



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 THURSDAY 25TH JANUARY 2024 AT 19:30 IN THE UPPER HALL AT ROTHERFIELD MEMORIAL INSTITUTE

PRESENT

Cllr R Harris (Chair)
Cllr L Buck
Cllr P Snelling

Cllr D Hiles
Cllr J Gosney
Cllr A Martin

Cllr P Kember
Cllr J Fryatt

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT

Adam Hardy (Parish Clerk & RFO), Cllr B Standley (East Sussex County Council), Cllr G Taylor (East Sussex County Council) & Cllr M Lunn (Wealden District Council)

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING: -

a) Public forum.

None

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

Apologies for absence were received from: Cllr J Richardson, Cllr P Turner, Cllr B Johnstone, Cllr C Southern

It was **RESOLVED** that their reasons be accepted.

Cllr J Hulbert (Wealden District Council) also sent her apologies for the meeting.

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

- Cllr Martin declared an interest as he was receiving reimbursement on the payment run for this month.

d) District and County Councillor reports.

Cllr B Standley (East Sussex County Council)

A report had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

- Cllr Standley reported that East Sussex County Council would have to use its reserve to meet the budget overspend. A large part of the overspend is in Adult Health and Social Care.
- Cllr Standley reported that following the SLR meeting he had confirmed that the Mark Cross Junction reconfiguration is not in the capital grant program.

Clerk: Adam J Hardy, 3 Trinity Mews, Mill Crescent, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2QU

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- Cllr Standley reported that he had today attended a conference on Climate Change.
- Cllr Kember asked if East Sussex County Council was to receive any of the funds announced today for Local Government. Cllr Standley replied that the County was awaiting notification.

Cllr G Taylor (Wealden District Council)

- Cllr Taylor reported that a scrutiny and overview report had been sent to East Sussex Highways and a response is expected soon.
- Cllr Taylor reported that all Councils were lobbying the central government for an increase in funding. Cllr Gosney asked if a change of Government would mean an increase in funding. Cllr Taylor replied that it was too early to say.
- Cllr Buck asked if both County Councillors were aware that the Sussex Partnership had now run out of funding and was unable to offer any further dementia diagnosis in this financial year.

Cllr M Lunn (Wealden District Council)

A report had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting:

- Cllr Lunn reminded Councillors that the DRAFT Local Plan had been published but reminded Councillors it was still early in the process and that no comments should be made until the consultation process opens.
- Cllr Lunn drew Councillors' attention to the current Environmental Health (Licensing) - Environmental Framework Consultation. It could have a big impact on local village events and he would encourage Rotherfield Parish Council to make representation. **Clerk** to add an item to the 30th January Planning & Building Committee meeting agenda.
- Cllr Lunn invited Councillors to attend an open meeting in Hadlow Down with South East Water on Tuesday 30th January 2024. David Hinton the CEO will be in attendance.
- Cllr Lunn confirmed that the two PCSOs for Rotherfield will attend the 22nd February Parish Council Meeting as arranged with the Clerk.
- Cllr Lunn said that Wealden District Council will shortly go through a transition as the current Chair is standing down.

e) Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14th December 2023 for approval as a true record.

It was **RESOLVED** that these were a true record of the meeting and they were signed by the Chair.

f) Clerk's update on action items from previous meetings.

- Clerk reported that the container had now been ordered for REACT, this is being paid for by a generous grant from the Rotherfield Trust. The remaining items will be ordered following the delivery of the container.
- Clerk confirmed he had updated the Council website following the resignation of James Kitchenham and departure of Trevor Thorpe.
- Clerk confirmed that the precept request paperwork had been submitted to Wealden District Council and acknowledged.
- Clerk confirmed that the agreed budget for 2024/2025 had been entered into the accounting system.
- Clerk confirmed that the RSM and Rotherfield School grant payments were on this month's payment run.
- Clerk confirmed that the works in the Old Burial Ground had been completed by the agreed contractors.
- Clerk reported that he had arranged for a quotation for the Undercroft Light but it had not been received yet.
- Clerk reported that he had written to Sharon Gray at Eridge Station congratulating her on her GTR Award.

