



Meeting held at Rake Village Hall starting at 5.00pm.

Parish Councillors in attendance: Chairman Max Harwood (MH), Adrian Collins (AC), Laura Craven (LC), Elena McCloskey (EM), Octavia Pollock (OP) and Angie Simonds (AS).

District Councillor: Tim O'Kelly (TOK)

There were no members of the public (MOP) in attendance.

Clerk: Debbie Harknett

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- 1) **It was noted the meeting would not be recorded.**
- 2) **Apologies for absence** were received and accepted from Mike Galley (MG) and Zoe Maclehose (ZM) and noted from County Councillor Kate O'Kelly (KOK).
- 3) **There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda.**
- 4) **The minutes of the last meeting** held on 11th March 2024 were approved by the Council as a true record and signed by Chairman.
- 5) **Representations from the Public:** none

Reports from representatives of outside bodies:

- 6) **West Sussex County Councillor – KOK's** report had been circulated prior to the meeting:
 - a) Heath and Adult Social Care Committee (HASC) – meeting scrutinised St Richard's downgrade by CQC from 'outstanding' to 'requires improvement' and also reviewed update on ambulance service. Health leaders are working to decrease the backlog of planned surgery waiting times and have made significant progress related to heart attack and stroke emergency response times. Cancer referral to diagnosis times have improved but time to treatment is still taking longer than their target in many cases.
 - b) Property disposal motion called for more co-ordination with local planning authority and more engagement with local members and stakeholders prior to these decisions being made.
 - c) Digital exclusion motion called for the council to commit more focus to identifying digital excluded groups who tend to be more vulnerable and improving their access to services; this was unanimously agreed.
 - d) Education – proposal to relocated Jessie Younghusband school to new school in Minerva Heights has gone to statutory consultation; decision driven by cost and urgent need for SEND places.
 - e) Clerk noted she has spoken to KOK who is aware on the ongoing road condition problems with Fyning Lane and St. Peter's Road. She also raised the issue of recent road closures happening without the parish being informed as both Nyewood Road and the A272 at Trotton were closed recently. While emergencies are understood communication with the parish helps – otherwise we have no idea what is happening or how long it will last.
 - f) There was some discussion about digital inclusion and the feeling that the closure of banks (Nat West, Petersfield is closing in September) isn't helping and in many cases the elderly are affected.
- 7) **Chichester District Councillor – TOK's** report had been circulated prior to the meeting:
 - a) Weekly food waste collections from households – the next stage has been formally approved. It is estimated this will cost the council £1.35m in addition to the government grant which has mandated food waste to be collected by 2026. They will be trialling some electric collection vehicles and starting the procurement process asap as every local authority in the country is doing the same thing.
 - b) Warmer homes – grant threshold has been increased to £36,000 a year income which has expanded the eligible pool of households who can access free energy saving upgrades by nearly 20% - scheme open to applications until November 2024 with them processed on first come-first served basis.
 - c) Midhurst Angel Hotel fire was a year ago - District Council offered significant support to the town with a package of £300,000 as well as business support on the ground and marketing activities and will continue to champion the town.

8) Chairman's report – MH's report had been circulated prior to the meeting:

- a) Concern has been raised by a MOP who had parked a car on Rogate Road near The Drivers/National Trust car park. While the car was parked somebody had stuck an official looking notice (which was very hard to remove) stating that parking was illegally and the number plate had been logged with the local council and police and if it happened again the car would be impounded. We informed him it is nothing to do with the Parish Council and checked with the local residents' group who they are not aware of who may have done this.
- b) We received some emails relating to works being carried out at Forge Farm and Smugglers Copse. We had expected a planning application for Forge Farm but it wasn't received and enforcement closed the file. Smugglers Copse is in Milland parish and they are now involved and talking with local residents.
- c) MH reminded members tonight's meeting had been held in Rake in the hope of attracting some local residents but though no MOPs were present we had provided the opportunity.

Matters for discussion:

9) Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 18th April 2024 in Rogate Village Hall

- a) MH noted our meeting is due to start at 7.00pm which will be preceded by the Village Hall AGM at 6.00pm with coffee served between the two. LC/AS volunteered to make cakes; LC will purchase coffee/tea/milk and all councillors to help with the setting up and clearing up.
- b) Clerk has invited all the village organisations (as listed on the agenda) as well as trying the Police Community Support Officer and Rother Valley Way who are unable to attend. She has asked WSCC for details of the village 20mph CHS if at all possible and has invited the parish representative.
- c) TOK noted that the Arun MP, Andrew Griffiths has been attending some meetings though it was agreed he would not be specially invited to the meeting it is open to all members of the public.

TOK left with thanks.

10) Rogate Hall – to consider youth club room furniture grant

- a) MH reported he and the Clerk met with members of Rogate Village Hall committee to discuss the possible use of the old youth club room as a parish room.
- b) The room is in need of redecoration and while the hall committee have yet to finalise their plans they are considering options. A full refurbishment (with new bar area/lighting/electrics/flooring/decoration/furniture etc) is likely to cost £10k and they would need to be able to recoup this money – one option would be a commercial letting of the room with income generated to support the hall. This sort of lease is outside the council's budget.
- c) We felt the room would be useable with some simple redecoration and addition of furniture. It is an ideal size for Parish Council meetings and wouldn't be disturbed with noise which can happen when using the pavilion. It would also offer us more flexibility of meeting timings as these are dictated by the availability of the hall though it was understood that PC sole use of the room once or twice a month is not viable. The hall offered to permanently house a couple of filing cabinets.
- d) The hall committee suggested they may be able to fund the simple decoration and wondered if the parish council would consider a grant to purchase furniture – at a possible cost of £1,000.
- e) AC urged members to read the hall article in last month's R&T and reminded the meeting that our grant budget was not spent in full last year and we could be challenged on this.
- f) After much discussion, it was agreed that MH/Clerk to continue discussion with the hall on the understanding that the council could be open to a furniture grant if they redecorate the room and the council had priority use with the default layout as a meeting room for 12 people.

