



Minutes of the Meeting of Rottingdean Parish Council on Monday 6th of October 2025 at the Whiteway Centre

Present. Cllr Nixon, Cllr Lawrence, Cllr Poole, Cllr Levins, Cllr Cherrie, Cllr Snow, Cllr Evans. C Hayes Parish Clerk

Public Gallery: Ward Cllr Earthy

Questions from the public.

In her absence **Cllr Earthy** read out the following update sent in from Cllr Fishleigh.

- Two of the BHCC owned homes in the St Aubyns development were having their boilers and radiators replaced as a pilot because of higher than expected bills. It was likely that the rest would be replaced over time as they weren't fit for purpose.
- The meeting with EE's infrastructure company about their proposal to resubmit the application for a 5G mast on St Margarets was to be reschedule to next week.
- Cllr Fishleigh had reported the two big pot holes going north out of the village by The Green and Kipling's flint wall.
- The Dene had just three residents left, and the charity that owned it had told Cllr Fishleigh they were undecided about its future.

Cllr Earthy then gave his own update

- He was still engaged in trying to regularise the bin collection at St Margarets flats
- He had spoken to Jes Gibbons, BHCC, CEO about the hole in Kipling Gardens Wall which she was to follow up
- Saltdean had received funds for a decarbonisation study and Cllr Lawrence was invited to the next meeting.
- He was expecting the cost for rumble strips at the café's on the Undercliff to be provide by BHCC shortly.

1. **Apologies for absence.** The Clerk reported that apologies had been received from Cllr Lowery and Ward Cllr Fishleigh
2. **Declarations of interests.** None
3. **Agreement of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 1st of September.**
The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair as true record of the meeting.
4. **Matters arising.** None
5. **Action Log.** The Clerk provided the following update
 - i. 0405. Cllrs Levins and Hicken to research funding options for the High Street project and report back to the Council. The Clerk advised that following initial work by Cllr Levins the action was for him to match potential funders with RPC spending plans. The Clerk said he would not be able to complete this for the foreseeable future given other priorities and asked that the action be postponed. This was agreed. Closed
 - ii. 0107. Cllr Lawrence to pass on details of a reported parking issue in Upper Rottingdean to Cllr Evans to investigate. **Cllr Lawrence** said the area concerned was a green space between New Barn Road and Falmer Road. The resident who had raised the issue had been advised to report the matter via the resident portal but get back to the Council if this did not resolve the problem. Closed
 - iii. 0607. **All Councillors** consider alternative uses for the obsolete business directory sign in West Street Car Park and come back with any suggestions to the next meeting. On the agenda. Closed
6. **Finance Update**
 - i. Payments and invoices. The Clerk sought authorisation for the following payments.

		VAT
HMRC September	£737.67	
C Hayes Salary September	£872.83	
C Hayes (Key Boxes)	£40.65	£8.14
Room Hire	£66.00	
Affordable Waste (DD)	£116.92	
Sam Cocks (Field Maintenance)	£1050	£210.00
New Wave Property Management (Bin Emptying)	£200.00	

Toolkit	£165.00	£33.00
DMH Stallard (St Aubyns)	£750	£150
Total	£3999.07	

Payment was proposed by Cllr Levins, seconded by Cllr Poole and agreed by unanimous vote

- ii. Bank balances. The clerk advised that at the end of September the bank account balances were

Unity Trust Bank Current Account	£108.87
Unity Trust Bank Instant Access	£376,200.16
C&C savings account	£87,777.14
Cash at Bank	£464,086.17
Less St Aubyns Maintenance Fund	£282,678.66
Net Cash Available	£181,407.51

- iii. September Accounts and Reconciliation The Clerk presented the accounts for September noting that the second tranche of the precept had now been paid along with the second tranche of the St Aubyns maintenance lump sum. The accounts were agreed. **Cllr Nixon** confirmed that he had checked the accounts against the bank statements which reconciled.

- iv. Midterm Expenditure Report. The Clerk summarised the main points of the mid-term expenditure report circulated.

- Overall spend was well below profile due to low project expenditure and lower than expected expenditure on Infrastructure and St Aubyns maintenance.
- Operational spend was slightly lower than profile at 39%
- St Aubyns maintenance expenditure was below profile at 21% of budget. The majority of the spend so far had been on Field maintenance costs with 46% of the budget spent even though the transfer took place part way through the year. This was because of higher than expected expenditure on waste removal but as expenditure on Field maintenance would be lower during the second half of the year, spend should remain within budget.
- Just over half of the grants budget had been used with £3207 remaining.
- Expenditure on projects was only at 6% of budget but should increase with planned work on Beacon Hill notice boards, work on the Chapel and Pavilion and potentially expenditure on the High Street upgrade.
- It was difficult to estimate the end year position at this stage, particularly given uncertainty over the High Street upgrade project. However, operational expenditure was likely to remain below budget as would project expenditure. The unallocated reserve of around £56,000 would therefore remain available for the second half of the year and provide the ability to augment the High Street upgrade project budget if necessary.

