



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 26TH FEBRUARY 2026 AT 19:30 IN THE UPPER HALL AT ROTHERFIELD COMMUNITY HUB (RMI) AT 7:30PM

PRESENT

Cllr R Harris (Chair)	Cllr L Buck	Cllr D Hiles
Cllr B Johnstone (Vice-Chair)	Cllr J Richardson	Cllr D Johnstone.
Cllr P Snelling	Cllr P Kember	Cllr J Gosney
Cllr B Cheeseman	Cllr E Holmes-Cutting	

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Cllr Bob Standley (East Sussex County Council), Cllr Michael Lunn (Wealden District Council), Cllr Jessika Hulbert (Wealden District Council), Cllr Andrew Wilson (Wealden District Council), Adam J Hardy (Parish Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer) and three members of the public.

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING: -

a) Introduction of Councillors & Officers.

The Councillors and Officers introduced themselves.

b) Public forum.

None.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr P Turner and Cllr P Beach

It was **RESOLVED** that the reasons for the apologies be accepted.

Apologies have also been received from Cllr Georgia Taylor (East Sussex County Council). She had circulated a report to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

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

Cllrs Paul Snelling and Emmanuelle Holmes-Cutting declared a personal interest in item 5i as friends of the landlord and landlady of the King's Arms. They confirmed that they would participate in the debate but would abstain from voting.

Last Updated: Monday, 2 March 2026 - 1:15 pm

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

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e) District and County Councillor reports.

Cllr Bob Standley (East Sussex County Council)

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

- Cllr Bob Standley reported that the exceptional funding requested from the government had been approved, but emphasised that it was not a grant but a loan and would need to be repaid with interest.
- The Council is still waiting to see the details of the SEND white paper, but expects a rush of ECHP applications ahead of the legislation becoming law.
- Cllr Bob Standley confirmed that the East Sussex County Council elections for this year were now back on. Therefore, the Council will go into purdah as per usual precedence.
- Cllr Bob Standley reiterated his firm support for the Kings Arms in the action being taken by the Environmental Enforcement Department of Wealden District Council.
- Cllr Bob Standley reported that he had received multiple pieces of correspondence in relation to the A267 road closure. The condition of the country lanes used by motorists is a great concern and will need to be addressed with SGN once the work is complete. Cllr Paul Snelling reported that the teams on the ground are working very hard to keep to schedule. The Clerk and Chair reported that they are attending weekly stakeholder meetings with SGN, East Sussex Highways, Mayfield & Five Ashes Parish Council and others. Correspondence from residents is being taken to these meetings.

Cllr Michael Lunn (Wealden District Council)

- Cllr Michael Lunn reported that the officer's report on the Highfield Farm planning application was not yet complete. Wealden is in negotiation with developers to discuss conditions that could be put in place. Cllr Peter Kember asked if it was his intention to call in the planning application. Cllr Michael Lunn replied that he would only be able to make a determination once the officers' report was complete and if solid policy reasons could be found to call in the application. Cllr Michael Lunn will keep the Council updated via the Clerk.
- Cllr Michael Lunn reminded councillors of the Regulation 18 Consultation that is currently underway for the New Local Plan. He encouraged councillors and members of the public to attend the public exhibitions. It is understood that the Alliance would like to move quickly from the consultation to Regulation 19.
- Cllr Michael Lunn reported that the Full Council had approved a 0% increase in the Wealden District Council element of the Council Tax.
- Cllr Michael Lunn reported that the Crowborough Shield application for Judicial Review would reach stage one judgment on Friday, 27th February 2026. This is whether Judicial Review can proceed.
- Cllr Michael Lunn informed Councillors that he had been advised by officers at Wealden District Council not to get directly involved in the enforcement action against the Kings Arms, and he had nominated Cllr Andrew Wilson to represent the Community in this matter.

Cllr Jessika Hulbert (Wealden District Council)

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

- Cllr Jessika Hulbert reported that in addition to her report that had been circulated she was attending to speak on items appearing later in the agenda. She repeated the encouragement for councillors and members of the public to attend the Regulation 18 consultation exhibitions.

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f) **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday, 29th January 2026, for approval as a true record.**

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

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

- The Clerk reported that he had sent further representations regarding the planning application at Highfields Farm to Wealden District Council.
- The Clerk confirmed that he had confirmed the appointment of Appleby Petfield as Planning Agents for the development of the Pump Track.
- The Clerk confirmed that he had notified Good Company People of their successful grant application.
- The Clerk confirmed that additional signage regarding plastic flowers had been put up at the cemetery.
- The Clerk confirmed that he notified Sussex Primary Care of the acceptance of the District Valuers report for the new rental agreement for Rotherfield Surgery.
- The Clerk confirmed that he had circulated the A26 Speed Reduction Feasibility Report to the named Councillors.
- The Clerk confirmed that the container in the Recreation Ground had been purchased.
- The Clerk confirmed that the CCTV Camera on the end of the Scout Hut had been relocated.
- The Clerk reported that he had received an update on the merging of Rotherfield Pre-School and Rotherfield Primary School and this had been circulated to councillors.
- The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Newsletter had been discussed at the 17th February 2026 Community & Events Committee meeting.

2. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT THE END OF JANUARY 2026, REVIEW EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET TO DATE AND NOTE OR AUTHORISE PAYMENTS.

i Budget, other financial reports, and actions arising.

The bank reconciliation up until the **31st January 2026** was presented for all of the Council's bank accounts.

The Council **NOTED** the budget report up until the 31st January 2026

ii Approval of 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	Broadband	£52.16
Cloudy Group Ltd	4110	101	Rialtas Hosting	£76.56
Veolia	4391	303	Village Hall Bins	£241.73
Phil Ireland	4364	302	Litter Picking	£315.70
Phil Ireland	4252	203	Street Sweeping	£157.85
Rotherfield Village Hall	4125	101	Village Hall Hire	£36.80
Rotherfield Memorial Institute	4125	101	RMI Hire	£20.00
F Wilson	4117	101	Clerk's Admin Assistant	£798.06
Tollwood Garden Centre	4341	303	Village Hall & Rec (1)	£25.00
Tollwood Garden Centre	4389	302	Court Meadow (1)	£20.00

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Tollwood Garden Centre	4381	303	Bulbs and Planting around the Parish	£80.00
Tollwood Garden Centre	4255	203	Bulbs and Materials	£82.95
Tollwood Garden Centre	4381	303	Hornhurst Cemetery (1)	£30.00
Tollwood Garden Centre	4393	203	Ashes Interment (1)	£103.00
Tollwood Garden Centre	4393	303	Ashes Interment (2)	£113.00
Tollwood Garden Centre	4258	203	Eridge Station Planters	£80.00
Tollwood Garden Centre	4341	302	Village Hall & Rec (2)	£360.00
Tollwood Garden Centre	4389	302	Court Meadow (2)	£130.00
Tollwood Garden Centre	4116	101	MCCC Roof	£50.00

Total £3,141.56

Other Payments

ESALC	4105	101	Update on Planning Training	£48.00
Coppard Plant Hire LTD	4321	301	Storage Container	£3,000.00
Coppard Plant Hire LTD	4110	101	Container Hire - Jan 26	£184.80
Douglas Johnstone	4255	203	Fencing Materials	£89.99
Newman Business Solutions Ltd	4110	101	Parish Directory Flyers	£108.24
Glasdon UK Limited	4363	302	Replacement Dog Bin	£333.09
Good Company People	4150	102	Grant	£500.00
TN6 Electrical LTD	4388	302	CCTV - Scout Hut Camera Repositioning	£75.00
Douglas Johnstone	4363	302	Dog Bin Drill Bits	£18.94
Radioswap Ltd	4368	302	Radios	£947.94
William J Clark	4257	203	Hedge Cutting Rotherfield Hill and various locations	£576.00
Sussex Sports Turf Ltd	4343	302	Verti drain main football pitch	£420.00

Total £6,302.00

Surgery payments	Ledger code	Cost centre code	Ledger entry description - Max 30 characters	Amount
Sussex Primary Care	4399	305	Surgery Costs	£629.08
Phile Ireland	4405	305	Window Cleaning	£15.00
Metcalfe Plumbing and Heating Limited	4405	305	Boiler Service & Repair	£135.60
TN6 Electrical LTD	4405	305	New Extractor Fan	£110.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4405	305	Garden Maintain around Surgery	£60.00
				<u><u>£949.68</u></u>
Staff Costs - includes Tax, NI, pension and expenses			Total figure reported separately	<u><u>£4,941.30</u></u>

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

None.

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3. RECEIVE REPORTS, UPDATES & RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PERSONNEL

Cllr Janice Richardson reported that she had met with the Clerk and Cllr Paul Snelling for the mid-year appraisal update. She asked the Council to formally include in the minutes the recognition of the excellent work of the Clerk over the last year. This was unanimously **AGREED** by the Council. The Clerk also thanked his Council Administrator, Fiona Willson, for her fantastic support.

4. TO CONSIDER AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FOLLOWING PLANNING APPLICATIONS.

i. **WD/2026/0216/F - 6 Deilsfoot Cottages, Tunbridge Wells Road, Mark Cross, TN6 3PH**

Demolition of existing conservatory and single garage. New single-storey pitched-roof extension to rear and new pitched-roof single garage on footprint of existing, new dormer to catslide roof on side of house.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Wealden District Council that this application be **APPROVED**. The Council had no further comments on the application.

ii. **WD/2026/0267/F - Renby Stables, Forge Road, Eridge, TN3 9LG**

Demolition of detached metal barn and erection of two storey extension.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Wealden District Council that this application be **APPROVED**. The Council had no further comments on the application.

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

i. **Discuss and consider further actions in relation to the Kings Arms Public House.**

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

One member of the public addressed the Council outlining the situation that has led to the landlord and landlady of the pub receiving a summons to the Magistrate Court for breach of a noise abatement notice. The summons is issued following action from Wealden District Council Environmental Services.

Cllr Andrew Wilson (Wealden District Council) addressed the Council explaining that this appears to be a case of one branch of Wealden District Council not communicating effectively with another. Planning permission for the necessary changes and relocation of the Extractor Fan had been granted in October 2025 but was heavy with conditions as might be expected for a listed building. The Landlord has been obtaining necessary reports and documentations so work can proceed but, in the meantime, the prosecution has continued. The Landlord has reported that the earliest start day for the work is the 1st May 2026. If the magistrate enforces the noise abatement notice, then the kitchen would have to close and the pub shortly after. The Village would then lose an asset very much at the heart of the community. Cllr Andrew Wilson confirmed that he had taken this up with the officers and portfolio holders at Wealden but was making very little progress which is regrettable given the difficulties the hospitality industry faces across the country. It is essential that Planning & Environmental Health talk to each other to resolve this issue.

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The Landlord confirmed that the pub would be taking action to organise a campaign against Wealden's unreasonable actions. This would potentially include speaking to the media.

Cllr Paul Snelling asked Wealden Councillors that if even after work had been carried out the pub could face the same complainant by the complaint and the process starts again. Cllr Andrew Willson confirmed that this was indeed possible.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Kings Arms Pub has the support of the Parish Council in this unfair and unreasonable action take by Wealden District Council Environmental Services.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council would write to the Chief Executive, Portfolio Holders and Director of Place at Wealden District Council asking them to address this unfair matter urgently. The following points would be included:

- That Rotherfield Parish Council disagrees with the actions of Wealden District Council Enforcement in the strongest possible terms.
- The lack of communication between Wealden departments. The Landlord has been proactive in acknowledging the issue and sought planning permission for a solution. This has now been granted with conditions that need to be met before work can proceed. These are mitigating circumstances that should mean the court case should be adjourned until work can proceed.
- The Officers at Wealden Environmental Services have been remiss in taking this matter to prosecution and that urgent intervention from the Chief Executive is required.
- The Parish Council understands that Environmental Services has not undertaken any Noise Impact Assessment and that the evidence for the abatement notice is subjective.
- The action is unreasonable and if continued would likely cause the closure of a valuable parish asset at the heart of Rotherfield Parish since the 1600's.
- The effect this action and the potential closure of the pub would have on the mental health and wellbeing of residents as well as staff and publicans is unacceptable to this community.

