

**Rother Association of Local Councils (RALC)**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2018 at 2.30pm**  
**on the Ground Floor,**  
**The Emmanuel Centre, Harrier Lane, Battle TN33 0FL**

**Present:** David Pankhurst (Peasmarsh)(RALC Vice Chairman), Lesley Bannister (Brede), Ann Cook (Ticehurst), Barry Cooper (Benefits Project), Lisa Cooper (RDC), Jon Copp (ES Highways), Graham Furness (Guestling), Carol Harris (RALC Secretary), Margaret Howell (Battle), Malcolm Johnston(RDC), John Overall (Catsfield), Hillary Pankhurst (Peasmarsh), Mike Rowe (Beckley), Karen Ripley (Salehurst & Robertsbridge), Dan Russell (Sussex Police), David Smedley (Icklesham), Peter Turner (Icklesham), Andrew Wedmore (Brightling).

**1 Self Introductions were made**

**2 Apologies for absence**

Anna Beams (SALC), Judith Dean (Pett), Leslie Elmslie (Burwash), David Furness (Battle), Richard Farhall (Rye), Tony Ganley (RDC), Jacqui Harding (Northiam), Martin Holgate (Catsfield), Les Nottage (Brede), David Penfold (Pett), David Perrett (Guestling), Alan Stainsby (Crowhurst), Jonathan Vine-Hall (Sedlescombe), Nigel Wooldridge (Camber).

**3 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2018**, subject to the amendment at item 10: the Standards ~~Committee~~ regime is being reviewed, were agreed and duly signed by the Chairman.

**4 Matters arising from meeting held on 11 July 2018**

Jonathan Vine-Hall had agreed to represent RALC at the meetings of the WARR Partnership.

The Secretary confirmed that research is ongoing in relation to the Rother Health Improvement Partnership.

**5 Finance**

The position at 31 August 2018 was noted as attached. The Secretary highlighted that Hall hire is one quarter behind but will be brought up to date this month.

**11 Sussex Community Development Association – Benefits and Debt Advice Project**

Barry Cooper introduced himself as Project Manager to the Benefits & Debt Advice Project funded by the NHS for Hastings & Rother CCG. He highlighted the objective to offer free confidential advice on available benefits that are not currently being applied for. BC reported that older people are particularly reluctant to claim benefits and may suffer as a result from isolation. He emphasised that there is only one 'phone number with no referral forms required and enquiries may be made on behalf of self or another. BC asked that information be circulated and left leaflets and posters for members. (Information attached).

*Barry Cooper left the meeting.*

**6 Sussex Police**

Insp Dan Russell was welcomed to the meeting. He highlighted the [rural crime strategy](#) that aims to assist with vulnerability in rural areas. DR reported that CI Steve Curry had retired and he is the temporary District Commander. DR hoped that new CI Sarah Godley would attend the next meeting. He confirmed that he will be leaving for his post at Head Quarters and thanked everybody for their support over the years during which there had been many changes. DR reported that the increase in funding will enable an increase in local staff levels. He acknowledged the frustration experienced in calls to the 101 number and advised that the PCC aim to improve this service. DR invited members to email if he could assist with any specific issues. Members congratulated DR and thanked him for his continual honesty at meetings.

## **7 Highways matters (ESCC)**

Jon Copp was welcomed to the meeting and reported that £14m had already been spent on patching and resurfacing work with a further £4m scheduled by the end of the financial year. There is a new system being introduced which will allow pot holes to be assessed for risk factors eg footfall, use of area etc, rather than purely size of hole. JC reminded members that the grass cutting regime had been retained at previous levels due to RDC paying for the additional 4 cuts this financial year. Councils will need to consider options for next year: self serve and be reimbursed by County for the 2 cuts; accept 2 cuts; or pay for any additional cuts required. He advised that the website is constantly evolving to improve online advice and fault reporting. JC confirmed that work carried out by utility companies is monitored with permanent repairs given 6 months for completion.

*Jon Copp left the meeting.*

## **8 Rother matters**

Malcolm Johnston reported the:

- great loss for Rother of Insp Dan Russell;
- forthcoming consultation on the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan which must be agreed prior to 24 January 2019 to prevent new policy requirements being instigated;
- Housing and Homelessness Strategy consultation will take place between 15 October and 26 November;
- Master plan to develop the Blackfriars area in Battle, to include 170 properties, will cost £1m
- Community Grants panel had approved grants of over £30k;
- Land released to Rye for wild meadows;
- Successful prosecution for illegal commercial fly tipping in Peasmarsh;
- Agreement to Battle Town Council's request for a Community Governance Review for a reduction from 17 to 13 Councillors.

## **9 On-line Mapping**

The Secretary reported that 2/3rds of members had agreed to renew the Geosphere online mapping programme at £40 each. Only one Council had decided not to accept but there were still several that, despite several emails, had not commented. She confirmed that, based on the current position, there could be a shortfall of £340 plus the £95 training fee. Members agreed that any deficit for the renewal of Geosphere for 2018-19 should be taken from the Training budget.

To avoid this confusion at next year's renewal, it was agreed to discuss renewal/cancellation for 2019/20 at the April meeting.

The Secretary was asked to confirm training for the first week of November. (Post meeting note: training will be on 9 November at the Emmanuel Centre from 9.30am until 1pm)

## **10 Broadband**

Andrew Wedmore advised that this will be the last report he will make. He confirmed that, despite much research and time dedicated to presentations and meetings, no great achievements had been accomplished and he had become demoralised. It was agreed that Trevor Leggo at SALC should be asked to take this issue forward.

Members expressed their thanks to Andrew Wedmore for all his efforts but understood his frustration.

## **12 Reports from RALC representatives - none.**

## **13 Secretary resignation**

Carol Harris confirmed that, whilst the role is not onerous, due to her change in role and hours at Battle she felt she could no longer continue as Secretary/Finance Officer for RALC. Members were asked to let the CH know of any suitable candidates for the position. One expression of interest had been in contact and a

conversation would be undertaken to ascertain suitability. It was agreed that the Chairman and Secretary should arrange for an appropriate person to take the role with effect from January 2019.

**14 Any Other Business** – None.

**15 Date of next meeting – Wednesday 9 January 2019**

*The meeting ended at 4.00pm.*

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