

# 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 ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2011 AT 19:30 IN ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL.

### COUNCILLORS PRESENT

|                                   |                 |                    |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Cllr. L. Pike (Chair)             | Cllr. M. Hall   | Cllr. J. Padfield  |
| Cllr. Miss N. Bolton (Vice Chair) | Cllr. R. Harris | Cllr. D. Thomas    |
| Cllr. Mrs P. Halse Adamson        | Cllr. R. Jaques | Cllr. N. Wickenden |
| Cllr. C. Clibbens                 |                 |                    |

### ALSO PRESENT.

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

### 1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (LGA 1972 s 85).

Apologies were tendered and accepted on behalf of Cllr. A. Watson, Cllr. C. Dennison and Cllr. Prince.

### 2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

None.

### 3. TO RECEIVE DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS.

#### Cllr. Merriman (WDC) reported the following points:-

- ESCC Highways have indicated that they cannot support the application for the proposed affordable housing development in Town Row in the current form due to lack of pedestrian access. The final decision on the application rests with WDC and it is not expected that there is likely to be any further progress with this until the New Year.
- Has been speaking with neighbours and WDC regarding the proposed Court Farm development and believes that a decision is due shortly.
- Has indicated that he wishes to back enforcement action regarding gates erected without prior planning permission at a property off Spout Hill. Retrospective application has been received for this, together with several objections from neighbours.

#### Cllr. Padfield (WDC) reported the following:-

- There is a hearing to consider the Wealden District Council core strategy.
- The Olympic Torch will be passing through Crowborough on July 17<sup>th</sup>, the Town Council have been asked to contribute £2500 toward arrangements for this.
- A new telephone number – 101 – is in place to be used for any non-emergency calls to Sussex Police.
- Has recently attended a Planning Forum regarding 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 64% of Council tenants are receiving housing benefit and an 8.5% rent rise is planned for next year.
- The project for one single site at Hailsham for WDC is on time and within budget.
- The election for the Police Commissioner will take place in November 2012.
- Discussions continue regarding joint waste collection arrangements for Wealden and Rother District Councils together with Hastings and Eastbourne Borough Councils.

#### Cllr. Tidy (ESCC) reported the following:-

- Proposals for high speed Broadband in East Sussex are progressing, Central Government need to agree the final plans.

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- Between 5-10% of properties are out of reach of a good Broadband connection and these homes and businesses will utilise a satellite connection, total equipment and installation costs for these will be in the region of £300 per site.
- Children in care have reached record levels in the County. The criteria applied in deciding the children to be taken into care will not be raised, more resources will be applied to support parents in looking after their own children.
- A deposit of £5K will be required from anyone wishing to be a candidate for the elected Sussex Police Commissioner, this to discourage frivolous applicants. Additionally, applicants will not have access to the Government support offered to Parliamentary Election candidates for distributing literature.

A question was asked regarding ESCC readiness for winter weather and in particular snow ploughs. Clerk advised that locally the names of three farmers had been put forward as possible candidates to use County provided ploughs. Although it is understood that a plough may become available for Winter 2012/13 there are no funds to purchase additional ones for this winter. Concern was expressed at this particularly as Kent County Council has 180 ploughs available.

#### **Cllr. Whetstone (ESCC) reported the following:-**

- A network of 12 "Road Stewards" will operate throughout the County actively responding to reports of Highways maintenance issues and arranging for action. Their areas are arranged so that they all have approximately equal lengths of road to patrol.
- Has visited the site of the recent accident at Mark Cross and has asked the ESCC Officer responsible for information. Limited funds are available to implement speed awareness measures and allocation is prioritised on personal injury accidents recorded at sites. At Mark Cross these show 2 serious and 2 slight injury accidents in the village centre for the 3 years to the end of August 2011. It was acknowledged that a petition and report had been presented to County in 2005 regarding speeding through the village, this with the support of the local District Council member.

#### **4. TO RECEIVE POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS REPORT.**

- No report received as PcsO not present.

#### **5. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 29<sup>TH</sup> AND MATTERS ARISING.**

Cllr Halse-Adamson wished her name be added to item 7 of these minutes. This was added to the minutes in manuscript and initialled. It was RESOLVED that there were no matters arising and that the minutes be adopted. The Chairman signed the minutes.

