

ANNUAL HENFIELD PARISH MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 3rd MARCH 2026 AT 7:00pm IN THE HENFIELD HALL

Present: Cllrs E Goodyear (Chairman), J Jones, M Morgan, G Perry, J Potts, M Chandler, M Andrews, S Leader, R Shaw, D Jemmett, D Grossmith and F Ayres

In attendance: Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager), Mrs B Samrah (Parish Administrator), Mrs H Boosey (Parish Administrator), Mrs R Robotham – Access Henfield, Cllr S Payne – West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and 85 members of the public.

MINUTES

1. WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN OF THE HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Each Councillor introduced themselves and named which committees they serve on.

2. AGREEMENT TO THE MINUTES OF 2025 MEETING

Approved. Signed and dated by the Chairman.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman drew attention to various highlights and achievements from throughout 2025 including:

- VE Day celebrations and Beacon Lighting
- New Village Entrance signs
- Training Rig on the Rothery Field
- Return of the Summer Fayre on the Common, thanks were extended to the organisers
- Successful campaign to reduce parking on zig zags outside One Stop resulting in 15 convictions, 14 of whom are Henfield residents.
- Year of Care and Wellbeing, with lots of initiatives continuing such as Coffee on the Kerb and Community Singing at Red Oaks. Thanks were extended to Henfield Community Partnership (HCP)
- Over £50,000 raised for the Haven by Anne Dewdney
- Self Help Group awarded Horsham District Council (HDC) Dream Team Award

The Chairman then explained that 2026 is the Year of the Village Centre. A survey has been undertaken by HCP and it is hoped that any resulting initiatives can lead to rejuvenation of the high street and an increased sense of community. She added that she understands that the new Scout Community Building will open this year and that Henfield Parish Council (HPC) continue to explore options for flood warning signage at Mock Bridge. HPC have formed a Local Government Reorganisation Committee but the current position on the number of resulting unitary authorities is still unclear. It is understood that the intention is for a Mayor of Sussex to be in place within the next two years.

4. RUTH ROBOTHAM – ACCESSIBILITY IN HENFIELD

Mrs Robotham reported on several projects and achievements by Access Henfield, a group formed by HCP to look at access difficulties by disabled people in Henfield, the aim being to raise awareness and remove potential barriers to disabled people enjoying and fully participating in Henfield Life. Achievements include;

- Additional disabled parking spaces in Coopers Way and Library car parks
- Undercover parking area for mobility scooters
- Mobility scooter training offered
- Full audit of missing dropped kerbs including a map
- Discussions to ensure dropped kerbs are installed on new Backsettown development.
- Distribution of radar keys for disabled toilet in high street

- Campaign to keep pavements clear of overgrown hedges and shrubs as well as overhanging trees and waste bins left on pavement
- Campaign to discourage parking on pavements
- Leaflet for shopkeepers to educate on how to support people with additional needs
- Ongoing audit of 85 buildings in Henfield to establish accessibility including availability of ramps and parking
- Inclusion onto a pilot Community Toilet Scheme alongside Storrington
- Website and folder in the library containing accessibility information
- Ongoing discussion and potential funding for accessible sports activities for young people
- Introduction of a buddy scheme for the local history group

She added that more volunteers would be appreciated as she needs some assistance with procurement of ramps, provision of dropped kerbs and inputting of accessibility information onto a new app for visitors to Henfield. She also suggested other local groups could consider also setting up a buddy scheme to reduce social isolation.

5. OPEN FORUM (For Henfield Residents to comment or ask their questions about life in Henfield)

Issues raised by residents were all related to the increased level of housing development planned. Specific points raised included:

- Flooding and the lack of capacity of the sewage system in the Hollands Lane area
- The potential need for additional parking in the village centre as the perimeter of the village is expanding.
- Access arrangements for the proposed development adjacent to the Bowls Club being unsuitable and homes planned are not single storey which is contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Concern regarding incremental development.
- Concern regarding the Neighbourhood Plan coming to the end of its life

In response, Cllr Shaw responded as Chair of the Plans Advisory Committee to explain that, as HDC have no active Local Plan to prove that there is a sustainable land supply for housing, Henfield is vulnerable to speculative developers. Two applications for sites not included in the Neighbourhood Plan have already been passed, Sandgate Nurseries and south of New Hall Lane in Small Dole as well as smaller infill developments. Members of PAC feel that statutory consultees such as Southern Water and WSCC Highways rarely submit a robust response to planning applications that reflect resident (or HPC) concerns. The second Croudace application is going to national appeal and there is also a proposal from Taylor Wimpey. He stated that all HPC can do is to continue to assess and fight each application, but unfortunately the only defence HPC has is the Neighbourhood Plan. He reported that HPC have conducted a review of the Neighbourhood Plan and once approved by Full Council this will be sent to HDC for advice on next steps, although this could be impacted and potentially overridden in part by the new National Planning Policy Framework, as could a Horsham Local Plan. It was noted that having a valid Neighbourhood Plan does enable receipt of enhanced levels of Community Infrastructure Levy thereby enabling investment into infrastructure such as replacement of the leisure centre roof. It was also noted that there is a planned National Day of Action on 18th April.

6. DATE OF NEXT YEAR'S PARISH MEETING

2nd March 2027.

7. MEET YOUR COUNCILLORS – PLEASE JOIN US FOR A REFRESHMENT & CHAT

Residents had the opportunity to view a number of information stands highlighting council work and promoting Access Henfield, the Youth Club, HCP and the museum.

Meeting Closed at 8.04pm.

