



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

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 2020 AT 19:30
IN THE PARISH COUNCIL ROOM, ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL TN6 3LX**

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. L. Henrick (Vice Chair)	Cllr. P. Kember	Cllr. J. Richardson
Cllr. L. Buck	Cllr. J. Kitchenham	Cllr. K. Rignall
Cllr. D. Hiles	Cllr. A. Martin	Cllr. G. Watson-Smith
	Cllr. A. Moore	Cllr. N. Wickenden

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None.

ALSO PRESENT

T. Thorpe, Parish Clerk, Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC), Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC),
Cllr. P. Dixon (WDC), Cllr. K. Obbard (WDC).

Two Highways Officers from ESCC in connection with item 3i)
and three members of the public.

Prior to the formal business of the meeting the Vice Chair suspended Standing Orders. This was to allow discussion of the recent resignation of the Council Chair, Cllr. Robert Harris, for which there is no agenda item. Key points were as follows: -

- Cllr. Harris has resigned from his role as Chair and as a Councillor.
- Cllr. Henrick expressed her and the Council's deep shock and sadness at this resignation.
- The usual "pre meeting" was held on Monday 24th February, this to review agenda items for the monthly Council meeting, "work in progress", Clerk's issues and items for future consideration by full council or committee. This meeting was fractious over various issues but in the opinion of both Cllrs. Henrick and Richardson these could have been resolved after a few days' reflection.
- Sadly on Monday evening Cllr. Harris emailed the Clerk and Cllr's Henrick and Richardson to tender his resignation, although in Cllr. Henrick's opinion the message was ambiguous. The view of the Clerk and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) is that the message was unambiguous.
- It is too soon to discuss the issues in detail, and they do not involve the whole Council although all of the matters could have been resolved.
- She hoped that Robert Harris could return to the Council at some point after a period of reflection.

Various Councillors commented on the matter and the key points of these are as follows: -

- Concern expressed that a fine "public servant" could resign at short notice, possibly due to a disagreement with Cllr. Henrick, and that the Council needed an explanation as to the issues surrounding the matter.
- Matters surrounding the issue should not be public as they may involve other Councillors. Concern that resignation decision was made in the "heat of the moment" and could have been resolved after a short period of reflection. It was felt that there must be a way of reversing the decision and would be horrified if this was not the case.

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- Clerk stated that the resignation process was that a Councillor's resignation is made to the Council Chairman, and a Chairman resigns to the "Proper Officer" of the Council, for smaller Councils this is the Clerk. Clerk considers that the resignation was unequivocal and there is no process for a "cooling off" period to reconsider, nor can the decision be reversed. The only way that he could return to the Council, assuming that he wished to, would be to follow the process as per the Casual Vacancy notices that will shortly be posted in the Council's noticeboards. Information had been obtained via telephone from the Surrey and Sussex Association of Local Councils (SSALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).
- In response to a question raised by a Councillor, Clerk advised that the resignation does not require to be accepted. The Councillor also enquired if investigations been undertaken to ensure that Cllr. Harris' email had not been "hacked" and then used to send the message. Clerk was of the view that this would be highly unlikely.
- A Councillor wished to know "what had happened" in the meeting to trigger the resignation. There had not been any detailed explanation to the Council as to the circumstances and he would not let it rest until detail was provided. Cllr. Henrick responded that the conversations within the meeting would remain confidential.
- Cllr. Henrick questioned that the resignation was only sent to the Clerk and copied to her and Cllr. Richardson. Clerk repeated details of the resignation process as given above and reiterated that it was not SLCC "rules" that governed the process but the Law relating to Local Government.
- A Councillor suggested that the resignation should have come before the full council. Clerk reiterated the details as above.
- In response to repeated concerns and requests that the full details of the circumstances prompting the resignation be disclosed Cllr. Henrick stated that if she had the power to reverse the situation she would and considered that focussing on the Monday meeting would not help the situation. She hoped that if given time and space Cllr. Harris could return to the Council. The Councillor raising the issue stated that he had no confidence in what they were being told about the circumstances of the resignation. He hoped that lessons would be learned from this matter.
- Further comments were made that, if Cllr. Harris were given time to consider the matter, he could return to the Council at some point.
- It was confirmed by Cllr. Richardson that the issue was in no way connected to the proposal for a long term plan for the Council or any of the valuable work undertaken either by long standing Councillors or those recently joining.

