



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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 26th NOVEMBER 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 "Zoom".

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

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

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

T. Thorpe, Parish Clerk, A. Hardy, Council Administrator,
Cllr. R. Standley (ESCC), and Cllr. P. Dixon (WDC).

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING: -

a) Public forum

No public present.

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

Cllr. D. Hiles had submitted an apology and it was **RESOLVED** that the reason for this absence be **APPROVED**

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.

d) District and County Councillor reports.

Cllr. Standley (ESCC) reported the following:-

- Covid remains an issue and local cases have increased steadily over the past few weeks.
- After today's announcement from the Government Tunbridge Wells District area will be in the "tier three" (very high alert) category from December 2nd and, from that date, Wealden District area will be under Covid restrictions in the "tier two" (high alert) category.
- Some Wealden schools had been required to close temporarily due to Covid cases being identified.
- Financial costs to Councils have been high but it is hoped that most of these will be recompensed by Central Government.
- Government money is now available to provide meals for children during the Christmas Holidays, February half term and possibly beyond.
- The petition collected by Parishioners in respect of speed issues in the Parish is in hand and will be presented to ESCC in due course; Cllr. Standley will monitor its progress.
- Cllr. Henrick enquired as to how many Covid tests had been undertaken in Wealden. Cllr. Standley will investigate and report back.

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- Cllr. Obbard (WDC) was unable to attend this meeting and had submitted a written report which was read out by the Clerk.

Cllr. Dixon (WDC) reported the following:-

- The Wealden Local Plan "Direction of Travel" consultation is running for a period of eight weeks from 9.00am Monday 23rd November 2020 until midnight on Monday 18th January 2021. Comments may be made "online" or via email.
- The plan sets out the issues and options for matters facing Wealden.
- Planning Enforcement is experiencing a rise in cases.
- Joint waste function. Biffa is the contractor for this, and Wealden have recently taken over the administration of the service from Rother District Council. Biffa recently conducted a presentation to Wealden at which it was reported that the missed bin figure is now below 100 per week.
- Conservation issue in the village. Cllr. Dixon has inspected the location in question and considered that it was for the Conservation Officer to comment on.
- The matter of enforcement on a village site was raised. Work continues on it and concern was expressed at the lack of action. It is understood that an application is to be submitted; Cllr. Dixon is to follow up.
- Cllr. Harris complimented the working of Crowborough Tip which he considers to be very well run. He was informed that this is managed by ESCC and Cllr. Standley will pass the compliment on to them. A

e) Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 29th October 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 by the Chair when circumstances permit.

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

- 3iv)** Assets of Community Value. Paperwork has been submitted to WDC to renew one entry and to add the new entry agreed at October's Council meeting.
- 3v)** Christmas lights. Consent has now been obtained for the power supply to the lights at the South Street end of the Village.
- 3vii)** Contractors for electrical work and replacement windows have been advised that their quotes have been accepted. Electrical work is to commence shortly, and a deposit has paid for window work; contractors are to visit the Surgery on December 4th to agree plans for the installation. Cllr. Henrick advised that the electricians are to start work on December 5th and the Surgery have been made aware.
- Quote for automating/providing power assistance to the surgery door. This has been chased and the company approached have promised to undertake a site visit and send their quote for consideration.

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

i. Budget, other financial reports and actions arising.

Reports have been made available to Councillors prior to the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the budget report be approved. Comments submitted regarding correcting allocations to cost centres are to be acted upon so that the figures presented at the forthcoming Finance and General Purpose Committee meeting will reflect the true position.

CLERK to note/action.

ii Approval of payments.

Details had been made available to the Councillors prior to the meeting and it was

RESOLVED that the following payments be authorised and paid. It was further **RESOLVED** that, at Cllr. Martin's suggestion, the payment for TSS should not be released until he and

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Adam Hardy were satisfied that the system was running in accordance with the Council's requirements. **CLERK** to note.

