

ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Working for the Community

in Rotherfield, Town Row, Mark Cross, Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 29TH AUGUST 2013 AT 19:30 IN MARK CROSS VILLAGE HALL

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

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

ALSO PRESENT.

- The Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe.
- No members of the public attended.
- Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC), Cllr. F. Whetstone, Cllr. H. Merriman (WDC) and Cllr. W. Rutherford.

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

Apologies were tendered and accepted for Cllr. A. Sharpe and PcsO Boyle.

2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER INTERESTS.

None declared. The Chairman reminded the councillors that they should declare an interest if they became aware of one at any point in the meeting.

3. TO RECEIVE DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS.

Cllr. Standley (ESCC) reported the following:-

- GCSE Results. 60% of East Sussex pupils got at least 5 A to C grades (2% increase on previous year). 11 schools, including Uplands in Wadhurst, Uckfield and Heathfield Community Colleges, got their best ever results.
- District and County Councils will have a 10% or greater reduction in central Government funding for 2014/15. The New Homes Bonus scheme will be changing, a percentage of this will, in future, be passed to Local Enterprise Partnerships; a consultation is taking place to establish what this percentage will be.

Cllr. Whetstone (ESCC) reported the following:-

- Acknowledged that results for some schools had improved, although others had not. His personal view is that there is still room for improvement.
- Fracking. No licences have been issued in East Sussex. In response to a question he advised that it is not known if any applications have been received. The investigations at Balcombe are to see if there is any likelihood of extracting oil by this process, not gas. Regulations for the process are extremely tight, even more so if the proposals involved an AONB.

Cllr. Merriman (WDC) reported the following:-

- He had been kept occupied with many complaints regarding missed waste collections and has personally taken some refuse to the tip on behalf of an elderly Parishioner who had not received collections. His own household waste collections have also been missed. It is hoped that the matters are getting back on track; any issues should be raised with him.
- Town Row affordable housing. Has visited neighbouring properties to discuss with residents their concerns about boundary planting. Considers it important the maintenance responsibility remains with the Housing Association long term and that tenancy agreements should state that the boundaries should not be cut by residents. Issues regarding the definition of the “gateway” condition in the WDC consent have been called in for consideration at a Planning Committee Meeting. He shares the resident’s view that the change of speed limit should be demarked by a physical “gateway” in the verge.

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- Briar House Farm. An event is believed to have taken place recently and reports have been received of more building work. Enforcement measures were agreed at the August 1st Wealden North Planning Committee meeting, he is requesting that a timescale be provided for the benefit of residents and the Parish Council.
- WDC Car Parking Review. Views invited from Parish Councils on car parking, particularly Eridge Station situation. Considers that pressure should be put on “Southern Trains” to find space for more parking and for ESCC to provide more restrictions to enforce usage. Clerk confirms that this consultation is on the agenda of the forthcoming Highways Committee meeting.
- Wealden Small Grants scheme information has been circulated to all councils in the District.

Cllr. Rutherford (WDC) had nothing to report but commented that he was pleased to see that the Parish Council was now “tweeting” and that he was commending our efforts to other Parishes.

Cllr. Standley reported the following in his capacity as the Leader of Wealden District Council:-

A response is encouraged to the aforementioned parking review. Among matters to be considered could be:-

- The split of short term/long term spaces to strike a balance between the needs of shoppers and workers.
- Possible decriminalisation of street parking which could permit enforcement by WDC directly.
- Charging in WDC car parks is not on the agenda.

Waste collections.

- Apologies were tendered on behalf of WDC who took ultimate responsibility for the issues had arisen after the change of contractors.
- Expressed concern that they had not used the April – July period before commencement of the new collection process to get to know the routes, particularly in the rural areas. Many routes and crews had been changed leading to unfamiliarity with areas where there were houses “tucked away”.
- Whilst some teething problems had been envisaged these were far worse than anticipated, switchboard had been overwhelmed with callers and staff had been drafted in from other areas of the Council to assist.
- The situation has improved, 97% of collections have been made correctly but with 64000 households in the District, it was acknowledged that the 3% of these is a significant number. 99.85% is the target figure for the contractors to achieve on a continuous basis.
- Cllr. Hiles joined the meeting at this point.
- Cllr. Standley has toured the District checking collections and speaking with collection crews.
- Cost of collecting waste represents approximately 60p per week of the Council Tax levied to each household by Wealden; the Wealden element of each household’s Council tax bill is approximately 10% of the total sum charged.
- Contractors had needed to enlist crews from outside the District, and work much overtime, to catch up. Council are looking how best to utilise the funds due back by way of penalty clauses in the waste contract.

