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 17TH SEPTEMBER 2026 @ 7:30PM
IN THE UPPER HALL AT ROTHERFIELD COMMUNITY HUB (MEMORIAL INSTITUTE)

PRESENT

Cllr Robert Harris (Chair)
Cllr Beverley Johnstone (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Paul Turner
Cllr David Hiles
Cllr Benj Cheeseman
Cllr Christian Mills
Cllr Paul Snelling
Cllr Georgina Frowde
Cllr Douglas Johnstone
Cllr Peter Kember

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

Cllr Lucy Buck

ALSO PRESENT

Adam J Hardy	*Parish Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer*
Cllr Jessika Hulbert	*Wealden District Councillor*
Members of the Public	**None**

1. CONSIDER A CANDIDATE FOR CO-OPTION FOR A SEAT IN THE ROTHERFIELD PARISH WARD.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Christian Mills as a Parish Councillor to the seat in Rotherfield Parish Ward.

The meeting was paused whilst the newly co-opted councillor signed his acceptance of office.

2. 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 Paul Beach and Cllr Janice Richardson.

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

Apologies had also been received from Cllr Michael Lunn (Wealden District Councillor & East Sussex County Councillor)

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

- Cllr Robert Harris declared a personal interest in item 6c as he owns neighbouring agricultural land.
- Cllr Georgina Frowde declared a personal interest in item 6a as she owns neighbouring property.

e) District and County Councillor reports.

Cllr Michael Lunn submitted a report to Councillors as he was unable to attend the meeting.

Cllr Jessika Hulbert (Wealden District Council)

- Cllr Jessika Hulbert reminded the Parish Council that the new Local Plan would be put to the District Council on Friday 18th September. She reminded the Council that the Planning Inspectorate could still approve the plan even if the District Council does not. The Government expects District Councils to have a Local Plan.
- Cllr Jessika Hulbert reported that the announcement of the pause in local government reorganisation has created some uncertainty in the District Council amongst both Councillors and Officers. The parties had all been preparing for a Unitary Authority election, so candidates have not been selected for a District Council election.
- Cllr Jessika Hulbert reported that she had attended the Wealden Crematorium open day.
- Cllr Jessika Hulbert highlighted the upcoming opening of the new Wealden Sports Club.
- Cllr Paul Turner asked if Wealden was planning to issue any updates on Emergency Planning. Cllr Jessika Hulbert replied that the District Council supports households being resilient and prepared and that she will investigate and provide feedback to the council.

f) Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday, 27th August 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 confirmed that he had raised multiple reports and enquiries following the representation from Eridge residents at the last Parish Council meeting.
- The Clerk reported that he had notified the New Road residents of the Council's official support for its petition regarding the South Street/New Road junction.
- The Clerk reported that the investigation for grant funded hedging for the new Land Adjacent to the Recreation ground was still ongoing. Fencing will take place in November, and planting can follow this.
- The Clerk confirmed that he had contacted the Planning agent regarding the Pump Track and a timetable has been put in place so that the Council can sign off on the planning application at the 29th October Parish Council meeting.
- The Clerk reported that Cllr Paul Beach will replace the damaged bolt on the Playground equipment.
- The Clerk confirmed that he is ordering topsoil for the planter and the cemetery.

3. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT THE END OF AUGUST 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 August 2026** was presented for all of the Council's bank accounts.

The Council **NOTED** the budget report.

