

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of Henfield Parish Council
held on Tuesday 7th January 2020
at 7.00pm in The Henfield Hall.**

Present: Cllrs M Eastwood (Chairman), M Morgan, R Kendall, R Shaw, E Goodyear, A Donoghue, C Simmonds, N Farrell, J Jones, A Sharp, D Jemmett, N Stevens and G Perry.

In attendance: Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Administrator), Mr Glen Chipp (CEO of Horsham District Council - HDC), Cllr L Barnard (West Sussex County Council - WSCC) and four members of the public.

MINUTES

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

None.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Cllr J Potts and A Rickard.

The Council held a minute's silence for John Greenfield, former Henfield Parish Councillor and for Linda Phillipson who jointly managed the Henfield Hall with her husband and greatly contributed to our community.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 3rd DECEMBER 2019**

Approved, signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

a) Installation of Posts at the Barratt Development

These have now been installed and a photograph was circulated to Councillors. Cllr Morgan confirmed it would now be virtually impossible for any vehicle to access the Downs Link at this location.

5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a) Email from Andrew Griffith MP

The Chairman received an email from Andrew Griffith introducing himself on the 19th of December. He has replied and invited him to visit once he is settled into his new role.

b) Local Climate and Environment Action Plan 2020 - 25

The plan was agreed at the Finance Risk and Change (FRC) Committee meeting in December. It was circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Cllr Perry and Cllr Jones. The Chairman confirmed that this is a very practical document which includes initiatives to add to those already achieved. It will be updated quarterly.

The Parish Office charity collection for Crisis at Christmas raised £34 and has been paid online.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be taking place on the 3rd of March 2020 and the Chairman asked all Committees to give thought to suitable content. He suggested having displays again around the Hall, following a similar format to last year as this proved popular with the public. The Chairman's suggestions for 10 minute presentations included Community Speedwatch, Sustainable Henfield 2030 and the Local Plan, to include mention of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Chairman also noted that the March Parish Council meeting will need to move to Wednesday 4th of March to minimise impact on all other committee meetings during the month. There was no objection to this.

The Chairman also noted the success of the recent Sound of Music production that took place in the Henfield Hall. He expressed his thanks and initiated a round of applause for Cllr Jones who was heavily involved in the production.

The Chairman then introduced Glen Chipp, CEO of Horsham District Council (HDC), who had been invited to the meeting following publication of the Horsham District Council Corporate Plan 2019-2023 to discuss it and answer questions. Mr Chipp was particularly interested in areas of alignment with HPC's Strategic Plan, as well as areas where HDC and Henfield Parish Council (HPC) can work more closely together. He referred to the comprehensive comparison between the two plans that the Chairman had produced and praised it, noting it was well considered and almost identical in alignment in terms of priorities. This comparison was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

In his introduction, Mr Chipp noted the Strong, Safe and Healthy Community priority as being a particular success in Henfield as the community spirit is so impressive, particularly in terms of volunteers and initiatives. Henfield is a shining example to other parishes.

He noted there are four key priority areas being, communities where people can live, work and prosper in a low carbon environment; providing culture, sport and leisure opportunities to improve health and wellbeing; build natural environments to be highly valued and well managed to maintain an attractive place to live whilst accommodating the development required that will sit well within the natural environment.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting and opened up the discussion so that members of the public could join in the discussion with Glen Chipp.

OPEN FORUM

A member of the public commented that there are huge pressures on Horsham to deliver development. Mayfield Market Town has been proposing 7,000 new homes as one of the submitted strategic sites. Previously this site was analysed by Mid-Sussex District Council and found to be the least sustainable in all areas, so it didn't progress beyond the initial stage. He asked why HDC is taking all the large strategic sites to Regulation 18 and not taking out the weakest sites as a first step?

6. DISCUSSION WITH GLEN CHIPP – CEO AT HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

Corporate Plan ambition - A great place to live. Mr Chipp explained that HDC has to evaluate all sites even-handedly. All of the site selection criteria are published on the HDC website and HDC has been gathering evidence independently. Feedback is also needed from all the communities on all strategic sites. He explained there is also a current development debate in government but that HDC need to demonstrate a 5-year land supply so they are not open to predatory development. They are also obliged to consider neighbouring authorities such as Crawley and Coastal areas which are severely constrained with a limited supply of development land available to them. HDC is making representation to government stating that they are currently delivering more than the required housing numbers and in fact overdelivered by producing 1,300 new homes in one year last year, instead of the 850 required. They are hoping to be able to carry forward this over supply and intend to put that argument forward through local MPs. He confirmed that the process is open and transparent but that clarity is also needed from central government.