7. Major Projects

i. **St Aubyns. Cllr Evans** provided the following update.

- The working group were now beginning work on management and maintenance plans for the Field and buildings for the near and longer term.
- The Field was now fully open with all the Heras fencing now removed.
- The wildflower meadow was about to receive its first cut, and the group had discussed the possibility of low fence around the meadow to distinguish it from the rest of the Field. The Clerk was to obtain a quote for the group and then Council to consider.

Some of the trees had taken a beating from the weather particularly those provided and maintained by City Parks. The City Parks Tree Officer had been contacted and was to visit to inspect the trees. He had also agreed to speak to Brighton Permaculture Trust about the follow up visit they had committed to provide a talk on tree care and maintenance to the members of the public who had volunteered to be tree guardians.

- The working group planned to hold an extended session with a wider group of participants to map out a field and building management plan for the short and longer term. Cllr Evans and Lawence were to arrange the session probably towards the end of November.
- The Clerk said that full and listed planning consent had now been received for the polycarbon protection of the Chapel, and fitting of a post box and security box on the exterior of the building. **Cllr Poole** said we had spoken to the company who had provided a quote for the window protection and was seeking an up to date quote which he would circulate.
- Cllr Cherrie agreed to obtain an up to date quote from the company who had provided the best quote for an alarm system for the Chapel and Pavilion.

Action Cllr Poole to provide a quote for the Chapel window protection

Action Cllr Cherrie to obtain an up to date for an alarm system for the Chapel and Pavilion

Cllr Nixon asked if the electricity supply had been transferred to RPC. The Clerk advised that he had spoken to James Sweeney from Fairfax who was chasing the matter with the supplier. **Cllr Nixon** also asked if Fairfax had been contacted about reseeding parts of the Field agreed at Completion. Concern was expressed particularly about the area between e “The Sweeps” and Vaughan Williams Way. **Cllr Evans** said he would speak to James Sweeney

Cllr Levins asked who was responsible for the incursion of Field hedge into the Twitten. **Cllr Evans** said he would clarify this with the Tree Officer when he visited.

ii. High Street

- a) Upgrade Funding Approach. **Cllr Nixon** summarised the key points of the paper circulated by Cllr Lowery.
- The preferred option for the High Street upgrade comprised replacing the kerbing on the eastern footway and replacing the paving with alternative blocks. The wearing course of the carriageway was also to be resurfaced.
 - The work would take up 8 weeks and involves road closures and diversions
 - The estimated cost was £260,623.88 including contingency of 30%.
 - The Section 106 funding available is £120K. A 50:50 split of the balance between BHCC and RPC was proposed that would mean an RPC contribution of around £70k.
 - The work could start as early as February/March 2026. This would follow the report of the current traffic management study which would enable any recommendations to be incorporated.
 - The suggested approach was not without risk. The traffic management element of the cost (£26,936) was an early estimate that required finalising with tendering contractors and given the complexity of installation. In addition, a core test would be needed to determine if the carriageway resurfacing approach was plausible and if not, the estimate would have to be modified considerably to accommodate an alternative approach.
 - The proposal to Councillors was that RPC should agree in principle to the following:
 - The balance above £120k Section 106 funding to be split 50:50 to a level limited by funding available to RPC yet to be confirmed. Should the total estimate result in a greater contribution from RPC, the scope of the project would have to be modified, or the project abandoned. Alternatively, BHCC would fund the balance.
 - Once the cost and work schedule had been agreed and the project was underway any increase in the final cost due to slippage would fall to BHCC.
 - It was further recommended that as soon as practicable BHCC should be asked to undertake the Carriageway coring study to derisk the project.