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- Clerk reported that he had arranged for the repairs and repainting to the St Cheron Twitten Signage.

2. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT THE END OF DECEMBER 2023, REVIEW EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET TO DATE AND NOTE OR AUTHORISE PAYMENTS.

i Budget, other financial reports, and actions arising

The bank reconciliations up until the 31st December 2023 was presented for all of the Council's bank accounts.

It was **RESOLVED** that the budget was correct and accepted by the Council as the correct position of the Council's accounts.

ii Approval of payments.

Cllr Kember sought confirmation that the invoice for Rotherfield Memorial Institute Architects (Robert Shreeves Ltd) was to be paid out of the already agreed grant. Clerk confirmed that this was correct.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following payments:

Regular Payments				
Invoice/payer details	Ledger code	Cost centre code	Ledger entry description - Max 30 characters	Amount - VAT included where applicable
Rotherfield Sports Club	4340	302	Grounds Maintenance	£368.75
BT Business Broadband	4409	302	CCTV Broadband	£47.10
Cloudy Group Ltd	4110	101	Rialtas Hosting	£76.56
Veolia	4391	303	Village Hall Bin	£58.56
Phil Ireland	4364	302	Litter Picking	£664.00
Rotherfield Memorial Institute	4125	101	Hall Bookings	£80.00
Rotherfield Village Hall	4125	101	Village Hall Booking	£16.80
Teambase	4110	101	Clerk Stationery	£38.94
Tollwood Garden Services	4255	203	Grit Bins Check Up	£68.75
Tollwood Garden Services	4255	203	Grit Bins Refill	£110.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4110	101	Deputy Clerk Furniture Transport	£68.75
Tollwood Garden Services	4110	101	Deputy Clerk Furniture Transport (2)	£41.25
Tollwood Garden Services	4341	302	Recreation Ground (1)	£30.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4341	302	Children's Play Area (1)	£15.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4341	302	Children's Play Area (2)	£30.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4381	303	Compost	£4.49
Rotherfield Memorial Institute	4125	101	Wealden Energy Training	£30.00
Total				£1,748.95
Other Payments				
Teambase	4110	101	Clerk Stationery (2)	£75.25
Thomas Mansfield Solicitors Ltd	4120	101	Solicitors Fees	£600.00
Cripps LLP	4120	101	Cripps Fees	£900.00
Robert Shreeves Associates Ltd	4113	101	Architect Fees	£6,551.94

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Rotherfield St Martin	4150	101	Feed-it-back and Community Garden grant	£1,000.00
Rotherfield Primary School	4150	101	Residential Trip Grant	£1,000.00
SLCC	4120	101	Clerk Membership Renewal	£298.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP,	4120	101	External Audit 2022/2023	£756.00
Adrian Martin	4110	101	Undercroft Keys	£12.00
BURRIDGE FENCING AND TREE WORK	4380	303	Old Burial Ground Tree Work	£1,536.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4380	303	Old Burial Grounds Work	£2,400.00
TN6 Electrical	4156	102	Defib Installation	£135.00
Trevor Thorpe	4110	101	WordPress Website Hosting Renewal	£288.00
Katharine Jennings Fine Art	4110	101	Leaving Present for Officer	£50.00
Blinds of all Kinds	4410	302	Rotherfield Village Hall Blinds	£365.58
J&K Gallery Limited	4110	101	Staff Leaving Gift	£150.00
Adaptainer Ltd	4368	202	Container for REACT	£2,778.00
Total				£18,895.77

Surgery payments	Ledger code	Cost centre code	Ledger entry description - Max 30 characters	Amount
Sussex Primary Care	4399	305	Surgery Costs	£629.08
Phil Ireland	4405	305	Surgery Windows	£28.00
				£657.08
Staff Costs - includes Tax, NI, pension and expenses			Total figure reported separately	£5,484.64

iii Note spending and justification of any payments agreed under delegated powers.