Standing Orders were resumed at this point. Due to Cllr. Harris' resignation Cllr. Henrick chaired the meeting. Chair proposed that item 3i) of the on the agenda be moved to appear following item 3d) as ESCC Officers were present connection with it. This was agreed.

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING: -

a) Public forum

- A Parent Governor from Rotherfield School was present and introduced himself to the meeting. He is lead for Health and Safety for the School, also involved with finance matters.
- He has two matters which he would like to discuss with the Council. The first and most important relates to the Health and Safety of the pupils in and around North Street near to the School, this mainly due to anti-social parking and associated anti-social behaviour. Clerk confirmed that there is an item on the agenda of the March 3rd Highways Committee meeting and that the subject will also be discussed at the forthcoming meeting with East Sussex Highways.

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- The second item related to the School's wish to expand its premises. Cllr. Standley invited contact from the parent regarding this project as he is the ESCC Lead Member for Education and Inclusion.
- **CLERK** to add an item to the March PCM agenda regarding the School's expansion plans.
- A parishioner who lives near to Eridge Station addressed the meeting regarding the parking issues in that area. Chair reassured that the Council were fully aware of the issues which they were trying to address. Cllr. Kember summarised the issues and what the Council hoped to do to regarding the matter and invited them to attend the forthcoming Highways Committee meeting for which there is an item on the agenda concerning this issue.

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

Cllr. N. Glynn had submitted an apology and it was **RESOLVED** that this be accepted.

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

None disclosed. Councillors were reminded that they should declare an interest if they became aware of one at any point in the meeting.

d) District and County Councillor reports.

- **Cllr. Standley (ESCC)** This report was combined with information regarding the B2100 long vehicle issue report as presented by the two ESCC Highways Officers present. The report explores all options, even those that were not feasible or practical, to address the matter.
- Many of the Councillors favoured an introduction of a 7.5t weight limit on the B2100 from the Mark Cross junction with the A267 to the King's Arms. This would encourage larger vehicles to use the B2101 Bicycle Arms road and, although they would still pass through the village, they would not pass by the Kings Arms area which suffers the most impact damage. The practicalities of enforcing this were raised.
- Cllr. Martin advised that many hours of CCTV footage from the Council's system had been scrutinised by him. Still images and reports were also provided by residents who were keen to see the issue resolved.
- Information regarding the length restriction has been passed to all Satnav providers; lorry drivers are under no obligation to use this navigation aid or, if they do, use the correct version for HGV's.
- The item features on the agenda of the 3rd March Highways meeting, also the forthcoming meeting with East Sussex Highways.
- Councillors are requested to review the report and put forward their favoured suggestions from those on offer so that they may be reviewed at the Highways Meeting. The most popular suggestions will be put forward to ESCC for possible implementation on a trial basis to gauge their effectiveness.

The East Sussex Highway's Officers were thanked for attending the meeting and for their assistance.

Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC).

- He considers that a barrier at Town Row to prevent large vehicles passing through should be considered as an option to deter HGV's.
- Railway parking at Eridge. Parking on the road not only saves cost, it also means that the commuter does not need to go "up and over" both sides of the footbridge to access the platform. He recommends that a petition be raised by residents affected and presented to East Sussex Highways.

Cllr. K. Obbard (WDC)

- WDC are in the process of appointing a Climate Change Officer.
- A Climate Emergency Parish & Town Action Day is to take place in April. A parishioner and a Cllr. from Rotherfield will be attending.
- There are various schemes in place in the Wealden Area to increase the number of charging points for electric vehicle.

