



Meeting held outside at Rogate Village Hall starting at 5.00pm.

Parish Councillors in attendance: Chairman Max Harwood (MH), Laura Craven (LC), Mike Galley (MG), Mairi Rennie (MR) and Steve Williamson (SW).

Clerk: Debbie Harknett

There was one member of the public in attendance.

Chairman: max.harwood@rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk

Vice-chairman: adrian.collins@rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk

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Clerk: (Debbie Harknett) clerk@rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk

- 1) The Chairman opened the meeting by thanking Councillors for attending in difficult circumstances and explained we had been compelled to hold this meeting despite current covid cases in the village being very high because R&THA had not given notice to postpone their Special General Meeting until gone 4.15pm today. We had told them last week we felt it was irresponsible to hold their meeting in a small room at East Lodge with vulnerable residents and if they had postponed earlier we would have been able to do the same. As it was we had moved our meeting outside and would limit the agenda to the R&THA discussion and necessary finance – leaving everything else until the July meeting.
- 2) **It was noted the meeting would not be recorded.**
- 3) **Apologies for absence** were received from Adrian Collins (AC), Zoe Macle hose (ZM), Elena McCloskey (EM), Gerard McCloskey (GM) and Kate O’Kelly (KOK), District/County Councillor.
- 4) **There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda.**
- 5) **The minutes of the last meeting held on 9th May 2022** were approved by the Council as a true record to be signed by Chairman.
- 6) **There were no representations from the Public at this time.**
- 7) **County & District Councillor reports – KOK’s report had been circulated prior to the meeting:**
As County Councillor:
 - a) County Local Forum meeting on 16 June – an opportunity to meet/question County Councillors.
 - b) WSCC full May meeting debated public health funding and water neutrality issue affecting the planning system in the north of Sussex. She asked questions about EV charger roll out and how it is going to work across the county and expressed concern CDC have not joined the partnership so none of their car parks are included in the roll out.
 - c) Buses – their group are calling to retain Chichester Station transport hub as there were plans to dispose of the bus station and have a row of bus stops along Ave De Chartres with no facilities.
 - d) No further news on buses in NW area of county but they are running an engagement exercise so people can give their views <https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/westsusbus>
 - e) Ukraine – questions from residents and hosts to ukrainesupport@westsussex.gov.uk.
 - f) Rother Valley Way cycling meeting this week with SDNPA full briefing regarding all landowners along the route prior to making contact with them all.As District Councillor:
 - g) Trees outside woodland program - CDC have distributed over 8,000 trees to residents, community groups, parish councils, businesses and landowners and have additional funding for 2022/23 planting season www.chichester.gov.uk/treescheme or treescheme@chichester.gov.uk.
 - h) Household Support Fund (HSF) administered by WSCC has been extended from 1 April 2022 to 30 Sept 2022 with £4,870,362 to allocate for this period. CDC Officers are able to make professional referrals and issue vouchers for customers they are working with. Fund is predominantly for support with energy, food and water but can include support for wider essentials associated with these costs, such as white goods and clothing etc. Community Hub <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/leisure-recreation-and-community/supporting-local-communities/community-hub-covid-19/>
Tel: 033 022 27980 · Lines are open 9.00am - 5.00pm 7 days a week.
 - i) Financial help for residents (incl debt management) www.chichester.gov.uk/helpwithfinances
 - j) Next drop in at Grange Centre, Midhurst – 11th July 10.30-12.30.
- 8) **Chairman’s report – MH’s report had been circulated ahead of the meeting:**
 - a) The month has been largely dominated by developments at R&THA.
 - b) A large oak tree has been taken down on the south side of Terwick Church as the trunk had split and it had become unsafe.

- c) The annual parish meeting was held for the first time in three years and he believes we should review the format of the meeting before 2023.
- d) Open Spaces Committee AC has become Chair and LC Vice-chair.
- e) Operation Watershed - we have obtained a quote from Landbuild and some thoughts from one of the affected residents but need to move the project forward.
- f) Wildflowers at the entrance to Parsonage - some concerns have been raised about daisy's blocking the site-line when exiting the estate - we have let Nick Heasman, SDNP know.

