



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 13TH OCTOBER 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 "Zoom".**

**PRESENT**

Cllr. L. Buck – Chair  
Cllr. R. Harris  
Cllr. L. Henrick

Cllr. D. Hiles.  
Cllr. J. Kitchenham.  
Cllr. A. Martin.

Cllr. J. Richardson  
Cllr. K. Rignall.  
Cllr. N. Wickenden.

**COUNCILLORS ABSENT**

None

**ALSO PRESENT**

Cllr. G. Watson-Smith, Trevor Thorpe (Parish Clerk), Adam Hardy (Council Administrator)

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

**a) Public Forum.**

No public present.

**b) Review Terms of Reference for this committee**

These were reviewed and it was **RESOLVED** that they be amended so that responsibility for matters relating to Town Row Green will be dealt with by the Full Council rather than this Committee.

**c) Elect a Vice Chair for this Committee**

It is wished that two Vice Chairs be elected for this Committee. Adam Hardy has researched the Local Government Act 1972 on this point and reported that this Act did not allow for Parish Council's to have more than one chair or vice-chair.

However, a Council's committee structure and officers are drawn up in adopted Terms of Reference for each committee. Therefore, if the council wished, it would be possible to have Co Chairs or Co Vice - Chairs but areas of responsibility should be clearly defined in the Terms of Reference. It would be a complicated process, involving revision of Terms of Reference, and may be unnecessary.

**CLERK** to add an item to the agenda of the October Council meeting to formalise the appointment of Cllr. Watson Smith to this Committee, and to other roles which he may wish to fulfil as shown in the minutes of the September Council meeting. **CLERK** to also add an agenda item for the meeting to elect Vice Chair or Chairs for the Recreation and Burial Committee.

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

None.

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

None declared. Councillors were reminded that they should declare an interest should they become aware of one at any point.

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- f) **To resolve that the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

It was **RESOLVED** that these be adopted as a true record of the meeting and they will be signed when circumstances allow.

- g) **Update regarding matters arising and action items from previous meetings.**  
Numbering relates to the July meeting agenda.

2) i & ii Clerk has renewed the advisory "Coronavirus" notices on the equipment and added warning tape and "Please do not use" notices to the roundabout pending its removal. Painting of the equipment is to be discussed at this meeting.

**2b) Old Tennis Court area.**

Cllr. Buck has spoken to a representative of the Bowls Club who confirmed that funds were in place for extending the Bowls Club area by 2m into this area. Club will be requested for full details of their proposal. If the path is built space will still be available for other uses of the area.

**2c) Sports Club.** The Football Foundation have agreed a grant toward pitch maintenance equipment. The Council agreed to support their application and a contribution of £5K toward the total £25K cost was agreed at the July meeting of this Committee. The Club have also requested that the Foundation replace its shabby sign at the entrance to the Recreation Ground.

**2d) Soil at bottom of the Recreation Ground.** See update in item 4vi below.

**2e) Anti-Social behaviour and CCTV.** No further instances have been reported. Cllr. Martin reported that he will be having a site meeting with the contractor installing the CCTV to finalise arrangements for the equipment to monitor the Recreation Ground car park, Scout Hut, Pre-school and surrounding area. He will also liaise with Cllr. Hardy regarding the computer software and hardware requirements to enable incorporation of the additional cameras into the existing system servicing the village centre. The modest ongoing costs for the "IP" address required will be met by the Council.

Cllr. Buck reported that she and Cllr. Watson Smith will be holding a site meeting with a representative of the "Raise the Roof" project to receive a progress report. She enquired whether the work required for this would cause issues for the CCTV, Cllr. Martin was of the view that the cameras could be easily relocated should the need arise.

**4.** Contractor has removed the hazardous trees by the Cemetery car park.

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

**2. COMMITTEE BUDGET AND FINANCIAL REPORT AND AGREE ANY ACTIONS REQUIRED.**

It was **RESOLVED** that there were no actions required and that the report be approved.

**3. AGREE THE BUDGET AND PRECEPT REQUIREMENT OF THIS COMMITTEE FOR 2021 - 22**

This was discussed, and the report accompanying these minutes has been updated to reflect changes agreed to the account categories and the committee's provisional budget for 2021/22. This will be considered at the December meeting of the Council's Finance and General Purpose Committee.

Provision in the budget for replacement benches on the Mark Cross Millennium Green was discussed. Both benches on the Green had been removed as they were damaged, showing signs of rot, and unsafe. Replacement will be undertaken in the Spring, subject to discussion regarding possible additional uses for the area and levelling work to the paved area on which the benches are placed.