11) Sussex Police online safety presentation – MH noted we previously held an evening event (December 2018) which was well attended and useful. After discussion, it was unanimously agreed to run another presentation on the same lines - Clerk to discuss with Trotton PC, the Police Officer and check hall availability.

12) Traffic matters:

- a) **Hillbrow 30mph TRO application** – AC reported the TRO consultation starts on 18 April and will run until 10 May 2024. He reminded the meeting of the importance of people supporting the application. Clerk suggested information be available at the APM.
- b) **Rogate Village 20mph zone Community Highways Scheme (CHS)** – no update

13) Finance matters

- a) Monthly finance report to the Council – AC reported its year-end and as expected there was nothing exceptional in the accounts though the £73,000 Operation Watershed project funds distort them. The year has finished with a £7,000 increase in general reserves raising them from £24,000 to £31,000 which is closer to the recommended precept equivalent. They had fallen quite a lot below as the precept hadn't been increased for a number of years but we are trying to address this shortfall and understand the importance of maintaining reserves. The budget for the forthcoming year is similar but there could always be a contingency for unexpected expenditure should something like a tree fall.
- b) Non-cheque signatory to check reconciliation – OP.
- c) Bank payments authorisation – AS and AC.
- d) As a member of the Finance committee it was agreed to add OP as a bank signatory.

Payments approved:		
Clerk/RFO	Salary/PAYE/Pension	Undisclosed
Debbie Harknett	Zoom video conferencing monthly cost	£15.59
Rogate Village Hall	Hall hire	£46.00
Laura Craven	Mileage expenses for collecting litter equipment	£29.70
Rake Village Hall	Hall hire	£48.00
Debbie Harknett	Refund Wilko cost-letter boxes and stationery	£76.45
MJS Fencing	Playground fence repair	£180.00
Rogate Village Hall	Playground lease	£25.00
Rogate Village Hall	Playground grass cutting	£143.00
Henry Warren Hall	Hall hire	£15.00

Committee/Working group reports:

14) Finance Committee

- a) The minutes from Finance meeting of 27th November 2023 were received.
- b) The Finance Committee meeting on Monday 29th April 2024 was noted.
- c) Update from Finance Committee meeting on 25th March 2024 – AC noted the Council do not currently have their own Microsoft 365 licence but use one donated by the Clerk. It had been agreed to regularise this with a licence purchase and to look at the use of Teams for meetings as it could save the cost of zoom.
- d) Pre-payment card update – AC had carried out a lot of research and recommended the Unity Pre-payment card (operated by Lloyds) which is widely used by Parish Councils. There is an initial £50 set-up cost with a monthly £3 fee but it will allow the council to meet its own financial obligations and hopefully reclaim a little more VAT. The application sets the maximum payment amount which is also governed by the amount held on the card. Regular balance to be maintained at £500 but, subject to prior agreement, this amount could be increased to cover a specific purchase. It would be managed by the Clerk and the Chairman of the Finance Committee with reporting/reconciliation as with the bank account. Following discussion AC's **proposal 'Parish council to apply for a Unity Pre-payment card for the Clerk'** as recommended by the Finance Committee was seconded by LC and unanimously approved.

15) Planning

- a) The comments from the Planning Working Group discussion of 4th March 2024 were received.
- b) The Planning Working Group discussion being held via zoom as necessary was noted.

AS left with thanks.

16) Open Spaces Committee

- a) The minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting of 22nd January 2024 were received.
- b) The Open Spaces Committee meeting on 20th May 2024 was noted.
- c) Update from Open Spaces Committee meeting on 25th March 2024 – LC/OP are now carrying out regular checks of the play equipment. AC added the play equipment in the village needs some repair to the curved seat and he is obtaining a replacement padlock for the gate.
- d) Litter – AC noted residents in Hillbrow/Rake have been active in clearing litter in the area and had obtained some signs from CDC. There was some discussion about the possibility of obtaining a SDNP grant for signs but it was agreed they would be unlikely to dissuade somebody from

dropping rubbish.

e) AC was pleased to report WSCC have spent two days clearing the footpath along the B2070.

17) Policy reviews –

- a) Vexatious complaints/communication policy – LC’s draft had been circulated. Following some discussion, it was agreed LC would amend a couple of things and recirculate for approval next month.
- b) Risk register review – AC reported the finance committee have approved this revised policy and reminded the meeting that the register is a living document and will be kept under review.
- c) Pre-payment card policy – following previous discussion LC’s proposal of **resolution ‘to accept the pre-payment card policy’** was seconded by OP and unanimously approved.

18) Projects and grants – SDNP CIL application – AC reported our application for village gateways would not meet the criteria for applications - Nature recovery, climate action, National Park for all. We therefore need to consider other options to fund these if we want to install any.

19) Drainage issues/operation watershed – no update.

Village organisation reports:

20) Rogate and Rake Schools – no update.

21) Rogate and Rake Village Halls – covered elsewhere in the meeting.

22) Correspondence -

- a) Bank statements received – filed in finance file.
- b) Other information/emails – circulated as received.
- c) Complaint to CDC Monitoring Officer – MH noted that we received two emails from a MOP asking for their complaint to be passed to the Monitoring Officer; the Clerk has done accordingly.

23) Information for the Council (for noting or inclusion on a future Agenda) – none

24) Date of next meeting – the **Full Parish Council Meeting** will be on **Monday 13th May 2024 at 5.00pm at Rogate Village Hall.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.50 pm.

Chairman:

Date: