



Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on  
**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 7.30pm** in the Village Hall

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Geoff Thomas (GT), Sonia Plato (SP), Lynda Roller (LR), Sue Laimbeer (SL) and John Goddard (JG).

County/district councillors present: County Councillor, Kathryn Field (KF)

In attendance: Maureen Collins, Parish Clerk. There were 4 members of the public.

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### **1. Public Questions**

Will Kemp advised the meeting that trees had been cut down on the Old Coach Road, adjacent to the Crocodile Pond. Mature wood has been stacked in what is now a clearing. Cllr. Roller added that trees on the other side of the pond have also been hacked back. Cllr Plato confirmed that one of the conditions for the Glamping Site was that the ancient woodland would not be adversely affected. The clerk was requested to consult with Rother District Council and will report back to councillors.

Robin Pridy asked for details of when the Croquet Club are scheduled to play on the Recreation Ground, as the children wish to play in that area after school. The Chair, Cllr Thomas, replied that Recreation Ground is large enough to accommodate everyone and suggested that the school children use the football pitch/MUGA. He also asked for it to be noted that respect should be shown to all members of groups that use the Recreation Ground. The clerk will contact the Croqueteers to make them aware.

### **2. Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **3. Declaration of Interests**

Received from:

Cllr Thomas – Village Hall Committee

Cllr Roller – Member of the Crowhurst Environment Group

Cllr Plato – Youth Club & Crowhurst Environment Group

Cllr Laimbeer - Annual Fayre Committee, Strolling Group, Crowhurst Environment Group & the Plough Public House.

Cllr Thomas reminded councillors of their responsibility to keep their Register of Interests up to date.

### **4. Adoption of Minutes**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the parish council held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 as a true and correct record.

### **5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting**

**5.1 Dog Waste Bin** – The dog waste bin has been installed and arrangements made for the collection of waste. Collection costs are the responsibility of the Parish Council.

**5.2 Councillor Vacancy** – This continues to be advertised on the Parish Council notice board, on the website and in the Crowhurst News.

**5.3 Sunday Social** – Cllr Roller updated the meeting on plans being made for the next season of the Sunday Social. The active volunteers have agreed to continue with the Sunday Social next winter, as it has become a successful regular event. The group will meet soon to discuss grant funding options.

**5.4 Attenuation Pond** – Cllr Plato had reported that fishing is again taking place in the Attenuation Pond. The Clerk has spoken to the Rural Crimes Team, who will make a report to the Environment Agency. They will come back to us with an update when they have one. The matter has also been reported to the Combe Valley Countryside Park CIC and will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

**5.5 Coronation Community Orchard** – The orchard was opened by District Cllr Chas Pearce on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025. This was followed later by an additional celebration with volunteers, where special thanks were made to Audrey Koop, John Goddard and John (Feltwell?).

## **6. Representations from District & County Councillors**

County Cllr Kathryn Field reported that Rother has received confirmation that monies granted during the last government can be used by the Council for projects that will be completed during the life of this government. This is good news, but the time constraint means that there will be no revamp of Bexhill Leisure Centre.

East Sussex County Council is continuing to deal with the horrific cuts to Adult Social Care. One of the proposed cuts has been referred back for reconsideration, as it may make more financial sense for it to remain open than to close. At present ESCC are unable to do the figures until it knows how many current users will take up the reprovisioned service at Bexhill.

KF reported that there is a very tight timetable for the establishment of a Unitary Authority, with Mayoral elections taking place next May.

Chas Pearce has resigned as District Council for Rother District Council. GT extended his thanks to Mr. Pearce for all he has done for the village in the past. He will be very much missed.

## **7. Town and Country Planning**

**1) To consider the following new Planning Applications and provide comments to Rother District Council.**

There were no new Planning Applications to consider this month.