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- There is a “Homelessness in Wealden” report due to be published in May.

Cllr. P. Dixon (WDC)

- He is trying to arrange a meeting with the tenants, freeholder and conservation officer regarding the Kings Arms.
- The Local Plan has officially been withdrawn. A new approach is to be made and further consultations will take place in due course.

e) Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 19th December 2019, 7th January 2020 and 30th January 2020 for approval and signing as a true record.

Draft minutes had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the report in item 3xi) of the 30th January 2020 minutes was submitted by Cllr. Kitchenham, not Cllr Richardson as stated, and a manuscript amendment was made. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of all three meetings be adopted as a true record and they were signed by the Chair.

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

- New website is now “live”. Thanks to Adam Hardy for his work on this, also the support of Cllr. Buck with the project.
- Circus in the Rec. Organisers have postponed plans for this but may return to us in the future. In deference to pitch maintenance activities it is suggested that the earliest that such an event could be held would be June 2021, subject to consultation with other users.
- Proposal for an Eridge Parish Council. Requested information regarding this has been provided by WDC and circulated to Chair, Vice Chair, Ward Councillors and our WDC representatives.
- Invitations to tender for a CCTV system covering the Village Hall area have been issued, responses will be considered at the March Council Meeting.
- Cllr. Rignall is now a signatory on the Unity Trust bank account. In the light of the recent resignation a further volunteer is sought for this. Item will be added to agenda of March PCM to review the current signatories. Any Cllrs. who wish to be added to please contact the Clerk.

2. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT END OF JANUARY 2020, REVIEW EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET TO DATE AND NOTE OR AUTHORISE PAYMENTS.

It was **RESOLVED** that these reports be accepted. **CLERK** to issue budgets and nominal ledger details to all Committees so that these may be inspected prior to any final entry or budget entries in anticipation of year end, agenda item to be added for March meeting.

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

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

Payee Name	Amount	Transaction Detail
Lloyds Bank Card Services	£96.01	Charge card payments January
NEST Pension Contribution	£273.88	Jan. & Feb. contributions
Amber AC Ltd	£192.00	Install AED cabinet at Mark Cross
Burns Guthrie & Partners	£4,692.96	Raising the Roof project fees
Paul Owen Associates	£4,722.00	Raising the Roof project fees
Phil Ireland	£320.64	Litter picking/road sweeping
Rotherfield Village Hall	£59.40	Meeting room costs
Coppard Plant Hire Ltd	£60.98	Barrier hire
TN6 Electrical	£120.00	Surgery lobby light replaced
Teambase	£25.32	First aid kit

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Trevor Thorpe	£1,593.67	February salary
H M R C	£480.68	February Tax & NI
Rotherfield Surgery	£135.05	Reimbursement of utility bills
Adam Hardy	£461.16	Admin. assistant costs
Trevor Thorpe	£584.05	Expenses and reimbursements
Rotherfield Surgery	£59.23	Veolia Nov 2019 collection
A. Martin	£636.00	SID and map board work/materials
James Valentine	£300.00	Groundworks various
William J Clark	£456.00	Hedge cutting/verge mowing
Teambase	£32.39	Ink cartridge
Burns Guthrie & Partners	£4,102.66	Raising the Roof project fees
Dual Energy Direct Ltd.	£235.98	January electricity bill - Surgery
Total Gas & Power Ltd.	£238.30	January gas bill - Surgery
TOTAL	£19,878.36	

Monies received

Payer	Amount	Detail
Rotherfield Surgery	£2,673.33	January rent
Rotherfield Players	£3,935.00	Consulting engineer costs
Rotherfield Players	£3,418.88	Architect Fees reimbursed
Rotherfield Players	£3,910.80	Architect Fees reimbursed
Santander Bank	£22.93	January interest
Total Receipts:	£13,960.94	

i. Council's response to the Rotherfield HGV Length Restrictions - Phase 2 Traffic Movement Investigations report from East Sussex Highways.