List of Payments for November

Payee Name	Amount	Transaction Detail
Xtraspace	£84.50	Storage costs
Rotherfield Sports Club	£325.00	Pitch Maintenance
Lloyds Bank Card Services	£149.78	Debit card expenditure October
HM Land Registry fees	£24.00	Land registry searches
M & A Brown & Sons	£20,521.80	Pitch maintenance equipment
Contractors		
TN6 Electrical	£60.00	Emergency work in Surgery
Phil Ireland	£400.80	Street Sweeping/Litter Picking
HM Land Registry fees DD	£6.00	Institute search fees
Insulation Services	£3,350.00	30% deposit - surgery windows
Tollwood Garden Service	£210.00	Grass cutting/groundwork
BHIB Council Insurance	£21.04	CCTV - additional premium
Coppard Plant Hire Ltd	£186.21	Excavator hire
Rotherfield Memorial Institute	£50.00	CCTV power supply contribution
Rotherfield St Martin	£1,137.14	Parish Newsletter costs
Teambase	£58.78	Ink cartridges
Rotherfield & Mark Cross	£500.00	Annual grant
Bonfire Society		
Rotherfield St Martin	£500.00	Support Grant instalment II
William J Clark	£186.00	Groundwork
Total Support Services Ltd	£8,916.00	Installation of Rec. CCTV
PKF Littlejohn LLP	£720.00	External audit fees
Adam Hardy	£756.25	November support
Trevor Thorpe	£1,669.89	November salary
H M R C	£515.51	November Tax and NI
Trevor Thorpe	£31.32	Mileage and expenses
Mulberry & Co	£216.00	2020-21 Interim audit
Computer Studio	£350.00	Laptop for SID stats
Smartest Energy	£213.95	October electric bill for surgery
Total Gas & Power Ltd.	£149.51	October gas bill for surgery
Adrian Martin	£426.00	CCTV, SID and repair work
Total payments	£41,735.48	

List of receipts for November

Payee Name	Amount	Transaction Detail
Rotherfield Surgery	£2,673.33	Monthly rent
Parishioner	£120.00	Fees for two plaque spaces on the Cemetery memorial wall
Tester and Jones	£50.00	Additional inscription fee
Santander Bank	£0.64	Bank interest
Total receipts	£2,843.97	

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- iii **Confirm removal of Cllr. Watson Smith as a signatory to the Unity Trust account at his request.**

RESOLVED that this be confirmed, **CLERK** to contact Unity Trust Bank to deal with arrangements for updating their records.

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

- i. **Reminder of Code of Conduct for Members and the Complaints Procedure for dealing with complaints against the Council or individual Councillors.**

Copies of the documents above had been made available to Councillors prior to this meeting.

Comments had been passed to the Clerk regarding various issues but there was insufficient information to take further action. He reminded Councillors that any complaints should be specific, in writing and sent for review by him and the Chair. These will be passed on to Wealden DC as a "Code of Conduct" complaint if appropriate.

The Council's complaints policy has not been reviewed since 2014. **CLERK** to investigate current SLCC/NALC "model" policies and add an item to agenda of the January Council meeting to report and present updated policy if required. Clerk and Adam Hardy are to review current policies to set up a diary system so that review of policies and other governing documents are spread through year.

- ii. **Review of the use of delegated powers for spending – Financial Regulations section 4.1.**

Research by Adam Hardy shows that our neighbouring parishes have broadly the same wording in their Financial Regulations regarding this matter. Chair considers that the wording of this section of the Council's Financial Regulations should be reviewed to clarify the circumstances under which use of this power is to be permitted. **CLERK** to add item to the agenda of the 10th December Finance and General Purpose Committee meeting to agree revised wording of section 4.1 of the Financial Regulations for adoption at the January Council meeting.

Cllr. Martin expressed his concerns regarding recent use of the delegated power and Cllr. Henrick suggested that this power should not overrule a previously minuted decision. After further discussion Chair closed this item as he considered that the actions agreed to review the use of delegated powers were sufficient, and that there was no benefit in discussing the matter further.

- iii. **Adoption of a Policy in respect of Councillors undertaking work for the Council, and insurance cover.**

Clerk has produced a draft document in respect of this; much of the information within has been provided by our insurers.