Ii Approval of payments.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following 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	£388.75
Trooli	4409	302	Broadband	£55.00
Cloudy Group Ltd	4110	101	Rialtas Hosting	£76.56
Veolia	4391	303	Village Hall Bins	£196.66
Phil Ireland	4364	302	Litter Picking	£133.47
Phil Ireland	4252	203	Street Sweeping	£266.93
Rotherfield Village Hall	4125	101	Hall Hire	£37.60
Rotherfield Memorial Institute	4125	101	RMI Hire	£39.00
Eridge Village Hall	4125	101	Hall Hire	£72.00
F Wilson	4117	101	Clerk's Admin Assistant	£340.34
Tollwood Garden Services	4389	302	Court Meadow (1)	£37.50
Tollwood Garden Services	4341	302	Village Hall & Rec (1)	£49.50
Tollwood Garden Services	4381	303	Hornshurst Cemetery (1)	£70.50
Tollwood Garden Services	4258	203	Planters (1)	£30.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4389	302	Court Meadow (2)	£37.50
Tollwood Garden Services	4341	302	Village Hall & Rec (2)	£199.75
Tollwood Garden Services	4381	303	Hornshurst Cemetery (2)	£412.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4381	303	Hornshurst Cemetery (3)	£5.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4389	302	Court Meadow (3)	£10.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4341	302	Village Hall & Rec (3)	£37.50
Tollwood Garden Services	4258	203	Mark Cross (1)	£50.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4258	203	Mark Cross (2)	£40.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4255	203	Highways (1)	£24.75
Tollwood Garden Services	4341	302	Village Hall & Rec (4)	£546.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4341	302	Village Hall & Rec (5)	£30.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4341	302	Village Hall & Rec (6)	£15.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4411	302	Pre-School (1)	£60.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4255	203	Highways (2)	£125.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4341	302	Village Hall & Rec (7)	£170.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4389	302	Court Meadow (4)	£37.50
Tollwood Garden Services	4341	302	Village Hall & Rec (8)	£49.50
Tollwood Garden Services	4393	303	Ashes Plot	£154.50
Tollwood Garden Services	4250	203	Footpaths (1)	£80.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4341	302	Village Hall & Rec (9)	£311.25
Tollwood Garden Services	4255	203	Highways (3)	£304.25
Tollwood Garden Services	4255	203	Highways (4)	£49.50
Tollwood Garden Services	4255	203	Highways (5)	£5.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4255	203	Highways (6)	£49.50
Tollwood Garden Services	4389	302	Court Meadow (5)	£37.50

Tollwood Garden Services	4381	303	Hornshurst Cemetery (4)	£70.50
Tollwood Garden Services	4380	303	Old Burial Ground (1)	£470.50
			Total	**£5,175.81**

Other Payments

betteridge & milsom ltd.	4113	101	RMI Project Fees	£600.00
Wealden District Council	4256	203	Dog Bin Fees July 26 - September 26	£549.00
Wealden District Council	4363	302	Dog Bin Fees July 26 - September 26	£183.00
William J Clark	4257	203	Hedge Cutting and Verge Mowing	£432.00
Ashdown Visual and Audio	4410	302	Village Hall Sound System	£2,551.43
Burridge Fencing and Treework	4341	302	Recreation Ground Tree Work	£2,976.00
			Total	**£7,291.43**

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	£15.00
Tollwood Garden Services	4405	305	Surgery Grounds Maintenance	£180.00
				£824.08

Staff Costs - includes Tax, NI, pension and expenses	Total figure reported separately	**£5,754.71**

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

None.

4. RECEIVE REPORTS, UPDATES & RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PERSONNEL

None.

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

i. Discuss and resolve the Parish Council position regarding vehicles on the Recreation Ground.

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

It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council will only allow vehicles (other than emergency and maintenance vehicles) on the Recreation Ground in exceptional circumstances made via request to the Parish Clerk. **Clerk** to update the Use of Recreation Ground Conditions document.

ii. Discuss and resolve a request from Rotherfield Sports Club for Council funds towards the cost of reseeding the Recreation Gound.

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

It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council would contribute £1,000 towards the cost of the reseeding of the Recreation Ground. **Clerk** to notify Rotherfield Sports Club.

Cllr Jessika Hulbert suggested that the Sports Club could apply to the Council Ward Budget Grant Scheme for the remaining funds. The Clerk offered to assist the Sports Club with an application if they would like.

iii. Consider a grant request from Rotherfield Primary School towards the cost of their annual Year Six residential trip.

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

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the grant request of £1,100 towards the cost of the Year Six Residential Trip. **Clerk** to notify Rotherfield Primary School.

iv. Discuss and resolve on a DRAFT Service Level Agreement between Rotherfield Parish Council and Rotherfield St Martin.