Cllr Simmonds asked how rigorous checks are on suppositions from prospective developers. Mr Chipp confirmed that HDC do their own assessments, for example, on flood risk and surface water. They also look at sustainability, infrastructure and local transport. He acknowledged that many parishes feel there is a current infrastructure deficit and that HDC has their own Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). He also noted that flexibilities are needed on criteria for S106 monies.

The Chairman asked whether there can be a dialogue on the allocation of S106 funds as HDC has in the past stated that HPC are not party to S106 agreements when we are attempting to repurpose funds toward things that we really need as stated on our own IDP. He stated that he wants HPC and HDC to work together so that both can deliver projects that are wanted and needed by the village. We are currently in a situation where HPC is having to contact developers first for agreement to variations before then approaching HDC when repurposing is needed. It would be better to agree the needs with HPC when the S106 agreements are first struck and as far he is concerned the HPC IDP, although shared with HDC, has not been discussed or utilised to form S106 arrangements.

Mr Chipp confirmed that better dialogue would be appropriate and suggested marrying the two IDP documents to see where there are similarities. He also noted that developers are not always flexible and are often keen for money to be returned if not spent within stated criteria or deadlines. He also noted that it is disappointing to hear that HPC is being told they are not party to S106 agreements and will attempt to facilitate discussion going forward.

The Chairman stated that it is important that the design of any development is important to the village where we are trying to preserve its character and connections to the countryside. In this regard more thought is needed into which developers are used and would appreciate dialogue on that. Mr Chipp confirmed that it is not just a case of housing numbers. Design statements are a key part in maintaining the look and feel of a place and sustainability is also a consideration. Cllr Morgan confirmed he had taken Mr Chipp to visit the Croudace and Barratt developments in Henfield and appreciated the difference between the two.

The Chairman then stated that Henfield and neighbouring parishes all feel strongly that we continue to live in a rural community and don't become a suburb of a town such as Mayfield. He asked that Mr Chipp takes that message back to HDC. He noted that this Mayfield site is the only strategic site that is proposed to be wholly in the middle of a greenfield site and commented that any of the others sit better in terms of infrastructure and flood risk. Mr Chipp again confirmed that HDC is evaluating all sites even-handedly and that evaluation details will be made public with chances for all to comment. Mr Chipp also commented that in order to meet development numbers, more than one strategic site will be needed.

Cllr Kendall asked whether these will be political decisions. Mr Chipp responded that all strategic sites will be evaluated based on the set criteria. There are a number of tests and if sites fail these, they won't be allocated. He stated that there is a relative lack of land constraints in the Horsham District and that there are more than enough sites to deliver what is required.

A member of the public then stated that 50% of the land ownership in question is not in Mayfield's control and that there have been recent approaches to landowners offering considerably more money than previously was the case. Mayfield has also stated that they have been shortlisted. Mr Chipp confirmed Mayfield definitely has not been shortlisted and that no garden village settlements have been supported either, as the evaluation phase has not been completed.

Corporate Plan ambition - A thriving economy. The Chairman moved on to mention the Community Development team. It works well in collaboration with Henfield, particularly with the Community Partnership, citing the display boards and heritage trails as examples. He also noted the high street is struggling, particularly with the loss of all banks and the introduction of car parking charges. Mr Chipp understood and said he is happy to work with HPC and discuss potential initiatives to help the high street. He also noted HDC is working on full fibre connectivity to improve employment opportunities and the local economy. The Chairman noted that HPC and HDC share goals on the strong, safe community, but there is a need for appropriate housing such as sheltered accommodation, bungalows and affordable smaller homes. Mr Chipp noted there is also a link with WSCC and potential revenue savings for them if there is suitable housing.

Corporate Plan ambition - A strong, safe and healthy community. The Chairman commented that Henfield has managed to retain its Youth Club and this is considered a vital component to help control anti-social behaviour and youth offending. The Henfield Haven and other voluntary services are also easing the burden on the Medical Centre as is the relatively new Connector+ initiative supporting the frail in our community. He asked whether these types of initiatives could be built upon in order to better connect HDC, HPC and WSCC, as the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) is currently working to different priorities and appears to be destabilising existing local services.

Corporate Plan ambition - A cared for environment. Cllr Perry stated she was very pleased to hear about the links with Wilder Horsham and that low carbon world terminology is being used. Mr Chipp confirmed that HDC already has a good record but is now raising the profile on these issues. He noted the impact of climate change is undeniable and it is important to identify how to make a difference, not just make hollow statements.