None

3. RECEIVE REPORTS, UPDATES & RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PERSONNEL

None.

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

a) To receive and note the Independent Remuneration Panel - Town and Parish Councillor Allowances for 2024/25.

Documents relating to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of this meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Remuneration Panels report.

b) To discuss and resolve Rotherfield Parish Council holding a community event to mark the Great Big Green Week on 8-16 July.

Documents relating to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

It was **AGREED** that this item should be delegated to the Community Engagement Committee for further discussion. **Clerk** to add the item to 13th February 2024 Community Engagement Committee agenda.

Cllr Snelling pointed out that the actual date of this event is 8th – 16th June 2024.

c) Discuss and resolve the Rural Grass Cutting Service - Environmental Enhancement Service Option.

Documents relating to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with Option 2 - Environmental Enhancement Service (reduced rural service). **Clerk** to write to East Sussex Council confirming choice.

It was requested that details of Option 2 be recorded in the minutes:

Excluding single track lanes, the first cut at start of season to be only visibility cuts for safety at junctions and on the inside of bends where sight lines between road users may be obscured by vegetation. The second cut later in the season will be visibility plus a 1 metre wide swathe along the verge.

d) Receive updates and consider actions on the lease and sublease of the Rotherfield Pre-School Building.

Documents relating to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

Clerk provided the Council with an update on the sublease between Rotherfield Pre-School and East Sussex County Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council would be happy for a seven-year sublease under S123 of the 1972 Act to be offered by East Sussex to Rotherfield Pre-School

It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council would not seek a rent increase or review at this time.

Clerk to write to East Sussex County Council Senior Estates Surveyor relaying the Council's decisions.

Clerk reminded Councillors that there would be legal fees as part of this process, but they would be met by East Sussex County Council. **Clerk** to contact the Councillors Solicitors for a fee estimate.

Cllr Harris suggested that it would be good for the Council to review all the leases that are part of the Council estate. **Clerk** to investigate and report back to the Recreation & Burial Committee.

5. RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE ROTHERFIELD MEMORIAL INSTITUTE.

The following report had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting and was requested to form part of the official minute of the meeting:

UPDATE FOR ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ON THE WORK OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ROTHERFIELD MEMORIAL INSTITUTE:

Please find below a copy of my report for to the 18 January meeting of the Institute's Management Committee, informing them of the successful outcome of the recent meeting with the Rotherfield Trust on 9 January, and setting out an indicative working timeline for the restoration and refurbishment project.

Since those meetings further information has been obtained about a significant bequest to be made to the Institute, which has confirmed that the overall working figure of £750,000 for the project is a realistic one, if the Parish Council is able to proceed with its PWLB application. The Management Committee will carry out further fundraising over the coming year to complete the project and equip the Institute to bring its facilities up to date, and the Management Committee will carry out this fundraising work in the coming year.

Chair's Report to The Management Committee January 2024

Committee members will be aware that the Rotherfield Trust has generously made a grant of up to £50,000 towards the costs of professional work on the restoration and refurbishment project to bring our plans up to the point at which a planning application can be made and public consultation initiated, and the Parish Council can make an informed PWLB application.

I have set out below the professional fee costs submitted by the contractors agreed by this Committee. To date, £10,355 has been paid by the Parish Council and from RMI funds to the architects and project managers: RSA have claimed for their Stage 1 and 2 work, and for 50% of their Stage 3 work; BLB have claimed 15% of their total Stage 1-4 work. This leaves a total of £31,970 to be paid, leaving some margin for other expenditures such as the drawings needed for the public consultation. For information, please see the RIBA Code specifications, which set out what is comprised in each Stage.

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1. *KEMBER LOUDON WILLIAMS – planning consultants (fees ex VAT, 20% rate reduction)*
 - *Stage 1 design brief: £1,280*
 - *Stage 2: develop Vision and strategy: £1,600*
 - *Stage 3: Planning application: c£2,000-2750*
2. *ROBERT SHREEVES ARCHITECTS (fees quoted ex-VAT)*
 - *Stages 1&2: client brief, meetings to develop options: £3,600*
 - *Stage 3: develop and prepare drawings for submission to WDC Planning Dept: £3,600*
Invoice paid December 2023: £5,459.70 includes Stages 1&2, 50% Stage 3, copying, travel
3. *BLB SURVEYORS (ex-VAT as % of total project value in line with RIBA Plan of Work: project management & quantity surveying, contract admin, MEP engineering to project delivery)*
 - *Stages 1-4: £32,625*
 - *Stages 5-6: £34,500*
 - *Stage 7: £3,000*

Working timeline

Now that funding has been procured to allow us to work towards planning permission and public consultation, we are in a better position to establish a possible working timeline for the next stage of the project. The below has been discussed with the Parish Clerk but of course the Parish Council will ultimately make its own decisions, based on the strength of the material we provide them with. Two key factors to note: the size and timing of any bequest is still unknown, and this may result in building work needing to be carefully phased; and there is very little money in the RMI account for any other than strictly necessary expenditure. The 2024/25 Parish Council budget has no provision for any expenditure on the Institute.

- January 2024:** *application to Rotherfield Trust for funding for initial professional work towards planning permission*
- April 2024:** *Parish Council engages NALC consultant to advise on RPC application for PWLB Management Committee presents Business Case to RPC*
Parish Council applies for planning advice on behalf of the RMI Charity
Parish Council makes formal resolution for PWLB application and for precept increase to cover loan payments
Public consultation initiated
- July/August 2024:** *public consultation and full parish postal referendum*
RPC applies for planning permission on behalf of RMI
October 2024: results of public consultation received
Parish Council submits PWLB loan application with supporting Business Case and results of postal referendum
- Early 2025:** *building work begins*

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Proposal to repaint the upstairs hall

If the build is not going to take place until early 2025, I would like to organise a working party in February, reaching out to parishioners, to repaint at least the skirting boards, windows and main wall up to the skirting, to make the room more attractive to hirers. The Trust were impressed with the voluntary work that has already been undertaken, and such an activity might be a useful outreach to the community.

Cllr Kember asked if any Councillors had any questions.

- Cllr Buck asked when the working party for the Upper Hall decorating was due to take place. Cllr Kember believed it would be scheduled for the end of February but would speak with the Chair of the committee.
- Cllr Gosney asked if the Plans were available for Councillors to look at. The Clerk confirmed that the plans were saved in the SharePoint.
- Cllr Gosney asked when planning permission would be sought for the project. Cllr Kember confirmed that the Management Committee were looking at different options for managing the project and would keep Councillors informed.
- Cllr Martin asked if three tenders would be put out for each building option. Cllr Kember replied that due process was being followed and currently the Management Committee were reviewing different ways to manage the building phase of the project.

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

9th January 2024	Planning & Building Committee Meeting
16 th January 2024	Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee Meeting

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

a) Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.

- Cllr Martin met with tarmac contractors regarding the pavement at Mark Cross. This item had already been considered at the 16th January 2024. Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee Meeting.
- Cllr Martin, Cllr Snelling, Cllr Turner, Cllr Gosney, Cllr Kember and the Clerk attended the recent Strengthening Local Relationships (SLR) meeting with East Sussex Highways. **Clerk** to circulate minutes to all Councillors.
- Cllr Martin visited Rotherfield Pre-School to update them on the undercroft light and to discuss the lease situation.
- Cllr Harris spoke with the local parishioner who has taken on responsibility for the storage of the Parish Christmas lights. He suggested that the Chair or another Councillor have a key to his farm where the lights are being stored. It was **AGREED** that the Chair would hold the key.

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b) Clerk's updates and issues.