#### **6. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS.**

##### **a) Response from Cllr. Halse Adamson to report regarding issues arising from Planning Meeting of October 18<sup>th</sup>.**

Councillor Halse Adamson expressed the following personal views regarding these issues:-

- Why had the matter of Councillor's not being formally appointed to Committee's not been spotted prior to this meeting and what had led to the issue being queried at the last minute?
- She had previously had conversations with other Councillor's regarding the Town Row affordable housing development proposal and felt that it would be recommended for approval by the Parish Council when it came before them.
- She regretted the loss of Cllr. Harris who had stood down from the Planning Committee on which he had served for many years.
- The possible loss of this development was regretted, there would be 26 families on the local waiting list who would also be disappointed.
- Parish Council policy should be to say "yes" to such developments.
- She hoped that the Councillors would raise this matter with the Ombudsman.

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- The Chairman pointed out that full membership details of the various Committees were shown in the minutes of the 17th May Annual Council meeting and that these minutes had been read and approved by the Councillors, and adopted at the 26th May Council Meeting at which all the Councillor's were present with the exception of Cllr. Prince.
  - Cllr. Wickenden, Chair of the Planning and Building Committee, expressed his disappointment that the 17th October Planning Meeting had not supported the application for the Town Row site.
  - Cllr. Hall stated that he was in favour of a development of affordable housing but felt that he could not support the Town Row application due to the Highways issues evident with it.
- b) **Council's response to the following consultations:-**
- i. **Boundary Commission - Proposed changes to the current Wealden Parliamentary Constituency.**  
Cllr. Merriman (WDC) has provided details of the District Council's response to the Commission regarding the proposed "The Wealden" Constituency, which would encompass an area of Kent. The Parish Council RESOLVED that the following response be sent to the Commission:-  
"The Parish Council are concerned that the "cross county" aspect of the proposed "The Weald" Parliamentary Constituency will mean that the effectiveness of the Parliamentary Member would be reduced by having to deal with issues involving two County Councils" CLERK to send response.
  - ii. **Wealden District Council – Review of Housing Allocations Policy.**  
Clerk has drafted a response to this, RESOLVED CLERK to copy draft response to Councillors and add to agenda of December meeting for agreement of final wording.
  - iii. **ESCC – County Waste and Mineral Plan.**  
Clerk has read the summary report and concludes that there are no specific issues for the Parish. RESOLVED to respond that the Parish Council view actions to reduce product packaging as an important part of any measure to deal with waste and that they are also pleased to note that there are no longer proposals for land raise sites in the County, CLERK to respond.
- c) **Quote for "part night" lighting conversion and low energy lanterns for street lamps in Spout Hill and other areas of the Parish.**  
Details of cost and estimated savings were circulated to the Councillors. 107 households have been contacted regarding the proposal with 16 replies received, 15 in favour. Request received to obscure part of one of the lamps in Sheriff's Lane that shines into an upstairs window, ESCC quote £70.18 for this. ESCC Highways suggest that we may wish to consider replacement of the concrete column lamps at Lodge Farm, Catts' Hill and by Longcroft Cottage if the budget permits, both of these columns are in the final batch for consideration for "part night" lighting. It was RESOLVED to accept ESCC quote for the work with the following changes:-
- Column 56 at Town Row Green is not to be "part night" converted due to security concerns of the owner.
  - The shading of the bracket lamp in Sheriff's Lane is to be deferred until the impact of the low energy bulb and "part night" has been discussed with the homeowner affected.
- CLERK to advise ESCC to proceed on this basis.
- d) **Quotations received in respect of invitation to tender issued for Parish grass and hedgecutting contract.**

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Six invitations to tender have been issued, four returned. The quotes were opened at the meeting and it was RESOLVED that the details be copied to the Councillors and an agenda item added for the 6<sup>th</sup> December Recreation and Burial meeting when a decision is to be made regarding the awarding of the contract.

**e) Information on RTC in Mark Cross on November 15<sup>th</sup> and update on Highways issues in Mark Cross village centre.**

The Clerk reported the following:-

- The 40mph VAS was checked on Monday and was working.
- ESCC Highways advise that no recent speed surveys have been undertaken on the A267 through Mark Cross or on the B2100 from the A267 junction to Town Row other than the one in connection with the Town Row housing development. Data has been provided for a survey undertaken last year near Biddenden Farm and Clerk will analyse and report in due course. Should PC wish to fund a survey these cost £330.
- Sussex Police have been asked for RTC data for the same sections of road for the last 3 years, details are awaited.
- Mark Cross Church, School and Nursery have all been contacted with regard to the slip road, signage for through traffic and extension of parking area.
- It is hoped that the bus shelter will be in place within the next 14 days subject to ironwork for the seating being received. Decision needed on colour of wood treatment. Cllr. Wickenden is to discuss this with the sponsor and advise.

