HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL - FINANCE RISK & CHANGE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting of the Finance Risk & Change Governance Committee held on Wednesday 18th November 2026 at 10:30am in the Committee Room at The Henfield Hall.

Present: Cllrs J Jones (Chairman), E Goodyear, M Morgan and J Potts

In attendance: Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Deputy Clerk) and one member of the public.

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**
   Cllr Morgan declared an interest in item 8 as he is Chairman of the Trustees of the Henfield Club.

2. **APOLOGIES**
   Were received from Cllr Shaw, Jemmett and Leader.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21st OCTOBER 2026**
   Approved. Signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**
   None.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

The member of the public represented the Friends of St Peters Primary School who have submitted a donation request for renovation to the wildlife pond which is used for Forest School activities. He explained that the pond is currently in disrepair, in part due to a willow tree which is planned for removal. It was all agreed to discuss item 7 directly after Open Forum.

The member of the public left the meeting.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

   a) Progress on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
   Twenty-one Henfield based organisations have been invited to a meeting on the 26th November as part of the ongoing consultation process. This will be a general discussion rather than an opportunity to pitch for individual requests for project inclusion, with the aim of ensuring that all appropriate areas of focus have been considered.

   b) Implications to changes in Staffing.
   It was noted that due to the Deputy Clerk significantly reducing hours from December, there will be a weekly shortfall of 27 hours per week. All Committee Chairmen are requested to consider this when suggesting new projects. There may be a need to prioritise and delay certain actions. The staff are currently working on who will take on which responsibilities in the shorter term, which will be communicated to Councillors. The two administrators have expressed concern at the potential volume of work. It was noted that there may be an opportunity to increase their hours. It was also noted that it is hoped to have a new Clerk in post by the middle of March.

6. **CONSIDER THE 2027/28 DRAFT BUDGETS, PRECEPT, PROVISIONS AND RESERVES**
   A draft was circulated prior to the meeting with three suggested items for discussion highlighted by the Clerk.
   - Remembrance. It was noted that an offer has been received for the PA system to be supplied free of charge next year. It was agreed to leave the budget at £1,500.
   - Employment Costs. It was noted that this is difficult to predict at the current time and General Reserves could be used if needed. It was agreed to leave at £230,000.

- Neighbourhood Plan. It was noted that this only requires review, and that there are Legal Reserves currently of £11,800 with provision for another £2,000 next year. It was agreed to rename the Legal budget line to Legal, Regulatory and Planning, to increase it from £3,000 to £5,000, and to remove the budget for Neighbourhood Plan completely. There will be another opportunity for the Committee to discuss the budget again next month as well as for a Full Council discussion on 1st December. The budget will be finally approved at the January meeting of Full Council.

7. **CONSIDER THREE DONATION APPLICATIONS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**

Further to the discussion in Open Forum, the Committee discussed each of the three donation requests. Application forms had been circulated prior to the meeting.

- Friends of St Peters Primary School £750. All agreed this is a worthwhile project encouraging outdoor learning.
- Access Henfield £750. It was noted that several improvements have been made already, such as at the Henfield Club and Old Railway Tavern, which have greatly improved wheelchair access. The final element of funding will complete the project.
- Henfield Conservation Volunteers £400. It was noted that they only use hand tools which do require regular replacement. It was also commented that it is pleasing to see the volunteers using the newly renovated Tanyard Barn.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Morgan and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the three donation requests as detailed above.

8. **CONSIDER PAYMENTS OF £500 TO THE HENFIELD CLUB & £1,000 TO ST PETER'S CHURCH**

It was noted that these payments were increased last year from £200 and £500 respectively. Henfield Parish Council would need to take on management of the churchyard if requested. It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Goodyear and **VOTED THREE IN FAVOUR WITH ONE ABSTENTION** to approve the payments of £500 to the Henfield Club and £1000 to St Peters Church.

9. **APPROVE UP TO £1,000 TOWARDS A NEW PA SYSTEM**

This item is no longer needed as an offer of a free PA system for Remembrance next year has been accepted.

10. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE NEW MODEL EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT & THE ANTI-BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY**

Model policies were circulated prior to the meeting. With regards to the employment contract, comments included that the probationary period may not be long enough and should perhaps be increased to four months from three. It was also suggested that the notice period for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk should be extended to three months for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, as is the practice at some other Parish Councils. It was agreed that the Chairman and Cllr Goodyear would meet to discuss and produce a personalised draft for the next meeting. With regards to the Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy, it was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Potts and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the model policy.

11. **CONSIDER THE CURRENT COMMUNITY TRANSPORT POLICY**

Several issues were raised with the current policy. It was felt that the costs per trip were high, that there has been a lack of users recently and that some organisations have been discouraged by the £50 contribution per trip. There is currently an unused funding amount of £2,435. It was agreed to further research commercial costs for comparison, in order to achieve best value for money. It was all agreed to approve the Youth Club request for a further trip in December despite them having already taken their maximum three trips per year as stated in the current policy.

12. **FINANCE**

a) Confirmation of Reconciliation of Bank Accounts (October).
Each signed and dated by two Councillors.

b) Internal Controls (To Include Audit Check of Expenditure in October).
Each signed and dated by two Councillors.

13. **ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS TO BE RAISED BY COUNCILLORS**
Cllr Goodyear updated the Committee on the Community Resilience Plan. It was noted that the information for the public was already all available on the website but has now been moved to the home page. Dates are awaited for a meeting with West Sussex County Council, which will aim to establish whether any additions are needed to the existing plan. The Henfield Hall are currently exploring options for power. The Parish Council have a recently-serviced generator able to provide heating and lighting.

It was noted that specific and targeted Parish Council content is being shared on a local Facebook group which is prompting false, defamatory, and malicious allegations without any basis in fact. It was all agreed that this is best ignored.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
16th December 2026.

Meeting Closed at 11.49am.