Dealt with under item 1d) above.

ii. Arrangements for transferring funds and direct debit payments to the new dedicated bank account for Rotherfield Surgery's income and expenditure.

Clerk reported the following.

- Direct debit mandates for gas and electric bills require signing so that future payments come from the new Barclays account which is to be dedicated to Surgery related income and expenditure.
- Veolia, the waste collection contractors for both Rotherfield and Brook surgeries, have been asked to provide a mandate so that payments for Rotherfield Surgery collections can be billed separately from those for the Brook Surgery.
- Net figure for income and expenditure on the Surgery since the start of financial year is £9227.01cr.
- Alternative quotes are being sought for the minor electrical works required in the Surgery and the Scout Hut.

RESOLVED the following: -

- Direct Debit mandates detailed above are to be signed and sent to Barclays.
- The Practice are to be instructed to transfer their rent payments to the new account.
- The Public Works Loans Board are to be instructed to transfer the loan repayments to the new account.
- The sum of £9227.01, plus the rent received from the Practice for February, is to be transferred to the new account.

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CLERK to action.

iii. Grant application to support the set-up of a Youth Club at Mark Cross.

Organisers of this have advised the Clerk that they will contact the Council after the initial session to gauge interest in such a club. If successful they will submit a detailed application.

iv. Grant application to St Denys' Church for installation of WiFi to encourage use of Church meeting rooms by community groups and other organisations.

It was **RESOLVED** that the £370 quoted by TN6 for the installation was accepted, **CLERK** to advise St Denys' that we are willing to fund the installation to benefit the community and encourage more use of the Church meeting spaces but that we expect them to fund the monthly cost of the facility. Concerns were expressed by a Councillor that providing further meeting facilities could impact on the income of other meeting places in the Parish.

v. Dog fouling issues.

This was reported by a resident with the Court Meadow Green/Surgery area being noted as a "hot spot" for this. Recent inspections by Councillors have not revealed any further occurrences. The area will continue to be monitored and if thought necessary Wealden District Council will be informed if the issue recurs.

vi. V.E. Day 75th Anniversary. Progress and budget report.

- Clerk and Cllr. Rignall advised the meeting that Robert Harris wishes to remain a part of this project.
- The 10th February meeting agreed many of the matters associated with the event.
- Running order has been settled, more marshals are required.
- Horticultural Society have offered to make their tables available for the event.
- Toilets have arranged and paid for.
- An entertainer has been arranged.
- Rotherfield Players will be performing.
- Clerk had obtained an additional first aid kit.
- Key activities will take place from 10:00 - 15:00.

vii. Receive the report of the Wealden Parish Independent Remuneration Panel on Town and Parish Councillor Allowances for 2020/2021.

Details have been available for Councillors to view in the SharePoint team folder.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and that, as in previous years, the Council will not be paying allowances to its members.

viii. Amendments to the Councillor's Code of Conduct as recommended by ESCC.

Details have been available for Councillors to view in the SharePoint team folder.

CLERK to review the documents and carry forward this item to the March agenda.

4. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF COMMITTEES WHICH HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED SINCE THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

- 11th February - Communication and Social Media Committee
- 18th February - Planning and Building Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of these meetings, to approve and confirm recommendations therein and, as far as is requisite, the actions taken by them.

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5. TO RECEIVE OTHER REPORTS AND CONSIDER ACTIONS ARISING FROM THEM.

a) Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.

- Cllr. Buck has visited Eridge and Mark Cross to engage with residents and to learn of any issues that could be of interest to the Parish Council which required adding to a future agenda.
- Cllr. Watson-Smith had attended the Village Hall Committee meeting from which there was nothing to report.

b) Clerk's updates and issues.

