

# ROWLANDS CASTLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the FULL COUNCIL 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025

Monday 3 February 2025 at 7.00pm

The Small Parish Hall, 11 Links Lane, Rowlands Castle PO9 6AD

*These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Council at its next Meeting*

## PRESENT:

Cllr C Stanley (Chairman), Cllr F Ball, Cllr J Edwards, Cllr Y Haggard, Cllr V Matthews, Cllr I Moore and Cllr B Wilson (in part – see Item 1)

G Whatley (Administrative Officer) and C Newman (Facilities Officer) were also present in part, as were A Ayers (representing RC History & Heritage Society, accompanied by other Society members) and B Brown (as local Community Speedwatch Co-ordinator).

## MINUTES:

Taken by L Walker (Clerk)

THE CHAIRMAN'S SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE

### 1. To Receive and Agree any Councillors' Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and agreed from Cllr S Donald. It was noted that Cllr Wilson would be arriving later due to another commitment as a school governor. *After the Meeting, apologies were also received from C Cllr M Harvey.*

### 2. To Receive any Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this point.

### 3. To Receive and Confirm the Accuracy of the Draft Minutes of the Council Meeting on 13 January 2025, together with a Written Update on the Progress of Resolutions from Meetings

The Minutes (circulated previously) were unanimously CONFIRMED as an accurate record of the Meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

The Clerk's Update (circulated previously) was received and NOTED and a copy will be kept with these Minutes.

### 4. To Receive Reports from County & District Councillors, and other delegates, if appropriate:

No reports had been received from either C Cllr Marge Harvey or D Cllr Charlene Maines.

### 5. OPEN FORUM – Limited to 15 minutes in total and a max 3 mins for each individual speaker

A resident commented on the absence of a clock in The Small Parish Hall and it was agreed the matter would be referred to the Hall's Management Committee to consider.

### 6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS: To Consider and Agree Action on the following, if appropriate

*NB: Council's full comments on these and all other relevant Applications can be read via EHDC's website: <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/planning-application-process/search-and-comment-planning-applications> or a similar page on SDNPA's website.*

Members noted that Council had not been notified of any new planning applications to be considered since the previous Council Mtg.

The Admin Officer made a statement explaining that in December 2024 EHDC had implemented a new IT system for planning services, during which time no planning applications were considered or decisions taken (see Item 10 a). EHDC has since advised the system is "going through a period of transition" and there are some difficulties which it is working hard to resolve. A copy of the Officer's complete statement will be kept with these Minutes.

### 7. GENERAL MATTERS FOR DECISION: To Consider and Agree Action on the following:

**a) Update from Rowlands Castle History & Heritage Society on Parish Archiving Plans** – At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Ayres gave a brief presentation on the Society's proposals (circulated previously) involving the construction of specially-designed cupboards in the Oak Room at the Parish Hall for the storage of Parish archive material. It was noted the Hall's Management Committee had already considered the proposals and raised a number of queries re accessibility, fire safety, weight restrictions and charging arrangements, some of which had since been resolved with expert advice. It was AGREED that the Council supported the proposals in principle, subject to the detailed resolution of the specified issues to the Committee and the Society's mutual satisfaction.

**Action: Hall Management Committee to liaise with Society**

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## b) Recreation Ground:

- **Proposals for Replacement of Entrance Barrier and Signage** – Members noted the Admin and Facilities Officers' Briefing (circulated previously). It was unanimously RESOLVED to:
  - i) Commission J B Corrie & Co Ltd (as a local company, offering best price and with HCC-approval status) to remove the old barrier and instal a new manual swing, lattice-style height barrier at a cost of £3,773.00 + VAT, funded largely from the Parish-wide enhancement sub-fund (Budget Code 38);
  - ii) Commission Shelley Signs Ltd (as offering value for money, experience and a comprehensive quote) to provide a main Information Board within the Ground (with wording provided) and a Welcome sign on the verge outside the Ground, at a combined cost of £1,550.00 + VAT and carriage;
  - iii) To obtain confirmation from landowner of verge to install Welcome sign.

**Action 1: Officers to commission respective companies to undertake works**  
**Action 2: Officers to obtain confirmation from landowner to instal Welcome sign**

- **For Note: Cutting back of RC Tennis Club Protective Hedge** – The Clerk noted the Club was responsible for both the leylandii hedge (immediately north of the tennis courts) and the fence within, which provide protection for the courts. She explained the Club's initial plans to cut back substantially the hedge to give better access to repair the fence, with a view to removing and replanting the hedge in time with something more indigenous and suitable for the purpose.

