

Rother Association of Local Councils (RALC)
Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2019 at 2.30pm
on the Ground Floor,
The Emmanuel Centre, Harrier Lane, Battle TN33 0FL

Present: David Pankhurst (Peasmarsh) (RALC Chairman), Peter Turner (RALC Vice Chairman), Lesley Bannister (Brede), Ruby Brittle (East Sussex Highways Stakeholder & Engagement Manager), Gill Colquhoun (RALC Secretary), Jon Copp (East Sussex Highways), Judith Dean (Pett), Michael Edwards (Westfield), Leslie Elmslie (Burwash), David Furness (Battle), Graham Furness (Guestling), Pauline Glew (Sedlescombe), Inspector Jonathan Hartley, (Sussex Police), Michael Horley (Westfield), Issy Horsly (Fairlight), Malcolm Johnston (Rother District Council); Wendy Miers (Dallington Les Nottage (Brede), John Overall (Catsfield), Hillary Pankhurst (Peasmarsh), David Perrett (Guestling), Karen Ripley (Salehurst & Robertsbridge), Keith Robertson (Crowhurst), Mike Rowe (Beckley), Gina Sanderson (Rother Voluntary Action), David Smedley (Icklesham), Alan Stainsby (Crowhurst), Bob Turgoose (Udimore), Jonathan Vine-Hall (Sedlescombe)

1 Self Introductions were made.

Gill Colquhoun was welcomed to her first meeting as the newly appointed RALC Secretary.

2 Apologies for absence

Paulette Barton (Etchingham), Ann Cook (Ticehurst), Lisa Cooper (Rother District Council) Margaret Howell (Battle), Nigel Wooldridge (Camber)

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2018, subject to the amendments in those present: David Pankhurst (Peasmarsh (RALC Vice Chairman) and Peter Turner (Icklesham) Vice Chairman, were **agreed** and duly signed by the Chairman.

3 Matters arising from meeting held on 10 October 2018

A member sought clarification on how RALC's subscription for On-line Mapping had been paid. The Chair confirmed that RALC had paid the fee on behalf of members, and individual Parishes had subsequently been invoiced £40 each by RALC; some Parishes had not yet paid their invoices. Members **agreed** that all Parishes who had not paid their On-line Mapping invoices be sent a reminder by the Secretary, and their access cancelled if they did not contribute in a reasonable timeframe (Peter Turner proposed, David Smedley seconded. In addition, a few members had not yet paid their RALC subscription. Members **agreed** that the Secretary should send reminders for outstanding On-line Mapping contributions and RALC membership fees. (The Secretary checked payments after the meeting; all members have now paid their membership fees).

5 Finance

The position at 30 November 2018 was noted as attached. It was confirmed that at the last meeting RALC had agreed to pay for any deficit for the Geosphere Online Mapping renewal for 2018-19 from the Training budget. As previously agreed the renewal for 2019-20 would be discussed at the next meeting in April.

6 Sussex Police

Jonathan Hartley, the new Police Inspector for Rother District, was welcomed to his first RALC meeting. He introduced himself as an officer with 5 years experience in Brighton & Hove, passionate about policing and Rother. JH emphasised that that he was aware of the challenges faced by the previous Inspector Dan Russell including visible policing and work on the [rural crime strategy](#). He was collaborating with Kent Police on cross County crime, which should result in more visible policing in the North and East of Rother. JH invited members to contact him with concerns and agreed to circulate his email address to RALC

members (Parish Clerks and RALC representatives) via the RALC Secretary. This email was not to be circulated beyond members.

7 Highways matters (ESCC)

Jon Copp was welcomed to the meeting and reported that a new guide to highways had been produced which outlined tasks undertaken by East Sussex Highways including different types of road repairs undertaken and funding available. JC would send the guide to the RALC Secretary in the next few weeks for circulation to members and to all Parish Clerks separately. JC also highlighted major Highways works in Rother in the next 3 months including Wartling Road resurfacing (full road closure March); Staplecross (village to Castle Bridge (April holidays) Starvecrow Lane Peasmarsh; Eatenden Lane Battle; Cousingdean Road, Cooden; Sea Road Bexhill. Resurfacing on the road through Sedlescombe, and Brede Lane, would take place later in 2019 (after March). A member emphasised the need for personal face to face contact with their local road steward. JC stated that this could be arranged.

Wendy Miers (Dallington) raised safety concerns in relation to Eastern Hill in Dallington. Highways had not responded to concerns. She was asked to email her issues to JC so that he could investigate. JC committed to respond within 2 weeks. Michael Horley (Westfield) requested that Highways commit responsibility for the dangerous road edge on the road opposite Mill Lane on the A28. JC agreed to contact Highways Information Team to establish ownership. JC explained that there could be two scenarios: it might be a private road (not maintained) or a private street (not maintained but has highway rights so Highways could maintain if owned by ESCC).

Ruby Brittle introduced herself as the Stakeholder & Engagement Manager for East Sussex Highways, she said that going forward East Sussex Highways are looking to build good ongoing relationships with Parish Councils. She is lead on the Community Highways project, a scheme which provides funding to enable parishes and local community groups to do small projects e.g. painting finger posts; speed projects; pedestrian crossings. Highways are refreshing this project. She agreed to circulate her contact details to members, and to Parish Clerks. RB offered to attend the next meeting in April to discuss the Community Highways project further. A member was concerned that an approved contractor was unable to quote for a new village sign. RB to discuss feasibility of this project with the member concerned and asked for the member to send his concerns to her direct.

Jon Copp and Ruby Brittle left the meeting.