The Chairman expanded on this by saying the Works Officers in Henfield have taken on more work due to budget cuts elsewhere and HPC have a good working relationship with WSCC in this regard. For example, Works Officers have been improving access to footpaths which in turn provides residents with an opportunity to walk improve fitness and wellbeing. Mr Chipp confirmed he is keen to work in partnership and that a change of leadership at WSCC is resulting in a noticeable difference in approach, although there are still severe financial constraints.

Corporate Plan ambition - A modern and flexible council. The Chairman agreed that HDC has a modern flexible workforce and that HPC generally receives good support from them and benefits from a particularly good well established relationship with Cllr Morgan. The Chairman stated that it would be helpful for the public to have more clarity on which Council dealt with which service as there is often confusion and the default is often to the Parish Office. Mr Chipp confirmed that this should improve with the new HDC website.

Cllr Stevens noted that there is S106 money for capital projects, but funds are often needed more urgently for repair and maintenance and that in fact capital projects can attract other funding that maintenance or repair projects can't. Mr Chipp noted this is something to discuss and consider.

Finally, Mr Chipp expressed his thanks for the invitation to attend the meeting and welcomed further comments to be sent to him.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

7. WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr Barnard stated that he agrees with much of Mr Chipp's statements, particularly on the negative impact of cuts in youth funding. He noted that the last WSCC meeting was on the 17th of December. At this meeting WSCC agreed to take on Becky Shaw, Chief Executive of East Sussex County Council, who will work with both Councils.

He also noted that Henfield Library will be shut for 5 days from 27th of January for refurbishment. The Youth Club grant of £1,700 should now also have been received from WSCC. The Chairman confirmed that this reduced amount was due to the necessity of match funding, so had been reduced accordingly from the originally agreed £2,000.

Cllr Barnard also mentioned that the new leader at WSCC has agreed to reinstate weed spraying and gritting, despite there still being a need to achieve financial savings. He will enquire further on the exact details of the spraying following concern from Councillors about the impact on wild flowers. He then noted that the speed indicator sign on the London Road will not be replaced or repaired by WSCC if there is a problem with it in future.

8. HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr Morgan confirmed that the six local Councillors involved with the Mayfield development have met with Planning Officers and are waiting for further information.

The situation with the Barclays ATM is still ongoing as there is a property owner in the village now interested.

The SE tyres application went to planning committee last month and has been approved, there will be no pole sign and signage will change. He is still discussing the positioning of the waste bins.

Finally, Peter Hudson is still in hospital and sends his best wishes for the New Year.

9. MOTION: TO INCREASE THE HOURS OF THE PARISH ADMINISTRATOR TO 27 HOURS PER WEEK

Cllr Goodyear confirmed that the FRC Committee had recommended that the Parish Administrator's hours be increased from around 10 hours per week to 27 hours per week. This is to assist with the increase in the workload of the Parish Office.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Goodyear and **seconded** by Cllr Kendall that this motion be **approved**. Councillors voted 12 in favour, with one against.

10. **MOTION: AS AN EMPLOYER LISTED IN PART 2 OF SCHEDULE 2 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS) REGULATIONS 2013, HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HAS THE POWER TO DESIGNATE WHO CAN JOIN THE PENSION SCHEME. IT IS RESOLVED THAT THE CLERK, DEPUTY CLERK AND PARISH ADMINISTRATOR OF HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ARE ELIGIBLE TO JOIN THE LGPS. MEMBERSHIP IS NOT EXTENDED TO ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL AT THE CURRENT TIME**

Cllr Shaw summarised the benefits of the scheme. The scheme is funded via a pooled arrangement, whereby Councils all contribute into one large fund and is therefore more stable. There are four stages to joining the scheme; passing this resolution and deciding which jobs are eligible, paying the £750 to the Local Government Pension Scheme actuary, approving the discretionary policy and signing the pooling arrangement.

Cllr Sharp asked for clarification as to whether this is a money purchase or final salary scheme and expressed some concern as to the cost. Cllr Shaw confirmed it is a defined benefit scheme based on a career average and that contributions may vary in future. Cllr Goodyear confirmed that details of the scheme had been circulated to councillors following discussion several months ago and that offering this pension was agreed prior to this meeting. Passing these motions is in effect approving the necessary processes. Cllr Kendall agreed that it is a very good scheme and will attract suitable staff, particularly as local government staff are often paid less than those in the private sector.

The Chairman confirmed that any risk involved in potential variation in contributions is spread due to the larger pooling arrangement from joining the WSCC scheme and that offering this scheme brings HPC in line with other Parish Councils. Cllr Simmonds confirmed that he felt offering this scheme will attract better qualified and experienced staff.