**2) To note the following enforcement cases.**

ENF/64/24/CRO – Hill House Farm, Barn at Land adjoining Catsfield Road, Crowhurst, TN33 9BU. A planning application has been received for the barn which is pending validation (RR/2025/575/P). The clerk will circulate this once it has been received from Rother District Council.

ENF/305/23/CRO – Land adjacent to Chapel Hill, Crowhurst, TN33 9AN.

Notification has been given that no further action will be taken as works in the vicinity of the tree was authorised by approval given by RR/220/945/P and RR/2023/698/DC. After a brief discussion of the history of this enforcement case, the Clerk agreed to download the details of these two approvals for discussion at the next meeting.

## **8. Financial Matters**

8.1 The financial report to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 had been circulated and was approved by members.

8.2 The payments report for April 2025 was considered and approved.

8.3 The bank reconciliations to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 had been circulated. It was approved by members and signed by the Chair (GT).

8.4 Councillors approved the payment of £44.17 plus VAT to Look Designs Ltd for the Crowhurst Community Award.

8.5 The receipt of the internal audit report from Mulberry Local Authority Ltd was noted by councillors, who approved payment of the invoice received for professional services of £211.25 plus VAT.

8.6 Councillors approved the year-end accounting statement and accounts reconciled.

8.7 Councillors agreed that the clerk should make changes to the Parish Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders in line with recent changes to the Procurement Act 2024.

## **9. Recreation Ground**

i. The Playground inspection had been conducted by Cllr Plato. Apart from the ongoing issues, the only thing to report was a broken bench. This is already on the handyman list. SP requested that the painting of the Pavillion veranda with anti-slip painting is marked as a priority on the list of repairs.

ii. Following a decision at the last meeting, the clerk had contacted Catsfield Parish Council to seek their recommendations for a handyman. They have recommended Mr Matt Bumpass, and the clerk will contact him to arrange a meeting to discuss details.

iii. The clerk will shortly be sending out invoices to users of the Recreation Ground. The rates, which were confirmed by the clerk, were increased slightly this year and were discussed by Councillors and agreed during the 2025/2026 budget process.

iv) There was a meeting of the Rec Users Group on the 20<sup>th</sup> March. The minutes of the meeting have been prepared and will be circulated soon.

v) The car park was repaired this month. Many thanks to Colin Ford.

vi) There were four Recreation Ground booking requests to consider. The Year 6 leavers event on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, The Annual Fayre, 20<sup>th</sup> /21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> June and the Stoolball Tournament proposed for Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August were all approved. A request from 1066 Trail Runners was not authorised. The Clerk will contact the organiser Willum Withecombe to advise.

vii) The Pre-School had contacted the Parish Council to request assistance with the problem of rats nesting under their bike shed. Approval was given by Councillors for the clerk to contact Graham Burgess, who has set a bait trap in the shed. Cllr Plato requested that the clerk contact Glenys Cornwall to confirm that the compost heap has been removed, as had previously been requested.

## **10. Grant requests**

There were two grant requests to consider. The Year Six Leavers Group for Crowhurst School made a request for a grant of £234 for waterslide rental at the Year 6 leavers day. This was approved by councillors with four votes for and one against. The Annual Fayre Committee made a request for a grant of £1500 towards the cost of hiring a marquee. Cllr Laimbeer had previously expressed an interest in the Annual Fayre and took no part in the discussion or voting. Following a discussion by the remaining councillors it was agreed that a grant of £1500 would be made this year. This is strictly a one-off grant to help with increased costs this year.

## **11. SLR Meeting with ESCC Highways department**

The next SLR meeting will be held in Crowhurst on 30<sup>th</sup> April. The agenda has been received, and Cllrs Thomas and Plato have confirmed that they will be attending the meeting, along with the Clerk.

