



Meeting held via 'Zoom' audio conferencing due to Coronavirus situation.

Parish Councillors in attendance: Chairman Steve Williamson (SW), Elizabeth Brown (EB), Carolyn Butler (CB), Adrian Collins (AC), Fiona Dix (FD), Max Harwood (MH), Zoe MacLehose (ZM), Elena McCloskey (EM), Gerard McCloskey (GM) and Mairi Rennie (MR).

County/District Councillor Kate O'Kelly (KOK).

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Clerk: Debbie Harknett.

Meeting started at 7.30pm

**Chairman:** Steve Williamson  
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**Vice-Chairman:** Elizabeth Brown  
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- 1) **Recording of the meeting** – none.
- 2) **Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:** Ann Arnold (AA) and Val Farren (VF).
- 3) **Declarations of interest** – none.
- 4) **Minutes of last meeting:** after amending 22c 'in the budget' to 'in the national budget' and EB to EM at 15a), 15l) and before 15j) the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were accepted by the Council as a true record to be signed by the Chairman.
  - a) While noting incorrect initials in the last minutes EM added that all the councillors know she has been working on the outdoor gym for many months, contacting suppliers, attending meetings, obtaining prices, liaising with the village hall etc and she was frustrated that no one had properly responded to her proposal. If the council had gone with her preferred option of using a fund-raiser the scheme would be on the way by now.
  - b) SW replied everybody was committed to the project. It was not on this meeting's agenda because it would have been inappropriate as he was aware that both EM and GM had been unwell and may not attend. There was no way the PC could proceed in the current situation, and it should be held in abeyance for now as there are higher priorities; thoughts that were echoed by others.EM left the meeting.
- 5) **Representations from the Public** – none.
- 6) **County & District Councillor reports** – KOK's report had previously been distributed:  
As County Councillor:
  - a) Covid-19 info: [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) [www.westsussex.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19/)
  - b) Health & Social care have 172 recorded cases in WS according latest Public Health England data.
  - c) Community Hub allows residents to contact WSCC if they need help and allows volunteers to offer help with dedicated website and telephone helpline 033 022 27980 from 8.00-8.00pm.
    - They are appealing for business to support with delivery and equipment.
    - Three levels of people to be triaged by hub – category 1 primary hub support - shielded defined by NHS; category 2 hub support if no local support available - vulnerable (medically or 70+); category 3 support via community or CDC if not available – everybody else.
  - d) WSCC have considerable amount of acute hospital capacity with occupancy levels below 60%. Local system also has significant amount of empty community bed capacity ready for rise in demand.
  - e) Local people who have lost jobs due to coronavirus are being urged to apply for jobs in the care industry as they anticipate huge demand for services as outbreak continues. [www.proudtocarewestsussex.com](http://www.proudtocarewestsussex.com) – details of around 300 full-time & part-time positions available with care providers across West Sussex.
  - f) Registration offices in Midhurst are closed and all appointments to register deaths are being conducted by phone. Birth registrations are not being carried out from 25 March for 3 weeks.
  - g) Recycling sites across the country have been closed as keeping them open would encourage residents to leave their homes against government guidance. Their priority is to dispose of clinical and putrescible waste. The inability to dispose of other waste (garden, electrical, recyclable materials, clearing loft waste) is an inconvenience but no excuse for criminality. Green waste can be composted.

