



HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT for 2025/26

Review by Henfield Parish Council Chairman

2025 has been an interesting year for Henfield Parish Council (HPC) and 2026 is looking to be more of the same. The HM Government's plan for Local Government Reorganisation in Sussex will mean the dismantling of Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council (along with the other local councils in East & West Sussex) into a Mayoral Authority for the whole of Sussex by 2028, with a system of yet to be determined number of Unitary Authorities. At this point in time, we do not know where Henfield will be placed. HPC are working to try to ensure a positive outcome for Henfield and its residents so that normal service can be maintained. We will update residents as soon as we are aware of decisions made.

We continue to see speculative planning applications for new houses in the village. HPC policy is to object to applications for sites that have not been approved by residents as part of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan. As I write, more applications for 190 houses and 500 houses respectively are in the pipeline. We will continue to defend Henfield's green spaces and lobby for the right homes in the right place.

My fellow councillors have produced below the summaries of all the work in 2025 of HPC and its committees. I would particularly like to highlight Henfield Museum – a hidden gem in the heart of the village. The Digitisation Project started in 2025 and is continuing into 2026. This project to digitally scan museum collections (currently paintings and photos) ensures that these items can be viewed online and are preserved for the future. Henfield Museum has many fascinating items as well as changing displays. Do take time to visit.

Elaine Goodyear
Chairman Henfield Parish Council

Individual Committee Reports

Finance, Risk and Change Committee (FRC)

This Committee comprises the Chairmen of the Parish Council's standing committees, the Vice-Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee (AOS) and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council. FRC's remit is to deal with all matters financial and regulatory, along with change projects and items not addressed by other Council committees, such as:

- staff matters, including working hours, pay and remuneration;
- monthly reconciliation of bank accounts;
- financial decisions, including insurance and the management of bank accounts;
- approving the remit of sub-committees and working groups.

As the Council's personnel committee, we have appointed an additional part-time Parish Administrator, Helen Boosey, to our team. We also make recommendations to Council regarding

changes to the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and other Council policies and plans. For example, this year we have updated our Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) guidelines and are also working to ensure that our IT policies and the planned new website will comply with the latest regulations.

As part of our oversight of financial matters, we have approved expenditure from reserves and/or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds towards the improvement of the Cricket Club car park and also for the containers on the Kings Field, which enable our Works Officers to store their equipment more conveniently. In accordance with our policy on Carbon Reduction, the Works Officers now have an electric vehicle.

This Council is committed to maintaining services in Henfield and Small Dole to the highest standard that our finances will allow, for the benefit of all residents and visitors. Our budget for 2026/27 takes into account anticipated expenditure on a new website and further support for our Youth Club, along with general cost increases.

For the next financial year (2026/27) the Council precept will be increased to £403,895. This is a rise of 8.2% and is the equivalent of a £10.63 per year increase for a Band D property.

I hope that you feel from what you read in this year's report, and those of the Council's standing committees, that we provide a good service for your money.

Jane Jones - Committee Chairman.

Committee Members: Russell Shaw (Vice Chair), Elaine Goodyear, Michael Morgan, Josh Potts, Samantha Leader and David Jemmett.

Amenities and Open Spaces Committee (AOS)

This Committee was formed in May 2025 to take over most of the roles formerly looked after by the Recreational and Open Spaces Committee and the Village Amenities Committee. This Committee is responsible for managing and developing amenities for the benefit of the people of Henfield not dealt with by the other Committees of the Council. We deal with, amongst other matters:

- the management of the playing fields at the Kings Field, the Sports Centre Field, the Rothery Field and the Memorial Field on the Common.
- the provision, maintenance and management of public seats, floral displays, cycle racks and shelters, public toilets, bus shelters, noticeboards, Christmas lights, litter picking, dog bins and street scene in general.
- the management of the Cemetery in accordance with legislation.
- the organisation of Remembrance events.
- transport-related issues, including Community Speedwatch.

Unfortunately we are still not any further forward with our work with the School and West Sussex County Council on proposals for improvement works around the school. This is to encourage walking and cycling to St. Peter's School and to make travel safer. West Sussex County Council have an Active Travel Plan and they have encouraged us to participate in this and we met with them in October 2022 with our thoughts and suggestions. Whilst this is ongoing, we are still awaiting as to whether the Henfield Scheme will be included in their future plans.

Many of you will have seen the two new containers which have been installed on the Kings Field near the Football Pavilion. This will be used by our Works Officers for the storage of their equipment that is needed for the sterling work they do around the Village. We are grateful to Dick, Paul and Robin for their dedicated work.

We have replaced the lamp standards in the Leisure Centre Car Park which were becoming dangerous and took the opportunity to change these to energy efficient lighting.

