



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 25<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020 AT 19:30**

**As permitted by the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No.392  
this meeting was conducted “online” via “Microsoft Teams”.**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT**

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

**COUNCILLORS ABSENT**

None.

**ALSO PRESENT**

T. Thorpe, Parish Clerk, Adam Hardy (Administrative Support)  
Cllr. P. Dixon (WDC) and Cllr. K. Obbard (WDC).

**1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING: -**

**a) Public forum**

No issues raised.

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

Cllr. Standley (WDC) was unable to attend and had submitted a summary report for both WDC and ESCC matters. Cllr. Hiles gave notice that, if he was able to attend, he would join the meeting at some point.

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

None. Chair reminded the Councillors present that they should declare an interest at any point of the meeting if they became aware of one in connection with an item being discussed.

Cllr. Kitchenham joined the meeting at this point (19:37)

**d) District and County Councillor reports.**

Key points of Cllr. Dixon's report were as follows: -

- Considering the current situation with “Coronavirus”, matters appeared to be running smoothly.
- Enquiries to the “Community Hub” were reducing.
- WDC had paid out £38m to support businesses in the district.
- Discretionary grants of £2.6m had been paid out and some funds still remained.
- The wish is for business to resume where safe and possible to encourage the economy to “take off” again.
- Council services had generally been maintained.
- WDC are continuing to hold their meetings on a remote basis.

The meeting informed Cllr. Dixon of various recent contentious planning issues that had been before the Council's Planning and Building Committee, also possible enforcement matters

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that had been raised with Wealden's planning team. Cllr. Dixon advised that site visits from planning officers have now been resumed.

Key points of Cllr. Obbard's report were as follows: -

- Reminded that the response deadline to the ESFR consultation regarding proposed changes in local fire cover is due no later than tomorrow. Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council's objections had been submitted and acknowledged earlier in the week.
- The Walshes Road planning application, seeking an increase in the permitted number of properties from 85 to 100, had been passed by WDC. An application for a further 150 houses to the rear of the site is to be made.
- Wealden Local Plan. The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) element of this is to begin shortly.
- Cllr. Obbard was thanked for his report and left the meeting.

The report submitted by Cllr Standley covered matters relating to both WDC and ESCC. Key points are as follows: -

### **Covid 19**

- The work of the Shield (ESCC) and the Hub (WDC) continues although at a very much reduced level.

### **Recovery**

- The emphasis now is on the recovery and considerable work is being done on getting the economy back to near normal whilst minimising the risk of a Wave 2. Work is being co-ordinated by the County Council with District and Boroughs.
- Team East Sussex (Tes) is also involved. Tes is the East Sussex part of the devolved South East Local Enterprise Partnership and includes Leaders of Local Govt, business reps. and Further Education.

### **Schools**

- The majority of schools have been open throughout Covid with 138 out of 186 open for vulnerable children and those with Key worker parents.
- Primary Schools opened on June 1st and, whilst attendance has increased over the weeks since the first, it is still very variable across the County.
- There are 39,000 primary school pupils and the daily figure attending has risen from 6000 to 11000 on Tuesday of this week. Given attendance is Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 plus key worker and vulnerable children the number attending should be about 19k, so we have approx. 50% attendance
- The figures for Rotherfield Primary are 88 and 20 for Mark Cross.

### **Finance and Council performance**

- The County Council has incurred extra expenditure of £49m during Covid and received £26m in extra grants from HMG. We are lobbying hard for extra funding to be fully compensated for the work done.
- The Council Monitoring report was discussed by the Council's cabinet earlier this week. 76% of the targets were achieved.

#### **e) Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 for approval as a true record.**

Draft minutes have been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be adopted as a true record and they will be signed when circumstances allow.

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

- Rialtas Business Systems "Alpha" finance software. Details of its workings have been circulated to the Councillors.
- Surgery finances. £12000 budget added to the surgery project funds centre as agreed, account headings edited to make them more descriptive and a new "Surgery - other

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receipts" code added to separate these from rent income. This should simplify identification of the surgery's surplus of income over expenditure.

- General Power of Competence. Clerk has reviewed this and confirms that we still qualify to use it. See agenda item below.
- Annual return and the supporting documents have been submitted to PKF, our external auditor.
- Council's Consultation response, objecting to proposed changes to local fire cover, has been sent to East Sussex Fire and Rescue.
- "Cabletest", the Essex based company used by us for steel lamp column testing in 2016, have been contacted for a quote to test our "over 25 years old" columns. They have responded and Clerk will provide them with information to enable them to quote for testing.
- In response to an enquiry raised by the Parish Council East Sussex Highways confirm that the "Cat's Eyes" removed from Rotherfield Village centre last year, due to the resurfacing work, are to be replaced. As yet there is no date available for when this will take place.

