

Rother Association of Local Councils (RALC)
Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2020 at 7.30pm
(Virtual Meeting held on Zoom)

Present: David Pankhurst (Peasmarsh) (**RALC Chairman**), Peter Turner (Icklesham) (**RALC Vice Chairman**), John Barnes (Etchingam), Gillian Branford (Salehurst & Robertsbridge), Gill Colquhoun (RALC Secretary), Ros Day (Crowhurst), Judith Dean (Brede), David Dengate (Rye Foreign), Tracy Dixon (Brede), Ed Erith (Beckley), Bob Franklin (Burwash), Jill Gyngell (Battle), Jacqui Harding (Northiam), Inspector Jonathan Hartley (Rother Police), Issy Horsley (Fairlight), Malcolm Johnston (Rother District Council), Les Nottage (Brede), Hilary Pankhurst (Peasmarsh), John Parsons (Rye Foreign), David Penfold (Pett), Judy Petty (Brightling), Mary Philo (Playden), Cllr Sue Prochak (Rother District Council), Gary Quinnell (Udimore), Keith Robertson (Catsfield), Kristina Sodomkova (RDC Environmental & Policy Manager, David Scott (Catsfield), Steve Stewart (Fairlight), Jonathan Vine-Hall (Sedlescombe and RDC Councillor), Lesley Voice (Playden), Dale Wheeler (Battle), David Young (Ewhurst)

1 Welcome.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He informed those present that the meeting was being recorded on Zoom to aid minute taking.

2 Apologies for absence

John Bradford (Camber), Lisa Cooper (RDC) Isla Dacey (East Sussex Highways), Pauline Glew (Sedlescombe) Karen Ripley (Salehurst & Robertsbridge)

3 Accuracy of Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2020, were agreed, the Secretary noted one error Item 8 'Secretary of Statement' to be replaced by 'Secretary of State'.

4 Matters arising from previous meeting

No discussion.

5 Sussex Police *Inspector Jonathan Hartley*

jonathan.hartley@sussex.pnn.police.uk

Inspector Hartley apologised for not attending the July meeting. He verbally reported that during the pandemic Operation Radcot had been tested as a result of large influx of day visitors to coastal areas in particular Camber. He was pleased with the collective response from partners, and lessons have been learnt for the future. Parking enforcement has now officially moved over to ESCC. Community response to the pandemic had been impressive and the Police were pleased to support communities through distribution of more than £10K from the Police Property Fund. At the start of lockdown demand on the Police shot down but has now returned to a stable level of demand, business as usual plus Covid regulations (gatherings, breaches etc). The Police had not received warning of changes in government guidelines. There had been successful arrests by road stop checks during lockdown. Rural crime had included a spate of quad bike thefts over 12-18 months, during lockdown warrants served in Rye, and by the Metropolitan Police at a site in Orpington using Rother intelligence. Sharing of intelligence will continue to support rural communities. There is a big drive from the new Chief Constable on tackling antisocial driving and speeds, and reduction of KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured.) The Neighbourhood Prevention Team has been renamed Neighbourhood Policing Team.

Questions / comments:

Cllr Judy Petty (Brightling) asked if the Police will pay attention to the problem with motorbike speeding on the B2096. Inspector Hartley confirmed that speed and antisocial behaviour (in relation to the noise) is a concern of the Police. The Police are not yet equipped for enforcement of noise but kit is being trialed to deal with this.

Cllr Gary Quinnell (Udimore) asked if data on traffic volume and speed collected in June 2015 was sufficient. Inspector Hartley is happy to look into this if not answered in the meeting.

Cllr John Barnes (Etchingam) recorded his thanks to the Police for recent cross border policing. However he noted that the ongoing PCC consultation did not involve parishes in the NW of Rother. Inspector Hartley will look at feedback on lack of engagement; parishes were asked to contact him if they are not hearing from their community PCSOs. The Chairman clarified that the ongoing consultation by the PCC was run by Mandy Jameson from the PCC office. The Chairman was aware that some smaller parishes had not been included in this consultation and asked members to tell the Secretary if they felt their parish should be included.

Cllr David Penfold (Pett) recorded his thanks for the work of various agencies working together to deal with the influx to coastal areas, highlighting that there were problems in Winchelsea Beach and Pett Level as well as Camber.

The Chairman queried if local intelligence was useful for dealing with county line groups. Inspector Hartley confirmed it was. Parishes were invited to submit any evidence to the Police.

