,200.00	Scout Hut Project*
27/08/2015	Inca Developments Ltd	801987	£34,200.00	Scout Hut project*
Total Payments			<u>£119,987.54</u>	

Amounts shown for items marked* include VAT which is recoverable by the Council. Further work is due in Chant Lane to amend the camber to allow water to run off correctly, cheque for this work is to be held until this has been completed.

6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- CPRE – Summer 2015 Review and Sussex report for 2014.
- Spa Valley Railway – “Starter” magazine issue 54.
- Local Council Review- Summer 2015.
- Clerks and Councils Direct – July 2015.
- The Clerk Magazine – July 2015.
- St-Chéron en Bref – Editions 319 and 320.

7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

It was noted that sunken grave filling at St Denys’ still requires action. Missing bollard adjacent to Rec. car park has been reported to Tony Moaby for action, grass needs cutting behind the Clubhouse and there are low branches hanging over the path from the Pavillion to the Playground. CLERK to note and action. No other hazards were note nor have any reports been received from the public regarding any potential safety issues and the Chairman signed the inspection sheets.

8. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- August 4th - Planning and Building Committee.

There is only one application for this meeting, it is to be cancelled, and this application considered at the 11th August Recreation and Burial Committee meeting.

- August 11th - Recreation and Burial Committee.
- August 25th - Planning and Building Committee.

Dependant on number of applications received Clerk recommends applications be considered at the August Monthly meeting or as an alternative Chair, Vice and 1 other member may make decision on comments and communicate to WDC as per this Committee’s delegated powers.

- August 27th - Monthly Council meeting.

All of the above meetings are to be held in the Parish Council Room, Rotherfield Village Hall, starting at 19:30.

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

- Substandard repair to pothole in North St. made this morning by ESCC contractor. Concern raised by nearby resident, Highways have been contacted with the concerns with a copy to Steward and Cllr. Standley.
- Complaint received from Eridge Forstal resident that grass has not been cut alongside the A26 between there and the Village. She relies on a mobility scooter to get to Church, grass and low tree branches are impeding such that recently she has been forced to travel on the road. Area has appeared on several ESCC schedules for a visit from the grass cutting team but nothing has yet happened, Clerk has contacted ESCC and will escalate to the County Councillor for the area to try to get action.

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- Cllr. Martin has investigated cost of CCTV to monitor King's Arms corner, equipment of appropriate quality will cost in the order of £500. It is important that appropriate signage, policies and processes are in place to store and make available images captured as it will not be possible to rely on them as evidence against those causing accident damage if this is not so. Police are to be consulted regarding this proposal, item to be added to September agenda to discuss, CLERK to note. It was noted that a CCTV has been installed by the King's Arms to monitor the corner. Chairman recommended that Cllr. Martin contacts Pcs0 to obtain Sussex Police specialist in this matter.
- Cllr. Gilbert reported that footpath 42 – Chant Lane to Town Row Green was severely overgrown in places. CLERK to report to ESCC for inspection/action.

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 22:00

10. PUBLIC FORUM.

None.

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

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