



## **HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**Meeting of Henfield Parish Council held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 at 7.00pm  
in The Henfield Hall.**

**Present:** Cllr E Goodyear (Chairman), J Jones, M Morgan, S Leader, A Willard, F Ayres, J Potts, D Jemmett, D Grossmith, A May, R Kendall, R Shaw and C Simmonds.

**In attendance:** Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager- OM), Cllr S Payne – West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) and two members of the public.

### **MINUTES**

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

None.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Cllr Perry.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2024**

Approved. Signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a) Visit to Henfield Haven 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025. All Councillors are invited at 2.30pm to see the work of the Haven as well as to have an opportunity to chat with staff and ask questions.
- b) Councillors are also encouraged to attend the exhibition to mark the end of the Year of Biodiversity between 6.30pm and 8pm on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December.
- c) Councillors also noted the charity collection tin for Crisis. They are encouraged to make a donation rather than send Christmas cards.

*The Chairman adjourned the meeting.*

### **OPEN FORUM**

None.

*The Chairman reconvened the meetings.*

6. **WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Payne reported that WSSCC has released a guide on Riparian ownership and the budget consultation continues until the 15<sup>th</sup> December. WSSCC are planning to offer apprenticeships for social workers and she added that she hopes to see an improvement to the bus service for Partridge Green around school times. In answer to questions from the Chairman and Cllr Morgan in regard to Active Travel, she reported that she hopes to arrange a meeting with interested parties on the 11<sup>th</sup> December. It was noted that there has been a lack of communication which has caused confusion on this matter. Flooding at Woods Mill is being reported to the Environment Agency.

7. **HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Potts thanked Cllr Perry for her report. He reported that the Horsham District Council (HDC) Carbon Reduction Plan has been approved and improved pollution sensors have been fitted at Cowfold, Storrington and some other industrial areas. It was noted that the Stonepit Lane appeal for gypsy and travellers' sites was allowed. He has shared his concerns with MP Andrew Griffiths. HDC will shortly roll out collection bins for vapes and batteries. Results from the food waste trial are being considered and it is also expected that this will go ahead. Cllr Perry is working with the Access

Henfield group on additional disabled parking spaces in the village and recently attended a drop-in session on the improvement works at Bramber Brooks. He thanked Cllr May for organising the recent bulb planting at Deer Park and added further work is needed at Dannys Pond. It was noted that HDC is removing willow trees in Deer Park as they have been causing subsidence issues.

8. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT 2024/25**

It was noted that this was a clear audit with no issues raised. The Chairman thanked the office team.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Interim Internal Audit 2024/25.

9. **MOTION: APPROVE THE AMENDED DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY INCLUDING TRAINING FOR STAFF & COUNCILLORS**

A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. This has been amended due to the recently introduced Worker Protection Act which now requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent harassment in the workplace. The policy has been amended to indicate that any member of staff can now approach any Councillor with concerns; this can be done on an informal basis, rather than in the past needing to make a formal complaint. Staff and Councillors will also all be required to attend training on a date to be agreed.

It was also noted that the Council has signed the Civility and Respect pledge. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Potts, **SECONDED** by Cllr Morgan and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the amended Dignity at Work Policy. It was noted that all concerns, historical or otherwise, have always been investigated as appropriate. The risk assessments have also been amended to reflect the new law.

**Action Point: The OM to arrange training in the new year.**

10. **MOTION: APPROVE THE PRINCIPLES FOR VERGE MANAGEMENT IN HENFIELD**

A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. This has been produced following extensive work by the working group and will inform the schedule of the works officers. Cllr Morgan stated he was surprised that a motion had been brought forward as the working group had not been able to agree on which verges should be Community Road Verges (CRV's) but wanted to seek the views of Full Council on this matter. Following lengthy discussion, it became apparent that there was a split of views on how the two verges at Wantley should be managed, with several Councillors wanting to retain an open aspect with neat and tidy appearance, particularly at the northern entrance to the village but with other Councillors in favour of CRVs and more nature friendly planting. It was noted that, although most are in favour of increasing biodiversity, there could be other areas in the village for wildlife planting. The Chairman commented that she would not like to see the removal of an existing CRV in the Year of Biodiversity. However, it was felt that the general principles were sound and that the work of the group had been useful. Therefore, it was agreed to defer agreement to section six of the policy which refers to the individual specified areas to allow for more detailed discussion at a later date. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Potts, **SECONDED** by Cllr Kendall and **VOTED TWELVE IN FAVOUR WITH ONE ABSTENTION** to approve the Principles for Verge Management, subject to the removal of section six referring to individual verges.