We have continued with improvements to the Cemetery including the planting of further bulbs and improvements to the Rose Arch. Unfortunately, we are still having problems with the lights installed in the Cemetery and we are continuing to resolve the issue. This has not been helped by the vandalism on several occasions where the heads of lights have been removed and/or broken.

Last year saw the 80th Anniversary of D-Day which was commemorated by an event on the Rothery Field. We were grateful to the BP Guild who assisted with the Beacon lighting and the provision of refreshments.

An Application for Definitive Map Modification Order has been made to West Sussex County Council for the twitten running between Craggits Lane and the High Street for this to become a Public Footpath.

We are working with WSCC and residents to see where we can provide additional bus shelters and to generally make bus stops more user friendly.

We have worked with Access Henfield to make improvements wherever possible to assist the day-to-day life of residents who suffer from disabilities. Unfortunately, the nature of some of the buildings in our High Street do not lend themselves to solving all problems.

We repeat what we said last year concerning the service that Community Transport Sussex provide by way electric cars for communal use. This is a sustainable asset for the village as it is community-run and used as a valuable resource. One of the main aims of the Club is to have a positive environmental impact by reducing the need for second cars and to bring the community together giving residents a tangible sense of ownership. Vehicles can be hired on a self-drive basis or with a volunteer if needed. If you are interested in finding out more about this then visit https://www.ctsussex.org.uk/services/electric-vehicle-community-car-club_or_phone_01273_087096.

We now have car electric charging points in both of the Car Parks situated off the High Street, at the rear of the Henfield Leisure Centre and in Fabians Way.

We are supporting the Community Partnership, who are carrying out a survey to see how we can improve the viability and appearance of the High Street. The Parish Council itself works hard to keep the street clean and free from litter and by providing the colourful hanging baskets and tubs, flower beds and the Christmas lights.

Mike Morgan - Committee Chairman

Committee Members: David Jemmett (Vice-Chair); Daryn Grossmith, Richard Kendall, Samantha Leader, Russell Shaw, Gill Perry and Adrian Willard.

Plans Advisory Committee (PAC)

This Committee as a 'Statutory Consultee' comment upon planning applications within Henfield Parish and advises the relevant planning authorities. The planning authorities with responsibility for decision-making are Horsham District Council (HDC) and the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNP). Additionally, the Committee seeks to influence the Local Plan, made by Horsham District Council especially in as far as development in the Parish is concerned.

The PAC has scrutinised 90 planning applications since 1st April 2025. Each application is evaluated against the policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework; the Horsham District Council’s Planning Framework; the South Downs National Park Local Plan; the Horsham Conservation Area Management Plan for Henfield; the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (made in June 2021), and the Henfield Parish Design Statement. It has also provided commentary of the draft Local Plan.

Planning applications can only be determined against material planning considerations and, when objecting to an application, the objections will be on the grounds that the application is in conflict with the Planning Frameworks referred to above and the specific policies are referenced. Particular care is taken for applications in the Henfield Conservation Area and for work to trees with a Tree Preservation order or within the conservation area. The PAC uses the expertise of our Parish Tree Warden, John Willis, to inform our advice to Horsham on any applications concerning trees.

As well as commenting on individual planning applications, the PAC responds to district and regional consultations. The table below summaries the work of the PAC over the period 1st April 2025 to 28th February 2026.

Total Number of Planning Applications Reviewed	91 (7 withdrew)
Number Supported (No Objections)	56
Number where we Objected	19
Number deferred for further information	9

What were the Planning Applications for?

New Houses	12
Extensions to existing homes	41 (3 Withdrew)
Removal or Reduction in Trees	14
Other planning matters	24

The PAC meets twice a month and residents are welcome to attend. The Horsham District Council website provides a link for all planning applications where detailed plans can be viewed and comments made, together with planning policy documents.

Russell Shaw – Committee Chairman

Committee Members – Daryn Grossmith (Vice Chair), Mark Andrews, Fiona Ayres, Mark Chandler, Elaine Goodyear and Jane Jones.

Museum Committee

Over the past year the Henfield Museum Committee has continued to focus on strengthening governance, improving accessibility, advancing digitisation, and supporting the long-term sustainability of Henfield Museum.

Governance and Accreditation

A significant priority during the year has been preparation for Museum Accreditation. A comprehensive review of policies and procedures has been undertaken to ensure the Museum continues to meet national standards. This work strengthens governance, protects the collection, and ensures the Museum operates to recognised professional standards.

Digitisation Project

The digitisation project has continued to make strong progress. In-house scanning was completed in April 2025, followed by further external scanning of framed photographs, paintings and selected objects. The next phase of external scanning has been approved, ensuring further preservation of fragile items and continued improvement of digital access. Digitisation provides long-term protection for the collection, secure cloud storage, and greatly enhances accessibility for researchers and residents who may not be able to visit in person.

