



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

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RECREATION AND BURIAL COMMITTEE  
HELD ON TUESDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> JULY 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".**

**PRESENT**

Cllr. G. Watson-Smith (Chair)  
(joined at 19:40)  
Cllr. N. Wickenden (Vice Chair)

Cllr. L. Henrick  
Cllr. J. Kitchenham

Cllr. A. Martin.  
(joined at 19:45)  
Cllr. J. Richardson

**COUNCILLORS ABSENT**

None

**ALSO PRESENT**

Cllr. R. Harris, Cllr. L. Buck, Trevor Thorpe (Parish Clerk)  
and Adam Hardy (Administrative Assistant).

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

**a) Public Forum.**

None.

**b) Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85)**

- Cllr. K. Rignall submitted an apology for absence. She has expressed a wish to be part of any group reviewing the facilities in the Recreation Ground as detailed in items 2b) i – iii of the agenda and this was noted.
- Cllr. Martin had given notice that he may be late in joining the meeting.

**c) Declaration 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 in the meeting if they became aware of one in conjunction with an item being discussed.

**d) Request from Cllrs. Buck and Harris to be appointed as a member of this Committee.**

It was **RESOLVED** that these Councillors be appointed to the Committee. **CLERK** to update records accordingly.

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

- Cllr. Martin reported that there have been several meetings regarding the building and at present remedial work is proposed to start during the first week of August and completed in time for the start of the new term in September. Last week an independent surveyor engaged by ESCC attended the site to undertake an inspection nearly 10 years after the building's completion. It was found that there were a number of items of concern and details will be provided when his report is completed; he will ensure that the Parish Council has a copy.
- Cllr. Buck has discussed the feasibility of installing a public children's play area in Mark Cross School's grounds, unfortunately this will not be possible. Other areas in the Village will be investigated.

**f) Committee financial report and agree any actions required.**

Budget and other financial information had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Clerk

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suggested that, as part of the review of the Council's accounting system, separate accounting codes be created for expenditure on the Council's bees and hives in the Old Burial Ground. No other matters were noted.

## **RECEIVE INFORMATION AND MAKE DECISIONS ON ACTIONS AND EXPENDITURE AS REQUIRED REGARDING THE FOLLOWING AREAS OF PARISH COUNCIL LAND.**

### **2. RECREATION GROUND, CAR PARK AND VILLAGE HALL**

#### **a) Play area**

##### **i. Possible reopening of the play area in accordance with Government guidelines.**

Clerk summarised the information obtained from various sources regarding this. At a recent Clerk's remote meeting other Wealden Council Clerks shared their experiences regarding closure of play areas during "lockdown", and their plans to reopen them now that it is permitted to do. Several had found it impossible to "close off" areas as barrier/fences were frequently removed by users.

Clerk has undertaken a "Coronavirus" risk assessment for the play area based on information provided by our insurers. It was **RESOLVED** that the signage be displayed stating that the Council could not recommend use of the equipment and highlighting the suggested "Covid aware" measures that users should take to minimise risk. **RESOLVED** that **CLERK** to draft a notice and circulate to Councillors for approval.

Clerk informed the meeting that arrangements had been made with Wicksteed to undertake their annual safety check and report.

##### **ii. Repainting of equipment.**

**RESOLVED** that a quote obtained for this with the painting to take place after the schools have returned in September. In the interim **CLERK** is to arrange for the equipment to be cleaned. Cllr. Buck advised that the fence between top and bottom pitch had been damaged and she will send photographs to Clerk for review.

#### **b) Old Tennis Court area**

##### **i. Request for the Bowls Club green to be extended by 2 metres into this area.**

This had been raised at a meeting with the Sports Club and would give the bowls club more space for storage of their equipment. As this could compromise provision of facilities detailed below it was agreed that usage of the whole of the area should be reviewed by a "sub committee". Cllr. Buck has devised a simple survey for circulation; this would help identify demographic of users and encourage suggestions for the facilities that they would like to see provided in the Recreation Ground.

**RESOLVED** the following: -

- Cllr. Buck is to circulate a draft copy of the survey to all Cllrs. for comment on content, and to whom it is to be targeted, prior to publication.
- "Sub committee" to be formed of Cllrs. Watson-Smith, Buck and Rignall to report back to full council with their recommendations regarding the extension request, installation of outdoor gym equipment and skateboard facilities.

