



**Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross,
Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas**

****DRAFT** MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD
ON WEDNESDAY 10TH MAY 2017 IN ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE
HALL**

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. R. Harris (Vice Chair)
Cllr. J. Cahan
Cllr. T. Gilbert

Cllr. A. Hardy
Cllr. D. Hiles
Cllr. L. Henrick
Cllr. J. Kitchenham

Cllr. J. Richardson
Cllr. A. Martin
Cllr. G. Watson-Smith
Cllr. N. Wickenden

Also in attendance were 58 members of the local Community and Cllr. Phil Dixon, our Wealden District Council representative.

1. Apologies for absence.

Cllr. D. Thomas, Parish Council Chair, together with our East Sussex County Council representatives, Cllr. R. Standley and Cllr. F. Whetstone, have all submitted apologies for their absence.

2. Introduction of Parish Councillors.

The Councillor's and Clerk introduced themselves to those present and summarised their roles and responsibilities.

3. Reports from District Councillors and County Councillors.

Cllr. Standley (ESCC) had submitted a written report which was read to the meeting by the Parish Clerk. A copy of the report forms a supplement to these minutes.

The key points of Cllr. Dixon's Wealden District Council (WDC) report were as follows:

- His responsibilities on WDC include Waste, Planning, Economic Development, Tourism, Housing and Benefits, and Licencing and Elections.
- It is unprecedented that a General Election should be following so soon after the County Council poll. Many Wealden staff are working long hours to deal with this.
- Due to the increased popularity of postal votes, there are 15 staff dedicated full time to process these prior to the Election. All such votes are carefully scrutinised to verify their details on receipt. Final date to register for postal votes is 23rd May.
- Creation of the Wealden Local Plan, started in 2015, and the final Plan was published in March of this year, although still subject to minor revisions. The aim is to have this document published in the Summer for consultation and inspection, with the final agreed document published in 2018.
- The impact of Nitrogen deposits from vehicles on the Ashdown Forest is far worse than first thought. This has led to a reduction of the number of houses in the Plan up to 2028. The new figure is 11456, 7392 of which have already been approved, thus leaving scope for 4064 further houses. Minimal development is likely in Rotherfield Parish during this period.



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- Waste collection/disposal. Kier have been the WDC waste collection contractors since 2013, Wealden is one of the best authorities in Sussex for recycling. Currently over 50% of WDC waste is recycled with only 1% going to landfill. The balance is dealt with in the Newhaven Incinerator Plant which generates electricity with the heat produced. Whilst the contract has proved profitable for WDC, falling prices for recyclables has led to agreement that the contract with Kier will end in 2019; a tendering process will be undertaken for a new contractor.
- A housing company is to be formed by WDC to assist in addressing the issue of lack of smaller homes for sale or rent for those entering the property market or downsizing. Any surpluses generated by this will go toward reducing Council Tax requirements.
- Work is proceeding to build a Crematorium near Horam to serve the WDC area. Currently the nearest are in Tunbridge Wells or Eastbourne.
- For 5 out of the last 6 years Council Tax has been frozen. This year there will be an increase of 2.8% in the WDC element of this.

4. Parish Council Chairman's report.

This was delivered by the Council Vice Chair, Robert Harris in the absence of Cllr. Thomas. Key points were as follows: -

- One Councillor, Lucinda Watts, resigned during earlier this year after serving the Parish's Mark Cross Ward for two years. We thank Lucinda for her work on behalf of the Community during her time on the Council.
- Consequently, there is now a vacancy for a Councillor and this will be filled by Co-option. Candidates for this are invited, please take an application form if you are interested or contact the Clerk and one will be sent to you.
- The Parish's County and District Council representatives were thanked for their support and help during the year.
- The Parish Council has various powers and duties under Acts of Parliament. Individual Councillors sign up to the Council's Code of Conduct and are expected to act within it.
- The Council and its Committees agree actions and expenditure thereon within the budget agreed each year; expenditure against budget is monitored and reported monthly to Councillors. The Council's Financial Regulations govern its expenditure.
- The Finance and General Purpose Committee agree the budget toward the end of the Calendar year, together with the money required (the Precept) from WDC to fund this. Final approval for the Budget and Precept must be by the Full Council.
- At eighteen square miles Rotherfield is the third largest by area of the 105 East Sussex Civil Parishes. Of the 2433 Parish residents (as calculated in the 2011 Census) 1100 live in the Village itself. The Council are mindful of the needs of the whole of the Parish.
- The bulk of our expenditure is on the maintenance of the Cemetery, Old Burial Ground and the Recreation Ground.
- This financial year the aim is to try and address and act on the speeding concerns raised regarding Rotherfield Village.
- Agenda are published at least 3 days prior to the meeting date for the all Council and Committee meetings. They are displayed in the Council noticeboards in Rotherfield