4. TO RECEIVE POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS REPORT

The Clerk delivered the following report in the absence of PcsO Boyle:-

- A burglary occurred in Sheriffs Lane, personal items stolen.
- A container was broken into but nothing stolen Yew Tree lane.
- Parking outside General Store
 - 28/08 - 1000-1120 cars coming and going.
 - 21/08 - 1500-1600 cars coming and going.
 - 15/08 - 0940-1045 cars coming and going.
 - 30/07 - 0900 no cars parked.
 - 29/07 - 1100-1130 no cars parked.

The new District Commander, is holding a meeting for local council members on

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3rd September from 1pm until 3pm at Hailsham police station. Please advise Clerk if you wish to attend.

5. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25TH JULY FOR APPROVAL AS A TRUE RECORD AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES.

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th July 2013, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, be confirmed as a true record and they were signed by the Chairman.

6. UPDATE FROM CLERK REGARDING MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING.

Numbers relate to those on the agenda for this meeting.

7 d) Clerk has set up a "Twitter" account for the Parish Council and we may now be followed at "@RotherfieldPC". It would be appreciated if this could be publicised, Clerk has mentioned details in the Parish Magazine and Courier and will be adding notices to the boards to publicise.

9. Clerk is to seek a source for an "A" board, which could be used to publicise attendance of Councillors at events.

7. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

a) Decision regarding Parish Warden Contractor hourly rate, hours worked, public liability cover level and duties.

Details provided at July meeting recirculated. It was considered that there should be no change to the current hourly rate or hours RESOLVED these to be reviewed after 6 months, CLERK to add agenda item for October meeting and advise him of this. Chairman raised concerns that Council would lose his services and reminded that he undertook many duties over and above those listed for; also the job was advertised at an hourly rate on an employed basis subject to tax and NI, he was undertaking the work as a self-employed contractor and the hourly rate should reflect this.

b) Parking area opposite Mark Cross Church.

- i. Signing of Section 278 agreement in respect of extension work.
- ii. Signing of licence for installation of bollards
- iii. Quote for installation of bollards and decision on planting on this area.

Section 278 agreement provided by ESCC for signature, cheque for £5300 required, £300 of this relates to the legal work. £1000 cheque already held by ESCC for DCIF. RESOLVED to sign cheque for this work and hold. CLERK add item to agenda of Highways Committee meeting 10th September and circulate agreement for inspection by Councillors, also obtain quote from Tony Moaby for the bollards.

c) Possible acquisition of a Public Access Defibrillator. Further information and decision regarding provision in the Parish.

Comments from other Councils circulated prior to meeting. Funding may be available from the British Heart Foundation (BHF) subject to a contribution of £400 from PC. RESOLVED CLERK to proceed with Grant Application to the BHF for a PAD.

d) Decision on review of 2006 Parish Plan and updating.

Details of report arising from this circulated prior to meeting and Clerk summarised findings to those present. RESOLVED to form Sub Committee of Council Chair and Vice Chair, plus Committee Chairs. Report to be made to full Council with recommendations for any further action.

e) Production of a "Village Guide" now that supplies of the Guidebook are nearly exhausted.

Clerk advised that supplies of this are nearly exhausted with exception of a small quantity held by Cllr. Wickenden. Many councils throughout the Country (including several in Wealden) use Local Authority Publishing based in Upper Dicker to produce village/town handbooks at nil cost funded by advertising. RESOLVED CLERK to investigate cost to Council of producing a new guidebook to standard of existing one or use of Local Authority Publishing. Sub Committee to review finding and provide recommendations with a view to costs being incorporated into 2014/15 Budget and Precept.

f) Attendance at the Official Opening of Ellis Gardens and Padfield Close September 10th at 11:30.

