

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Annual General Meeting of Henfield Parish Council held on Tuesday 5th May 2026 at 7.00pm in The Henfield Hall.

Present: Cllrs E Goodyear, J Jones, G Perry, M Morgan, J Potts, R Shaw, D Jemmett, S Leader, A Willard, M Chandler, M Andrews, R Kendall, F Ayres and D Grossmith.

In attendance: Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Deputy Clerk), Cllr S Payne – West Sussex County Council (WSCC), Cllr R Noel – Horsham District Council (HDC) and one member of the public.

MINUTES

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR FORTHCOMING YEAR**

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Potts, **SECONDED** by Cllr Perry and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to elect Cllr Goodyear as Chairman for the forthcoming year.

The Chairman announced the tragic news that Cllr Chris Simmonds has passed away. He was a huge character in the Henfield having been involved with the BP Guild, Scouts and Parish Council. He was originally a Councillor from 1991 to 1998 and rejoined in 2019. He served on every committee and had a particular interest in young people and was passionate about preserving the Commons. He was also instrumental in the building of the Rothery Pavillion. Cllr Morgan added that he was a good friend to him and the village. He was kind and generous and will be greatly missed. Council observed a minute's silence.

2. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Cllr Grossmith declared an interest in item 22 as he is the outside body representative for the Leisure Centre.

3. **APOLOGIES**

None.

4. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR FORTHCOMING YEAR**

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Kendall and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to elect Cllr Jones as Vice- Chairman for the forthcoming year.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10th MARCH 2026**

Approved. Signed and dated by the Chairman.

6. **REVIEW OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

There were no changes proposed, therefore it was **all agreed by show of hands** to leave the committee membership unaltered for the forthcoming year.

7. **REVIEW OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

There were no changes proposed, therefore it was **all agreed by show of hands** to leave representatives to outside bodies unaltered for the forthcoming year.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

9. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a) Community Governance Review.

The consultation period will begin shortly. The Local Government Reorganisation Committee (LGR) intend to discuss with neighbouring parishes. Council will be kept informed.

An initial meeting of the Year of the Village Centre working group has taken place and will be discussing the results of the High Street survey at their next meeting.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

10. **OPEN FORUM**

A representative from SH2030 invited and encouraged all Councillors to attend the Climate Emergency Briefing at the Henfield Hall on Sunday at 3pm.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

11. **WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Payne reported that WSCC are very much focused on the upcoming election. She confirmed that she is not standing for re-election and thanked Council for their support. The Chairman thanked Cllr Payne for all she has done for Henfield.

12. **HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Potts reported on the recent Local Plan hearing; the plan is legally compliant and is continuing to examination. A significant uplift in housing numbers is expected due to the duty to cooperate with the south coast. It was noted that Mid Sussex District Council will be consulted in recognition of their duty to cooperate. Cllrs Perry and Potts will query with HDC whether there are any legal obstacles to allowing certain developments to commence so that progress can be demonstrated. Cllr Potts also reported on the Croudace appeal where it was noted that HDC's defence was disappointing. With regards to the Slips, there was some confusion at the hearing with the Chairman deferring the decision on the basis of drainage rather than use his casting vote. Cllr Potts also continues to push for funding for the Leisure Centre.

Cllr Perry reported that HDC have a new Chairman, Joanne Knowles and Vice Chairman Nigel Emery. HDC have just released the Parish Energy Plan which SH2030 have summarised. This will be considered by the Finance Risk and Change Governance Committee (FRC). She added that the abandoned vehicle on Dropping Holms has now been removed. Cllr Morgan reminded Council that it can employ a barrister if needed for future planning issues.

13. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR**

The current internal auditor, Mulberry & Co have offered a one or three-year fixed deal at a cost of £80 per hour, increasing from £65 per hour. They have eight auditors and intend to switch around so that Councils do not always have the same individual. It was agreed that Mulberry offer a very good service and helpful advice when needed.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Jemmett, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve Mulberry and Co as the internal auditor for a three-year period.

14. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR 2025/26**

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Ayres and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Internal Auditor's report for 2025/26.

15. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE YEAR-END ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/26**

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Morgan, **SECONDED** by Cllr Potts and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the year-end accounts for the financial year 2025/25.

16. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR 2025/26**

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Grossmith, **SECONDED** by Cllr Kendall and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26.

17. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS FOR 2025/26**

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Grossmith, **SECONDED** by Cllr Kendall and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Accounting Statements for 2025/26.

18. **MOTION: APPROVE THE STANDING ORDERS**

There are no changes.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Andrews, **SECONDED** by Cllr Morgan and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Standing Orders.

19. **MOTION: APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

There is a proposed increase in the Clerk's emergency expenditure limit from £300 to £500, and with the authority of the Chairman, Vice Chairman or Chairman of relevant committee increasing from £3,000 to £5,000. Provision has also been made to accept online prices as quotations.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Kendall, **SECONDED** by Cllr Shaw and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Financial Regulations.

20. **MOTION: APPROVE THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Two appendices have been added, the Councillors Statement of Assurance and Guidance for Working with Officers.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Perry, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Code of Conduct.

21. **MOTION: APPROVE THE PARISH COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY POLICY**

This has been considered and approved by relevant committees.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Potts and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Biodiversity Policy.

22. **MOTION: TO CONSIDER APPROVING A GRANT OF £25,000 TOWARDS REPAIRS TO THE LEISURE CENTRE ROOF**

It was noted that this is a recommendation from FRC and that the building is owned by the Parish Council. The Leisure Centre are in a good financial position and are planning to invest in the gym area, but paying the full cost of £57,000 for repairs would empty all of their reserves leaving them potentially in breach of a current loan agreement. There is a fifteen year guarantee on the works proposed; it was advised that the Leisure Centre check whether this is insurance backed.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Potts and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve a grant of £25,000 towards repairs to the Leisure Centre roof.

23. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

(A) Finance, Risk & Change Governance

Cllr Jones reported that FRC have approved up to £3,000 for a new website and good progress is being made. Donation guidelines have been updated to include that applications will only be considered in the May and November FRC meetings with approximately half of the interest on Parish Council accounts to be allocated annually, currently around £5,000. It was also noted that Rebecca Grantham's job title has been updated to Deputy Clerk which better reflects the duties she performs.

(a) Summary of £45,262.68 Expenditure from 1st March – 31st March 2026 and £30,103.07 from 1st April – 30th April 2026.
Noted by Council.

(b) Select Expenditure as the Monthly Random Audit Checks – March & April.
Cllr Grossmith selected Dream Pairs for March.
Cllr Andrews selected ATS Machinery for April.

(B) Plans Advisory

Cllr Shaw will contact Norman Kwan at HDC in regard to next steps for the Neighbourhood Plan review.

(C) Amenities & Open Spaces

Cllr Morgan reported that the committee is intending to renew the lease on the Village Square and that the container project has now completed with electricity and a car charger now installed. Work has begun on Bishop Lane and three planting beds are due to be installed. The new replacement path between the Tennis Club and the Leisure Centre will take place in the May half term.

(D) Children & Young People

Cllr Leader reported that the committee did not meet last month, but a useful initial meeting has been held with outside organisations to discuss youth engagement.

(E) Museum

Cllr Potts reported on the current exhibit on agricultural history and a recent Mudlarking exhibition. He thanked all of the volunteers.

(F) Joint Commons

Cllr Perry reported that the Tanyard Management plan is now on the website. Works to replace fencing and the gate is now almost complete and discussion on the pond in Cagefoot Lane continues. She added another thanks to Cllr Simmonds for all his work on the Commons.

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

Cllr Leader reported from Henfield Community Partnership (HCP) that the High Street survey is ready to circulate, and she and Cllr Willard will be discussing with retailers next week. The next Coffee on the Kerb event is next Saturday on Upper Station Road. HCP are also considering offering trustee training and mentioned that the Football Club require volunteers for the upcoming tournament weekend.

25. **PCSO & POLICE ACTIVITIES**

No issues to report.

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

The Chairman thanked Cllr Grossmith for offering to host a summer barbecue.

27. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 2nd June 2026.

Meeting Closed at 8pm.