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In response to comments the Clerk confirmed that the Terms of Reference for the Recreation and Burial Committee state that it is responsible for maintenance and improvements of the Millennium Green and car park at Mark Cross. A separate safety inspection sheet will be created for monthly checks of the Millennium Green. Cllr. Buck was requested to discuss cost of new benches with the Highways Committee and agree who is to fund this.

It was **RESOLVED** that the changes agreed are to be included in the draft budget for discussion and final approval at the December Finance and General Purpose Committee meeting.

#### **4. RECREATION GROUND, CAR PARK SCOUT HUT AND VILLAGE HALL:**

##### **a) i. Receive Wicksteed's report on the play equipment and agree actions on their recommendations.**

This was reviewed and it was **RESOLVED** that **CLERK** will order the components identified as required for the minor repairs recommended, and that Councillors will install them.

##### **ii. Provision of exercise equipment in the Recreation Ground.**

Cllr. Buck is investigating products from various manufacturers and will provide a report and costings in due course. She has suggested that an "all weather" table tennis table be installed as this may be used by all ages; recommended site is near the flagpole and bench although concerns were expressed that this area is not level, 5m clearance is required from the nearest pitch for safety purposes. It was **RESOLVED** that this suggestion be added to the survey that will accompany the Autumn newsletter so that the level of support may be gauged.

##### **iii. Arrangements for removal of the roundabout and to consider options for its replacement.**

Wicksteed have quoted £912 plus VAT to cut of the roundabout's spindle and reinstate the surface below; Council would be responsible for removing and disposing of the roundabout itself. **RESOLVED** that Cllr. Buck will seek quotes from other play equipment suppliers to remove and replace with a similar roundabout suitable for all abilities; these will be presented to a future meeting for a decision to be made.

##### **iv. Arrangements for repainting of the play equipment.**

Cllr. Buck has obtained a quote from a local painter. His quote was based on the Council purchasing the paint, estimated cost of £375, plus five days labour at £175 per day, total cost £1250. It was **RESOLVED** that this quote be accepted, **CLERK** to advise contractor to proceed. Cllr. Buck did not vote as she is known to the Contractor.

##### **v. Update regarding the Pre School damp issue; consider of returning items to the storage area below.**

Cllr. Martin has inspected. There is still some evidence of damp, but it is unclear whether this is "historic" damp, which is yet to dry out, or further water incursion. The area will be checked regularly, and some additional ventilation created. The storage area is currently full. Cllr. Martin will provide regular updates on this issue

##### **vi. Development of the "Forest Area" at the bottom end of the Recreation Ground, and to undertake additional tree and fencing work.**

- Cllrs. Watson Smith and Wickenden reported that the majority of the spoil has been cleared; efforts are being hampered by the wet weather.
- Further hire of an excavator will be required to finish the landscaping and access to the pond area. It was reported that, although the excavator was hired for 2 days, a half day had been "lost" due to breakdown.
- Cllr. Wickenden had hired an excavator for a further day but some extra work is needed to complete the terracing in certain areas. The hire of a 5 ton excavator for a further day will be required to complete the work.
- Two further trees need cutting down, hedgework undertaken and netting provided over the fencing; a gate will also be provided to discourage dumping of grass.
- Cllr. Martin was concerned that the work being undertaken, and costs incurred, exceeded the initial intention to merely tidy up the area on which the soil had been

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dumped. The £4K in the budget was for a garden area next to the Pre School, not to undertake creation of a "Forest School" as well.

It was **RESOLVED** that the budgeted £4K also be used to progress both the "Garden" and "Forest School" work for the benefit of both Pre and Primary Schools. The Council representatives to these schools to please contact them and make them aware of what is proposed.

**b) Scout Hut. Review safety report, inspection process and consider quotes for electrical work.**

Cllr. Harris held a site meeting at the Scout Hut with a local contractor who will provide quotes for dealing with the necessary work identified in the electrical reports for both this building and the Surgery. It was **RESOLVED** to undertake the work required as soon as the quotes have been received due to the length of time elapsed since the original reports were received. Cllrs. Buck and Watson-Smith will be visiting the Scout Hut to undertake a check of the property. Cllr. Martin suggested that the Scouts should be charged for the cost of the work under the terms of their lease.

