



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

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 29TH APRIL 2021 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 will be conducted "online" via "Zoom". If you wish to attend the meeting on this basis, please contact the Council so that arrangements may be made.

Members of the public and press are welcome to attend. At the start of the meeting, the public are invited to identify to the Chairman any Agenda item they would like to express a view on for a maximum of two minutes in total. The Public Forum at the start of the meeting gives an opportunity for the public to make statements or ask questions about matters not on the Agenda. When published, the minutes of this meeting can be viewed at Rotherfield library, on the Council's website www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk or by contacting the Clerk to obtain a copy.

PRESENT

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

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None.

ALSO PRESENT

- Trevor Thorpe, Parish Clerk, and Adam Hardy, Assistant Clerk.
- Cllr. R. Standley and Cllr. F. Whetstone (both ESCC).
- Cllr. P. Dixon and Cllr. K. Obbard (both WDC).
- Two candidates for co-option to fill the current vacancy on the Council.
- Iona Baily from Rotherfield St. Martin in connection with item 3ix).

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING: -

a) Public forum.

None.

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

Cllr. Glynn has submitted an apology and it was **RESOLVED** that her reason be accepted.

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

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. Councillors who are receiving payment as detailed in section 2ii) for work undertaken on behalf of the Council are reminded to declare a personal and pecuniary interest.

Cllr. Martin declared an interest in item 2ii) as an invoice has been submitted by him for work undertaken on behalf of the Council.

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d) District and County Councillor reports.

Cllr. Standley (ESCC) Said he had little to report although he was happy to answer any questions from the Councillors . He advised the meeting that Cllr. Whetstone was not seeking re-election and thanked him for his service to the community as the Councillor for the ESCC Forest Row Division.

Regrettably due to IT issues Cllr. Whetstone was unable to connect with the meeting. The Councillors agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to him on behalf of the Parish Council and community for his help and support during the period that he has served as a County Councillor.

Cllr. Dixon (WDC).

Summarised the situation regarding the “five year supply” situation regarding house building in Wealden, and the challenges faced by the Council in meeting the totals expected.

Cllr. Obbard (WDC)

Update on the progress of the WDC Climate Crisis Action Plan.

There are several threads which are slowly being progressed.

The Action Plan can be found on the WDC website and it is updated after every report to Cabinet.

Green Homes Grant Scheme.

Uptake by the public has been low. The scheme has now been discontinued and some of the funds will be used to assist Councils to upgrade their social Housing. WDC have applied for a grant from this source and await the outcome.

Microgeneration Certification Scheme

- WDC has successfully applied and obtained a £40,000 award from this scheme.
- The project will be concentrated on the Diplocks Industrial Estate in Hailsham, where many of the factory and warehouse units are quite old.
- The money will enable energy audits to be done and advice given about Insulation and renewable energy installation such as solar panels on roofs and switching from oil to heat pumps.

Solar Together

- This is the scheme promoted by the WDC to residents to put Solar Panels on their roofs through a group buying scheme to obtain about 40% discount on normal prices.
- The i-chooser organisation is organising the group buying scheme, company Home commissioned to implement it.
- WDC sent out over 20,000 letters to households in Wealden and around 5% of these registered for a quote. This is considered to be a good response.
- Installations have been delayed due to Covid restrictions, but of the 1,000 or so of initial registrations about 140 households have agreed to solar panels &/or battery storage.
- So far only 18 have been fully installed and completed.
- i-chooser will be running another scheme in 2021. This will be promoted by WDC, probably starting in late August.

Riding Sunbeams Project

- The Government has provided a £2.5M grant which is being administered by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership of which WDC is part.

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- This money will provide initial funding to link the Cuckmere Solar Farm to the Rail Network, providing electricity directly into the electrified railway.
- Once all the initial work is done, there will be an opportunity for the community (ie the public) to invest in the project, and WDC is also considering a direct investment.

Electric Vehicle (EV) charging in Wealden.

- There has been lots of discussions and preparatory work with the Energy Saving Trust
- This has identified 36 Wealden Car parks as potential sites, where the criteria for footfall, housing accessibility, National Grid connection, and various other factors are favourable.
- WDC has approached 18 leading EV charge point installers to gauge interest, but disappointingly only received expressions of interest from 4 companies.
- It is unlikely that the contract would be decided upon before the Autumn 2021, so it will be 2022 before we see a roll-out of EV charge points in Wealden Car parks.

Hydrogen Sussex

- This is a new grouping formed in February 2021 that WDC has joined to explore the place of hydrogen in the energy mix for the future.
- It is hoped that there would be a hydrogen production plant at Shoreham, to make use of spare electricity from the offshore wind farms.