8 Rother matters

Malcolm Johnston reported that:

- All Parish Councils had received a Precept form for completion, noting that there was no Council Tax Support Grant this year.
- RDC had agreed to fund the cost of East Sussex grass cutting for Parishes for a further year, subject to approval by Full Council. MJ confirmed that East Sussex are aware of this decision.
- The waste contract from June 2019 had been awarded to Biffa. MJ apologised for any disruption to recycling collections after Christmas. It is expected that some changes to waste runs will be made several months into the Biffa contract. The council hopes for a much improved service which is costing RDC an extra £1.5 Million. It is expected that the same crews will be employed but with different wagons.
- District of Rother Parking Places Order will be reviewed in 2019, possibly resulting in charging in all RDC car parks.
- Neighbourhood Plan progress: Ticehurst Plan is with the examiner; consultation on Rye Plan will close in the next week; Crowhurst Plan is being submitted to Cabinet.
- The budget for rough sleeping and homelessness has increased. Parishes were asked to inform RDC of people who are rough sleeping so can make contact and offer help. Inspector Hartley highlighted authorities' responsibility to safeguard the homeless; emergency accommodation is made available for 3 days during cold weather.

- Any questions regarding the forthcoming Parish Council elections should be directed to Richard Adams (contact details would be circulated via the Secretary). As RDC is not permitted to say who has been nominated individuals will be encouraged by RDC to contact their Parish Clerks. MJ suggested that a Parish should budget 'in the low thousands' for a Parish election. Nominations must be received at the RDC office by the deadline. RDC offer an informal check on all nomination forms.

MJ agreed to investigate why new numbers had been assigned to houses in one parish. A member asked if RDC is likely to introduce waste food collection. MJ stated that there are no immediate plans to do so but it is likely. Waste food collection had been included in the recent waste tenders in case RDC is required to do it. Another member asked when parking charges would be introduced in Bexhill. MJ confirmed this would be after the April elections. Poll cards will be distributed early enough. The election would be called at the end of March; there will be 5-6 weeks for individuals to stand.

9 Rother Voluntary Action: Grants and help available to Parish Councils

Gina Sanderson, Rother Voluntary Action, was welcomed to the meeting in her capacity as RVA Partnership & Insight (she is also a Parish Councillor at Peasmarsh). She gave the attached PowerPoint presentation on the grants and help available to Parish Councils and other bodies. GS made the following additional points:

- What funders look for has changed a lot over time (see presentation for ideas on how to consult with parishioners).
- Awards for All: is a simple application process which can include paying for staff. They are looking for applications from Rother as they are not giving out as many grants as they would like in Rother area. It is important to consider whether it would be more appropriate for the Parish Council or another body to apply. Money cannot be spent until a letter is received saying grant application has been successful.
- Sussex Community Foundation: is essential for philanthropists to fund local activities. The money is given to local community groups not Parish Councils, but Parish Councils can promote to community groups. It is to help smaller groups, with 4 application deadlines a year.
- Rother Community Grants: need to show have matching funds with strong community support and sustainability. There are 3 levels of grant, RDC are really keen for smaller projects under £500. The next round of grants will be considered on 15 January, then July. Applications need to show how money will make a difference. A member asked if there is a model application for RCG grants. GS stated that RVA can help.
- Other opportunities: Community Assets Fund is wider than grants for pavilions. Small grants can be made to make people active. Money is provided up front; it is sometimes better for Parish Councils to get other bodies to make applications.
- New scheme: East Sussex County Council has just announced a new small grants scheme linked to crowd funding. A member questioned whether there might be resistance to crowd funding if a Parish Council was involved.

GS was asked if most grants require matched funding. She stated that it is not always the case. Leslie Elmslie (Burwash) reported that her Parish had received the full amount required to establish an Internet Cafe. A member informed the meeting that the recycling site can provide money for environmental issues, community buildings and playgrounds.

10 Reports from RALC representatives

Wendy Miers (Dallington) provided a verbal report on the Standards Committee she attended with John Overall (Catsfield). Although Parish Councils are well represented at the meeting, which is important, the time dedicated to Parish Councils is reducing. She was pleased to report that no Parish Councils had been affected by behaviour in public life.

11 Any Other Business

Capping Precept - The Chair highlighted that although the government proposal to cap Parish Council precepts had been dropped, the proposal may return next year.

Wildflower/nature connectivity - David Furness (Battle) reported that Battle Town Council had started a successful nature group looking at wildflower meadows/verges. He proposed that all parishes could work together on this to achieve connectivity. He suggested that Fergus Garret and Keith Thatcher, who had been advising Battle, be invited to the April meeting. Members **agreed** to add this to the next agenda and that David Furness should contact Fergus Garrett, Keith Thatcher and the person in ESCC responsible for wildflower verges to establish if they could attend the next meeting in April meeting.

Missing Names on War memorials - David Furness (Battle) asked if other parishes, like Battle, had found that not all names had been included on their war memorial. Several other parishes including Burwash and Dallington had recently added missing names to their existing war memorial, whilst Pett had created a separate memorial. It was noted that grants are available for maintaining war memorials.

Delays responding to 101.- Alan Stainsby(Crowhurst) raised concerned at the length of time taken to answer calls to 101, further to a potential scam targeted at a vulnerable member of the community in Crowhurst. It was felt that there needed to be a better system for circulating information about potential scams. Inspector Hartley agreed that scamming is a sporadic issue and would discuss with Alan Stainsby.

PCSO contact – Concern was voiced that there were no longer designated PCSOs to contact in serious situations. Inspector Hartley recognised the problem; he felt that a solution needs to be worked out where communication between villages and the Police is effective.

Robberies – The Police were thanked for their assistance with a spate of robberies in one Parish.

12 Date of next meeting – Wednesday 10 April 2019

The meeting ended at 4.15pm.

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