SLCC advice is that, with reference to the 1972 Local Government Act, a Council member cannot be appointed to a role involving paid employment with the Council until 12 months has elapsed of them ceasing to have been a member of that council. Reimbursement of items purchased for work undertaken is permitted.

Chair advised that some of the Councillors do have their own contractors public liability insurance for their work, also certification to use powered tools such as chainsaws and for use of pesticides and herbicides.

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Cllr. Martin advised that when he undertakes work for the Council it is as a contractor at an hourly rate and materials at cost and not as an employee. **CLERK** to update the draft policy to reflect this and add to the January agenda for consideration.

iv. **Quotes for tree work at the bottom of the Recreation Ground, development of a "Forest School" area and removal of Bamboo by the Clubhouse.**

RESOLVED to accept the following quotes:-

Tollwood Garden Services.

- £150 for bamboo removal and disposal.
- £400 To reduce height of hedge from nursery to the far corner as discussed and to dispose of cuttings at the agreed site which is the bottom left hand side of the lower pitch, with the bamboo being placed in the "Forest School" area

T.C. Woodgate

- £350 for felling trees on the bank between the football pitches, chip and remove.
- £780 to reduce rear hedge at the bottom of the rec ,reduce side branch of the mature oak tree and reduce willow tree back off the hedge line .

Concerns were raised regarding the proposed work to the Lime trees to the front of the Village Hall. Further research is required regarding the power/BT cables that run close to these before any work is undertaken as damage to the cables could incur cost to the Council.

CLERK to advise the contractors to proceed, also investigate situation regarding the cables and report.

Cllr. Martin wished that the following be noted:-

- The Tollwood quote for bamboo cutting is to include disposal on site, and their quote for hedge cutting is also to dispose of cuttings at the agreed site at the bottom left corner of the lower pitch.
- The T.C. Woodgate quote provides for all arising to be removed from the site.

v. **Rotherfield Memorial Institute. Adoption of Terms of Reference for the Working Group and to receive the report from the initial meeting held on 11th November.**

Cllr. Martin advised that the Working Group's Terms of Reference and aims had been accepted by the Group. A contractor has been instructed to repair a floor joist, together with guttering and other minor works.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Working Group were approved by the Council.

Minutes of the Group's meeting have been circulated to the Councillors. The three options for the property are as follows:-

1. Recruit new members to the Institute Committee to oversee a refurbishment programme.
2. Sell the property with funds passing to the Community, subject to Charity Commission consent.
3. Parish Council and Rotherfield St Martin to join forces to oversee repair and refurbishment of the property for continuing community use.

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- Parish Council have agreed a £1000 grant for repairs requiring urgent attention.
- Quotes are being sought for weatherproofing an old coal chute, gutter work and clearing and venting the air vents.
- Quote for a skip is being obtained for disposal of rubbish to the rear of the building, possibly by using volunteers.
- Land registry searches have been undertaken; these suggest that there does not seem to be any covenants over the property. Further investigation is suggested.
- Rotherfield St Martin are engaging a consultant on senior citizen care to investigate and recommend how the building can best be adapted for such use.
- Next meeting of the Group is at the beginning of January. Other than the joist repairs, no further work is to take place until the New Year.
- A new logo has been agreed for the Institute and a Facebook page is to be created.
- Surveyors advise that a full structural survey will cost around £1500; Cllr. Martin is to review quote.
- **CLERK** to add item to the December Council Meeting agenda to consider quote for approval, receive updates and agree further action.

Cllr. Wickenden left the meeting at this point.

vi. Rotherfield Surgery. Report from recent meeting, and update on improvement/repair works. Proposed actions and re-negotiations on expiry of lease at the end of its two year term.

It was **RESOLVED** under The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Sec 1 (2) that the public be excluded from this item due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

vii. Quote from East Sussex Highways to replace the lamp columns identified in a recent report.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following action be taken:-

- Column 69 in Hornshurst Road is to be replaced at a cost of £1730.37.
- Column 58 in Yew Tree Lane is to be replaced at a cost of £1683.08.
- These columns do not require painting.
- East Sussex Highways are to be asked to investigate whether Column 21 on the B2101 outside "Burwood" can be restored to upright, rather than replaced at the quoted cost of £2352.47 plus Vat.