Concerns were expressed by Mark Cross residents present at the accidents in the village centre, which are believed to be caused by vehicles exceeding the 40mph limit. They stated that in 2005 a petition was handed in at County Hall and a meeting held with Highways officers, nothing has been done since other than the installation of the 40mph VAS which generally disregarded by motorists. Cllr. Padfield considered that most of the recent accidents have occurred on the stretch of A267 between Brickyard Lane and the turning for the School and Church. It was recommended to the villagers that another petition be organised pressing for action by ESCC. RESOLVED that details of the petition could be put in the Parish Noticeboard and that the matter of reminder measures and reducing the speed limit through the village be put on the agenda of the forthcoming SLR meeting with ESCC in January. Cllr. Clibbens also offered to display details of the petition at Cuckoo Line Stores.

Cllr. Clibbens reported that the Speedwatch training was completed with 14 volunteers and one further candidate to be trained on return from holiday. A site has been approved in Mark Cross for speed monitoring activity by the group.

**f) Meeting schedule and venues for 2012.**

Details of draft dates were circulated to the Councillors and it was RESOLVED to accept the schedule with the Eridge meeting replaced with an additional meeting at Mark Cross Hall, CLERK to confirm bookings with venues and publicise details on the website and notice boards.

**g) Suggestion from a Parishioner regarding empty shops in the Village.**

The proprietor of a village shop has contacted the Clerk to suggest that the owners empty village shops could be encouraged to add some "window dressing" to improve the street scene. Clerk has enquired of WDC regarding this; they have encouraged similar action in Crowborough, response awaited. It was RESOLVED that CLERK investigate this matter further with WDC and whether this would affect the Business Rates of the premises in question.

**h) Dog fouling issues in the Millennium Green.**

Wealden no longer have a dog warden, Clerk has enquired of them whether they may supply suitable signs for here and Rochester Lane, reply awaited. RESOLVED to draft an article for the Parish Magazine and discuss a school

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poster competition with Rotherfield School and the Millennium Green Trust who organised a similar competition.

**i) Registration with the Information Commissioner within the requirements of the 1998 Data Protection Act.**

Clerk has investigated this prompted by an article in “the Clerk”. Considers that Registration is required, annual cost is £35. RESOLVED that CLERK arrange for registration.

**j) Progress update regarding Jarvis Brook to Rotherfield pathway project.**

No update received from ESCC, CLERK to carry forward to the December agenda.

**k) Correspondence and invitations inviting a response.**

- **Rotherfield Bowling Club** – Enquiry regarding Diamond Jubilee events for the Recreation Ground in 2012. CLERK to check with Sports Club and advise.

**7. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS & MATTERS ARISING.**

- Highways Lighting and Transportation 8<sup>th</sup> November 2011. It was RESOLVED that these minutes be adopted and that there were no matters arising.
- Planning and Building Committee 1<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2011. The minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> November meeting are to be carried forward to the December agenda as they have only recently been circulated.

**8. TO RECEIVE REPORTS**

- **Other committees and sub-committees.**
- **Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.**
  - Clerk reported on behalf of Cllr. Watson that she had attended the AGM of Rotherfield St Martin and the Village Hall monthly meeting. It is understood that the hall are not now progressing with installing solar panels.
  - Cllr. Clibbens advised that the second Speedwatch training session had been held today. In addition to himself and the Clerk four Parishioners had attended and had the chance to use the speed monitoring device in Station Road by the Millennium Green car park entrance. Other sites approved are near the entrance to Court Meadow, Town Row lay-by opposite Ormfield and Mark Cross.
  - Chairman has tried to speak with the Director of the Mark Cross Inn owning company regarding the concerns raised by him in response to the Council’s letter regarding advertising signs on the verges at Mark Cross. So far has only been to hold a long conversation with his Secretary. She promised to pass the information on to him and call back if necessary,
- **Clerk’s report and issues.**
  - Attended meeting at Pre School for final defects inspection, no major issues remain were raised.