- h) Residents who are self-isolating are asked to place waste/recycling into double-bagged plastic bags in bins; NOT to put the rubbish out for collection until 72 hours later; wash bin handles.
- i) Homelessness and rough sleeping – WSCC group are working to prioritise providing accommodation solutions for these people which allows for self-isolation and includes practical support such as food delivery, prescriptions etc.
- j) Small school formal decision process to reorganise some West Sussex schools has been amended due to current situation. KOK has been invited to join the task and finish group.
- k) Pensioners and vulnerable people with WSCC bus passes can use them earlier on weekdays to take advantage of some supermarkets first hour of trading dedicated to these shoppers.
- l) Routine PROW inspections and maintenance work has been suspended.
- m) New Western Area Highways Manager (for Arun & Chichester District) [chris.start@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:chris.start@westsussex.gov.uk)  
As District Councillor:
- n) Weekly virtual meetings updates on essential services.
- o) [www.chichester.gov.uk/councilservicestatus](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/councilservicestatus) for information on more than 30 different sectors.
- p) Waste and recycling – 01243 534619 – put bin out on normal day and they will try to collect.
- q) Street cleaning & litter picking reduced, no grass cutting.
- r) Planning officers are working from home – no site visits, no notices being put up to advise neighbours, no neighbour letters.
- s) CDC have £37m business grant to distribute and have sent letters to eligible businesses.
- t) Car parks are currently free.
- u) ZM questioned the change in planning services while no site visits are understandable to suspend both neighbour letters and notification signs could enable an application to be made/approved without neighbours having any knowledge. There appears to be no obvious reason why letters couldn't still be sent and applicants could be asked to erect notification signs. KOK responded she thought the signs maybe to discourage people visiting the site but she will take the question to the weekly CDC meeting and let us know their response.
- v) FD asked if the time scales/deadlines for planning response has been extended – KOK to check.
- w) In response to AC's question KOK explained Chris Dye has been moved to a more senior position in the highways department but will now be covering Arun as well as Chichester areas.

## 7) Chairman's report -

- a) SW explained the need for an addition to our Standing Orders to allow meetings to be conducted by audio and/or video conference facilities in special circumstances; Nick Bennett, CDC provided a very helpful explanation on the matter which had been circulated. After discussion SW's proposed resolution **'The Council agrees to amend its Standing Orders to allow, at its discretion, for Council and Committee meetings to be conducted using audio and video conference facilities over the internet, including access for the public by prior arrangement, and to advertise these in the normal way'** was seconded by GM and unanimously approved.
- b) Nick Bennett also included guidance on the issue of postponing the Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting until it is more convenient.
- c) There was some discussion about the Annual Parish Meeting and it was agreed to ask participants if they could provide reports for circulation and postpone holding the actual meeting until 2021.
- d) SW added having virtual meetings meant, in his view, that we would be unable to hold secret ballots for election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman or to co-opt a new member. Therefore, he offered to remain as Chairman until normal meetings can be resumed and similarly to leave the co-option process until then as well. His offer of chairmanship continuity at this difficult time was welcomed by MR and support echoed by Members; it was agreed to postpone the annual Parish Council meeting, as he suggested, with him remaining as Chairman until a normal meeting could be held.
- e) SW explained this was due to be EB's last meeting but he had asked her to remain in post under the current circumstances and because he didn't think a virtual meeting was a suitable medium to give thanks for her many years of dedication and service to the parish council; she kindly agreed.
- f) SW's proposal of resolution **'The Council agrees to postpone its Annual Parish Council Meeting until restrictions currently in-force are relaxed sufficiently and the Annual Parish Meeting until 2021'** was seconded by CB and unanimously approved.
- g) SW noted the Grit/salt bin at Tullecombe crossroads has been stolen along with its contents. Clerk is investigating fixing kits; AC has offered to mark bins when the lockdown is over; FD suggested installing solar operated cameras.

## 8) Finance report -

- a) Monthly report – budget monitor for the accounts to year-end had been circulated prior to the meeting and there were no questions.

Receipts and payments approved:

<b>Receipts noted:</b>		
HSBC	Bank interest	£18.84
<b>Payments approved:</b>		
Midhurst Foodbank	Grant (last year's accounts)	£500.00
Rogate Village Hall	Hall hire (last year's accounts)	£44.00
Clerk/RFO	Salary/PAYE	Undisclosed
Debbie Harknett	Clerk expenses – coronavirus mailing postage/stationery	£154.85
Simon Wright	Terwick Woodland tree clearance	£50.00