## **12. Crowhurst Community MUGA**

i. Cllr Thomas will look into obtaining quotes for CCTV on the MUGA,

ii. The MUGA group had reported that horsetail has again begun to sprout up around the court. The clerk was requested to contact Claire Jessup who sprayed the court last year.

iii. The installation of the new container and the setting up of equipment will take place on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> April.

iv. The re-opening of the MUGA will take place on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May. The event will start at 11.:00am, and there will be opportunities to try out lots of different sports throughout the day. All sports activities will be free of charge. There will be a lunchtime BBQ, with food and drink available to purchase. A message will be sent out via Village Email.

### **13. Neighbourhood Plan Review**

Councillors approved the completed CNPD Review and thanked Ros Day for all the time and effort she has put into this on behalf of the Parish Council. The Plan/CNPD Review is to be adopted at the next Full Council Meeting of Rother District Council on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

### **14. Annual Parish Assembly 2025**

The arrangements for the Annual Assembly on 28<sup>th</sup> April were confirmed by the clerk. Councillors gave their approval for £93.31 to be spent on refreshments for the event. Our speaker for the event, Mr. David Field, has requested the use of a flip chart. The clerk was authorised to purchase flip chart paper at the cost of £9.25 (incl VAT).

### **15. Community Awards 2024**

Councillors discussed the nominations and gave their approval for the purchase of the award from Look Designs Ltd (£53.00 incl VAT).

### **16. Millennium Garden**

Cllrs Plato, Goddard and Laimbeer had met with Colin Ford to discuss the repairs needed in the Millennium Garden. Councillors discussed his quote for £997 to remove the old retaining wall and to install a new upright chestnut retaining wall. After a brief discussion, Cllrs agreed to accept this quote as it was very similar to the other quotes received. The clerk will contact Mr. Ford.

### **17. Pavillion/Recreation Ground Refurbishment**

Councillors discussed plans to establish a group to discuss the results of the Recreation Ground consultation and to discuss plans to renovate the playground. The clerk will arrange to send out the results of the consultation to residents via Village email.

A further meeting will be held during April/May to move forward plans for the renovation of the Pavillion, as the group will need to start to look at grant funding for the project.

### **18. Parish Council Newsletter**

Councillors discussed the practicalities of publishing a regular Parish Council Newsletter. It was agreed that this would be a useful tool for sharing information with villagers. Councillors will meet to discuss.

### **19 Councillor Updates on External Bodies (if any)**

Cllr Plato advised that the silver birch in the Picnic area has been declared 'dead and needs to be removed. The picnic bench will be put in its place. The silver birch tree had been dedicated to David Cane, who had worked very hard for the village, and councillors agreed to purchase a dedication plaque to be fitted to the table.

Cllr Thomas had attended the Crowhurst Society AGM on behalf of the Parish Council. Moving forward, the Society will be raising funds to continue their work.

There will be a Board meeting of the Combe Valley CIC next month.

### **20. Clerk's Report/Information for Councillors/Correspondence/Future Agenda Items**

1. The clerk has received a letter from Sam Kemp, PCSO at Battle Police Station, regarding minority clubs, groups and meetings. The clerk will respond to the letter on behalf of the Parish Council.
2. A letter has been received from local resident, Katie Cesar who is looking for permanent premises for Space for Yew. Cllr Thomas suggested that she be invited to join the Recreation Ground working group, which is currently considering plans to renovate the Pavilliion.
3. A letter has been received from the Rural Crime Team regarding holding a Parish Surgery in the village. The clerk has written to confirm that we would be delighted to hold one in Crowhurst.
4. Mr. Ian Botley has contacted the Parish Council to ask if his walking group could use the car park for a one-off walk starting and ending in Crowhurst. The clerk has written to Mr. Botley to thank him for his courtesy.
5. The footpath Warden reported that the stile between footpath 17b and 17a was in danger of collapsing, and that footpath 17a had been ploughed over. The clerk had contacted the Rights of Way team, but it had already been reported.
6. The last two letters of the Crowhenge sign have become detached. This will be added to the Handyman list.
7. The next RALC meeting will be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

**21. Date of next meeting:**

The AGM will take place on **Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025** at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed ..... Dated .....