- Clerk has received a response from East Sussex Highways concerning the relining requested on Station Road junction and the Village Square. They do not consider this necessary at present as it does not meet their policy criteria for action. It was **AGREED** that Councillors were not happy with this response and asked for the matter to be raised again. **Clerk** to raise with the Highway Steward.
- Clerk reported that the Village Hall DRAFT Lease had now been completed and was awaiting final comments from the Clerk and the Chair. It would be presented to the February Parish Council meeting for adoption by the Council.

c) Items for the next Parish Magazine column.

- Former Deputy Clerk retirement
- Parking around the Parish
- Rotherfield Memorial Institute update
- D-Day 80th Anniversary outline and update
- Promotion of Wealdlink and buses to Crowborough/

8. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- An Update on the Local Plan situation from Cllr James Partridge – Wealden District Council Leader. Clerk had circulated this to the Councillors.

Clerk reported that this had now been superseded by the release of the DRAFT Local Plan.

- Email from a resident regarding the environmental disposal of waste. Clerk has replied confirming that all procurements will include a discussion of the appropriate disposal of waste.
- Grant Application from Wealden Citizens Advice. Clerk had acknowledged the grant request and added an item to the 18th April 2024 Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting.
- Thank You Letter from Rev Canon Nigel Mason. Clerk had circulated this to Councillors.
- Clerk received an email from Rotherfield Primary School inviting the Council to be involved in Rotherfield Community Week - 11th - 15th March 2024.

It was **AGREED** this was something the Council would definitely like to be part of. **Clerk** to reply to school.

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- Clerk had received several communications regarding the fencing between 26 Court Meadow and the Old Burial Ground. The request is that the Council fulfil its obligations under the Schedule 1 of the Covenant of the Title Deed of the Cemetery.

Documents relating to this Correspondence had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

It was **AGREED** that the Council wished to fulfil its obligations under the Covenant in the title plan: ESX279604. This requires the Council to provide "stock proof fences". It would not be appropriate for the Council to provide panel fencing as it does not believe this to be the responsibility of the Council as set out in the Covenant.

Cllrs Martin & Harris to investigate what stock proof fencing is required to make good on the Council's obligations.

Clerk to write to the resident of 26 Court Meadow confirming the Council's position.

9. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS.

Date	Inspection Report
15 th January 2024	Recreation Ground Inspection Report
15 th January 2024	Playground Inspection Report
15 th January 2024	Hornshurst Burial Ground Report
24 th January 2024	Old Burial Ground Inspection Report

10. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

Date	Meeting	Venue
30 th January 2024	Planning & Building Committee	Rotherfield Memorial Institute
6 th February 2024	Recreation & Burial Committee	Rotherfield Village Hall
13 th February 2024	Community Engagement Committee	Rotherfield Memorial Institute
15 th February 2024	Rotherfield Memorial Institute Management Committee	Rotherfield Memorial Institute
20 th February 2024	Planning & Building Committee	Rotherfield Village Hall
22 nd February 2024	Parish Council Meeting	Rotherfield Memorial Institute
12 th March 2024	Planning & Building Committee	Rotherfield Village Hall
19 th March 2024	Rotherfield Memorial Institute Management Committee	Rotherfield Memorial Institute
26 th March 2024	Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee	Rotherfield Memorial Institute
27 th March 2024	Parish Council Meeting (N/B Wednesday)	Rotherfield Village Hall

All meetings are at 7:30pm.

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

- Cllr Buck asked if any further action had taken place concerning an email from Openreach about holding a public information event. Clerk had circulated the email to Councillors but no further action was discussed. **Clerk** to follow this up.
- Cllr Kember asked if an item could be placed on a future Planning Committee agenda to discuss options for reviewing and reimagining the Council estate. Cllr Harris said that this item would be commercially sensitive and would require discussion in a closed session of the Council. **Clerk** to add an item to 20th February Planning & Building Committee agenda for further discussion.
- Cllr Martin to arrange a quotation for the work on the steps in Hornshurst Road and will report back to the Council.
- Cllr Martin is in the process of arranging a quotation for ventilation holes in the Pre-School Building.

Chair declared the meeting closed at: **21:07**

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