CLERK to advise ESCC.

viii. Update to CCTV policy.

Draft of updated document has been circulated which reflects additional cameras installed to monitor the Village Hall and car park area. It was **RESOLVED** that the new policy be adopted.

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

- 10th November - Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee
- 17th November - Planning & Building Committee

Draft minutes of these meetings have been circulated and published. 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.

- Clerk, together with Cllrs. Buck and Kember attended a “Zoom” meeting with a Parishioner regarding Broadband in the Redgate Mill area. Clerk will circulate notes in advance of Tuesday’s Communications and Social Media Committee meeting which will feature an agenda item on the matter. The Parishioner driving the project in that area of the Parish will also be present via “Zoom” to address the meeting.
- Cllr. Kitchenham has visited Parishioners affected by flooding during the recent rainstorms and held site meetings with ESCC officers regarding issues. The cause of most of these issues appears to be lack of drain “rodding” and regular maintenance.

b) Clerk’s updates and issues.

None.

c) Items for next Parish Magazine column.

Cut-off date for the January edition is December 17th – subject to confirmation. Cllrs. Buck and Richardson are to compile an article for inclusion regarding their footpath exploring.

6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- Mulberry & Co - Interim internal audit report for 2020/21.
- PKF Littlejohn - External report for 2019/20 financial year and “sign-off” of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return – “AGAR”. This has been published and displayed on the Council noticeboard as is required.

No other correspondence was received that required action.

7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS.

No items requiring urgent action were identified in these. “Online” forms are being devised to simplify the reporting process and Adam Hardy and Cllr. Buck will liaise to discuss the requirements for this.

8. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

- 1st - Communications & Social Media Committee
- 8th - Planning & Building Committee
- - Finance & General Purposes Committee – *Agreement of 2021-2022 Budget & Precept*. Adam Hardy is minute with Trevor Thorpe dealing with the financial matters. Terms of reference for this Committee are to be reviewed at this meeting. **CLERK** to note
- 10th
- 17th - Monthly Council Meeting
- 22nd - Planning & Building Committee – volume of applications received will be reviewed prior to meeting to consider if comments under delegated powers are appropriate and that the meeting may be cancelled.

These meetings will be held on a “virtual” basis and will start 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.

Cllr. Henrick. Footpath complaints near Bletchinglye Lane. Cllr. Kitchenham is to inspect and report on the issues so that Clerk may report to the Rights of Way team at ESCC. Item to be added to the next Highways Committee meeting to review footpath issues, **CLERK** to note.

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Cllr. Kember. Reported that the waiting room at Eridge Station is being reopened and suggested that the Council could make a small contribution toward interior work such as furnishing. **CLERK** to add item to the next Highways Committee agenda to consider this – figure of £500 was suggested. With regard to the verge seeding he would like to see progress being made to do this. Cllr. Martin is happy to deal with this subject to weather conditions and suggested that this best be dealt with in the Spring. Cllr. Kember is to liaise with Cllr. Martin regarding this work.

Cllr. Glynn. Concern raised with her regarding Byway 77 near Green Hedges Farm off Danegate. **CLERK** to investigate status of path and report, also add to agenda of next Highways Committee meeting to discuss

Cllr. Moore. She is to decorate the “Exchange” kiosks and was thanked for her offer.

Cllr. Richardson. She has received comments from walkers that many paths are missing signage.

Cllr. Watson Smith. Footpath alongside the garden centre. Steps down from the A267 require attention as do fallen trees in the wood at the bottom of this path. Clerk to investigate and advise the Rights of Way team.

Clerk encouraged Councillors to investigate the “online” ESCC Rights of Way map which contains much useful information of assistance in identifying the location of issues.

Cllr. Buck sought advice regarding allocation of funds toward projects suggested at the recent “Zoom” meeting held to seek information from Mark Cross residents and their suggestions for projects in that area of the Parish. It was recommended that she arranges for an agenda item to be added to the January PCM.

Adam Hardy warned of fake emails being purportedly sent by members of Parish organisations.

Chair declared the formal business of the meeting closed at 21:50.

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