6 Highway matters

Report from Isla Dacey (ESCC)

isla.dacey1@eastsussexhighways.com

A report had been circulated, feedback was invited.

Councillor Hilary Pankhurst (Peasmarsh) wanted further information about spray patching. When will Highways go back to inspect after patching, how long will it last? RALC will write to ask this question on behalf of parishes. Cllr Peter Turner (Icklesham) noted that spray patching was generally undertaken in advance of resurfacing.

Councillor Robert Franklin (Burwash) highlighted that a group of local Burwash parishioners were dissatisfied with the quality of Highways work undertaken by Costains and had produced a paper which would hopefully be submitted to the ESCC Standards Committee expressing dissatisfaction with the quality of work and who should employ the Highways Stewards. Cllr John Barnes (Etchingam) highlighted that the highways contract was about to be reviewed and Parishes should communicate their views to the Chair of the review body via the RALC Secretary.

Roadworks

The Chairman was concerned about the criteria for roadworks. Parishes were asked to send evidence of areas requiring works which did not satisfy Highways criteria for repair to the Chairman at chair.peasmarshpc@gmail.com The Chairman would write on behalf of RALC to Highways.

Cllr Issy Horsley (Fairlight) voiced concern at the unnecessary lack of warning of extended roadworks in Fairlight (both to the Parish and Stagecoach bus company). The District and County Councils should be able to communicate with the Parishes.

Cllr Jonathan Vine-Hall reported that anything other than a pothole was added to a long list of possible works. Cllr David Penfold (Pett) had mentioned this matter at a recent SLR meeting and he had been informed that the matter would be taken back to Highways.

7 Rother Matters

Malcolm Johnston was congratulated by the Chairman on his recent appointment as Chief Executive of Rother District Council.

Rother Update

Cllr Prochak cllr.susanprochak@rother.gov.uk provided an update:

- Malcolm had been appointed Chief Executive on 5th October 2020.
- Bexhill will have a Town Council with elections in 2021, Bexhill District Councillors will be members of Rother District Councillors and members of RALC.

- An arm's length housing company had been created by Rother allowing houses to be built without big profits; the first site is at Blackfriars in Battle. She had requested that Parishes are invited to the presentation at that site. It is important that Parish Councils get more involved in planning – Parishes are invited to Rother Planning Committee and to attend District training (a recording of recent training on Neighbourhood Planning is available to Parishes on YouTube).
- Civil parking enforcement by East Sussex (formerly the responsibility of the Police) had begun on 29 September. There are no parking meters in villages but there will be village inspections; it is hoped this will benefit the local economy
- The appointment of Kristina Somdokova was part of Rother's commitment to the environment.
- She congratulated the parishes on their impressive community response to Covid, in contrast to Bexhill which did not have a town council.

Introducing Rother Environmental & Policy Manager kristina.sodomkova@rother.gov.uk

Kristina Sodomkova introduced herself: she was appointed in August to deliver the new Rother environmental strategy. Engagement is critical. She looked forward to working with members. The Secretary was asked to include Kristina's email in the minutes.

Malcolm Johnston malcolm.johnston@rother.gov.uk stated that he felt very privileged to be Chief Executive. There is widespread agreement amongst Rother politicians that Rother's priorities were the environment (2030 is challenging); housing development (delivery of increasing numbers of affordable homes); and new ways of raising money (commercial activity). RDC recognise that communication is vital and should be two way so that it can be seen to be listening and taking views in account. He will start by discussing ideas with the RALC Chairman. He recorded his thanks to the Police and Emergency Services for their work to meet demand in Camber over the Summer.

Cllr David Scott (Catsfield) queried why there was no sign to say drivers need to pay at the parking bays in Devonshire Road in Bexhill. He suggested that signs were checked. Cllr Prochak will check and reply to Cllr Scott.

Rother Parish Conference 21 October 2020

Members were reminded to take part in the Conference (theme: Climate change). Up to 4 individuals from each Parish may attend. Names of attendees and questions for the programme panel to be emailed to Clare Fletcher RDC by Friday 9th October, details had been sent to all Rother Clerks by Jane McCullough at RDC. Cllr Prochak encouraged all Parishes to attend. The Secretary noted that the deadline for submission of questions had been extended to 9th October. Parishes can submit questions via the Secretary if they wish (this deadline has been further extended after the meeting to 16th October). Keith Robertson had raised the issue of emissions from home heating, the Chairman asked if this item could be discussed in the programme before the question and answer session, and possibly discussed further by RALC members at a meeting next year; he would send Councillor Prochak the details.