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Village (North Street), Town Row (Cuckoo Line Stores) and Mark Cross (outside the Church), also the noticeboard at Eridge Village Hall which is shared with Frant Parish Council. Agenda and other documents such as meeting minutes are shared via Twitter and Facebook with links to the Council's website.

- Our Parish Clerk, Trevor Thorpe, is the recommended first point of contact for Parish matters. He is our sole paid employee and holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA). He also liaises with the District and County Councils and other organisations regarding Parish matters and controls the bank account and accounting records.

5. War Memorial project report.

Cllr. Adrian Hardy, Vice Chair of War Memorial Working Group, delivered this report. The "PowerPoint" presentation which accompanied it is available to download and view from the Parish Council website at [War Memorial presentation](#). Key points were as follows: -

- The Parish Council support the provision of a War Memorial on Court Meadow Green.
- There are Memorial Plaques located in St Denys' Church, Parish Council Room in Rotherfield Village Hall, Rotherfield Memorial Institute and Mark Cross Church. The Memorial Plaque formerly in Mark Cross Village Hall is in safe keeping pending relocation. However, Rotherfield is the only village in Sussex without a dedicated War Memorial.
- A Working Group has been set up, with members from the Parish Council and local branch of the Royal British Legion, to consider the matter.
- Two designs have been chosen and the one of "traditional" style is the only option acceptable to the Wealden District Council Conservation Officer, the chosen location being in the Village Conservation Area.
- A Planning Application is being drawn up and it is hoped to put proposals to the May Parish Council meeting; details of the proposed design are also on display in Village businesses.
- Sources for funding are being investigated, please contact the Clerk if you are aware of any suitable.
- A British Legion member is researching names for inclusion on the Memorial and has already discovered some names from the Village that feature on the Crowborough War Memorial.

Questions and comments were then invited from those present: -

Q. How much is the Memorial likely to cost?

A. Indicative figure for cost is in the region of £15-20K.

Q. Why has Court Meadow Green been chosen as the location? Could it be incorporated in the Church Wall?

A. The Church authorities did not wish to give consent to a Memorial in the Church Wall. Court Meadow Green was selected due it being in the heart of the



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Village, adjacent to the Church and a suitable gathering place for laying of wreaths on Remembrance Day and observance of the two-minute silence.

- Q. It is not clear from the illustrations as to the height of the proposed Memorial?
- A. Conservation Officer requires that the Memorial be no higher than the railings bordering St. Denys' Churchyard behind the proposed site.
- Q. Could it be situated in the Parish Cemetery in Eridge Lane?
- A. As previously noted the site chosen is easy to access for the Remembrance Day service which would not be the case if at the Cemetery.

A Parishioner present commented that the Committee formed in 1919 to consider a Memorial to those who perished in the Great War had considered various options. It had ultimately decided that Memorials would consist of Plaques in St. Denys' Church and the Memorial Institute. His personal view is that if a Memorial is to be installed it should be a simple Cross in Rotherfield Square which would not feature names as these are already recorded on these plaques.

Clerk requested that views on the subject be sent to him to pass on to the Councillors.

6. Presentations from Committee Chairmen.

i. Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Cllr. Louise Henrick, Chair of this Committee, delivered this and the "PowerPoint" presentation which accompanied it is available to download and view from the Parish Council website at [Full Council documents](#). Cllr. Henrick was thanked for taking on additional responsibilities to support the Clerk. Significant items in the Budget for 2017-18 are as follows: -

- £5K to support the War Memorial Project.
- £5K to maintain the verge on the B2100 between the Village and Jarvis to make it safer for pedestrian use.
- £7K to support possible work to increase car parking.
- £6K to support possible traffic calming measures in the Village.
- £1K for work to extend the area for burials in the Parish Cemetery in Eridge Lane.
- A grant has been sought from the Sussex Lund grant to support work to tidy the Old Burial Ground behind St Denys' Churchyard.