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

Financial reports, invoices and details of payments had been made available to the Councillors prior to the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** that the budget and bank reconciliation reports be approved, and the payments shown below authorised. The exception is the payment to Agrifactors which is to be deferred until the grant funding from the Football Foundation, which has been agreed, is received. Agrifactors have completed the work and the Clerk and the Sports Club, as joint applicants for the grant, are liaising with the Foundation to enable release of the grant funds. Taking into account the VAT element of the payment and the other funds already available Clerk estimates that there will be a small shortfall in the order of £100.

### List of Payments made or authorised between 1st – 30th June

Payee Name	Transaction Detail	Amount
Xtraspace	May document storage fee	£84.50
Rotherfield Sports Club	June pitch grass cutting	£325.00
Lloyds Bank Card Services	Charge card May payments	£28.00
Ian Bassett	Telephone Kiosk refurbishment work	£575.00
Phil Ireland	Street sweeping/litter picking	£417.50
Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd	Pitch drainage work	£30,622.80
Les Pike	Replacing lost chq. 300019	£61.57
KPS Contractors Ltd	Burial Plot excavation	£561.14
Mulberry & Co	Internal audit costs 2019-20	£180.00
Wealden District Council	Dog bin emptying April - June	£375.00
Teambase	Printer cartridges	£81.59
James Valentine	June grass cutting/groundwork	£1,366.00
The Sussex Sign Company Ltd	Signs for Cemetery and Court Meadow Green	£137.36
Trevor Thorpe	Reimbursements/expenses	£302.46
Trevor Thorpe	June Salary	£1,602.43
H M R C	June Tax and NI	£470.12
Adam Hardy	June Administrative work	£406.25
A. Martin	Various maintenance items and traffic cone purchase	£562.80

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TransFunk Furniture	Refurbishing Surgery seating	£689.50
Unity Trust Bank plc	Bank charges March - June	£30.60
Dual Energy Direct Ltd.	Surgery 1st - 31st May electricity bill	£207.03
Total Gas & Power Ltd.	Surgery 1st - 31st May gas bill	£83.14
Rotherfield Surgery	Bills reimbursed - Cleaning, phone calls and waste collection	£671.38

<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£39,841.17</b>
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#### List of receipts between 1st – 30th June

Rotherfield Surgery	Rent for June	£2,673.33
Tester and Jones	Gravedigging costs and burial fees	£967.62
		<b>£3,640.95</b>

**CLERK** is to ensure that the costs attributed to the telephone kiosk works are transferred to the correct account code in the Communication and Social Media cost centre. Clerk advised the meeting that £350 of the cost for the Surgery seating refurbishment had been funded by the public donations made at the start of the Surgery project.

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

#### i. Candidates for Co-option to fill the current vacancy on the Council.

It was agreed that this item be dealt with as first on the agenda. Robert Harris was the sole candidate for vacancy, and it was **RESOLVED** that he be co-opted to fill it. His acceptance of office form was viewed as being signed and witnessed “on line”. **CLERK** to advise Wealden District Council and **COUNCIL ADMINISTRATOR** to please update the Council's records. **CLLR. HARRIS** to please advise of the Committees he may wish to join so that he may be formally appointed to them at their next meetings.

#### ii. Formation of “working group(s)” to review and agree recommendations to Full Council regarding the organisation of the Council's committees, meetings, accounting and 3 year budget.

The aim of the review is to encourage the Council to become more proactive in recognising and addressing issues within the Parish; some preliminary work has been undertaken by Cllrs. Richardson and Buck to research and suggest options for consideration. It was **RESOLVED** to hold a special meeting of the Council once “face to face” meetings are permitted, with social distancing if need be, to review the suggestions and identify those to recommend for adoption by the Council.

#### iii. Confirmation of eligibility to renew use of the “General Power of Competence” by the Council.

Clerk reported that the Council still qualified to use this power as the proportion of Councillors who have stood for elections is still above the “2/3” total required. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council will continue to use this Power for a further year.

#### iv. Receive final internal audit report for 2019/20 and note recommendations and actions.

Report circulated. No matters requiring attention were raised and the contents were noted.