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

Cllr Beverley Johnstone presented the DRAFT Service Level Agreement to the Council as Chair of the Working Group.

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the text of the DRAFT Service Level Agreement subject to the following amendments:

- Paragraph 7.3 delete "pilot" and replace with "first"
- Paragraph 8.2 delete "in the pilot year…"
- Paragraph 1 delete "Rotherfield Parish" and replace with "Rotherfield, Mark Cross, Boars Head & Eridge".

Cllr Paul Snelling abstained from voting on this motion.

It was **RESOLVED** to set the SLA figure at £8,171.00 for the 2027-2028 municipal year.

Cllr Paul Snelling and Cllr David Hiles abstained from voting on this motion.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council enter into a Service Level Agreement with Rotherfield St Martin subject to the approval of the charity trustees agreeing the DRAFT Service Level Agreement.

Cllr Paul Snelling abstained from voting on this application.

Clerk to notify Rotherfield St Martin and discuss next steps.

v. **Discuss and gain Council agreement for the reconfiguration of Rotherfield Surgery Waiting Room to include a more private reception desk.**

It was **AGREED** to support the reconfiguration of the Rotherfield Surgery Waiting Room.

Clerk to contact Tanget Space to arrange a meeting to explore options.

vi. **Discuss and resolve cutting back and tidying of the footpath from the Eridge Forstal to the Neville Crest & Gun.**

It was **RESOLVED** that Will Clark be engaged to cut back the hedges on this stretch of road providing relevant assurances are in place. **Clerk** to liaise with the contractor.

It was **RESOLVED** that James Valentine would clear the footpath. **Cllr Robert Harris & Clerk** to arrange a meeting to discuss the required works.

6. TO CONSIDER AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS AND OTHER PLANNING MATTERS

a) **WD/2026/1696/F - Edgefield Cottage, Groombridge Lane, Eridge, TN3 9LA**
Internal reconfiguration to create an open-plan kitchen, dining and family room and a separate playroom, with two new sets of bifold doors to the rear garden. Alterations to existing windows and doors, installation of extract ventilation serving the relocated ground floor WC and utility room, and relocation of the boiler and associated flue to the attic.

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

b) **WD/2026/1751/F - Itawa, Spout Hill, Town Row, Rotherfield, TN6 3QX**
Erect a garden studio in a private garden.

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

c) **WD/2026/1281/F - Salters, Station Road, Rotherfield, TN6 3HR**
Proposed replacement garage.

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

7. RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE ROTHERFIELD MEMORIAL INSTITUTE.

Cllr Beverley Johnstone informed the Council that she had received notice that the funding request for the refurbishment project will be going to the October Cabinet meeting.

The Clerk reported that there had been a delay on the Councillor Ward Budget Scheme grant for the asbestos removal due to the above funding application. The Clerk will investigate and report back to Council.

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8. RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE MARK CROSS COMMUNITY CENTRE.

The Clerk reported that the Community Centre was running smoothly and there were no updates for the Council.

9. RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE ROTHERFIELD SURGERY BUILDING.

The Clerk reported that a wasp's nest in the surgery car park had been dealt with. The exterminator also noted holes in the side of the building that need to be sealed, as they allow wasps to access it. The vegetation along the side of the Surgery Building had also been identified as a route for wasps and vermin to use to access the building. There is a possibility of another wasp's nest in the front-left roof space; the Council have asked the receptionist to keep an eye on it and report back to the Clerk. **Clerk** to arrange for necessary works.

The Clerk reported that there had been an issue with the automatic door at the surgery, but a system reset appears to have resolved it. It will continue to be monitored.

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

The Clerk reported that the Pre-School now had a key to the pitch-side barrier, allowing emergency vehicles access to the pre-school and Forest School if required.

11. RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON EMERGENCY PLANNING.

Cllr Paul Turner reported that the REACT group had met. There is a national increase in preparedness messaging in the event of an incident, and the group is investigating how to support this message without creating panic or unease.

Cllr Paul Turner informed the Council that another dry run of setting up the Emergency Hub will take place in the coming months.

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

None.

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

a) Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.