Invitation has been sent to Mrs Padfield directly from Saxon weald. Cllrs. Kitchenham, Wickenden, Harris, Watson, Clibbens and Thomas indicated they wish to attend. CLERK to advise

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Saxonweald and enquire regarding timetable of events for the day, if there is to be a formal “ribbon cutting” and if Saxonweald intend issuing a press release.

g) Update and decisions on further action regarding claim for damage caused by diesel spill in the Village Hall car park.

DAS are the insurers who will handle our claim subject to £500 excess, which will be recoverable from the third party if the claim succeeds. RESOLVED the following:-

- Cheque for excess to be issued to DAS with request that damage is inspected as a matter of urgency by third party insurers so that they may consider consenting to area being brought back in to use.
- Letter to be sent to organisers of event expressing Council’s deep concerns that the incident was not reported at the time it had occurred as this delayed clear up efforts.
- Clerk to advise regular users of the Recreation Ground of reason for continued closure.
- Item to be added to September agenda to consider changing description of car park and insurance cover.
- CLERK to advise Culverden Engineering to proceed with repairs to barriers and provision of “shrouds” to impeded forced removal of padlocks, quoted cost £250.

h) Public Liability Insurance levels for hirers of Amenity Land and Recreation Ground. RESOLVED the following:-

- £2m cover required for “coffee morning” style events on the Amenity Land.
- £5m cover required for social events such as Easter Egg hunt or School Sports day using the Recreation Ground.
- £10m cover required for any events on the Recreation Ground using “Bouncy Castle” or other similar equipment.
- CLERK to add to agenda of forthcoming Recreation and Burial Committee meeting item to discuss insurance of pitch surface and drainage.

i) Clerks holiday requests.

RESOLVED to approve the following dates:-

- 2013 January 2nd and 3rd.
- 2014 14th – 17th April (4 days)
- 27th – 30th May (4 days),
- 11th – 23rd August (10 days provisionally).

Clerk has now completed 5 years’ service and contract provides for 25 leave days per year plus two “Statutory Days”.

j) Venues and frequency of meetings for 2014.

RESOLVED frequency of all meetings to continue for 2014 as follows:-

- Full Council meetings – monthly.
- Highways, Lighting and Transport, and Recreation and Burial Committees bi monthly.
- Planning and Building Committee 3 weekly to fit in with consultation periods for WDC.
- Finance and General Purpose Committee, meeting in December to agree budgets and Precept requirement for recommendation to Full Council. Meeting in April to review annual accounts.

CLERK to compile timetable and liaise with Rotherfield Village Hall regarding room availability, two Full Council meetings to be held at Mark Cross Village Hall.

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

The following meetings have taken place in August.

- 6th and 27th August – Planning and Building Committee
- 13th August – Recreation and Burial Committee.

It was RESOLVED that all these minutes both be adopted by Full Council.

9. TO RECEIVE REPORTS

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

None.

• **Councillor “Have Your Say” session.**

No meeting held in August, next session is in the Reading Room at Mark Cross Church, Saturday 14th 10:30 – 11:30.

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

Chairman had attended recent meeting of the Memorial Institute Committee. Work is to commence shortly on replacing the porch. A vehicle had recently struck this but fortunately, damage was not serious to the Porch. Grant toward the work agreed in principle at the December 2012 Council Meeting, amount not determined.

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

None.

10. TO RECEIVE FINANCE INFORMATION

Bank Reconciliation and review of expenditure against Budget to end of July 2013.

– It was RESOLVED that these be approved and the Chairman signed them.

Approval of Payments.

