

**GUESTLING PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL ASSEMBLY**

**MINUTES OF GUESTLING PARISH COUNCIL ASSEMBLY HELD WEDNESDAY 17 MAY 2023 7.30PM  
AT GUESTLING VILLAGE HALL**

**CHAIR:** Cllr MARION ROBERTS

**PARISH COUNCILLORS:** Cllr GRAHAM FURNESS Cllr MARTIN GRIFFITHS

Cllr PETER KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN

**PARISH CLERK:** BRYONY YOUNG

Cllr ANDREW MIER Cllr TIM GROHNE 2 MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PCSO DARYL HOLTER  
EAST SUSSEX FIRE & RESCUE - SIMON NEILL

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
1	<b>APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE:</b> Cllr Beverley Coupar	
2	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND MINUTES RESOLVED:</b> Declarations of interest - None. That the Chair of the Council is authorised to sign the minutes of the last Parish Assembly held 11 April 2022	
3	<b>EAST SUSSEX FIRE AND RESCUE: SIMON NEILL, GROUP MANAGER – THE RIDGE FIRE STATION – Q&amp;A:</b> The Ridge to stay 24 hour manned until 2025, there will be another consultation before any decisions are made at that date so current levels of service will be kept. Having to deal with wild fires as well although this is not listed as part of remit, lobbying central government for funding to be able to take this on as part of fire service duties <b>MEMBER OF PUBLIC LEFT, MEMBER OF PUBLIC ARRIVED 7.55PM SIMON NEILL LEFT 8PM</b>	
4	<b>THWART UPDATE OF INCREASED TRAIN FREQUENCY AT THREE OAKS STATION –</b> Gentleman left, trains at Three Oaks are now hourly rather than 2 hourly	
5	<b>LOCAL PCSO UPDATE/INTRODUCTION- PCSO Daryl Holter</b> Wants to build a relationship in the Parish (meeting with Chair and Clerk). Guestling is a low crime area. Contact Daryl Holter or report on Sussex Police website with info or suspicious activity, preferred method by email, for emergencies still 101 or 999 Request from Cllr Griffiths for PCSO to attend Three Oaks Village Hall coffee morning <b>2 COUNCILLORS LEAVE WITH PCSO 8.25PM</b>	
6	<b>THREE OAKS VILLAGE HALL/ROTHER ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCIL UPDATES:</b> <b>Cllr Martin Griffiths:</b> First full year at the hall has been completed, hall was used most days of the week and most weekends. Working on refurbishment projects decorating hall and changing electrical equipment. Toilet refurbishment project is ongoing. Have set up Rother Lottery status and ask that local residents support by buying tickets. Number of events have been held: Coffee mornings every other Monday, a Jubilee Party, a 40 <sup>th</sup> party for the hall is planned, various craft events. Have applied to Rother for carbon efficiency grant to insulate and provide better heating and to the small grants fund. <b>2 COUNCILLORS RETURN 8.31PM</b> <b>RALC (Rother Association for Local Councils) – Cllr Martin Griffiths:</b> Reinvigorated post-COVID good representation, attended by head of Rother District Council, Presentation from Community Speedwatch and RDC Environment Climate Action. Discussion regards caravan parks within Rother and the impact on utilities and infrastructure that is associated with people living in them on a more permanent basis and Rother's recent approvals of extending residence duration via planning – matter will be taken forward to next ESALC meeting. Request for Guestling Parish Council to be involved in this going forward	
7	<b>REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE PARISH COUNCIL AND DISTRICT/LOCAL COUNCILLORS:</b> <b>GPC CHAIR:</b> Welcome to Guestling Annual Assembly 2023. The Parish Council remains committed to maintaining and improving the QE11 playing field and will be looking to replace the existing 1960's pavilion within the near future with an updated structure more in line with today's needs.  Hastings Athletic football Club continue to flourish and grow, utilising Fairlight playing field in addition to Guestling and have just announced a partnership with Silverdale school. They have also introduced walking football.  Guestling Bowls club have also increased their membership in the same location.	

The Parish Council continue to support Guestling Church, with representatives attending the Remembrance service to lay a wreath along with the football club.

Our clerk has worked tirelessly, along with some Three Oaks residents, district councillors and our M.P to try to push through the provision of faster broadband. I understand this could now be imminent so huge thanks for that.

The Parish Council continue to support Speedwatch in the Parish. They are, as always, on the lookout for new members.