Clerk enquired of Cllr. Obbard regarding the WDC car park in Station Road as he had today received an enquiry from Cllr. Moore on behalf of a parishioner regarding the possibility of a charging point in the parish. Cllr. Obbard will research the position and send available information. It is as yet unknown whether the WDC Station Road car park will be a candidate for receiving a charging point and he will investigate.

e) Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 25th March 2021 for approval as a true record.

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

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

HGV issues. Highways have been contacted re: their report from January 2020 containing various options. Clerk has asked them to advise as to whom is the prime contact for the project, and for an update in time for the forthcoming Highways Committee meeting on 25th May.

2. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT END OF MARCH 2021, REVIEW EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET TO DATE AND NOTE OR AUTHORISE PAYMENTS.

i. Approval of payments.

It was **RESOLVED** that the payments listed below be authorised.

Payments made or authorised between 01/04/2021 and 30/04/2021

Payee Name	Amount	Transaction Detail
Rotherfield Sports Club	£325.00	Recreation ground maintenance
Xtraspace	£84.50	Monthly storage fee
Phil Ireland	£564.46	Litter picking
Lloyds Bank Card Services	£31.78	Monthly bill
Tollwood Garden Service	£1,542.50	April groundwork/grass

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Teambase	£38.33	Stationery
David Peacock	£28.00	Noticeboard signwriting
A. Martin	£1,676.88	Works for Council - various
KPS Contractors Ltd	£552.00	Gravedigging plot P13
David Peacock	£160.00	New St Cheron twitten sign
T.C. Woodgate	£792.00	Tree work by car park and Hall
Alec Gould	£2,868.00	Forest Garden project fencing
April employment costs	£2,380.09	Employment Costs
H M R C	£513.02	April Tax & NI
SmartestEnergy	£199.85	Surgery electricity bill - March
Total Gas & Power Ltd.	£185.87	Surgery gas bill March
Cripps LLP	£980.40	Final surgery bill for lease
Elliott Glynn	£120.00	Photos for lease
Total Payments	£13,042.68	

Receipts between 01/04/2021 and 30/04/2021

Payer Name	Amount	Transaction Detail
Rotherfield Surgery	£2,673.33	Monthly rent
Burslem	£170.00	Memorial fee plot N13
Dignity Funerals Ltd	£800.00	Burial fees - H3 & P13
Rotherfield Millennium Green	£62.50	Dog bin emptying Jan-Mar
Tester and Jones Ltd	£50.00	Inscription fee 1278
Wealden District Council	£60,652.00	Precept and CIL payment
Total receipts	£64,407.83	

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

i. Approval of signature of the Council's draft accounts for 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

This is still work in progress. Internal auditor "remote" date is 7th June and papers need to be with them in good time. External auditor deadline for receipt of papers is 2nd July 2021. **CLERK** to add an item May agenda regarding this.

ii. Consider candidates for Co-option to the Council to fill the current vacancy.

- Two Parishioners, Jemma Cahan and Paul Beach, had submitted application forms for Co-option.
- Both candidates separately addressed the meeting to outline their experience and reasons for wishing to join the Council.
- A ballot was held which chose Jemma Cahan as the successful candidate. Paul Beach was encouraged to apply again when another vacancy arose, and it was also suggested that he may wish to be involved in various projects and working groups when opportunities arose to help the Council.
- Cllr. Cahan signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office document and this was witnessed via "Zoom". **CLERK** to ensure that this document and her completed Register of Members Interest Form is sent to WDC to advise of the new Councillor appointment.

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iii. Broadband project update.

Assistant Clerk reported that 60 expressions of interest have been received so far and that these could generate £174K of funding from BT from whom a quote is awaited. A “flyer” raising the profile of the scheme will be sent with the forthcoming newsletter. Cllr. Martin sought clarification regarding work BT were currently undertaking in the Village and whether this was related to broadband. It was agreed that the flyer be added to the Council’s social media to raise awareness of the project.

ASSISTANT CLERK to action please.

iv. Recommendation to the Full Council as agreed by the Recreation and Burial Committee confirming support for play equipment enhancements suggested by Proludic, and the expenditure required.

- Cllr. Watson-Smith advised that the Pre School and Primary School had been consulted regarding the equipment proposed.
- Proludic had reduced the cost of their quote by £2700 thus reducing the total cost of the project to £25,327.20, plus recoverable VAT.
- Cllr. Watson-Smith proposed that the quote be accepted at the price quoted and that the project be funded from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds contributed from building developments in the Parish.
- Cllr. Kitchenham commented that it would also be beneficial to extend the path to the play area, repair and improve the benches and seat and deal with some drainage issues under the benches.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr. Watson-Smith’s proposal be adopted with funding to be provided from CIL funds held. **CLERK** is to inform Proludic and liaise with them regarding instalment arrangements. Cllr. Martin wished it noted that he was not in favour of the project and Cllr. Buck abstained from voting.

v. To note updated contents of the new councillor “Welcome Pack”.