**9. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION**

- Bank Reconciliation at end of October 2011. The RFO presented the figures, which were agreed and signed by the Chairman. The Bank has confirmed that Cllr. Bolton is now a signatory on the account. Clerk has received an approach from NatWest regarding banking and is making further enquiries of what they can offer us. CLERK to add agenda item regarding this for December Council meeting.
- Review of Expenditure against Budget to end of October 2011. The RFO provided the summary figures to Councillors and relevant detailed figures to the Committee Chairmen.
- Approval of Payments. After explanation it was RESOLVED that the following payments be made:-

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| CHEQUE NUMBER | PAYEE                     | DETAILS   | AMOUNT           |
|---------------|---------------------------|---|------------------|
| 801340        | Trevor Thorpe             | Clerk's salary for November   | £954.84          |
| 801341        | H.M.R.C.                  | Tax and N.I. for November   | £232.48          |
| 801342        | Trevor Thorpe             | Clerk's expenses for November   | £100.94          |
| 801343        | Jim Gander                | Street sweeping for November  | £131.25          |
| 801344        | SALC                      | Adjustment for Chairmanship course and Clerk's networking day                                       | £69.00           |
| 801345        | Coppard Civil Engineering | White lining costs for car park   | £720.00          |
| 801349        | Freedom Leisure           | Booking of Active Play session  | £63.16           |
| 801348        | Gwen Pritchitt            | Audit fee - November visit  | £194.50          |
| <b>Total</b>  |                           |   | <b>£2,466.17</b> |
| 801346        | H.M.R.C.                  | Replacement for cheque 801299 issued 30/08/2011 but not received by payee - original cheque stopped | £232.28          |

**Please note that cheque 801347 is spoiled**

### CREDITS

| PAYMENT FROM | DETAILS                         | AMOUNT           |
|--------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Santander    | Bank interest - October         | £60.55           |
| H.M.R.C.     | Vat reclaim 1/8/2011 - 31/10/11 | £1,038.90        |
| <b>Total</b> |                                 | <b>£1,099.45</b> |

## 10. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE GENERAL

- **South East Water** – Update regarding water resources situation.
- **East Sussex Fire and Rescue** – Decision regarding proposed merger with West Sussex Fire and Rescue is to be deferred until New Year pending outcome of the Local Government Resource Review.

### .CIRCULARS AND MAGAZINES

- **Saint-Chéron en Bref** - No. 279.
- **Sussex Area Ramblers** – November 2011 “Now Open”
- **The Clerk Magazine** – November 2011.
- **Countryside Voice** – Winter 2011.
- **Sussex Review** – Autumn 2011.
- **Clerks and Councils Direct** – November 2011.
- **Wealden DC Parish Bulletin** – Issue 12.

## 11. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS.

## 12. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- Planning and Building Committee – Tuesday December 13<sup>th</sup>
- Recreation and Burial Committee – Tuesday December 6<sup>th</sup> to include consideration of precept requirements.
- Monthly Full Council meeting – Thursday December 15<sup>th</sup>.

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

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

- Christmas cards will be sent to St Chéron, our street sweeper, ESCC Highways Team and WDC Planning department, a collection will be held at the December meeting for a gift to our street sweeper.
- Spout Hill hedge. ESCC have discussed with owner and the main visibility issue appears to be caused by growth on the Highways verge. After the leaf fall season is over they will arrange to tidy the bank and investigate drain clearance.
- Clerk has received confirmation from the mapping agency for TomTom “Sat Navs” that they have at last updated their records to show that Chant Lane should not be used as a through route.
- Concerns have been raised regarding a public lay-by near Mark Cross, which appears to be getting more difficult to access due to vehicles from nearby properties, CLERK to investigate and report.
- Chairman is attended the forthcoming Broadband conference.
- Planning application WD/2011/2484/F was recommended for refusal by the Parish Council at the recent Planning Committee meeting. Applicant had spoken to Clerk and was advised that the Council’s recommendations were not binding on Wealden District Council.
- Cllr. Padfield suggested that the Public Forum be held at the start of meetings rather than the end as this would not require members of the public to sit through the entire proceedings before being given the opportunity to speak. CLERK to add item to December agenda to discuss this.
- Vehicles have been parking on the grass area at the entrance to the car park, CLERK to investigate and report feasibility of bollards here.
- A contractor has reported that the condition of one of the Chestnut Trees in the recreation ground requires investigation by a tree surgeon as condition is worse than first thought, CLERK to add to agenda of forthcoming Recreation and Burial Committee meeting for consideration.
- The Chairman advised that he would be hosting light refreshments and drinks after the 15<sup>th</sup> December Council meeting.

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

## 14. PUBLIC FORUM.

A member of the public enquired whether additional 30mph signs could be placed on the B2101; currently there is none between the boundaries of the limit at Town Row and Church Road. They were advised that traffic regulations precluded this as in areas where street lighting is spaced at intervals of 183m or less no further 30mph limit reminders are permitted. It was also suggested that enquiries be made of Lamberhurst Parish Council regarding the process by which they had managed to get speed cushions and build outs on the approach to their village. CLERK to investigate.

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