As per their earlier declaration, Cllrs Paul Snelling and Emmanuelle Homles-Cutting abstained from voting on this item.

ii. Consider and approve candidates for Freedom of Rotherfield Parish.

It was **AGREED** to hold this item over until the March Parish Council meeting. **Clerk** to add item to the 26th March 2026 Parish Council Meeting agenda.

iii. To resolve to appoint Cllr Paul Snelling as a reserve councillor on the Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Paul Snelling as a reserve councillor on the Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee. **Clerk** to update committee structure on website.

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iv. To adopted a revised Grant Policy effective 1st March 2026.

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

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the revised Grants Policy. **Clerk** to update website with revised policy.

v. Discuss and resolve quotations for a measured survey for the Pump Track project.

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

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation of M J Zara Associates to carry out the measured survey for the pump track. **Clerk** to notify Residents Group and Appleby Petfield.

vi. Discuss and consider the Council's response to the 'Focused' Draft Wealden Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation.

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

The Chair thanked Cllr Beverley Johnstone for her hard work on preparing a response on the council's behalf. Councillors suggested that the Parish Site Assessment was not a true reflection of Rotherfield and missed several key business and organisations including Rotherfield St Martin and The Kings Arms.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt Cllr Beverley Johnstone's report as the Parish Council's response to the consultation with councillors invited to submit business and organisations to be included in the Parish Site Assessment. **Clerk** to arrange a meeting with **Cllr Beverley Johnstone** to submit the Council's response to Wealden District Council.

The Chair asked if it was possible for the Parish Council to submit the former Lagat Ballet School (Jameila Ismael) as site for the SHEELAs. The Clerk believed this was possible and would agenda an item in the future to discuss this.

6. RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE ROTHERFIELD MEMORIAL INSTITUTE.

Cllr Beverley Johnstone reported that a potential new and greater funding opportunity with Wealden District Council had opened up. Meetings are being arranged to discuss this further.

Cllr Beverley Johnstone confirmed that four out of five companies approached for tender had agreed to engage in the process.

7. RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE MARK CROSS COMMUNITY CENTRE.

The Clerk reported that there was nothing to report and the Community Centre was running well.

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8. RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE ROTHERFIELD SURGERY BUILDING.

The Clerk and Chair reported that the Practice had recently had a health and safety inspection, which identified a few issues that needed attention.

- Minor electrical works, including a replacement extractor fan. These have been attended to.
- A risk around the blind pulls in all areas of the building. The investigation into the best solution for this is still underway.
- Fire doors are missing or not fitting correctly. We are awaiting the outcome of the inspection from East Sussex Fire and Rescue before proceeding with any fire safety work.
- Damp in the consultation room/s. Work to rectify this is in hand with local contractors.

The Clerk is pleased to report that Sussex Primary Care have also accepted the District Valuer's report for the yearly rent. The Clerk is required to submit an invoice for back rent and the new monthly value. **Clerk** to arrange invoice.

9. RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE ROTHERFIELD PRE-SCHOOL BUILDING.

The Clerk, Cllrs Harris and Beach met with the Pre-School and Headteacher of Rotherfield Primary School to discuss fencing and safeguarding around the site. The Chair confirmed that they had now installed privacy film on some of the windows and doors.

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

Date	Meeting
17 th February 2026	Community & Events Committee

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

a) Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.

- The Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair have attended weekly briefings with SGN regarding the progress and issues surrounding the A267 Gas main replacement.
- Cllr Jerry Gosney reported that he had attended a Wealdlink meeting and that, thanks to a grant from Wealden District Council, two new electric buses were to be purchased.
- The Chair, Cllr Paul Beach and Cllr Douglas Johnstone had met with a resident regarding trees on the junction of Catts Hill and Bletchinglye Lane. Action on this is being followed up by Cllr Bob Standley.
- The Chair had met Tom Woodgate to discuss tree surgery work on the Recreation Ground.

b) Clerk's updates and issues.