Clerk summarised the contents; details are available to view in OneDrive. Cllr. Cahan was invited to comment on the contents as she will be the first recipient of the pack. Cllr. Richardson was thanked for her work in progressing the pack.

vi. Update regarding arrangements for the Annual Council meeting, Annual Parish Meeting, and for conducting “virtual meetings”; Receive information regarding availability of local meeting venues.

The recent High Court hearing seeking to extend remote meetings was dismissed and the emergency “Covid” regulations that permitted these expires on May 6th. Assistant Clerk reported that he had investigated suitable venues to hold “face to face” meetings and had identified two that would allow sufficient space to be “Covid Secure”. Two proposals were considered for conducting forthcoming meetings.

- Informal “virtual” meetings to discuss and recommend items for formal consideration at a “socially distanced” monthly council meeting to conduct official business and consider items put forward for its consideration in a Covid secure venue. Some matters may be dealt with under existing delegated powers,
- Holding all meetings in person in suitably Covid compliant venues. The Scout Hut could be used on certain Thursdays subject to availability and the Church is also available with

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Wi-Fi and projector facilities and is treated with “fogging” on a regular basis to deter Covid. Other community venues in the Parish are not reopening until June or July.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following arrangements be in place until the usual meeting venues become fully open without additional Covid requirements.

- That monthly council meetings, and committee meetings, should be held in person at either St. Denys’ Church or the Scout Hut on a “Covid secure” basis with 2m social distancing and masks required when those attending were not speaking.
- That the Planning Committee should hold its meetings on a virtual basis with the Council’s comments and recommendations agreed under the existing delegated powers available.
- In response to a question regarding Councillors who may feel uneasy in attending “face to face” meetings assistant clerk advised that it was advised that the public could make submissions via “zoom” but Councillors could not vote if not physically present even if “self-isolating” .
- It was recommended that councillors or members of the public not attending should make written submissions on matters with which they were concerned. In the case of members of the public video submissions were acceptable.
- With regard to the forthcoming annual council meeting votes for election of Chair and Vice chairs will need to be by an open vote.
- The Annual Parish Meeting will be held in the Autumn on a date to be determined.

These arrangements will be reviewed as each stage of lifting “lockdown” restrictions is reached.

vii. Request for CCTV installation at Town Row.

Prompted by a recent burglary attempt in this area of the Village a resident has requested that consideration be given to providing this. Cllr. Martin reported that, whilst the cameras themselves are of modest cost, providing the power supply required, together with a means of storing the footage collected and internet access for remote viewing would be considerable. Costs so far for the Recreation Ground CCTV approach £7.5K and, whilst this system is in action, additional work is required to improve remote access to the footage captured.

RESOLVED not to install this facility due to practical and cost issues, Clerk to contact Parishioner to thank him for his suggestion.

viii. Grant applications - Rotherfield Village Pre School, Wealden Citizens Advice Bureau and grants recommended for payment at the Finance and General Purpose Committee meeting.

Application forms for the Pre School and CAB are in the team folder for this meeting. The following grants were agreed at the recent F & G P meeting.

- Rotherfield St Martins - £2,000.00 payable in equal instalments April and October. Last year £1500 and £500 paid in instalments.
- Rotherfield Friendship Club £200.00. £200 paid last year.
- Crowborough Community First Responders £200.00. £100 paid last year.
- Kent & Sussex Air Ambulance £300.00. £250 paid last year.

These grant applications have subsequently been received.

- Rotherfield Pre School - £1500.00 sought, £750 paid last year.

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- Wealden Citizens Advice Bureau - unspecified sum sought, £300 paid last year.

It was **RESOLVED** that Pre School be paid £1500 as grant support for this year and that £300 be paid to the CAB. **CLERK** to advise all grant recipients and arrange for payments to be made to them.

Clerk informed the meeting that he had contacted the Powdermill Trust, who manage a nature reserve in the Parish. to invite them to make an application for grant support. They have acknowledged and sought further information from the Council regarding eligibility.

ix. Request for the Council to join the Wealden Dementia Action Alliance Charter.

This item was dealt with after item 2) ii at the meeting.

- Iona Baily, a member of the Rotherfield St. Martin team, gave a brief presentation regarding the Charter.
- Clerk had circulated information regarding the Charter to the Councillors prior to the meeting and the key points of the presentation are listed below:-
- By 2025 over one million in the UK will be living with Dementia and currently there are 10172 living with Dementia in East Sussex.
- Dementia is associated with the older generation and in Rotherfield the population is above the East Sussex average with 25% aged 25 and over.
- The Charter aims to support those with the condition and those that care for them day to day.
- It is wished that all Parish groups, societies, clubs, and individuals sign up to the Charter; many have already done so, including our MP.
- Iona leads the voluntary 45 minute sessions to raise dementia awareness. A weekly email is also circulated containing tips on how to be "Dementia Friendly".