8 Speeding Proposal Update

RALC Update

Cllr Keith Robertson keith.a.robertson@aol.com summarised RALC's work to date on speeding. RALC wished to better engage with the Police and East Sussex Highways (ESH) to tackle speed, by 1. encouraging Parish Councils to buy black cat radar device, a passive data collection device which will enable Parishes to speak to the Police and ESH, and 2. also use Speed Watch data when available to tackle hot spots. A black cat device had just been installed at his Parish, Catsfield, as a test site and data will be sent to the Police. Keith will report back to members by the next meeting. Speed Watch groups can collect data now, this data is reported back to the Police, but to short cut the system Parishes can send hot spot data direct to the Police via Keith (so far Catsfield, Peasmarsh and Beckley have done so). A hot spot is a location with constant, regular speeding of 40 or 45 mph in a 30-mph limit. Speed Watch teams can contact Keith Robertson now if they have hot spot areas. Sharing of black cat radar devices will be possible.

Police Response

Inspector Hartley stated it was early days in terms of data submitted so far to the Police being useful to them. Although Safer Roads Partnership operate at 10% plus 2 the Police response needs to be proportionate. In terms of enforcement data the Police are concerned first with identifying worst areas and prolific offenders. Brian Banks at ESCC is working on education. The Police will do more, putting resources into hot spots at times they will likely get the maximum benefit. Inspector Hartley wished to see what data is obtained from the black cat at Catsfield and see how the data can be used before other Parishes employ the device. He sought confirmation as to whether the device could be moved around communities. Keith Robertson confirmed it could. The Police may be able to buy one black cat radar device for use by RALC members.

Members asked questions:

Cllr Peter Turner (Icklesham) felt it would be useful if Police could suggest where black cat devices could best be positioned. Cllr Robertson noted they were passive black boxes. Inspector Hartley suggested that Parishes contact Steve McConnell, Police Community Speed Watch. Inspector Hartley can facilitate. The Chairman will raise any members' questions at the next Safer Roads meeting in December. He thanked Keith Robertson for driving RALC's speeding initiative; members were encouraged to think about sharing purchase of devices, pending data results at Catsfield.

Cllr Vine-Hall stated that Sedlescombe is purchasing a Black cat device as part of an attempt to get a 20mph limit through the village. They would be open to share with other parishes. The village is potentially looking at prioritising some infrastructure levy money for traffic calming measures.

Cllr Robertson confirmed that the cost of a Highways licence for the black cat device is £58 per year for multiple locations within a Parish (Catsfield has 3 locations). Training cost only applies if the device is placed less than 1.2 metres from the kerb. Accreditation has been waived at Catsfield (Isla Dacey has enabled this).

Cllr Jacqui Harding (Northiam) asked if pre-existing poles could be used. All pre-existing road signs (Highways assets) can be used. The Chairman asked Inspector Hartley to check if repeater sign poles could be used. Inspector Hartley would find out.

Inspector Hartley confirmed that data from the black cat device would still be valid if not collected at a Speed Watch approved location. Cllr Robertson confirmed that Highways will advise on where the device can be located.

9 Planning Consultations / Engagement

Cllr Jonathan Vine-Hall reported that the paper circulated with the agenda had been submitted to the Secretary of State on behalf of RALC members voicing concern on the increased housing quotas, as agreed at the last meeting. The Government had subsequently issued a consultation on the planning white paper with an increased housing formula, which would result in up to 1200 house pa being built in Rother. The group who had worked on the submission included Cllr Vine-hall (Sedlescombe), Cllr John Barnes (Etchingam), Frankie Nowne (Ticehurst), Stephen Hardy (Salehurst & Robertsbridge, and Clare Tester AONB Planning Officer. Jonathan Vine-Hall summarised the ongoing consultations:

National Ministry of Housing consultations

[Changes to the current planning system](#) * RALC response re housing quotas made for Government deadline 1 October (NALC deadline 17 September). Deadline now passed.

[Planning for the future](#) - the planning white paper (NALC deadline for responses 15 October; Government deadline 29 October), represented a complete overhaul of the planning system,

identifying 3 different types of area for growth or protections. The proposal would take away the role of district planning committees or leave them with a narrow role. Effectively planning permission would be given at the local plan stage.