Cllr Nixon said that it was important to keep up momentum on this project as completing this upgrade would address the single most important issue raised by residents in the recent survey and at a number of meetings. **Councillors unanimously agreed to the proposal**

- b) High Street Property Ownership **Cllr Nixon** said that as RPC become more active in the High Street, and more specifically given the likelihood of considerable disruption and inconvenience should the High Street Improvement and Upgrade project be approved, it was essential that the RPC be able to engage with both tenants and owners of properties in the High Street. Cllr Lowery was therefore proposing that RPC invest in a search for each High Street property from Vicarage Lane to the Seafront via the Land Registry to collect this information. The cost would be £7 per property. **Councillors agreed that this would be a useful exercise.**

Action Cllr Lowery/Clerk to begin by compiling a list of the properties that would be the subject of a search from which an estimated cost could be presented.

c) **Planning**

- i. **Applications Received in September.** In addition to the note circulated Cllr Poole took the meeting the following application. An application had been received for a fence topper to provide additional screening and enhance boundary treatment at 27 Vaughan Williams Way Rottingdean Brighton BN2 **Cllr Poole** explained that the fence topper would have a maximum height of 80 cm installed on top of an existing fence, which measures 153 cm in height and is mounted on a 32 cm wall given a total height of 265 cm. This particular property had a rear garden that was one of 10 gardens that form three sides of a square around a parking area for residents' vehicles. There were also public paths that passed through this area. These properties, whilst having different style characteristics, were planned and built to provide a cohesive street scene, including rear garden fencing panels that were all to the same style and height. Although the application was to improve privacy in the resident's rear garden, this issue would have existed at the time of purchase. Any increase in the height of a fence, regardless of style, would be detrimental to the visual amenity of this area and would affect other residents at this location. For this reason, Rottingdean Parish Council had objected to this application.

d) **Advisory Group Meeting Updates**

i. **Strategy and Communications**

- a. WhatsApp group **Cllr Levins** advised that the following the departure of Cllr Hicken he had transferred the administration of the WhatsApp group to the Clerk and was in the midst of updating the Communication Strategy to incorporate guidance on its use.
- b. Community Library Review Further to the note circulated the Clerk summarised the key points of the meeting with BHCC arranged by the Save

Our Library Campaign group in 22 September that he and Cllr Snow had attended.

- The meeting was chaired by Chris Ward, MP, and attended by Cllrs Robins and Taylor, Anna Gianfrancesco and Ceris Howard from BHCC's library service, the Campaign group (Sarah, Dyllis and Nicky), Mike Bennett from Rottingdean Heritage, with The Parish Clerk and Cllr Snow representing RPC. This followed on from the drop-in session that morning that had attracted about 50 people
- BHCC did not really elaborate on the details of proposed savings either for Rottingdean or for the service as a whole and when pressed indicated that these were all approximate figures.
- On alternatives to closure they said that to provide a more radical and strategic options would take at least 18 months which was outside their timeframe. Ceris and Anna repeated the argument that voluntary staffing would not save money because of the need to train, manage and insure volunteers.
- Jacob Taylor said that there was an urgent need to balance the books in-year. However, he did emphasise that decisions had not been made and that the Cabinet might well be persuaded to find savings elsewhere.
- The Campaign group, supported by RH, made their position clear that the library should stay open as once closed it would never be reinstated. In this context they said they were unwilling to discuss wholly community run alternatives at this stage but would consider hybrid solutions that kept a library service within the BHCC network.
- I said that Parish Council's position was that BHCC Cabinet members should listen to the responses to the consultation and the points raised in the RPC response and think again about closure.
- It was agreed that BHCC would give more consideration to the feasibility of the ideas put forward by the Campaign group to avoid closure, including how a hybrid model might work, and arrange further meeting probably in mid-October.

In discussion Councillors agreed that, as a statutory body, the content of the RPC response should be drawn to the attention of both the Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet and not buried in the consultation summary. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to officers accordingly.

Action. The Clerk to write BHCC officers to get an assurance that the RPC response would be drawn specifically to the attention of the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet members as part of the review of the consultation process.

- c) High Street Rental Auctions (HRSA). The Clerk explained that under new non-statutory guidance where a business premises had been unoccupied continuously for 365 days, or for at least 366 days within a 24-month period a

Unitary authority had the power to consider a High Street Rental Auction if the local authority considered that the occupation of the premises for a suitable high-street use would be beneficial to the local economy, society, or environment. Once a notice had been served if a landlord failed to let their premises during the 8-week grace period a local authority could begin the process of finding a suitable tenant for the premises. Cllr Fishleigh had approached BHCC about using the process on empty premises in the High Street and had asked RPC to come up with a list of empty properties to put forward to BHCC. Whilst BHCC had so far responded positively they had pointed out that a HRSA was very lengthy and costly process. The group proposed that a suitable list was circulated and provided to Cllr Fishleigh

Action. Cllr Lowery to compile and circulate a list of vacant High Street properties suitable for an HRSA for discussion with SCAG who would make a recommendation to the **Council**