It was proposed by **Cllr Kendall**, seconded by **Cllr Perry** and **voted 12 in favour and 1 against** to pass this motion.

11. **MOTION: TO ADOPT HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL'S DISCRETIONARY POLICIES UNDER THE LGPS REGULATIONS**

It was proposed by **Cllr Morgan**, seconded by **Cllr Shaw** and **voted 12 in favour and 1 against** to pass the motion to adopt Henfield Parish Council's discretionary policies under the LGPS regulations.

12. **MOTION: TO APPROVE A ONE-OFF PAYMENT OF £750 PLUS VAT TO THE LGPS ACTUARY**

It was proposed by **Cllr Goodyear**, seconded by **Cllr Farrell** and **voted 12 in favour and 1 against** to approve a one-off payment of £750 plus VAT to the LGPS actuary.

13. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE SIGNING OF THE POOLING ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

It was proposed by **Cllr Morgan**, seconded by **Cllr Simmonds** and **voted 12 in favour and 1 against** to pass the motion to approve the signing of the pooling arrangement between West Sussex County Council and Henfield Parish Council.

14. **MOTION: TO EMPOWER THE FINANCE RISK AND CHANGE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE TO ENACT THE PENSION POLICY ARRANGEMENTS AND PENSION PAYMENTS FOR INDIVIDUALS**

It was proposed by **Cllr Jemmett**, seconded by **Cllr Farrell** and **voted 12 in favour and 1 against** to pass the motion to empower the Finance Risk and Change Governance Committee to enact the pension policy arrangements and pension payments for individuals.

15. **MOTION: TO APPROVE COUNCIL EXPENDITURE AND INCOME BUDGETS FOR 2020/21**

The Clerk advised that the recommendation from the FRC Committee is that the expenditure and income budgets should be £292,148 for the 2020/21 financial year. The budgets were circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting and have all been approved by the individual committees. There is also income to consider from other sources such as the environmental cleansing grant from HDC and the cemetery fees.

It was proposed by **Cllr Goodyear**, seconded by **Cllr Jones** and **voted all in favour** to approve Council expenditure and income budgets for 2020/21 of £292,148 for the 2020/21 financial year.

16. MOTION: TO APPROVE THE PARISH PRECEPT FOR 2020/21 IN THE SUM OF £257,548

The Clerk stated that the proposed precept of £257,548 is an increase of 9.1% over last year's total of £236,145. This is an increase of 7.9% on a Band D equivalent property.

Other Parishes in the District are proposing increases ranging from 9.75% to over 30%.

Cllr Kendall asked whether there was a provision for elections. The Clerk confirmed that there is £6,000 in reserves which should be sufficient.

Cllr Sharp queried whether the Joint Commons contribution which was reduced from £1,000 last year should be reduced from £500 to zero. The Clerk confirmed that no such proposal had been made. The Chairman highlighted the benefits that the Works Officers provide to our Commons.

Cllr Kendall also noted that the budget for replacement of the Leisure Centre car park surface has been reduced to zero. The Clerk confirmed that this was to allow for a one-off budget spend of £11,000 for the new Cemetery extension. This would ensure that the overall increase to the Precept remains below 10% and the Leisure Centre car park budget could be increased accordingly in 2021/22 and the intention is to "catch up" in the following financial year.

Cllr Donoghue asked for clarification over the Museum reserve. The Clerk confirmed that any excess income over budget would be transferred to the Museum reserve at the end of the financial year, as agreed at the last FRC Committee meeting. Cllr Morgan noted that Parish Councils aren't currently capped but could be in future, so it is prudent to continue increasing the Precept at a reasonable rate.

It was proposed by **Cllr Stevens**, seconded by **Cllr Donoghue** and **voted all in favour** to approve the Parish Precept for 2020/21 in the sum of £257,548

17. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(A) Finance Risk & Change Governance

Cllrs Goodyear to report.

i) Summary of £42,592.44 - Period 1st December – 31st December 2019.

This was noted by Council.

ii) Select Expenditure as the Monthly Random Audit Check

Cllr Morgan selected EDF Energy for Rothery Electric - £77.16.

Cllr Goodyear confirmed that Persimmon Homes has agreed to the request to vary the S106 agreement which was originally for outdoor youth equipment, so that the Henfield Hall and Henfield Leisure Centre can apply for funding for urgent repairs. They will now need to make applications, being mindful that the deadline is fast approaching. The Chairman confirmed that Persimmon is likely to want the funding returned if the 6th February deadline is not met. Cllr Morgan noted it will also depend on the Deed of Variation and that once a legal officer is appointed, he will discuss it with them. He also reassured members that the officers at HDC are aware of the urgency.

