



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

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL,  
AND THE MAY MONTHLY MEETING,  
HELD ON THURSDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> MAY 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”.**

**PRESENT**

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

**ABSENT**

None.

**ALSO PRESENT**

Trevor Thorpe, Parish Clerk, Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC),  
Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC), Cllr. P. Dixon (WDC), Cllr. K. Obbard (WDC),  
Adam Hardy (Administrative Support)

**1. Local Authorities And Police And Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility Of Local Authority And Police And Crime Panel Meetings) (England And Wales) Regulations 2020.**

As permitted by Part 2 of these regulations, to consider and agree the options for the Annual Meeting and adoption of arrangements for holding “virtual” meetings, as detailed below.

- i. **Deferral of items 2, and 5i, ii and iii of this agenda to a future meeting.**  
It was **RESOLVED** to defer the agenda items above to a future date, as permitted by the Regulations.
- ii. **To hold any future meetings of the Council on a “virtual” basis via electronic means until the current Coronavirus situation is lifted, and public council meetings permitted. Members of the public who wish to attend meetings on this basis to please contact the Clerk in advance so that arrangements may be made.**  
It was **RESOLVED** to hold future meetings on this basis until such time as meetings and other group gatherings are permitted by Central Government.

**2. TO ELECT A CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR, AND SIGNING OF THEIR DECLARATIONS OF OFFICE.**

Deferred as per item 1 i).

**3. PUBLIC FORUM.**

None.

**4. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING**

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

None.

**Clerk:** Trevor Thorpe, 82 Fermor Way, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3BJ

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

None. Councillors were reminded that they should declare an interest at any point of the meeting if they became aware of one in relation to a matter being discussed.

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

**Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC).**

- In addition to the existing shield and hub work being undertaken ESCC are now looking at ways to aid recovery from the Coronavirus outbreak and work is being done toward this in association with "Team East Sussex".
- Schools should be starting back on June 1<sup>st</sup>, initially with Reception, Year One and Year Six returning.
- Potential issues and concerns regarding this return are acknowledged; and there are no indications as to the numbers likely to return.
- King's Arms. Wished to reassure the Council that the issue had not been forgotten and that he would ensure that the officers concerned with the issue would be reminded of it once their workload relating to "Coronavirus" had eased.
- He will be raising the Parish Council's request regarding support for the Rotherfield to Jarvis Brook footpath/cycle path with the ESCC Lead Member for Transport and Environment, Cllr. Claire Dowling.
- Cllr. Henrick advised Cllr. Standley that, following its recent Highways Committee meeting, the Parish Council were applying for temporary licences for various works aimed at alleviating the parking issues around Eridge Station.
- Cllr. Standley advised that there was a £38K Wealden DC "Crisis Fund" to support Charities and voluntary groups supporting their communities during the crisis. Contact details were shared but he pointed out that the deadline was midnight today. Cllr. Dixon (Wealden DC) advised that Rotherfield St Martin were aware of the fund and had applied to it.

**Cllr. P. Dixon (WDC).**

- Advised that £36m had been paid out by Wealden to support local businesses during the crisis. The Finance Team had undertaken a lot of work to scrutinise and pay out funds swiftly.
- Much council work is now being undertaken as "working from home"; staff have worked hard and adapted to these new ways of working, in particular that of holding meetings on a "remote" basis.
- Waste collections, including that of garden refuse, have resumed.
- Planning work, and that relating to the initial stages of the Local Plan, were continuing. Consultation on the Plan is anticipated to start in September.
- A local planning issue regarding drainage had been dealt with by the Planning Team and the means of formally agreeing this work is being investigated.

**Cllr. F. Whetstone (ESCC).**

- County have spent a lot of money to support businesses of which around 50% has been returned by Central Government.
- King's Arms and Eridge Station issues. Will be watching closely to see if measures proposed will improve the situation.

**Cllr. K. Obbard (ESCC).**

- Echoed the comments of Cllrs. Dixon and Standley that the Wealden team at Hailsham had done an excellent job in dealing with the increase in workload due to the Coronavirus situation and dealing with applications for financial support that have resulted.
- He is aware of concerns raised regarding groundwork being undertaken at Mark Cross; the Planning Officers have been informed and are investigating.

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**d) Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 for approval as a true record.**

- It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2020 Parish Council Meeting, with bullet point 4 on page 14 removed, be adopted and signed as a true record.
- It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 Parish Council Meeting be adopted and signed as a true record.

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

- **Review of Grants Policy.** Cllr. Buck has kindly reviewed this, and an item will be added to the June agenda to consider adoption **CLERK** to note. Cllr. Henrick thanked Cllr. Buck for her work on this.
- **Rotherfield Surgery** – request for assistance to install replacement flooring. Carried forward to item 8f) of this agenda.
- **Change of signatories.** Work is still in progress to add Cllr. Buck as a signatory/authoriser for the Unity Trust Bank account to replace Cllr. Richardson who wished to stand down from this role.

**5. ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

**i. To elect Chair & Vice Chair, and appoint members, of the following Committees.**

Deferred as per item 1 i).