Conservation and Collections

The Committee has considered conservation priorities during the year, including the restoration of the Woodmancote Place Estate Map. Quotations have been obtained and grant funding opportunities are being explored. Acquisitions have been reviewed and accepted in line with policy, and work has begun on cataloguing potential disposals to ensure the collection remains manageable and relevant. The Costume Curator continues to make an important contribution through themed displays and specialist advice.

Accessibility and Community Engagement

Improving access and engagement has remained central to the Museum's work. Key developments include:

- Continued development of the Oral History archive, now holding approximately 50 recorded interviews.
- The Roving Display Case touring local venues including the Free Church and the Library.
- A Memory Box initiative designed for those living with dementia, which can be loaned to local organisations.
- Website improvements, including clearer accessibility information.

The Museum also participated in community events including last year's Annual Parish Meeting and the Summer Fair.

Infrastructure and Security

A fireproof safe has been purchased to improve secure document storage. The CCTV system has been reviewed, and an upgrade option identified for future implementation subject to budget considerations. In recognition of declining cash use, the Committee has approved the purchase of a second Square payment unit to allow visitors to make donations electronically.

Financial Overview

Income during the year has primarily come from donations and support from the Friends of Henfield Museum. Annual donations continue at a modest level. The budget for 2026/27 has been agreed with projected income of £400 and expenditure of £2,000. The Curator's honorarium was reviewed and agreed during the year in recognition of the substantial voluntary contribution made.

Friends of Henfield Museum

The Friends continue to provide invaluable support through talks, newsletters, publicity, and community engagement. Events have been well received, and website updates regularly generate strong local interest.

Looking Ahead

Priorities for the coming year include:

- Continuing the digitisation programme
- Progressing conservation work where funding allows
- Completing accreditation requirements
- Enhancing accessibility and community engagement
- Reviewing IT equipment needs

The Committee wishes to thank the Curator, Assistant Curator, Costume Curator, Friends of Henfield Museum, Parish Council officers, and all volunteers for their continued dedication and commitment.

Josh Potts - Committee Chairman

Committee Members: Rob Gordon (Vice Chair), Elaine Goodyear, Michael Morgan, Alan Barwick, Peter Bates and Steve Robotham.

Henfield Commons Joint Committee

Our three local commons: Henfield, Broadmare and Oreham, in addition to the Tanyard and Tanyard Barn, are owned by Horsham District Council. They are managed through a joint committee made up of local Henfield parish councillors, residents and Henfield Conservation Volunteers alongside relevant expert Horsham Council officers and 3 District councillors: 2 from Henfield and one from Bramber, Beeding and Woodmancote. Henfield Parish Council undertakes to assist the Horsham DC Parks and Countryside team with room bookings and the occasional contribution of expertise and time from our valued Works Officers.

Over the last year, we have seen the benefits of more regular management at all sites, with increased biodiversity as a result. The range of wildflowers at Oreham Common in the meadow, which had been mown, was a good example. The ponds at Broadmare Common are now more open. The ecologically special marsh area at Henfield Common is improving and efforts to restrict the invasive goat willow are helping. Trees have been managed methodically and this is including 'haloing' some trees on Henfield Common to encourage more light in and develop the standing deadwood so valuable for a variety of wildlife. Henfield Conservation Volunteers have worked at all locations and made a difference to land management with their input.

The Tanyard Field was again opened to the public for the Gardens and Arts weekend. The attractive new wooden gate into the pond area should soon be joined by the old metal gate to the field which is being refurbished. The pond has had a floating eco-island installed, to encourage it to flourish. We have much appreciated the members of the public and the works officers who have helped us manage occasional anti-social behaviour, by retrieving bicycles and litter which had been thrown into the pond. New updated interpretation boards are on the way, to assist the public in enjoying the wildlife and landscape at each location.

The Henfield Common Fair and Show took place in September 2025 and was much appreciated by the community, despite the rain that day. Thank you to the dedicated team of organisers and supporters who made this happen. HDC has also hosted other events on Henfield Common: holiday events for children and walks for those interested in our local trees.

We thanked long-serving committee member, Eddie Colgate, for his many years of service and commitment to the Henfield Commons on his recent retirement from the committee.

Gill Perry – Committee Chairman

District Councillors: Gill Perry, Josh Potts and Roger Noel

Parish Councillors: Chris Simmonds and Mark Andrews

Horsham DC Parks and Countryside team: Pete Crawford, Malin Anderson, Neil. Matheson

Henfield Conservation Volunteers: John Willis and Tony Baker

Co-opted members of the committee: Eddie Colgate to end 2025, and Andrea May re the Fair.

Children and Young People Committee (CYP)

This Committee is a standing committee of the Parish Council created in June 2022. The purpose of this Committee is to support the children and young people of Henfield from birth to adulthood and to encourage them to be healthy, safe and active participants in their community. The committee also seeks to make appropriate recommendations to ensure children and young people have a voice and that their views are represented. This committee also has responsibility for the playgrounds and skate park in the village.