## Matters for discussion:

### 9) Coronavirus – parish council response

- a) SW expressed huge thanks to FD, AC, Clerk and all those involved for the heroic effort in getting out the parish council response to current Covid-19 situation; sentiments that were echoed throughout.
- b) AC and FD's report had been circulated prior to the meeting with copies of the letter, information, buddy system and alert cards. A Working Group held zoom meetings and working on input from Rake and Rogate groups agreed RPC should take responsibility to support the community during the Covid-19 pandemic by way of
- write to all residents with a statement of RPC's endorsement of the Governments strategy
  - establish a 'Buddy' system to assist all residents
  - establish a support system 'fetch & carry' service for food and prescriptions
  - provide details of shops & services (focussing particularly on Rogate/Rake businesses)
  - offer additional shopping information and 'sign-posting' across the district
  - offer support to residents where they do not have internet access
  - provide a telephone 'phone-a-friend' service for comfort, friendship or chat
  - build on community initiatives already in place in Rake and Rogate
  - Clerk has created a Covid-19 banner at head of our website which links to the parish response plan, relevant RPC notices and links to key CDC, WSCC, HM Government websites info pages.
- c) Response:
- Response letter delivered/posted to all residents across parish containing emergency contact numbers, permission slip (to be signed by resident to facilitate volunteer shopping/collecting prescription on their behalf); red & green alert cards for houses with a frontage in close proximity to pavement (resident to display card to indicate whether or not they need help).
  - Database of parish residential addresses created (631 properties) which will help in future.
  - RPC public contact numbers provided on website and letter.
- d) Rogate residents were grouped geographically together (by FD) into 40+ areas with a responsible Buddy. A total of 480 residences (all known properties across Parish not falling under Rake/Hillbrow scheme). The 'Buddy' system works in tandem with 'Rogate Community Coming Together' Facebook group and is a telephone point of contact for a cluster of houses offering any help that may be needed. Buddies do not have to undertake the task themselves but pass request to network to find volunteer to fulfil it. Each Buddy has been provided with instructions. This group have 120+ volunteers.
- e) Rake & Hill Brow Plan – AC is in close liaison with 'Rake Help for Covid 19' Facebook group on behalf of RPC. The initial point of contact is Flying Bull who pass on requests for help. The system has evolved into Buddy volunteers in local neighbourhoods. This group have a group of 70+ volunteers.
- f) FD added there has been some concern raised about the alert cards but as their use is voluntary and they are sent to all residents in a given area (young, old, multiple and single households) they were not highlighting vulnerable residents. KOK added Harting are using a similar system.
- g) AC explained FD did the bulk of the work, he was ensuring we could support the initiative of the Rake group who have now extended their area to include Hillbrow. He has been encouraged by the response with recipients already obtaining help they needed.
- h) They are not specifically aware of vulnerable residents but have asked buddies to become aware.
- i) It was agreed the letter has promoted people to think about other people in their vicinity and encourage community spirit.

- j) MH reported Neil Ryder has heard from South Downs Hotel who are offering to prepare and deliver free hot meals for NHS workers/sick or isolating residents/people who have lost their jobs. FD noted this is going to be communicated via the community alert and Facebook groups.
- k) FD explained they are looking to establish a twice-weekly prescription collection service and could piggy-back onto Harting Shop's collection from Midhurst. They are trying to ascertain need and get feedback of who may need service though it may already be integrated within the current system.
- l) KOK is sharing information across her patch and will continue to do so.
- m) SW added when we have a situation or projects to pursue there is a tendency to leave it to an individual councillor with other councillors not always receptive to calls for help, him included. This needs to change in the future.

**Committee reports:**

**10) Planning Committee** - minutes of the Planning Committee meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were received.

**11) Open Spaces (OSC)**

- a) It was noted the Open Spaces Committee scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 had been postponed.
- b) MH reported concerns about a tree at Fyning with a tyre swing as he thinks the branch may be dead – he will ask Simon Wright to check and remove if appropriate.

**12) Finance Committee**

It was noted the Finance Committee would meet on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

**13) Grants & Projects**

The award of the Chichester District Council VE75 grant of £250 towards the purchase of a bench/seat was noted; following the coronavirus lock-down the Clerk had submitted an amended application as a street party would no longer be possible. SW suggested if a more exciting scheme was considered appropriate CDC may agree to a change of expenditure.

**General:**

**14) Correspondence**

- a) Emails as previously circulated.
- b) Bank statements received – filed in finance file

**15) Information for the Council** (for noting or inclusion on a future Agenda) – none.

**16) Date of next meeting** – The next Full Council Meeting of the Parish Council will be on **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020** at 7.30pm at Rogate Village Hall Pavilion.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

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