

ROTHER ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (RALC)

Minutes of meeting held on 10 July 2024, 3.00pm Staplecross Village Hall TN32 5QG

Attendees: David Young (Chairman & Ewhurst), Keith Robertson (Deputy Chair & Catsfield), R. Franklin (Burwash, Udimore), S. Price (Hurst Green), Sonia Plato (Crowhurst), David Penfold (Pett), John Barnes (Etchingham), Nigel Franklin (Bexhill), David Todd (Salehurst & Robertsbridge), Karen Ripley (Salehurst & Robertsbridge), Phil Allard (Iden), Bernard Brown (Battle), Richard Farhall (Rye, Mountfield), Julie Ramus (Rye Foreign), Issy Horley (Fairlight), Pauline Glew (Sedlescombe), Jonathan Vine-Hall (Sedlescombe), Martin Griffiths (Brede, Guestling), Jo Morphy (Beckley), James Kelly (East Sussex Highways), Lorna Ford (Rother DC), Anna Evett (Rother DC), Alice Nolan (RALC Clerk)

Item Number	Agenda Item	Lead
1	Welcome The Chair welcomed attendees.	
2	Apologies for absence Joanna Coleman (Brightling), Keith Lloyd (Burwash).	
3	Accuracy of Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April *attached Agreed.	
4	<p>Matters arising or reports from Members from previous meetings</p> <p>i. Apr 23 Climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sedlescombe: work on a complete decarbonisation of the sports pavilion is due to commence. o Ewhurst: parish has declared a climate emergency. The Village Hall has received funding from Rother to reduce carbon emissions. o Crowhurst: Carbon Literacy training is ongoing for parish councillors. The parish declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019. A working group has been formed with involvement from Energise Sussex Coast. This has set up a warmer homes group which surveyed housing. Insulation workshops due to commence in autumn. Potential survey for solar farm is also due to go to Planning. o Salehurst & Robertsbridge: Village Hall is separate to parish and is considering solar panels. The parish has completed a replacement of street lighting with LED, which follows the 'Dark Skies' initiative. Climate impact of parish services to be reviewed through working group. Need to engage with railways to reduce their lighting. o Bexhill: has submitted information to APPG on nocturnal pollinators. Will engage with other parishes to join next Dark Skies meeting. o Fairlight: some Energise training has been completed. A meeting on solar suppliers is being held on 16 July in Hastings. o Beckley: freshwater springs should be considered- parish has received CIL funding to explore. <p>RALC members with projects can contact AN to post on the website.</p> <p>ii. July 23/Oct 23 Energise East Sussex/Energy VH</p> <p>iii. Apr 24: Road Safety, Rural Housing</p>	
5	Update from RDC	Lorna Ford and

	<p>Anna Evett and Lorna Ford presented an update, and the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RALC/RDC quarterly communications meetings provide regular updates on risks. • The risk process at Rother is dynamic and SLT have oversight of them all. The document is live and at every formal meeting, risks are considered e.g. performance reviews where KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) are monitored. • The highest rated risk is the Council’s financial position. This has been increased in the last 6 months. • Parish council risks are not monitored by Rother. Parishes have their own risk appraisal process which is audited. • The impact of other authorities (including County) going bankrupt is low. This is because shared services tend to be statutory and therefore unlikely to be challenged. • Treasury management is in place to maximise interest rates. All figures are reported. Currently, Rother is not borrowing finances. • A regular report is made to Rother Councillors on savings proposals. These will be delivered, but the need to save is increasing. • If projects (e.g. Town Hall Renaissance) do not progress, the money will come back into the revenue budget. This is considered as part of the overall financial risk. Business cases are being reviewed to determine if they are viable- will have a clearer understanding by autumn of revenue costs and capital projects to progress. A Corporate Programme Board also operates and monitors projects. • The Climate Manager role is partly covered by Elize Manning, Projects Officer. Other aspects will be captured within every department, as the Climate underpins all Council work. Operational concerns can be referred to Lorna or Elize Manning. • A new interim Head of Planning is due to join from August. The Planning Policy role is being backfilled by existing staff. • A report to Cabinet is being made on Monday 15 July which sets out plans for a new structure, with good governance a driving focus. 	Anna Evett
6	<p>Update from Highways</p> <p>James Kelly presented an update, and the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional information following up on last meeting has been sent to RALC Clerk. IT have advised that photos cannot be added to the system, but James will send them over if requested. <p>AN to circulate information from James.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stewards and stakeholder engagers should be attending SLR meetings. Meetings can be held in-person and James will follow up with the new Stakeholder Engagement Manager on Crowhurst’s meeting. • Restructure and expansion within team effective from 1 Aug. Information is shared in-house, even if changes are made. <p>James to circulate map of Rother with information on the stewards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sedlescombe: highlighted an issue within the area due to a traffic diversion. James will ask the relevant steward to investigate. • Burwash: Clerk meets regularly with Customer Services Manager and has found this to be productive. • Iden: how can uncertainty over road ahead closed signs be resolved? 	James Kelly (Balfour Beatty) ESCC Highway

	<p>James: A traffic management person is drafting new signs that will be more specific e.g. no access to Peasmarsh.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bexhill: does anyone within Bexhill liaise on road repairs- the council can contact James. 	
7	<p>Survey of members</p> <p>The Chair issued a reminder about the RALC survey that has been circulated. Members should provide one response per council.</p> <p>AN to resend survey.</p>	David Young
8	<p>CIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sedlescombe: shared a presentation with the group. CIL is a levy paid at different rates depending on the area. Rural areas of Rother generate about 2/3 of the total CIL collected by Rother DC. Proposals to change the process have been made at Overview and Scrutiny, including that funding pots between rural areas and Bexhill are combined. CIL has generated £6-8 million in total over 9 years. Proposes that RALC writes to Rother in support of keeping two funds separate. Etchingam: there are concerns over favouring Bexhill and larger projects. Overview and Scrutiny have made recommendations to Cabinet, which will take place on 15 July. Rother: highlighted the Local CIL funding pot which is for parishes to spend. The report has been made by the CIL panel and is not officer led. It intends to ensure that projects are delivered for entire district through a strategic approach. <p>RALC agreed in principle to contact Rother in support of keeping CIL funding pots separate.</p>	
9	<p>Any other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rye: highlighted queries over devolution of public conveniences. Would like to raise the matter of freeholds/leaseholds at the next RALC meeting. Catsfield: the RALC survey proposes a framework for dealing with devolution. This topic affects all the district, even those without public conveniences within their parish. Rother: the devolution approach was Member-led and signed off in 2022 as part of the Protecting Discretionary Services Strategy. <p>AN to note for consideration at next RALC agenda planning meeting.</p>	
10	<p>To confirm dates of next meetings</p> <p>Wednesday 9 October.</p>	