##### **ii. Suggestion to install "Outdoor Gym" equipment here or elsewhere in the Recreation Ground.**

See item i above.

##### **iii. Approach regarding provision of skateboarding facilities in the Recreation Ground.**

See item i above.

#### **c) Request from Sports Club for Parish Council to be a party to a joint application to the Football Foundation for a grant toward purchase cost of new equipment for pitch maintenance.**

Total cost is estimated at £25K with a contribution sought from the Parish Council of £5K. Grant to be on a joint basis as it would improve the facilities for use by the Parish and would enable the reclaim of VAT. Changes to the current pitch maintenance cost contribution may

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also be requested but no specific information regarding has been received so far. Two quotes have been obtained and shared with the Council. £5K is included in the current budget for unspecified "R & B other capital projects".

The current drainage project, funded in the main by the Club and Football Foundation together with £2K from the Council, has completed and grant money is in the process of being drawn down.

**RESOLVED** that the Council support this new grant proposal and contribute £5K toward the grant. This is on the basis that this will support maintenance of the pitches which benefit not only the football club and its several senior, youth and junior clubs, but also the cricket clubs, primary and preschools together with it being a general "community asset" open space.

**d) Disposal of waste soil near to the bottom football pitch.**

Cllr. Martin reminded the meeting that the quote and specifications for the recent pitch drainage work specified that "... arisings to be deposited below bottom pitch..." and that this information had been discussed at Council and other meetings with Councillors present. Removal of the soil subsequently deposited would be at Council expense and this could be considerable and may result in damage to the lower pitch. Cllr. Wickenden has discussed this matter with the Pre School who wish to use this location as a "forest area" for their use. He is willing to regrade the area for them and create a small pond. It was **RESOLVED** to accept Cllr. Wickenden's kind offer to undertake this project, which was accepted. The Council will cover the cost of hire of the excavator required; this will be £88 per day with £35 each for delivery and collection.

**e) Action regarding reported anti-social behaviour on the lower football pitch.**

Sussex Police have been informed and they have advised that the area is to be included in their Friday and Saturday evening "Operation Blitz" patrols. Clerk recommends that our litter picker be made aware of the issue, includes the area in his litter picking and provides photographs of debris if the matter continues so that reports may be made. Clerk advised that the proposal for installing CCTV on the Village Hall had been stalled due to "Coronavirus". Responses to the invitations to tender for the work had been received but had yet to be opened and considered as required by our Financial Regulations. **CLERK** will arrange for the responses to be opened in the presence of a Councillor and will add an item to the agenda of the July Council meeting to agree further action.

**3. RECEIVE DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF THIS COMMITTEE**

13<sup>th</sup> October 2020 19:30 in the Scout and Youth Community Hall (subject to change).

**4. REPORT DETAILS OF ITEMS AND ISSUES FOR INVESTIGATION, FURTHER ACTION OR FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

- The organisers of the fitness classes which take place to the rear of the Village Hall in the car park have contacted the Council as they wish to resume their sessions. Government "Coronavirus" regulations allow fitness groups of up to six members (to include the instructor) to undertake sessions with due regard to 2m "social distancing". The organisers have been advised and requested that the start and finish times of their three sessions per week be adjusted by 15' to avoid them clashing with other groups using facilities. They have responded and assured us that they will endeavour to keep to these new times. Councillors raised concerns that this could still be an issue for other users of the area although it is believed that the other groups have yet to resume activities. It was agreed that a thorough review be undertaken of our conditions for their use of the area for fitness classes from September onward. It was noted that the group use the area without charge. **CLERK** to research and pass details to vice chair.
- Surgery. Clerk sought information regarding recent incident with a broken fridge. It is believed that this was due to a fault with the device and not the Surgery electrics. Cllrs. Henrick and Harris are due to meet with the Surgery, Clerk is to update regarding the electrical report so that actions required may be dealt with for both the Surgery and Scout Hut.
- Tree by the Cemetery car park. One has been identified as being in a poor state and, if it fell, it would be on to the car park. **CLERK** is to notify the owners of the land of our

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concern with this and suggest that removal is arranged with the wood left stacked on the owner's land.

- Adam advised that the deadline for Parish Magazine articles is July 16th.

Chair declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 21:05.

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