- Defibrillator Cabinet has been installed at Mark Cross Church and Community Centre and the AED within it is now available for use. Clerk is liaising with the Crowborough First Responders team to arrange training sessions and once the date is settled, he will contact the organisations and businesses close to the Hall as well as advertising the sessions via Social Media. The Responders have recently installed similar devices at the Boar's Head Inn and Cuckoo Line Stores, this at no cost to the Council.
- Consultation regarding relocation of Crowborough Police Station to the former Town Hall building. Details have been posted to Social Media, A4 flyers are being provided for us to display and an item is on the agenda of the March meeting to agree the Council's response to this.
- An administrative plea. Will all Committee Chairs ensure that their minutes are signed and dated once adopted, also that each side of each page of the minutes should be initialled after the final line of text and above the footer.
- Clerk is concerned at recent comments made in an email circulated to all Parish, District and County Councillors in respect of the process of his dealing with the recent resignation of Cllr. Harris. He requires that a written apology be sent by the author of the email and that a copy is sent to all the original recipients.

c) Items for next Parish Magazine column.

Please pass any items to Adam Hardy.

Chair commented that she was impressed by the enthusiasm shown by our new PcsO at the recent Rotherfield St Martin meeting. He is dedicated to serving the Community and wishes that any concerns be passed on to him. He is keen for the relocation of Crowborough Police Station to proceed as currently he has to travel to and from Hailsham to sign on to his shift and receive his briefing.

6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| • Glasdon | - Information regarding Village Gateways and other items in their range |
| • Broxap | - Litter and recycling bins information. |
| • Local Council Review | - Winter 2020 edition. |

Clerk reported that the application for the licence for a dog bin at the A265/Brickyard Lane junction has been submitted and that he has asked for details of the licence cost before proceeding. Cllr. Martin advised that there may already be posts in the locality that could be utilised without the need to apply for installation of another.

7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS.

No items requiring urgent action were identified in these.

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8. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- 3rd March - Highways Lighting and Transport Committee
- 10th March - Planning and Building Committee
- 26th March - March Council Meeting
- 31st March - Planning and Building Committee

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

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

- Robert Harris wishes to continue as a member of the Group organising the “V E Day 75” event in the Parish.
- Clerk advised that, whilst it is preferred that Councillors submit notice if they intend to be absent from a meeting, there are no penalties incurred should this be overlooked.
- Clerk confirmed that an item relating to the Council “Five Year Plan” will feature on the agenda of the March Council meeting.
- Hi Vis jackets. All pupils at Mark Cross would like to be provided with a jacket – **CLERK** to investigate source of these. Rotherfield School wish to have the parking issues outside the school addressed and the funds earmarked for jackets put toward this instead.
- Cllr. Watson Smith advised that Chant Lane would benefit from some “Type 1” to address the potholes there. **CLERK** will advise the Right of Way team at East Sussex as they may deal with the issue.
- The Five Year Plan group have met to discuss the suggestions provided by Councillors.
- The Strengthening Local Relationships (SLR) meeting with East Sussex Highways will take place at 13:30 on Wednesday 11th March in the Scout Hut. This meeting is open to Councillors but not open to members of the public.
- Cllr. Wickenden advised that the bell mouth of New Road has been resurfaced by Wealden District Council as it forms part of the access to the Housing Association properties at the bottom of the Road
- Cllr. Wickenden raised concerns regarding the obscured sign warning in Station Road for Chant Lane.
- Concerns raised at drainage issues in Catts’ Hill, this will be raised at the SLR.
- Drainage issues also reported at High Cross. A two day road closure had been scheduled for drainage work but only half a day’s work had taken place. No information had been found regarding this.
- Raise the Roof project. **CLERK** to contact the Rotherfield Players to arrange a progress meeting.
- Chair reported that a recent planning case had been reopened as the formal notice for the application had been displayed incorrectly.
- Clerk has reported several dangerously parked vehicles at the A26/Groombridge Lane junction at Eridge Station to “Operation Crackdown”.

Chair declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 21.56.

..... Chair.....Date

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