(B) Plans Advisory

Cllr Stevens invited questions on the minutes of the last two meetings.

(C) Open Spaces

Cllr Perry reported that the bid has gone in for the Pocket Parks in order to enable a feasibility study on the Sand Pit field. There has also been some discussion on verge management.

(D) Village Centre

Cllr Jones invited questions on recent minutes.

i) Public Conveniences Update

Cllr Jones commented that the disabled toilets are yet to open and that Cllr Morgan is chasing the contractor. Cllr Morgan also confirmed there has been some vandalism and that he is monitoring the situation. HPC may have to consider closing the bus shelter at night.

(E) Museum

Cllr Donoghue had nothing to report as there has not been a recent meeting.

(F) Commons

Cllr Sharp reported that there was a meeting on the 16th of December and invited questions.

(G) Neighbourhood Plan Report

Cllr Stevens noted that an update from Mr Ray Osgood was circulated to all councillors yesterday. Regulation 16 consultations ended on the 19th of December and there were 45 responses; however nothing of note from statutory consultees. The next stage is that HDC will report on any changes they feel necessary and this will also include the consultation statement. Following that an Inspector will be appointed. HDC has given a choice of three and a fourth has been requested due to his particular high level of local knowledge. HPC can expect the Inspector to begin in April, with the referendum possibly by the end of June.

18. REPORTS OF MEMBERS REPRESENTING COUNCIL ON EXTERNAL BODIES

None.

19. SUSSEX POLICE REPORT

The Clerk noted that there have been several instances of anti-social behaviour in the High Street and at the back of the Leisure Centre. The PCSO has been informed. He also commented that there is no CCTV at the back of Leisure Centre. There has been some damage by a motorbike being ridden across the Kingsfield football pitches. The Chairman asked that the resident who cleared the broken glass from the Leisure Centre car park is sent some flowers as a thank you gesture.

20. CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the Bus and Coach Association had tried to force the hand of the Department for Transport to prosecute community transport associations who operate without 'O' licenses. This claim was rejected on 6th December by the High Court.

21. ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS TO BE RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

None

22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 4th February 2020 at 7:00pm in The Henfield Hall.

Meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Appendix 1 - £42,592.44 Expenditure - Period 1st December to 31st December 2019

Budgens (Various)	9.98
Mr P Stanislas (Locking the Temporary High Street Toilets)	90.00
Acorn Contractors Ltd (Supply and Install Bike Shelter)	3,750.00
Coles Automotive Ltd (Council Van Repairs)	115.91
One Stop (Various)	3.45
WC Hire Ltd (Storage Container Hire & Sewage Pit Emptying)	613.60
AVS Fencing Supplies Ltd (Posts)	7.04
Cloud Access (Smart Updater)	3.13

Stonepit Nurseries Ltd (High Street Flowers/Watering)	1,810.00
Simpson Electrical Solutions Ltd (12 New LED Bollards)	10,763.30
Amazon Web Services (Back-up Services)	5.52
Bank Charges (Barclays)	16.90
EDF Energy (Rothery Electric 31/8 to 28/11/19)	77.16
Picturedome Theatres (Rent for Area Adjacent to Hawthorne House)	100.00
HDC (Refuse and Recycling Collections)	625.75
Litter Warden Salaries (December)	706.41
Salaries (December)	9,395.48
Post Office (Postage)	6.60
Premier Office (UK) Ltd (Photocopy Charge 20/11/19 to 10/12/19)	52.51
Mrs P Sanders (November Verge/Bed Maintenance)	83.50
S McMenamin (December Cemetery Maintenance)	164.00
EDF Energy (Public Conveniences Electricity)	57.00
Shell Garage (Petrol and Diesel)	66.17
BT (November Phone Charges)	81.60
Legal & General (Pension Contribution)	400.23
A & B Matters Ltd (Payroll Services Oct to Dec 2019)	150.00
Premier Office (UK) Ltd (Quarterly Insurance)	75.00
Active Pump Services Ltd (Sewage Pump/Pipe Work)	886.00
Mulberry & Co (Interim Internal Audit 2019/20)	172.50
Members' Allowances (Three Councillors)	277.50
EDF Energy (Quarterly Link Road Lights)	303.07
Stokes (Stationery)	2.50
Amazon (Various Stationery/Hardware)	109.09
HDC (Dog Bin Emptying)	78.54
Green Manor Building Ltd (Third Payment for Public Conveniences)	11,533.00

Transfer of Internal Funds in December 2019

£15,000.00 transferred on 20th December 2019 and £15,000.00 transferred on 23rd December 2019, from the HSBC Money Manager Account to the Barclays Current Account.