9) Rogate and Terwick Housing Association (R&THA) proposed transfer of engagements to PHA Homes Ltd (PHA) - SGM meeting arranged 14 June 2022 had finally been postponed to 22 June 2022

- a) MH reported we have been formally advised the transfer agreement hands over the freeholds of East Lodge and properties at Hugo Platt along with approximately £500,000 to PHA. It is a simple agreement where R&THA have to meet certain deadlines to handover the assets. The vote has been called and the Councils response, as the only corporate shareholder, is to be decided at this meeting. No options, consultations or information has been put forward other than what R&THA want voted on.
- b) A MOP John Craven (JC) addressed the meeting:
 - Communication and organisations leading up to transfer vote were appalling and there was a fairly significant number of misapprehensions about what may or may not happen.
 - R&THA propose to transfer the land (East Lodge and number of properties at Hugo Platt) as well as approximately £500,000 permanently and without recourse. The transfer document refers to a merger, in effect it is a surrender.
 - The agreement is one sided and there is no concession to 'Rogate interests', no charitable objective to Rogate or any strong priority for allocation though housing associations do try to allocate properties locally.
 - The East Lodge building will be difficult to sustain in the medium term as it is deteriorating and has an inefficient/expensive communal heating system and it is increasing difficult to find new tenants who meet the required financial criteria for social housing.
 - If the proposed transfer goes ahead PHA will draw up plans for a replacement development on the site (being aware that plans and planning permission would take years) but would not necessarily aim to start the redevelopment straight after any permission were granted.
 - PHA have agreed RPC can nominate somebody to their board and he (with experience of boards and housing/homelessness) is willing to be considered. This wasn't part of the original arrangement as R&THA had declined to take up this offer from PHA.
 - Any redevelopment would require government grants and therefore new homes would be social housing. However, it is likely any grant would be insufficient to meet building requirements set by SDNP, especially within a conservation area, so there could be an opportunity for a small amount of housing for market rental or sale to local residents which would help recognise the original spirit of the site.
 - At our suggestion, PHA have agreed 4 local people could be involved in a development group to provide a local voice.
 - If the transfer doesn't go ahead PHA have said they will walk away.
 - He, along with Peter Moss, R&THA and Denise Rajchel, PHA held a meeting at EL to address residents (of which 3 attended). A Q&A sheet has since been circulated to others. Residents were reassured they would be looked after by PHA and accepted they wouldn't be rehoused in Rogate but that the development is likely to be 4/5 years away and lives change.
- c) SW noted we don't like the position we find ourselves in and don't like the way that R&THA have conducted the transfer proposal but we can't change that; all we can do is vote on the resolution to register our dissatisfaction. R&THA are a group of volunteers who felt they did not have the required expertise to continue to operate but rather than seek experience/help they decided to get rid of it. The issue of the value of the freehold being transferred is the stumbling block for him – a lease agreement with the freehold retained in the community by trustees would be a reasonable option that he would be able to support. We now know more about risk/opportunity of redevelopment and have shared this with the community; something the trustees should have pursued before proposing to hand over the freeholds.
- d) Clerk read comments from EM & GM who were concerned the message is the same as at the outset – the very substantial assets were gifted to the people of Rogate for their benefit and are not in the gift of the current board to decide the future of. We should choose to fight even if we think the odds are stacked against us. It is important to note that none of the shareholders benefit from this

handover of assets. They proposed we vote against the plan; insist the board meeting be delayed; contact the regulator to seek a meeting; end this period of keeping the whole thing under wraps and seek substantial coverage for our struggle from local newspapers and broader media and consider a referendum of the parish. We cannot face our parishioners without clearly showing we have done all that we can.