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v. **Adoption of updated CCTV policy to include charges for footage requests.**  
It was **RESOLVED** that this be adopted, **CLERK** to finalise and arrange publication.

vi. **Adoption of revised Grants policy.**

It was **RESOLVED** that this be adopted and published after Cllrs. Buck and Henrick have dealt with some minor formatting amendments.

vii. **GDPR Information relating to Councillors posting on Social Media.**

- Adam advised that he wished to make all aware of the “collective voice of the Council” meaning that when one Councillor speaks, they speak with the voice of the Council.
- Recommended that items relating to Council matters should be posted under the Council’s name and not by an individual Councillor.
- Councillors wishing to post or comment on matters relating to the Council must make it clear that they are posting as an individual “speaking independently”.
- Please send any appropriate items for posting to Adam who will add it to Social Media under the Council’s name.
- Generally the Council are good at complying with GDPR.
- Contractors employed to undertake work for the Council should not be named, suggest that they are referred to as a “local contractor”.

viii. **Clerk’s Holiday. Arrangements for dealing with matters arising in his absence.**

Clerk has booked off Friday 24th July and the following two weeks. Owing to the current “Coronavirus” situation he will not require the Friday date. He and Adam will liaise regarding arrangements for custody of burial records and other matters.

ix. **Twelve month review of the Clerical Support/Administrative Assistant role.**

It was **RESOLVED** that this present arrangement be continued for a further twelve months. Clerk commented that Adam’s support in dealing with matters such as IT and updating social media was invaluable and he thanked him for his help.

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

- 2nd June - Planning and Building Committee
- 16<sup>th</sup> June - Communications and Social Media Committee
- 23<sup>rd</sup> June - 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.

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

**a) Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.**

Cllr. Martin reported the following: -

- He has met with the contractors and Pre School to resolve issues arising from the depositing of surplus soil from the recent drainage work by the bank adjacent to the lower pitch.
- He has also met with the surveyor and contractor regarding the remedial work to the Pre School building. The intention is for the work to take place from the first week in August and finish by the first week in September prior to the Pre School’s return.

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- Our contractors are dealing with the “urban cut” grass cutting work which the Parish Council have now taken over from ESCC in return for a financial contribution toward the cost.
- He has visited Eridge Station and viewed the work progressing to replace the footbridge. It is believed that Network Rail may be amenable to the installation of signs on their land highlighting the location of the car park and encouraging its use. It was agreed that Cllr. Buck will discuss this with the contractors and Sharon Gray of the Sussex Community Rail Partnership.
- Cllr. Buck reported that there will be a “virtual coffee morning” on Tuesday 7th July.

**b) Clerk's updates and issues.**

- Clerk recently attended a remote “Zoom” meeting with 10 other Wealden Clerks at which Coronavirus and other issues were discussed. General concerns were raised regarding the raising of “lockdown” from July 4<sup>th</sup> on public playgrounds, and resource and practical issues in sanitising play equipment. An item has been added to the agenda of July 7<sup>th</sup> Recreation and Burial Committee meeting regarding this.
- Clerk reminded that he was awaiting information to pass on to ESCC Highways regarding suggested changes to the junction of Spout Hill and the B2100 to improve safety.
- Council have been approached regarding sandstone spoil at the Cemetery; an approach has been made by someone interested in purchasing for garden landscaping. It was agreed that the clerk will enquire as to how much of it is required together with arrangements for removal. A donation toward a local charity will be requested in return for the sandstone.
- Clerk has requested permission to purchase a camera and microphone for use with his PC when attending virtual meetings. Is using the Council laptop currently but this is not satisfactory. It was agreed under delegated spending powers that this be purchased from Computer Studio who have a suitable model costing £55.
- Clerk reminded the meeting that he has recently circulated details of “on line” training courses being conducted by SSALC and that any councillor interested in the courses should contact him so that arrangements may be made.

**c) Items for next Parish Magazine column.**

Deadline for next edition is July 17th. Suggestions for features to be passed to Adam please.

**6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.**

No items received requiring a response or further action.

**7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS.**

No items requiring urgent action were identified in these.

**8. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.**

- 7<sup>th</sup> - Recreation and Burial Committee
- 14<sup>th</sup> - Planning and Building Committee
- 21<sup>st</sup> - Highways, Lighting and Transport Committee
- 30<sup>th</sup> - July Council meeting

These meetings will be held on a “virtual basis starting at 19:30 unless circumstances change.

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

- Cllr. Wickenden wishes for an item to be added to the agenda of the forthcoming Recreation and Burial Committee meeting to discuss the issue of the soil arising from the recent pitch drainage works being deposited on the bank by the lower pitch. **CLERK** to note.
- Adam will restore Cllr. Harris' Council email address for him to use.
- Cllr. Martin was reminded that work is required to the fence at the Castle Hill/Five Ashes Road junction.
- Clerk reported mole activity in the Cemetery and a fallen tree blocking the track adjacent to the village side boundary. Our grass cutting contractor has also commented on these.
- Concerns were expressed at the condition of a "cut through" in Rotherfield village centre. Cllr. Martin will speak with our street sweeper and ask him to tidy it.
- Cllr. Richardson has received an enquiry from a resident regarding a pathway in the "Walnut Wood" and they wished to know if it was an official right of way. Clerk recommended that the resident contact him with further details so that the location can be identified, and the official rights of way map checked.

Chair declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 21:20.

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