**ii. To review and appoint Council representatives to the following organisations.**

Deferred as per item 1 i).

**iii. To review, remove or create new responsibilities and posts and make appointments to them.**

Deferred as per item 1 i).

**6. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE BANK RECONCILIATIONS AS AT THE END OF APRIL 2020.**

It was **RESOLVED** that these be approved.

**7. REVIEW EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET TO DATE AND NOTE OR AUTHORISE PAYMENTS.**

**i. Budget, other financial reports and actions arising.**

Councillors have identified that they would like further information/training to improve their understanding of the accounting software and its processes so that they may be more effective in analysing and checking their committee budgets. There will be an item on the agenda of the June meeting for Committee Chairs to feedback their wishes regarding the “set up” of their cost centre, amendments/additions to their account categories that they have identified to provide more information. **CLERK** to circulate information regarding the Rialtas Business systems “Alpha” software used by the Council for accounting. It was **RESOLVED** that the budget be accepted; **CLERK** is to review budget allocated to the Surgery as agreed at the December Finance and General Purpose Committee meeting, also set up a new account code to separate rent income for the surgery from other credit items.

**ii. Approval of payments.**

It was **RESOLVED** that the following payments be approved or confirmed.

**Summary of payments and receipts**

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Transaction Detail</b>
Xtraspace	£84.50	Storage fees
Rotherfield Sports Club	£325.00	May pitch grass cutting
Lloyds Bank Card Services	£41.40	Monthly statement
NEST Pension Contribution	£136.94	May pension contribution
NW Community Transport	£1,300.00	Wealdlink bus Support grant

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Trevor Thorpe	£21.06	Clerk's May expenses/mileage
Adam Hardy	£381.25	Admin support for May
Coppard Plant Hire Ltd	£55.44	Barrier hire
Trevor Thorpe	£1,602.43	May salary
Rotherfield Village Hall	£220.00	Hall door repair
Phil Ireland	£610.20	Road sweeping/Litter picking
Figtree Fencing & Landscaping	£843.91	Fencing around waste unit
TransFunk Furniture	£500.00	Deposit for surgery benches
Coppard Plant Hire Ltd	£69.26	Barrier Hire final payment
Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd	£148.80	Accounting software annual fee
Satswana Ltd	£180.00	DPO services annual fee
Tollwood Garden Service	£1,478.00	Ground maintenance
H M R C	£470.12	May tax and NI
Dual Energy Direct Ltd.	£165.88	Surgery electric bill April
Rotherfield Surgery	£61.01	Veolia April waste collections reimbursed
Total Gas & Power Ltd.	£132.06	Surgery gas bill April
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£8,827.26</b>	

#### **Payer**

Rotherfield Surgery	£2,673.33	May rent
Santander Bank	£22.21	April bank interest
Raising the Roof project	£488.25	Reimbursement of survey cost
Rotherfield Sports Club	£7,000.00	Pitch drainage work contribution
HMRC	£1,460.07	Vat reclaimed 1st - 31st March 2020
Wealden District Council	£68.40	Reimbursement of card reader costs
	<b>£11,712.26</b>	

## **8. TO CONSIDER AND AGREE ACTIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS**

### **a) Resolution to adopt the General Power of Competence as contained in the Localism Act 2011.**

Clerk is reviewing this in the light of the resignation of Cllr. Harris as this may have taken the Council below the "2/3 of members to have been elected or stood for election" which is one of the requirements for qualifying to use the Power. He will report at the June meeting and include an agenda item to confirm adoption of the Power if the Council remains eligible to use it. **CLERK** to note.

### **b) Approve and adopt final accounts for 2019/20 and any adjustments required to the 2020/21 budget; Review and sign sections 1 & 2 of the Annual Return.**

The reports relating to these had been made available to the Councillors prior to the meeting. The meeting considered the Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20 and the Section 2 Accounting Statements for 2019/20.

It was **RESOLVED** that the meeting agreed with the statements made in categories 1.to 9 inclusive in the Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement and the figures in the Section 2 Accounting Statements, and that these be approved. Clerk will sign the document, make arrangements to obtain Cllr. Henrick's signature on them and dispatch to the external auditor for scrutiny.

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- c) **Add additional clause to Council's code of conduct as recommended by ESCC and WDC.**

To be carried forward to the agenda of the June 2020 meeting, **CLERK** to note.

- d) **Response to consultation regarding local fire station cover.**

**RESOLVED** that Cllr. Buck will draft a response for the Council, objecting to the proposal for reducing the fire cover, and circulate to the Councillors for their comment prior to submission. The Chair encouraged the Councillors to submit individual personal responses to the consultation which closes on Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> June.

- e) **Postponed "VE Day 75" Event. Report on feasibility of deferring to 15th August – VJ Day 75.**

It was considered that it would be unlikely for public gatherings of this nature to be approved prior to this date. Adam Hardy reported that it was likely that the £346 deposit for the toilet hire would be forfeit if cancelled, also that groups planning activities in connection with the event would need to prepare for the event should it proceed on this date.