It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council sign up to the Charter as a group; if individual Councillors wished to sign up as Dementia Friends this would be very welcome, and the Chair endorsed this view. It was also suggested that a briefing could be held at a Council meeting when the agenda permitted. **CLERK** to liaise with RSM to arrange. Further details may be viewed on the RSM website.

x. Approve the Risk Assessment for volunteers working in the Old Burial Ground

This had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr. Buck had received minor comments, with these changes it was **RESOLVED** that this be approved.

It was confirmed that group would not be active on Sunday mornings, also that any "lone working" will be undertaken with due regard to monitoring and support.

4. TO NOTE MINUTES OF COMMITTEES PUBLISHED SINCE THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING.

- 6th - Communications & Social Media Committee
- 13th - Recreation & Burial Committee
- 15th - Finance & General-Purpose Committee
- 20th - Planning & Building Committee

It was **RESOLVED** that the contents and actions arising from these meetings be noted.

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

a) Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.

- Cllrs. Kitchenham, Harris, Hardy, Richardson, and Moore had attended meetings in relation to "Rotherfield in Bloom". Cllr. Richardson had also visited various nurseries and attended "Zoom" meetings regarding this project.
- Cllr. Buck had met with the Pre School, also visited Eridge Station to choose furniture for the refurbished waiting room. She had also attended the recent meeting of the Wealden District Association of Local Councils (WDALC).
- Clerk had attended a Clerk's zoom meeting with 10 other Clerks and Keith Stevens of NALC and the East Sussex Association of Local Councils (ESALC).
- Virtual meetings were discussed.
- The recent challenges and changes to the local associations were discussed and there are now individual bodies representing East Sussex, West Sussex, and Surrey. SSALC is no more, and we are now represented by ESALC with Trevor Leggo as CEO and Emily Simpson, Administrative & Finance Assistant, both working from home 09:00 – 12:00 weekdays. Further details may be viewed at <https://esalc.council.prateraines.co.uk>.
- Clerks hours and resources were also discussed, particularly hours paid which are generally less than those actually worked for their respective councils.

b) Clerk's updates and issues.

Assistant Clerk has "signed up" for various clerk's training courses that will be funded by the Council.

c) Items for the next Parish Magazine column.

Cllr. Kitchenham will provide an article on dog fouling, Cllr. Moore will update regarding "Speedwatch" and Cllr. Richardson will update regarding "Rotherfield in Bloom".

d) Training information and updates.

- Information regarding training courses or other events of interest to Councillors has been circulated to all when received. Please let Clerk or Assistant know if you wish to attend any of the sessions on offer.
- Cllr. Cahan will review the courses available and will advise Clerk of any which may be of interest.
- Training formerly provided by SSALC will now be provided by Mulberry and Co on their behalf: Clerk reminded the meeting that training is funded by the Council.
- Clerk and assistant will be undertaking training from Rialtas Business Systems regarding the asset inventory software that we will be using.

6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

None requiring Council action or response.

7. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS.

Email report has been submitted by Cllr. Buck. No issues requiring urgent attention were noted.

8. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

May meetings - all commencing at 19:30.

- 11th Planning & Building Committee (informal zoom meeting)
- 25th Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee – to be held in St Denys' Church.

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- 27th Monthly Parish Council Meeting incorporating the Annual Council meeting. To be held in Rotherfield Scout Hut.

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

- Cllr. Martin updated regarding signage at Eridge Station. An item will feature on the agenda of the forthcoming Highways Committee regarding arrangements for this.
- Cllr. Wickenden reminded Clerk to contact the Sussex Wildlife Trust re safety arrangements for wildlife ponds in children's areas.
- Clerk advised Cllr. Watson Smith that the timber provided by Wicksteed was for repair work to the climbing frame in the Rec.
- Cllr. Kember enquired regarding the forthcoming Planning Cluster meeting and was advised that links will be provided nearer the date of the meeting.
- Cllr. Cahan advised that she is unable to attend the May Council Meeting.
- Cllr. Moore requested that WDC be approached to see if dedicated residents parking could be permitted in the Station Road car park.
- Chair had arranged for a gift to Andrew Fermor in acknowledgment of his invaluable professional support and help with the negotiations regarding the Surgery lease.
- Cllr. Martin advised that some tidying up was required by the contractor who had recently undertaken fencing work in connection with the Forest School.

Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:55.

.....Chair.....

.....Date

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