The Council were thanked for applying to Sussex Lund to improve the Old Burial Ground.

Cllr. Henrick also reported on a meeting held recently between her, Cllr. Harris and Inspector Tony Wakefield who leads the Wealden Neighbourhood Policing Team based at Hailsham Police Station. The following key points were raised and discussed at this meeting: -



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- The reduction in Police Community Support Officers (Pcso's) had impacted deepest on the Wealden Neighbourhood which was now left with 12 Pcso's out of the former total of 40.
- Concerns raised regarding the lack of parking enforcement. Sussex Police are hopeful that the Wealden and Rother District Councils will finally agree to "decriminalise" parking with enforcement becoming a civil issue enforced by Council's. The Councils are not currently keen to follow this route.
- Incidences of dangerous parking and anti-social driving should be reported to the "Operation Crackdown" team at [Operation Crackdown](#).
- Community participation is encouraged in Neighbourhood Watch and OurWatch schemes, details of which may viewed on the Sussex Police website. Local crime statistics may also be viewed on the website.

There have been recent instances of anti-social behaviour in the car park to the rear of Rotherfield Village Hall and in the car park on the Mark Cross Millennium Green. The Parish Council have installed improved lighting to the rear of the Village Hall which is hoped to discourage this. It is strongly recommended that full details of specific incidents are passed on to Sussex Police.

Questions and comments were then invited from those present: -

A Parishioner expressed concern that the Police were abdicating their responsibility to enforce parking restrictions; this should be done by them not the Community. The Parish Council recommends that any incidences of dangerous parking noted should be reported to "Operation Crackdown".

ii. **Communications and Social Media Committee.**

Cllr. Jemma Cahan, Vice-Chair of this Committee, delivered this and the "PowerPoint" presentation which accompanied it is available to download and view from the Parish Council website at [Full Council documents](#).

She reported that members of this Committee and other Councillors aimed to attend Parish events to represent the Council. They had attended the 2016 Rotherfield School Fair, the Easter Egg Hunt on Good Friday this year and would attend the Mark Cross School Fair later this month.

Questions and comments were then invited from those present: -

Q. What is the target timescale for publishing draft meeting minutes on the Council's website?

A. Clerk advised that he aimed for these to be published within a week of the meeting.



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iii. Planning and Building Committee.

Cllr. Norman Wickenden, Chair of this Committee, delivered this and “PowerPoint” presentation which accompanied it is available to download and view from the Parish Council website at [Full Council documents](#). Key points were as follows: -

- It had been an “eventful” year for this Committee with two complaints raised by Parishioners with the Wealden District Council Monitoring Officer. Neither complaint had been upheld by him.

Questions and comments were then invited from those present: -

- Q. Phone mast adjacent to New Road at Highgate Farm. Is this still going to be erected? What is being done to improve the mobile phone signal in the Village?
- A. Wealden District Council granted permission for this in September 2016 and the applicant has three years from that date within which they may proceed. Council will make enquiries to establish if this is likely to go ahead.
- Q. Do members of the Planning Committee visit the sites relating to the applications that are received?
- A. Cllr. Hiles, Vice Chair of this Committee responded that there was no real need to visit sites as full information is provided regarding them by WDC. It is recommended that neighbouring properties affected by an application make their views known to both the Parish Council and WDC.
- Q. Are there plans to make the Ashdown Forest Nitrogen Deposit issue legally enforceable?
- A. Cllr. Dixon (WDC) responded to this. Damage to the Forest is covered by law, it is designated as a Special Area of Protection and Site of Special Scientific Interest. Where refusal for developments in this area have been challenged in the High Court WDC have won. The new local plan substantially reduces the number of houses in Wealden to reflect the impact on the Forest.
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- Q. What is happening regarding the recent application to build houses to the rear of St. Peter’s Church?
- A. The decision is awaited from WDC regarding this.

iv. Recreation and Burial Committee.