- The Clerk reported that he had attended the Crowborough Army Camp Working Group.
- Cllr Paul Turner reported that he had attended a meeting of the Rotherfield Millennium Green Committee in his capacity as a Trustee.

b) Clerk's updates and issues.

- The Clerk reported on the Wealden Clerk's Conference.
    - The Local Government Reorganisation has been paused, but Wealden have no further information on a new timeline. The Minister has reinforced the government's commitment to devolution and reorganisation.
    - District Council elections will take place in May 2027. Town and Parish Council elections will also take place. These will take place on the 1st Thursday in May.

- The current funding position remains unchanged but may change if a new political administration is elected in May 2027. The only caveat to this is that Wealden will now have to set a budget to 2029.
- The Local Plan remains unaffected by the pause in Local Government and has the Alliance's support.
- Some tension is developing between Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council.
- Parish & Town Councils are still encouraged to set ambitious budgets for 2027/2028

- The Clerk reminded Councillors that he was in the process of arranging Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday. It was **AGREED** that this year wreaths would be laid by Cllrs Robert Harris, Beverley Johnstone & Georgina Frowde. **Clerk** to order wreaths.
- The Clerk informed Councillors that he is about to start the arrangements for the Christmas Lights. The light switch on will take place on Sunday 29th November 2026.
- The Clerk reported that he had been busy advertising the Council's commitment to the Rotherfield Community Speedwatch Team following the receipt of online abuse directed at the team for their actions.

14. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- The Clerk reported that he had received a Freedom of Information (FOI) request on the amount of time and money the Parish Council had spent on Local Government reorganisation.

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

Date	Inspection Report	Comments
15th September 2026	**Parish Cemetery**	Grave decorations continue to be scattered by wildlife. For environmental and wildlife protection should we consider prohibiting plastic flowers and decorations? The bin contractors continue to fail to put the bin back in the bin store.
15th September 2026	**Old Burial Ground**	Some graves need topping up. As before the soil from the ant hills can be used. As previously reported, a fence post is broken at the bottom right hand corner on boundary with neighbouring property off Church Road. It will need replacing as it will be difficult to put a spur in as it is between a grave edging and a retaining wall.
15th September 2026	**Court Meadow Green**	Nothing to report.

15th September 2026	**Playground**	Previously reported - the bolt holding the rope needs replacing. Cllr Douglas Johnstone reported that we need to get a repair from Wickstead. **Clerk** to arrange a replacement.
15th September 2026	**Recreation Ground**	Nothing to report.
15th September 2026	**REACT and Storage Container Box**	Nothing to report.
15th September 2026	**Scout Hut and Pre-School Buildings**	Nothing to report.
15th September 2026	**Village Hall and Car Park**	The previously reported pothole still needs repairing
15th September 2026	**Pump Track Field**	Nothing to report.
N/A	**Allotments**	*No report provided this month.*

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

1)	The Parish Council thanks the Community Speedwatch Team for their work across the Parish and recommits its support for the initiative.
2)	The Parish Council was pleased to make a grant to Rotherfield Primary School towards the cost of the Year Six residential trip.
3)	The Parish Council agreed to contribute towards the reseeding of the Recreation Ground in conjunction with Rotherfield Sports Club.
4)	The Parish Council has agreed to tidy and make more accessible the pavement and footpath between the Forstal and the Nevill, Crest & Gun in Eridge.
5)	The Parish Council was surprised by the government's decision to pause Local Government Reorganisation. This means that District Council elections will now take place in May 2027.

17. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

Date	**Meeting**	***Venue***
6th October 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	*Rotherfield Village Hall*
13th October 2026	Highways, Recreation & Cemeteries Committee	*Rotherfield Community Hub (Memorial Institute)*
27th October 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	*Rotherfield Village Hall*
29th October 2026	Parish Council Meeting	*Eridge Village Hall*
17th November 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	*Rotherfield Village Hall*
26th November 2026	Parish Council Meeting	*Rotherfield Community Hub (Memorial Institute)*

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

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

None.

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Chair declared the meeting closed at: **9:22pm.**

…… Chair…… Date