- e) LC didn't like the proposal but felt we had one vote and we have to make the best of what is on offer. We should ensure the wider community is aware of our decision.
- f) MG felt torn as he could see the pragmatic issues about the building and management but there is a decision to be made about passing over assets without considering alternatives. The PC is bigger than one vote as we represent the community and it could be seen as the council that allowed the asset to be given away.
- g) MH, JC and Clerk all noted they have been contacted by members of the public and other shareholders who have asked questions and shown concern about alternatives and due diligence.
- h) JC noted it is possible the chairman and/or trustees will resign if their proposal is rejected and the regulator will be called in. The regulator could then decide the transfer to PHA will go ahead anyway; if that happened the PC should try to make contact with the regulator.
- i) MR noted Hugo Platt were just the sort of affordable housing the village needed. The lack of co-operation from R&THA with START has resulted in the resignation of their chairman and possibly put doubt on the community land trust's future.
- j) After much discussion MH called for **resolution to vote for/against/abstain on R&THA's proposal 'To transfer the whole of the property and all of the engagements of Rogate and Terwick Housing Association to PHA (Homes) Ltd'**; it was unanimously agreed to vote against the proposal.
- k) MH called for **resolution to vote for/against/abstain on R&THA's second proposal 'To acknowledge and agree that all the Association's property and engagements shall vest in PHA (Homes) Ltd without the need for any conveyance or assignment'**; it was unanimously agreed to vote against the proposal.
- l) It was agreed to issue a statement giving the reason for the decision
Rogate Parish Council's position has always been clear. In order to support R&THA and to vote in favour of the proposed transfer of property and engagements to PHA Homes Ltd, the Council has wanted to be sure that all options have been fully considered with due diligence. We appreciate the work that R&THA has done over the years, and the support given more recently by PHA Homes Ltd. However, the lack of information provided by R&THA, and their poor communications have resulted in our decision to vote against the proposal at the shareholders' meeting next week as we do not believe all options have been considered. Our decision in no way reflects on PHA Homes, and we recognise that the present proposal might well lead to a good route forward. We suggest that any future proposal should be supported by an independent evaluation of options, including a local consultation. We hope that this will enable the Parish Council to support a future proposal.
- m) MH's proposal of **resolution 'to nominate John Craven for appointment to PHA board'** was seconded by MR and unanimously approved.
- n) After discussion it was agreed to leave consideration of nominations for the potential EL development group until more is known but noted JC's offer to join along with an EL resident who has contacted PHA to express their interest in joining.

JC left with thanks.

10) Finance report and matters

- a) Bank payments to be authorise by MH and SW.
- b) MH reported on behalf of AC that the internal auditors report from Mulberry and Company which raised no matters of concern was an endorsement of the excellent work and record keeping of the Clerk; thanks that were echoed throughout. The Clerk added that the new internal auditor carried out a much more comprehensive review and some policy changes may be needed in the coming year.
- c) Review of the Annual Governance Statement:

1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements and prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	YES – accounts follow latest Accounts and Audit Regulations and practitioners guide recommendations.
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2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness and made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.	YES – there is regular reporting of financial transactions and accounting summaries, offering the opportunity for scrutiny.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances and has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.	YES – the Clerk advises the council in respect of its legal powers.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.	YES – the requirements and timescales for 2020/21 year-end were followed.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required and considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.	YES – the council has a risk management scheme and appropriate external insurance.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems and arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.	YES – the council has appointed an independent and competent internal auditor.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit and responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.	YES – matters raised in internal and external audit reports have been addressed.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and. Where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements and disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant	YES – no matters were raised during the internal audit visits.
9. Trust funds including charitable – In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/asset(s), including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit and have met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.	YES – the council has met its responsibilities as a trustee

d) LC's proposals of **resolution to 'Approve Annual Governance Statement 2021/22'** was seconded by MR and unanimously approved..

e) Having considered the AGAR Accounting Statements for year end 31 March 2022 (circulated prior to the meeting) and with no questions being raised LC's proposal of **resolution to 'Approve the accounting statements for 2021/22'** were seconded by MR and unanimously approved.

Payments approved:		
Clerk/RFO	Salary/PAYE/Pension	Undisclosed
Debbie Harknett	Zoom video conferencing monthly cost	£14.39
Rogate Hall	Hall hire	£66.00
Southern Water	Fyning Recreation Ground supply	£9.76
Debbie Harknett	Clerk's expenses	£67.39

11) Correspondence -

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

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

13) **Date of next meeting** – the next **Full Parish Council Meeting** will be on **Monday 11th July 2022 at 5.00pm at Rogate Village Hall.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.08pm.

Chairman:

Max Harwood