[Transparency and competition: a call for evidence on data on land control](#) (NALC deadline for responses 16 October; Government deadline 30 October).

Members raised questions:

Cllr David Scott (Catsfield) was concerned that Catsfield was the only village in Rother outside the AONB apart from a few small developments so at great risk. Cllr Vine-Hall acknowledged that some parts of Rother are outside the AONB. He felt Catsfield still had some element of protection as it was on the edge of the AONB. A Neighbourhood Plan would give some protection and sites must be suitable. Probably 60% of allocated housing is now through Neighbourhood Plans

Cllr John Barnes felt the designation of 3 different areas was more dangerous than the actual numbers proposed. It also potentially gives green light to industry as well as housing.

Cllr Ros Day (Crowhurst) queried if technical applications would still be required. Cllr Vine-Hall said the consultations were unclear on this but the broad idea is that in a growth area permission will be done when the Local Plan is created so it would be difficult for people to respond. He felt the two consultations should be joined together.

Cllr Peter Turner (Icklesham) does not see how the government can look into planning alone. For example water supply is an issue. It is not clear how houses will be serviced to ensure sustainability.

Cllr Keith Robertson (Catsfield) said it was difficult to respond. He queried whether the group who had submitted the paper on increased numbers might be putting together a paper to respond to other consultations on behalf of RALC. Cllr Vine-Hall confirmed this was possible. RALC may respond on the consultations as a group but Parishes should also respond as individuals. Cllr Robertson also queried whether the new planning process would invalidate old Neighbourhood Plans. Cllr Vine-Hall said it would not.

The Chairman received permission for the Secretary to circulate the email of Julia Edwards the new Rother Neighbourhood Planning Officer julia.edwards@rother.gov.uk

The Chairman will ask ESALC for permission to circulate a recent presentation on the White Paper. He reiterated that individuals, groups and Parishes may respond (Cllr Barnes noted that the High Weald Unit are prohibited to respond).

Rother planning policy engagement:

[general engagement form](#) (RDC email request 17/18 August to complete form asking Parishes to give views on future direction of Rother Local Plan to 2039 by 9th October 2020) [Deadline extended after the meeting to 16th October].

assistance with settlement studies (RDC email request 19 August for Parishes to complete a detailed survey of facilities and services within each Parish by 9th October 2020)

Cllr Vine-Hall stated Rother's Early Engagement questionnaire demonstrated a commitment by Rother to work with Parishes and seek their opinion. Cllr David Penfold (Pett) asked Malcolm Johnston to check if Parishes could receive a copy of their submission (not available at the time of submission). Cllr Vine-Hall to check.

Cllr Barnes stated it would be helpful when the complete draft settlement studies was collated for it

to be circulated for comment.

It was confirmed that any submission in Word format were acceptable.

10 RALC Website Update

The Secretary updated the meeting on work to develop a RALC website for members, freely hosted by Rother. The content has been written. The home page would be publicly accessible, then RALC members would login for agendas and papers. The plan is for the website to be available by January 2021. Members voted to allow anyone (ie all Clerks and Councillors from member parishes to access the website).

11 Online Mapping Update, including data sharing

The Secretary has renewed Geosphere subscription for 2020/21 and contributions are in the process of being paid by members as part of their annual membership invoices. She had been working with Chris Mewse from Geosphere to get the agreement of RDC and ESCC to share their data. So far attempts to obtain data at Rother had not been successful. Malcolm Johnston agreed to assist the Secretary with progressing data sharing at RDC, Cllr John Barnes to assist at ESCC.

The Chair reported that Trevor Leggo was requesting that ESCC financially assists councils to access the Mapping Online website.

12 Any Other business

None

13 Dates of next meetings – the meetings, subject to Covid developments, were confirmed as 13 January 7.30 pm (Zoom), and the following meetings in person at The Emmanuel Centre: 7 April 2.30pm; 7 July 2.30pm; 6 Oct 2.30pm. The Chairman stressed it was important that the July meeting was held in person as it was the AGM. Cllr Barnes felt there were advantages to holding meetings on Zoom and it might be possible to hold alternate meetings on Zoom and in person. Rother Parish Conference 21 October 3pm (Zoom)

The meeting ended at 9.13pm

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