– It was RESOLVED that the following payments be made:-

PAYMENTS

CHEQUE NO	PAYEE	DETAILS	AMOUNT
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Payments are made using the General Power of Competence as contained in the Localism Act 2011. The Power was adopted by Rotherfield Parish Council at their monthly meeting held on 29th November 2012

001638	Trevor Thorpe	Clerk's salary for August	£1,329.04
001639	H.M.R.C.	Tax and N.I. for August	£413.28
001640	Trevor Thorpe	Clerk's expenses for August	£56.70
001641	Rotherfield Sports Club	August pitch grass cutting	£315.00
001642	Rotherfield Village Hall	Hall hire - August	£33.00
001643	DAS Legal Expenses Insurance Company Ltd.	Insurance claim excess for diesel spill claim	£500.00
001644	Teambase	Stationery	£23.93
001645	L.J. Head and Son	New tap in Cemetery	£68.40
001646	JAKK Country Furniture Designs	Refurbishing fingerpost at Town Row	£596.88
001647	ESCC	Section 278 agreement Mark Cross parking extension	£5,300.00
001648	Mr and Mrs Sweeney	Contribution toward water bill	£58.02
001649	Chiddingly Parish Council	Cost of unused training course space	£35.00
001650	ESCC	Replacement of lantern on column 70	£263.70
001651	Tollwood Garden Services	August grass cutting,	£1,290.00
Total			£10,282.95

CREDITS

PAYMENT FROM	DETAILS	AMOUNT
Santander Bank	Interest on 4711394 for July	£52.32
HM Treasury	Interest on 4% Consolidated Stock holding	£29.74

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Rotherfield Horticultural and Allotment Association	Allotment rental due March 2012	£425.00
Rotherfield Millennium Green Trust	Contribution toward dog bins	£63.38
Dignity Funerals Ltd	Right of Burial and interment fee	£235.00
Tester and Jones Ltd	Ashes interment fee	£55.00
Rotherfield Allotment Association	Allotment rental from March 2013	£510.00
Total		£1,370.44

- It was RESOLVED that the cheque currently being held in respect of the resurfacing work on Fp31a New Road – Kings Arms should be released to the contractors as the work has now been completed to our satisfaction

11. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING GENERAL AND PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE GENERAL

- **Catt's Hill Resident** – Thank you letter in respect of Council's efforts in successfully getting a 40mph limit introduced for much of Catt's Hill.
- **Chant Lane Resident** – Thank you letter for the clearance work carried out in Station Road and the footpath.
- **Locality** – Quick Guide to Neighbourhood Planning.
- **ESCC** – Invitation to send two representatives to the Parish and Town Council Conference, Friday 18th October 09:30 – 16:00 De La Warr Pavillion Bexhill.
- **ESCC** – Information regarding introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER).

MAGAZINES AND CIRCULARS

- **Wealden District Council** – Parish Bulletin 26.
- **Sussex Area Ramblers** – Now Open August 2013.
- **CPRE** – Countryside Voice Summer 2013.
- **Spa Valley Railway** – Spa Valley Starter Autumn 2013.

12. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS

The Chairman signed these; no safety issues requiring immediate action were noted.

Member of the public has reported missing fixing bolt at bottom end of rope "handrail" on climbing frame, CLERK to obtain new bolt for repair. No other comments have been received from the public regarding any safety concerns noticed on the Council's land.

13. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- Tuesday 10th September – Highways Lighting and Transport
- Tuesday 17th September – Planning and Building
- Tuesday 24th September – Recreation and Burial
- Thursday 26th September – Monthly Council Meeting

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

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

- CLERK to obtain additional quotes for tree work identified in the annual tree inspection report for consideration at the 24th September Recreation and Burial Committee meeting.
- CLERK to contact WDC to request inspection of trees bordering St Denys' as concerns had been expressed regarding safety of some particularly near Moon's Yard as they are swaying noticeably in the wind. Cllr. Wickenden requests to be present in his role as tree warden when their visit is made.

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- CLERK to add item regarding Chant Lane to agenda of forthcoming Highways Committee meeting.
- CLERK to investigate response to concerns raised regarding vehicles parking on verge outside Highgate Flats and suggestion for bollards to discourage this.
- CLERK to ask Sports Club for preferred location for the new bin by the Clubhouse.
- CLERK to send letters of thanks to those who have responded to hedge cutting request letters.

The Chairman declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 21:45.

15. PUBLIC FORUM.

None.

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