- ## c) Further Speed Monitoring Devices for Parish and Update on Data from Current ones
- Further to discussions at Council Mtgs on 7 October and 2 December 2024, members noted the Admin Officer's Briefing (circulated previously). It was unanimously RESOLVED to purchase an additional Speed Indicator Device from Westcotec Ltd (as Council's existing supplier with good customer service and devices which comply with weight restrictions and are compatible with Council's existing bracket and data software) at a cost of £3,359 + VAT and carriage, using funds originally budgeted for proposals under HCC's Community-funded Initiative (see Minutes of Council Mtg on 2 September 2024).

**Action: Admin Officer to purchase agreed device**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Brown and members noted his reports (circulated previously) on recent data captured from the AutoSpeedWatch (ASW) cameras on Manor Lodge Rd and an on-line meeting with ASW and other local Community Speedwatch (CSW) representatives. Members noted that more volunteers from Rowlands Castle had come forward to join CSW and more local sites were being negotiated. Data indicated incidents of speeding had reduced, though this could be due to a number of seasonal (daylight hours etc) or other reasons. The majority of those speeding were still commercial vehicles, though one local firm appears to have heeded the Admin Officer's warning letter (see Council Mtg Minutes of 2 December 2024) and none of its vehicles have been recorded as speeding. CSW continue to send information on non-MOT'd vehicles to the local Police Officer. Mr Brown was disappointed that, despite his question on the matter, no mention of speeding or ASW was made during the Hants Police & Crime Commissioner's COPs web conference in December 2024. The Chairman thanked Mr Brown and Council's Admin Officer for their dedication on this matter. *The HP&CC's Office has since sent a more positive response re the potential use of ASW data within Hampshire and IOW.*

*Cllr Wilson arrived at 8.00pm, towards the end of discussions under Item 7 c) so did not vote*

- ## d) Review of Internal Auditor Engagement Letter and Scope of Work for 2024/25 onwards
- Members reviewed the Auditor's recent Letter and Scope of Work (both previously circulated). It was unanimously RESOLVED to AGREE the terms of the Letter, which was then signed by the Chairman, and to engage the Auditor to undertake the Scope of Work listed, excluding items non-applicable to Council.

**Action: Clerk to send signed Letter to Auditor and liaise accordingly re Scope of Work**

- ## e) Request to include a Seed Exchange in Bus Shelter or Community Book Exchange
- Members welcomed and considered a resident's idea to install a small box to act as a local seed exchange. They recognised the importance of having a central location but AGREED that neither the Shelter nor Exchange were appropriate. An alternative location on the premises of a public house were suggested.

**Action: Clerk to liaise with resident accordingly**

## 8. FINANCIAL MATTERS FOR DECISION: To Consider and Agree Action on the following:

- ### a) January 2025 Schedule of Payments, for authorisation
- Cllr Moore stated he had reviewed and confirmed the relevant invoices. It was unanimously RESOLVED to AUTHORISE the Schedule (previously circulated), which was then signed by the 3 signatories present.

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A list of payments is included below (incl VAT where appropriate, which is reclaimable by the Council):

Method	Amount £	Payee	Reason
DD	720.53	Cushon Group Ltd	2 x Monthly pension contributions + admin fee
DD	111.97	Focus Group	Monthly fee for Office phone and broadband
DD	22.00	Vodafone Ltd	Monthly fee for Facilities Officer's mobile
DD	11.28	Three Business	Monthly fee for CCTV SIM Card at Pavilion
DD	6.57	Managed Print Partners Ltd	MFD charges incl supplies, maintenance etc
IBT	240.00	The Play Inspection Company	Quarterly inspection, Rec Ground equipment
IBT	40.00	Rowlands Castle URC	Hire of Meeting Place for Council Mtg
IBT	273.60	Hants Assoc of Local Councils	Training Course and LCPD Membership
DD	35.14	Rowlands Home Hardware	Consumables for Office, Rec and War Mem
IBT	333.00	Exterior Living Rooms Ltd	Handyman and Lengthsman services
IBT	28.00	L Walker, Clerk	Reimbursements for HM Land Reg fees
IBT	4.95	G Whatley, Admin Officer	Reimbursement for consumables
IBTs	6,415.18	Staff salaries including HMRC, PAYE and NICs	
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,242.22</b>		

IBT = Inter-bank Transfer, Council's main payment method

DD = Direct Debit SO = Standing Order Chq = Cheque PP = PayPal

**Action: Clerk to make any remaining payments according to Schedule**

A list of receipts into the Current Account in January 2025 is included below:

Method	Amount £	Payer	Reason
IBT	1,341.83	HMRC	VAT Repayment for October, November & December 2024

**b) Report on Council's Bank Accounts as at 31 December 2024, for acceptance** – Members noted and ACCEPTED the Report (circulated at the Meeting).