**RESOLVED** to defer a decision and make no further arrangements. **ADAM** is to please convey this information to the organising committee.

- f) **Rotherfield Surgery. Request for replacement flooring in areas of the building, and other suggested maintenance matters. (Carried forward from the 30th April Council meeting).**

Clerks analysis of the Surgery Funds, based on income from rent less the "overhead" costs of utility bills and loan repayments, indicated a surplus for the 2019/20 financial year of approximately £5K, subject to final verification. These figures excluded external grants received and repair and renewal work on the premises. Quotes had been obtained to replace the surgery flooring, these totalled £9K; urgent work accounts for £2K of this sum which the League of Friends have kindly agreed to fund. Cllr. Henrick proposed that the Council contribute £3K toward the balance of the cost and, after further discussion it was **RESOLVED** that £3.5K be contributed. Clerk reminded the meeting that the Council were funding repairs for the waiting room seating at a total cost of £1190. Public donations of £355 from the start of the Surgery Project are held in an earmarked reserve and could be used toward this.

- g) **Offer from ESCC to arrange structural testing by an independent contractor of the Parish's steel lamp columns aged over 25 years.**

Clerk reported that this had been received too late to feature on the agenda of the recent Highways Committee meeting. ESCC Highways have offered to arrange testing of the Parish Council's 45 columns over 25 years old via an independent contractor, this at a cost of £10.31 per column. Cllr. Martin raised concerns regarding previous testing undertaken on behalf of ESCC which had identified many columns requiring replacement which had later been proved to be sound when retested independently. **RESOLVED** that a contractor fully independent of ESCC be used, **CLERK** to research testing company previously used and report to Cllr. Martin.

## **9. TO NOTE MINUTES OF COMMITTEES PUBLISHED SINCE THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING.**

- May 12<sup>th</sup> - Planning and Building Committee

The contents of the minutes of this meeting, and actions proposed, were noted.

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

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

Cllr. Martin has contacted ESCC to see if the remedial work to the Pre School can be undertaken during "shutdown". This has not proved possible and repairs have been deferred to the Summer Holidays.

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

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- Clerk reported that he had spoken to SLCC regarding the feasibility of conducting a Co-option to fill the vacancy on the Council on a “remote” basis. They considered that this would be permissible under the Emergency Regulations and it was agreed that the notice inviting candidates should be published **ADAM** to please arrange. The Co-option is to be dealt with at the June Meeting. **CLERK** to note.
- A possible planning enforcement issue at Eridge has been reported by a resident and details have been sent to the Wealden Planning Enforcement team.
- It is understood that the cast village signs have been reinstalled in Rotherfield and Mark Cross after their refurbishment and Cllr. Buck has offered to take photographs for displaying on Social Media.

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

Items to Adam Hardy by 17<sup>th</sup> June please.

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

- Various periodicals, advertising notices and circulars. None requiring action
- Kent and Sussex Air Ambulance – “Thank you” letter for recent donation from the Council.
- Unity Trust Bank – advice that the interest rate on our deposit account reduced to 0% from May 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Santander Bank – advice that the interest rate on our Business Saving account will reduce to 0.01% from July 7<sup>th</sup>.

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

None.

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

- 2<sup>nd</sup> - Planning & Building Committee.
- 16<sup>th</sup> - Communications & Social Media Committee.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> - Planning & Building Committee.
- 25<sup>th</sup> - Monthly Council meeting.

All start at 19:30 and, unless the situation changes, will be conducted remotely via “Microsoft Teams”.

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

- Cllr. Kitchenham had reported three stiles damaged on Fp32 near Yew Tree Lane/Sherriff's Lane end. Details and photos have been sent to the ESCC Rights of Way team.
- A resident has also reported three stiles had been damaged at the Town Row end of Fp 42 which runs to Chant Lane. Owner of the land has also contacted the Council regarding this matter and was concerned in the increase in use of the path due to “lockdown”, also that many users were not respecting the Countryside Code and were straying from the path and allowing dogs to run loose and foul. The damaged stiles have been reported to the Rights of Way team.
- It was suggested that Cllr. Henrick contact the Nfu regarding the Code and signs for displaying on stiles and gateways.
- Clerk to add review of use of Administrative Support to the agenda for the June meeting.
- Clerk reported that Adam had set up a diary system to remind of policies requiring review.

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

- Cllr. Wickenden reported that the Town Row sign on the downhill side of Station Road approaching Chant Lane has again been moved. Cllr. Kitchenham reported that a similar sign had been installed at the foot of Catts' Hill near the site of recent bank subsidence.
- Cllr. Richardson requested that an item be added to the June agenda regarding structure of Committees and ways to improve meetings. Clerk suggested that Cllr. Richardson contact him to discuss the detail and wording of this item.
- Adam is to provide Clerk with tutorial videos regarding Microsoft Teams.
- Adam has reviewed items for publishing as background items for meetings. **CLERK** to add item to future agenda to discuss this.
- **CLERK** to follow up response from Highways to issue raised by a High Cross resident.

Meeting closed at 21:50

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

Draft minutes subject to confirmation and adoption as a true record

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