- The Clerk reported that the new dog bin had been installed at the Millennium Green. Thanks to Cllr Douglas Johnstone for undertaking this. The old dog bin from the Millennium Green is to be installed at Mark Cross, and a local contractor has been arranged to carry out the installation.

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- The Clerk reported that he had received a visit from the Allotment Association following notification of the landowner's intent to raise the rent. The Allotment Association would like the Parish Council to consider subsidising the £300.00 increase in rent for this coming year. At the same time, the association has decided to disband, and the Parish Council is therefore required under the Allotments Act 1950 to take over the management. The Clerk would like to propose that the rent is subsidised for the 2026/2027 financial year, and during this year, a handover process for the Allotment Association to the Parish Council can take place. The Chair reported that we would need to take great care with the water arrangements for the allotment when we take over direct responsibility.
- The Clerk reported that he had attended Planning Update training on Monday, 23rd February 2026.
- The Clerk reported that he had been contacted by Frant & Eridge Station regarding the fingerpost on the A267 junction with Danegate. This finger post is listed on their asset register and ours. They have received a quote from Jakk to repair this (£1,529.20+VAT), but would like to clarify the ownership position. It was **AGREED** that this fingerpost was clearly in Rotherfield Parish and that it should be repaired. **Clerk** to liaise with Frant Parish Council about the speediest way to achieve this. The Clerk suggested that a survey of all the Fingerposts in the parish should be undertaken, and then ascertain which ones needed repair. **Clerk** to provide Cllrs Douglas Johnstone and Cllrs Paul Snelling with a list of fingerposts so that a survey can be undertaken.

12. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- The Clerk reported that he had received multiple pieces of correspondence from residents regarding the A267 Gas Main replacement.
- The Clerk reported that he had received correspondence regarding the adoption of the telephone box at Eridge Station. He has registered the council's interest in adopting the box and is negotiating with the landowners, Southern Railway, for permission to do so.
- The Clerk reported that he had received a letter regarding the Council's decision to award a recent grant. The Clerk will respond in accordance with the decisions taken at this meeting.

13. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION REPORTS AND RECREATION & BURIAL UPDATES.

The Clerk reported that inspections had not taken place this month.

14. TO AGREE ON FIVE POINTS FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY DOCUMENT.

1)	The Parish Council has agreed to support the Kings Arms pub against the unreasonable actions of Wealden District Council Environmental Services.
2)	The Parish Council encourages residents to participate in the Regulation 18 Consultation process for the New Wealden Local Plan.
3)	The Parish Council has agreed to adopt the telephone box outside of Eridge Station. Once the paperwork is complete and the box repaired, ideas will be sought from locals for its future use.
4)	The Council was pleased to hear that Wealdlink had received a grant for two electric busses from Wealden District Council.
5)	The Parish Council has agreed to take over the management of the allotments following a transition from the current association over the next year.

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15. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

Date	Meeting	Venue
10 th March 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	Rotherfield Village Hall
24 th March 2026	Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee	Rotherfield Community Hub (Memorial Institute)
26 th March 2026	Parish Council Meeting	Rotherfield Community Hub (Memorial Institute)
31 st March 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	Rotherfield Village Hall
7 th April 2026	Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee	Rotherfield Community Hub (Memorial Institute)
16 th April 2026	Finance & General Purposes Committee	Rotherfield Community Hub (Memorial Institute)
28 th April 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	Rotherfield Village Hall
30 th April 2026	Parish Council Meeting	Mark Cross Community Centre

All meetings are at 7:30 pm unless otherwise stated.

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

- Cllr Douglas Johnstone asked where we would like the Speed Indication Device (SID) installed next. It was **AGREED** that SID would be deployed on Sherrif's Lane and then Mayfield Road to monitor the additional traffic using these roads whilst the A267 was closed.
- The Clerk asked if the Council wished an item for lighting in bus stops to be added to the next Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee meeting agenda. It was **AGREED** to add the item. **Clerk** to add item to the 24th March Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee meeting agenda.

Chair declared the meeting closed at: **9:30pm**

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

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