11. **CONSIDER THE HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL BUDGETS FOR 2025/26**

A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. All comments must be received by the 18<sup>th</sup> December when the Finance Committee will need to agree a final recommendation for Full Council approval in January. The Clerk explained that the recent increase in employers National Insurance has increased employment costs by £5,500, taking the increase in precept from 5.5% to 7%, which is 6.8% rather than 5.2% for a Band D property. It was explained that the Children and Young People Committee could no longer justify a budget line for a premises lease on the high street, so this had been removed but further provision made for reserves. The budget for the Neighbourhood Plan has increased as this will need to be reviewed next year. There will likely be a cost for research and consultants as it is felt that the Council do not have the necessary experience and expertise among their members.

12. **CONSIDER THE NEXT STEPS IN THE MOCK BRIDGE FLOODING PROJECT**

Following a recent on-site meeting with members of Shermanbury Parish Council and WSCC highways, evidence of flooding is starting to be gathered and a formal flooding report submitted to WSCC. Although it was felt signage at junctions north and south of the bridge would be ideal, this

would be a lengthy process taking up to three years. Therefore, it was agreed that real time warning signage linked to actual river levels on the bridge would be most appropriate. Quotes are being gathered and the next stage is to gather evidence of public support. It was all agreed by show of hands to move forward with a petition.

13. **CONSIDER THE COUNCILLOR VACANCY**

An interested party has been identified, but standing orders state that all vacancies must be advertised, therefore an advert will be placed in the BN5 and Parish magazines in January as well as on social media and the website. It is hoped that applications received can be considered at the February meeting.

14. **V E DAY CELEBRATIONS IN MAY 2025**

It is hoped that the BP Guild will light the Beacon as well as consider providing some food and drink. This will be discussed further at the next Village Amenities meeting.

15. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**(A) Finance, Risk & Change Governance**

Cllr Jones reported that the committee continue to deal with the cemetery lighting issue, which currently awaits an email from the original installer to confirm that the newly installed lighting heads are letting in water. The Committee will be meeting with Community Transport Sussex on the 18<sup>th</sup> December to discuss their funding request for the electric car club. It was confirmed that the search bar was removed from the website as it was not functioning correctly. When a fix was requested from the web designer the Council was told that this was not possible without significant extra cost as the website is now considered out of date. This has also been the same response when requesting fixes for various other issues with the website such as loading photographs and various accessibility issues.

(a) Summary of £34,561.54 Expenditure from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024.  
Noted by Council.

(b) Select Expenditure as the Monthly Random Audit Check – November.  
Cllr Grossmith selected Litter Wardens salaries.

**(B) Plans Advisory**

Cllr Shaw reported that although the appeal was granted for a gypsy traveller site on Stonepit Lane, the appeal for the industrial unit adjacent to the nursery was not upheld. Activity on the site appears to have slowed but the committee will continue to monitor. The committee intend to make representation on the Local Plan at the hearing date for rural communities on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

(a) Neighbourhood Plan Update.  
Discussed under item 11.

**(C) Recreation & Open Spaces**

Cllr Kendall reported there had been a lot of discussion on verges and invited any questions.

**(D) Village Amenities**

Cllr Morgan thanked the Parish Administrator for all her work organising Remembrance and added there would be a debrief session tomorrow.

**(E) Children & Young People**

Cllr Leader reported that the skate park project is moving forward and it is hoped to have a meeting with all interested parties in the village with a view to developing a village wide plan for children and young peoples' services.

**(F) Museum**

Cllr Potts reported that the Museum is reviewing opening times in order to attract more visitors and hopes to coordinate with when events take place at the Hall. The digitisation

project is also moving forward with the next items likely to be paintings. The Museum also hopes to work more closely with local schools.

**(G) Joint Commons**

Cllr Potts reported that the Committee requires more Parish Councillors and urged anyone interested to get in touch. Consideration is being given to minor renovations at the Tanyard Barn to allow the conservation volunteers to use it for storage. There is also a possibility of sheep grazing the Tanyard field and the pond being dredged. Work will take place on the Common reed bed this week.

16. **REPORTS FROM MEMBERS REPRESENTING COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr Grossmith reported that work is progressing well on the padel courts and safe space projects at the Leisure Centre. Cllr Simmonds reported that the flooring will shortly be completed in the Scout Community Building and work can then begin on internal fit out. Cllr Leader reported that the Community Partnership is also in continuing discussion with Community Transport Sussex and is working with Access Henfield moving forward.

17. **PCSO & POLICE ACTIVITIES**

Nothing to report.

18. **ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS TO BE RAISED BY COUNCILLORS**

The Chairman thanked all the staff and Councillors for their hard work this year.

19. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025. Cllr Simmonds gave his apologies for this meeting.

**Meeting Closed at 8.50pm.**