**c) Agree process for resuming safety checks on a "virtual" basis.**

It was **RESOLVED** that the current paper check lists are to be made capable of being completed and shared "online". **CLERK** to liaise with Adam Hardy who will create these forms, an additional check list is to be created for the Mark Cross Millennium Green and car park. It was reported that some graves in the Cemetery require "topping up" having sunk during the wet weather, Clerk had also received a report that a grave in the Old Burial Ground need filling. **CLERK** to contact contractors to deal with these as a matter of urgency

**d) Litter picking and street sweeping. Review duties for this role and confirm boundaries of activities for street sweeping**

Copy of the signed list of responsibilities from April 2017 was reviewed. Clerk is to add a mention of "Covid awareness" to the list and send him the updated form for signature and return to the Council.

**5. ROTHERFIELD PARISH CEMETERY:**

**a) Planting or other screening to obscure the view of the spoil bins from the Cemetery.**

Cllr. Wickenden has offered to tidy this area and empty the spoil bins. He will suggest some options for screening for consideration.

**b) Suggestion for fence installation to discourage deer from damaging floral tributes.**

This has been suggested by a Parishioner. Cllr. Martin advised that effective fencing of the correct standard would need to be at least 2m high, would cost in the order of £7K to install and would leave this rural Cemetery looking unsightly. It was **RESOLVED** that fencing would not be installed.

**6. OLD BURIAL GROUND, COURT MEADOW GREEN & OTHER PARISH LAND:**

**a) Condition of Burial plots in the "wild" area of the Old Burial Ground, and tidiness concerns.**

- Two comments have been received regarding this area and the condition of family graves therein.
- Cllr. Richardson, who undertakes the monthly inspection of this area, reported that she considered that the paths and other areas of the Burial Ground are uneven and potentially hazardous.
- Cllr. Henrick has also visited the site and reported that there are many hazardous sunken graves requiring attention and that a plan should be agreed to address these issues.
- Cllr. Buck suggested a feature in a forthcoming newsletter regarding the burial ground and notable former residents buried therein.
- **RESOLVED** That the profile of the Old Burial Ground be raised via the Parish Magazine and Social Media and Church to encourage voluntary efforts from the Community to maintain the "wild area" and that Communications and Social Media Committee be involved in these efforts.

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b) **Dog fouling issues in Court Meadow Green.**

It was considered that most of the fouling was caused by foxes. Dog fouling, whilst undesirable, is a rare occurrence. It was **RESOLVED** that the residents comments be noted but that no further action in addition to the site inspections, were required. Cllrs. Richardson and Martin have volunteered to monitor the area and report any incidences of fouling.

c) **Town Row Green. Receive information and agree coppicing arrangements.**

Cllr. Wickenden reported that he had been approached by a neighbour of the Green who reported that Sycamore trees thereon required coppicing before they became too tall; they were last coppiced around twenty years ago. Cllr. Wickenden considered that the Council were custodians of the Green. It was **RESOLVED** that it be confirmed to the resident that the Council had no objection to the work taking place.

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

To be advised.

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

- Cllr. Kitchenham requested that consideration be given to resuming "in person" Council meetings in the Scout Hut, perhaps starting with Planning Committee meetings. Councillors considered that the "rule of 6" would preclude this and that the subject was already a fixture for review on the monthly meeting agenda.
- Cllr. Wickenden reported that tree branches were growing over the "unmade" section of New Road and that the refuse lorries were breaking these off when passing. **CLERK** to investigate and raise report with ESCC Highways or landowner responsible.
- It was suggested and agreed that, due to the volume of business on the agenda of the October Council meeting, the start time should be moved back to 19:00. Cllrs. to note, **CLERK** to inform our District and County representatives.
- **CLERK** to request contractors to cut back and remove the bamboo growth near the Sports Clubhouse, arisings to be placed in the "Forest Area" at the bottom of the of the Rec. Contractor to be asked to cut the hedge in the area of the waste unit at the rear of the Pre School.
- The local British Legion representative has requested that the Legion's bench in Court Meadow Green be unchained from the tree and moved to opposite the War Memorial. Cllrs. Wickenden and Watson-Smith have offered to deal with this, **CLERK** to inform the Legion's representative.
- Remembrance Sunday Service. Adam Hardy advised that, due to Covid, the number able to attend this at the Church will be limited and "track and trace" information will be required. Cllrs. and Mrs. Wickenden, and Cllrs. Watson-Smith and Rignall will attend and lay wreaths on behalf of the Council, Parish and Legion.

The meeting was declared closed at 21:55

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

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