Account	Balance
Lloyds Current Account	£2,765.14 ( <i>Reconciled balance of 2,397.00 accounting for payments not yet made/direct debits not yet take/cheques not yet presented</i> )
Public Sector Deposit Fund	£83,543.08
12-month Fixed Rate Bond	£15,491.33, matures 11/06/25
12-month Fixed Rate Bond	£20,000.00, matures 16/12/25

**c) Review of Provisional Budget for 2025/26 and Confirmation thereon** – Having listened to some residents' concerns, members noted the provisional budget (re-circulated previously) agreed under Item 8 e) at Council's Mtg on 13 January 2025, which already took into account: identified major priorities for the year; inflationary pressures; the significant increase in Employer's National Insurance Contributions; provision potentially to increase the Clerk's role to full-time because of the workload; the forecast of a very slight increase in the Council Tax Base. Since then an additional saving had also been identified.

It was unanimously RESOLVED to CONFIRM a Budget of £168,445.00 (including non-Precept funded expenditure) for 2025/26.

**Action: Clerk to published confirmed Budget on website**

**d) Review of Provisional Precept for 2025/26 and Confirmation thereon** – Members noted the provisional precept (re-circulated previously) agreed under Item 8 f) at Council's Mtg on 13 January 2025, and the additional saving identified.

It was unanimously RESOLVED to CONFIRM the resultant Precept of £158,945.00, acknowledging this would represent a moderate increase on the previous year (an extra £5.01 for the year for a Band D property) whilst noting the factors detailed in 8 c) and that there was no guarantee that external funds (eg grants, developers' contributions) would be available for planned projects.

**Action: Clerk to submit Precept Requirement to EHDC**

### 9. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION:

**a) Summary of Residents' Dealings with Parish Office in January 2025** – Members noted the Admin Officer's Summary (circulated previously), a copy of which will be kept with these Minutes.

### 10. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION:

**a) Schedule of EHDC's and SDNPA's Planning Decisions up to 31 January 2025** – The Admin Officer advised there had been no decisions made since the previous Council Mtg – see Item 6.

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**b) Report on Interim Havant Thicket Reservoir Stakeholder Group on-line Mtg on 21 January –** Members noted Cllr Stanley's report (circulated previously), a copy of which is available upon request.

**c) Report on East Hampshire Association of Parish & Town Councils on-line Mtg on 22 January –** Members noted Cllr Ball's report (circulated previously), a copy of which is available upon request, and Horndean Parish Council's subsequent helpful contact with the Chairman.

**d) Report on Hills to Harbour Community Rail Partnership (CRP) Mtg on 28 January –** Members noted Cllr Stanley's report (circulated previously), a copy of which is available upon request. Specifically, it was noted that Cllr Stanley had pushed hard for the CRP to help get Network Rail to properly consider his proposal to get better access to the south-bound platform of the station to help those residents not able to use the steep footbridge for various reasons. It was also AGREED the Chairman would approach RC History & Heritage Society re the Railway 200 Celebrations.

**Action: Chairman to liaise with RCH&HS re Railway 200 Celebrations**

**e) Report on SDNPA Briefing on Partnership Management Plan and Local Plan Review Regulation 18 Consultation on 29 January –** Members noted Cllr Stanley's report on behalf of the 4 cllrs attending (circulated previously), a copy of which is available upon request. It was AGREED to consider a response to the Consultation at the next Council Mtg on 3 March, with cllrs to submit contributions to the Chairman by 18 February. It was also AGREED the Clerk would write to SDNPA about the lack of guidance/information on the Briefing in advance, which disadvantaged some attendees.

**Action 1: Cllrs to submit contributions to Chairman by 18 February**

**Action 2: Clerk to include suitable item on Agenda for next Council Mtg**

**Action 3: Clerk to write to SDNPA re organisation of the event**

**11. To pass a Resolution in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press for discussions regarding employment matters where publicity might be prejudicial to the special nature of the business**

It was unanimously RESOLVED to pass the Resolution though no members of the public remained at the meeting at this point.

**12. To Receive an Update from the Recruitment of new Clerk Working Group and Agree Action thereon**

Members noted the Update (circulated previously). It was unanimously RESOLVED to engage the Local Council Consultancy (a commercial arm of the Society of Local Council Clerks) to provide external administrative support for the recruitment process at a cost of £2,680 + VAT + disbursements and expenses.

**Action: Working Group to liaise with Clerk to engage LCC**

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 3 March 2025 in The Small Parish Hall, Rowlands Castle

*The Meeting ended at 8.50pm*

During the course of the Meeting (both part and whole) there were 3 members of the public present, as well as those listed at the beginning of these Minutes, and no members of the Press in attendance.