- d) High Street Retail Needs Survey. The group suggested that the next RPC survey, perhaps in the Spring, should assess residents' High St shopping needs and share demands with main leasing Agents to pass on to prospective business tenants. This survey results could form the basis of a business welcome pack that could include information about the conservation area restrictions so that potential tenants understood what they could and could not do before taking the lease and where to seek advice. This would stop new businesses from using inappropriate signs or colours, as seen in recent cases.
- e) Business Sign in West Street Carpark **Cllr Nixon** said Cllr Lowery proposed that the two obsolete signs in the carpark be replaced by new signs with a mechanism to allow easy updating. A quote had been obtained for £3000 for each sign. However, there was a question about whether RPC or businesses should pick up the initial costs and the cost of keeping the signs up to date. The following points were made in discussion:
- Having an up to date sign listing Village shops and businesses is supported by the Parish Council.
 - The signs could add to the clutter in the High Street if not up to date and well maintained.
 - It might be better to consider this following the High Street upgrade.
 - Planning advice would be needed from BHCC and if an application was necessary the cost would significantly increase.
 - It was unlikely that business would pay for the sign or even to update the sign which would mean an on-going liability for RPC.
 - It might be useful to encourage local traders to reform the Rottingdean Traders Association that had initially commissioned the sign

On balance Councillors agreed that the matter should be revisited once the High Street upgrade work had been completed.

- f) The Old Tea Rooms The Clerk said he had contacted the BHCC planning enforcement team and been advised that they would shortly issue an enforcement notice that would give the owners two to three years to complete the repairs. The Clerk said he had sent photographs of the building to BHCC to provide evidence of the very poor state of repair.
- g) Community Asset Transfer **Cllr Nixon** reported the key points of a discussion he and the Clerk had earlier that day with a BHCC senior surveyor about the possible transfer of community assets to RPC.
- Within Rottingdean only the Grange was considered suitable by BHCC for possible transfer at present
 - There was no apparent intention to sell the Grange but to provide the head lease to RPC and transfer responsibility for future management, income, tenancy, and maintenance.
 - BHCC would also consider transferring the head lease to Rottingdean Heritage (RH) if they were interested.
 - Although not aware of any outstanding building repairs BHCC were open to providing a condition report prior to any transfer
 - Although the library decision was not directly associated with the transfer, if the library were to remain and BHCC subsequently became tenants, this would affect the terms of any transfer agreement.

Cllr Nixon had requested more information before the Council could form a view on the proposition. He asked for information on the current revenue and liabilities of the Grange, a list of outstanding repairs that BHCC were aware of and the amount and proportion of the building maintenance costs that BHCC are currently responsible for. The aim would then be to discuss the matter with RH and at SCAG before coming to the Council with a recommendation.

- h) Co-option. The Group had reviewed the current interview questions and proposed them to be retained. The group proposed to continue the current practice of an interview panel consisting of the Chair, and Vice Chair with one other Councillor. Cllr Levins had volunteered to be the third member of the panel. **This was agreed**
- ii) **Village and Community**. Cllr Lawrence provided the following update.
- Cllr Lawrence had attended the Village Fair AGM and noted that charity funds increased from £1,500 to £5,000 at the last fair. The organisers planned to further develop the event.

- Cllr Lawrence had attended the Local Action Team and met the new PCSO who had advised the meeting that there had been decrease in anti-social behaviour in the area although shop lifting at Tesco remained a problem.
- The debris from the recent Pond clearance work had not been removed from the Green. Cllr Lawrence had therefore written to Steve Wright at City Parks who normally arranged collection of the material
- A grant application had been received from the Friends of Kipling Gardens for various items and plants to enable the woodland area to be enhanced with new trees, shrubs and seating. VCAG would consider and make a recommendation at the November meeting
- **Cllr Snow** said she had met with various volunteer groups with a view to arranging and event championing their work and seeking new volunteers. This would feature an external speaker on fund raising.

iii) Natural Environment. Cllr Evans provided the following update.

- The revised text for the new Beacon Hill notice boards had been agreed, and the designers were shortly to meet with the Friends of Beacon Hill for a final check prior to producing the new boards. The Ranger was to organise a schedule for installation, hopefully before the end of the year.
- The group were awaiting information on the costs of proposed safety measures on the undercliff and would consider a possible contribution from RPC

iv) Built Environment. Cllr Cherrie provided the following update.

- Another car strike at the junction on Marine Drive and High Street, on the crossing islands, had damaged railings and caused a considerable trip hazard owing to raised brick work. BHCC had completed a temporary repair.
- Missing bricks on the east side of the High Street had been reported to BHCC who were to inspect shortly
- BHCC had agreed to investigate the poor street lighting, above the barbers and further up the High Street
- A request had made to include the Lower High Street in the conversation area had been declined given plans to develop the area.

The meeting closed at 21.42. The next meeting is on Monday the 3rd of November

Chris Hayes, Parish Clerk

October 2025