We continue to lobby Highways and our ESC Councillor regarding the state of the lanes. The situation has been hampered mainly by the weather conditions, an outdated drainage system that can no longer cope, a huge increase in traffic rat running through the rural lanes and the tenure of the current contractor coming to an end.

We continue to be represented at R.A.LC meetings and we support extra grass cuts for urban areas. We have offered and still are offering grants to local community groups and projects. We continue to respond to all planning applications.

We have supported the excellent Archive Resource Centre in their endeavours since the beginning in their important quest to continue recording, storing and archiving local history so that it is not lost for good.

The country, as a whole, was saddened by the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in September. The Book of Condolence was placed at Guestling Church and signed on behalf of the Parish Council. This was followed earlier this month by celebrations to mark the Coronation of King Charles III.

The Parish Council has vacancies as we have lost 4 members in the last year. 2 decided not to stand for re-election and 2 left for personal reasons. We thank them for their work during their time with us.

Hopefully we can put the pandemic behind us now and move forward, uninterrupted. Thank you.

#### **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT:**

Elections were held on 4 May 2023 for all Rother seats, with counting the next day. The composition of the council is now – Party Number of Seats Conservative 10 (-5) Rother Association of Independent Councillors 8 (+1) Lib Dems 7 (no change) Labour (6) + Lab & Co-Op (2) 8 (+6) Green 3 (+2) Independent 2 (+1)

There may be some adjustment between the Rother Association of Independent councillors and the other Independents. As before no one party has an overall majority, and an Alliance of Rother Association of Independents, Labour, Lib Dem and Greens is being formed. In Southern Rother Tim Grohne (Con) and I (Lib Dem) were returned to represent the ward. I congratulate Tim on his election and commiserate with the unsuccessful candidates.

Councillors represent all electors, irrespective of party allegiance. The most significant features are the rise of Labour and the Greens, and the reduction in Conservative seats. Lib Dems retain the same number of seats as before (though some in different wards). Independents have increased by one.

In cabinet (a political body) RAI will have 4 seats, Labour 3, Lib Dems 2, Green one. Unfortunately the two Lib Dems will be the only non-Bexhill cabinet members. By way of counterbalance one rural member, Cllr Sue Prochak MBE (Robertsbridge), will be joint Deputy leader with Cllr Christine Baylis (Lab, Bexhill). Cabinet portfolios will appear on the Rother website in due course. In nearby wards there were some developments of note. Rye and Winchelsea returned two Labour members in place of a Lib Dem and a Conservative. There was no change in Eastern Rother (2 Cons) or Brede and Udimore (1 Con). In Sedlescombe and Westfield Jonathan Vine-Hall (RAI) stood aside and Beverley Coupar (RAI) was elected in his place together with sitting member Cllr Carl Maynard (Con), the Conservative group leader. Jonathan Vine-Hall stood in Northern Rother, but was unsuccessful.

I note that 16 of the 38 councillors are new to the role. Chair and Committees Cllr Vikki Cook will be Chair for the year, with Cllr Richard Thomas as Vice-Chair. Chair of the Council is a largely honorific and representational role, though the Chair presides over Full Council meetings and is an ex officio member of all committees. Membership of committees is determined in proportion to each party's representation on the council.

By tradition and following good practice the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is chaired by a member of the opposition party, in this case Cllr Paul Osborne (Con, Eastern Rother).

	<p>I shall chair the planning committee, but will not have Jonathan Vine-Hall's planning policy brief, nor his place in cabinet. Cllr Tim Grohne (Con) will join me on the planning committee</p> <p>Membership of other committees will be available on the website –Agendas for the formal first meetings of Planning, Licensing, Overview and Scrutiny, and Human Resources are already available and contain the names of all proposed committee members.</p> <p>Full election results and Councillors' contact details are also available on Rother's website.</p> <p><b>East Sussex County Council Annual Update May 2022-April 2023 available on request to Clerk</b></p>	
8	<p><b>PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:</b>  Member of public asked what was happening with Community Led Housing Programme in Guestling. Chair advised that nothing further has been put forward and confirmed again that this is not a Parish Council led programme</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MEETING CLOSED 8.44PM</b></p>	
	<p><b>BRYONY YOUNG – PARISH CLERK 07730 015684    <a href="mailto:guestling.clerk@gmail.com">guestling.clerk@gmail.com</a></b></p>	