Cllr. Trevor Gilbert, Chair of the Committee, delivered this and the “PowerPoint” presentation which accompanied it is available to download and view from the Parish Council website at [Full Council documents](#). Questions and comments were then invited from those present: -



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- Q. Are there restrictions on burial of non-Parishioners in the Cemetery?
- A. There is no restriction but the fees for non-Parishioners are considerably higher to reflect that they have not contributed to the upkeep of the Cemetery via their Council Tax.
- Q. Who now owns the Scout Hut?
- A. The Scout Hut has been extensively refurbished and is now referred to as the Rotherfield Scout and Youth Community Hall reflecting that other organisations also use it. Ownership remains with the Parish Council and the Scout group pay a nominal annual licence fee for its use. In return they are responsible for running costs and routine maintenance.
- Parishioner then enquired if the Council could hold their meeting there, thus avoiding having to pay fees to hire the Village Hall. Response was that the Council pay the normal hire fee when using it as a meeting venue because the Scouts are responsible for the Hall's running costs.

The Council were thanked by a Parishioner for restoring the water fountain in the Church Wall to working order, funding for this came from a bequest of £500.

v. Highways, Transport and Lighting Committee.

Cllr. Adrian Martin, Chair of this Committee, delivered this and the "PowerPoint" presentation which accompanied it is available to download and view from the Parish Council website at [Full Council documents](#). Key points were as follows: -

- The Parishioner who had driven the campaign and petition for speed limit reduction measures in the Village was thanked for their work.
- A feasibility study will shortly be undertaken by the ESCC Highway's Contractor to establish what may be feasible in the Village centre to encourage observance of current or lower speed limit if implemented. Once the outcome of this is known cost details can be established.
- Resulting from the recent meeting between Cllrs. Henrick and Harris, and Sussex Police, the Police have requested information regarding vehicle speeds as recorded by our SID (Speed Indicating Device). This may support requests for them to monitor and enforce the limits in the Village.
- In view of additional houses being built to the West of the A267 at Mark Cross residents have requested that an additional crossing point be installed near Brickyard Lane. Currently the only traffic island to assist safety in crossing is located near the Garden Centre. A site visit has taken place with ESCC Highways Officers to investigate this. The recently introduced Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) may be a source of funding for this work if it proceeds.

The following concerns, suggestions and questions were raised: -

- Cars parked outside the former "George" Inn block traffic through the Village.



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- It is a shame that accidents need to occur to increase the chance of preventative measures being provided.
- Q. What action is proposed to address the lack of parking in the Village?
- A. The possibility of improving/extending the parking area under the bank between the Rec. and North Street is being investigated.
- Restrictions are of little use if not enforced, why not install CCTV in the Village Centre to monitor issues?
 - Police are not enforcing speed limits but the cost of speed humps, chicanes and bollards to physically restrict speeds is high
 - King's Arms was again hit by a large vehicle on May 9th, impact was sufficient to cause cracking to internal walls.
- Q. 20mph limit. If agreed and installed what parts of the Village would it cover?
- A. Envisaged that it would cover the section from the School to the King's Arms, and from Johnson's Pond to New Road junction with Mayfield Road, also part of Station Road. This would all be subject to the findings/recommendations of the feasibility study, funding and consultation.
- Q. Although there is talk of improving the roadside "path" by the B2100 Rotherfield Hill there is already a public right of way by using Footpath 22b and Bridleway 24e to reach Jarvis Brook. However, there are concerns regarding dangerous surface conditions on this route and barbed wire near the Golf Course. What can be done to improve this situation?
- A. An item will be added to the agenda of the forthcoming Highways Committee Meeting on the 23rd May regarding this.
- Q. In view of the success of the Council's Facebook page could it be used to run a "Safe Parking" campaign?
- A. Clerk will add an item to the agenda of the forthcoming Highways Committee Meeting regarding this.
- Q. In addition to the Council's SID what other speed monitoring sites are there in the Village?
- A. The DfT operate speed loops in Station Road and there are ESCC operated loops in Mayfield Road and Rotherfield Hill B2100 near the laybys.



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vi. Smith and Fermor Charity Report.

The Clerk gave details of this local Charity which is open for applications to benefit residents of both Rotherfield Parish and Crowborough Town. The annual report and details of the categories under which applications will be considered is to be displayed on the Council's website.

Two Parishioners expressed their thanks and support for the Parish Council's work on behalf of the Community, a vote of thanks was made and applauded. Than

The Vice Chairman thanked those that who had attended and the members of St. Denys' Church who had dealt with the refreshments. He then closed the meeting at 21:45.

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

Draft minutes subject to approval at the 2018