This year the committee has organised:

- In consultation with the football club, the installation of a “training rig”, which is outdoor exercise equipment aimed primarily at youth, and is disability accessible, in the Rothery Field.
- Organised a ROSPA survey and essential repairs to the playgrounds and skate park.
- Repairs and replacement hoops on the basketball court with more repairs of the tarmac planned for the burned section soon.
- Held several engagement sessions with youth and users of the skate park on a design for its upgrading where the design team were impressed with the youth’s creativity and ideas. The design work based on this feedback has been commissioned and we are currently waiting for the workable designs from the structural engineers.
- Facilitated access to the community bus by the football club, scouts, youth club and guides.
- Managed a Youth Notice Board in the bus shelter/ Instagram page.
- Ongoing consultation with the Scouts, St. Peter’s School, the Youth Club and the Football Club on youth matters.

The work of the committee is supported by a new part time Parish Administrator, Helen Boosey. Our plans for this coming year are to focus on the work to improve the Skate Park and engage young people in the Parish Council’s Year of the “Village Centre”. We have established a working group on “youth engagement” and will be inviting all organisations working with youth to join and share ideas on youth matters and ideas for the village’s youth.

The committee would welcome suggestions, especially from children and young people and remind you all that you are welcome to join our monthly meetings which are usually Monday evenings at 7:30pm in the committee room of the Village Hall or write to the Clerk with ideas and suggestions, especially if you are interested in running them with Parish Council support.

Samantha Leader – Committee Chairman.

Committee Members: Adrian Willard (Vice-Chair), Gill Perry, Mark Andrews, David Jemmett, Fiona Ayres and Chris Simmonds.

Local Government Reorganisation Committee (LGR)

First created as the Devolution Working Group in April 2025, this Committee became a standing committee of the Parish Council in September 2025. Our remit is to:

- Identify the challenges and opportunities presented by the establishment of a devolved Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) for Sussex and Brighton and the proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)
 - by researching and keeping abreast of communications from relevant bodies
 - in collaboration with neighbouring parishes and other stakeholders
- In the light of Horsham District Council’s (HDC’s) proposed Community Governance Review, consider which functions/assets Henfield Parish Council would wish to acquire from HDC, taking account of maintenance costs and funding arrangements
 - by identifying the relevant functions and assets

- by obtaining estimated maintenance costs and likely funding arrangements and/or revenue opportunities
- through discussions with HDC, neighbouring parishes, other potential stakeholders
- Make recommendations to Finance Risk and Change Committee (FRC) or to full Council, as appropriate, as to formal agreements and contracts with regard to HPC acquiring assets currently owned by HDC.

To date we have:

- In collaboration with HDC, identified assets within the Parish which currently belong to HDC and recommended to Council that we express a non-binding interest in having all of these transferred to us. This recommendation was accepted in October 2025.
- Established criteria for deciding which assets we eventually seek to have transferred; business cases would need to be written for these.
- In collaboration with other parishes, examined in some detail the possibility of acquiring our two car parks. It has emerged that such income-generating assets are unlikely to be transferred to parishes, unless included in a package with assets which bring an equivalent expenditure with them. We are considering the implications of this.
- Received and considered information relating to LGR and Devolution from a wide range of sources. We await the Government's decision (expected shortly) regarding the boundaries of the new Unitary Authority which will take over the functions of West Sussex County Council and HDC.

Jane Jones – Committee Chairman

Committee Members: Elaine Goodyear, Daryn Grossmith, Richard Kendall, Michael Morgan, Gill Perry, Josh Potts, Russell Shaw and Adrian Willard.

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Office in the Henfield Hall Monday to Friday 9am to Midday

Telephone 01273 492507 **Email** office@henfield.gov.uk

Full Council meets 1st Tuesday of every month at 7pm in the Henfield Hall.

Members: Elaine Goodyear (Chairman); Jane Jones (Vice-Chairman); Daryn Grossmith; David Jemmett; Mark Chandler; Samantha Leader; Richard Kendall; Michael Morgan; Gillian Perry; Josh Potts; Russell Shaw; Chris Simmonds; Fiona Ayres; Mark Andrews and Adrian Willard.

Committee Structure of Council

Finance Risk & Change	Meets – 10.30am Wednesday	Monthly
Plans Advisory	Meets – 7:00pm Thursday	Twice Monthly
Local Government Reorganisation	Meets – 10.00am Wednesday	Monthly
Amenities and Open Spaces	Meets – 10.30am Wednesday	Monthly
Museum	Meets – 7.30pm Wednesday	Quarterly
Joint Commons	Meets - 9.30am Thursday	Quarterly
Children and Young People	Meets - 7.30pm Monday	Monthly

