

# HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL - FINANCE RISK & CHANGE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting of the Finance Risk & Change Governance Committee  
held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 2:30 pm via Zoom Conferencing.

**In attendance:** Cllrs E Goodyear (Chairman), M Eastwood, N Stevens, A Donoghue, J Jones and G Perry.

**Present:** Mr K Wright (Clerk) and Mrs R Grantham (Administrator).

## MINUTES

### 1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None

### 2. APOLOGIES

None

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 30<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2020

Approved, to be signed at a later date.

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

#### a) Staff Payments

These payments were signed off at the June meeting.

Cllr Eastwood asked when the agreed increase in cemetery fees would be actioned. Cllr Jones confirmed that the increase had been deferred due to the current situation with Covid 19. She recommended extending this deferral for a further three months. Cllr Perry suggested adding a note to the website to explain the situation. The Chairman agreed and **it was resolved** to review the situation again in September.

**Action Point: The Administrator to include this matter on the Village Amenities agenda for September.**

**Action Point: The Administrator to update the website to clarify the current position on fees.**

*The Chairman adjourned the meeting.*

## OPEN FORUM

There were no members of the public at the meeting.

*The Chairman reconvened the meeting.*

### 5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### a) Local Climate & Environment Action Plan and Local Climate & Biodiversity Action Plan

Cllr Perry has conducted a quarterly review, this was circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed to discuss this at the July meeting.

The Chairman confirmed that she and the Clerk are investigating a potential new telephone and broadband provider which could result in significant savings. There will be further information available at the July meeting.

## 6. COUNCIL COMMITTEES – KEY ISSUES

Cllr Perry reported that there has been no meeting of the Recreation and Open Spaces committee (ROS) recently but there is one planned for July.

Cllr Jones reported that the Village Amenities committee had met recently and that two quotations have been received for the pathways in the cemetery extension. Both were around 30% over budget so there maybe a need to scale down plans. She also reported that a contractor has been instructed to resurface the leisure centre car park and that work will commence on the 30<sup>th</sup> June. The Clerk confirmed that Remus have now confirmed that they have no objection to the variation of the S106 agreement to allow work to go ahead on the leisure centre sports hall floor and repairs to the Henfield Hall roof.

Cllr Donoghue reported that there had been a meeting with representatives of the parish council and Henfield Hall in order to clarify the position on grants and plans for the extension. She commented that the meeting was worthwhile and is a positive step forward in finding a new way to work together.

Cllr Stevens commented that there have recently been two planning applications with significant local interest which would normally prompt the committee, , to recommend that the decision is made by the planning committee at Horsham rather than by an individual officer. The committee has not made this request recently due to the situation with Covid 19 and will continue to do so as long as the officer assigned has been inclined to refuse the application. The Chairman queried whether the planning committee meetings at Horsham are still going ahead and if they are, whether the public are able to attend.

**Action Point: The Administrator to seek clarification with Horsham District Council as to whether members of the public are able to attend remote planning meetings.**

Cllr Eastwood reported that calls to the Henfield Helpline have dropped. However there are still a core group of vulnerable residents needing support. He also confirmed that there has been a request made to Horsham District Council for a postal ballot on the Local Plan. He then reported that, despite having recently been being awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary service, the dementia care provided by the Haven is under threat as Impact Initiaives have withdrawn their provision without notice. Cllr Eastwood is chairing a working group looking at how to continue services, however there is a need to be cautious and legally compliant.

## 7. REVIEW OF COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

### a) Standing Orders

The draft was circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Chairman explained that some further documents are still under review and will be presented at the July meeting. The Standing Orders have been revised against the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) model, there are a few changes to note but it is broadly similar to the existing document. She commented that there was no provision for co-option of new members in the new model from NALC even though it is still a statutory obligation

Investigation into this matter with NALC had no provided answers as to why this is the case,. Therefore the co option section has remained in this version as it was previously. Cllr Donoghue asked why some sections were in red and some in bold. The Chairman explained that red denoted changes and items in bold are statutory requirements that cannot be altered. Cllr Jones noted that she had spotted some discrepancies with numbering and that item 4 (d) xii ought to be altered to reflect that committees elect their own Chairman at the first meeting, rather than by Full Council.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Perry and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** that, subject to the amendments discussed, the document is recommended for adoption by full council in July.

**Action Point: Cllr Jones to send an amended version to the Administrator.**

b) Code of Conduct

The draft was circulated to members prior to the meeting. Cllr Donoghue confirmed that Horsham District Council still have their Code of Conduct under review but that their draft has been considered suitable for adoption by Parish Council and is considered an improvement on the current document. Cllr Perry suggested an improvement to formatting to include the table referred to in the appendix, as it was in the original draft.

**Action Point: Cllr Donoghue to amend the document to include the table formatting.**

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Eastwood, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR**, subject to the amendment above, to recommend this document for adoption by full council in July.

c) Disciplinary Policy

The draft was circulated to members prior to the meeting. Cllr Donoghue confirmed that this policy has been based on the NALC model, and that she has been in contact with Cllr Jones in order to ensure that it mirrors the content of the Grievance policy. The Clerk also recommended not abbreviating the name of this committee in the first paragraph. He also confirmed that this policy does not need to be ratified by Full Council.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Donoghue, **SECONDED** by Cllr Perry and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to adopt this policy.

**Action Point: The Clerk to circulate the policy to all staff.**

**Action Point: Cllr Donoghue to ensure that the matters identified by the Chairman are covered in an alternative policy.**

**The Clerk left the meeting.**

## 8. AGREE TERMS OF REFERENCE

a) Personnel Sub-Committee & Member/Officer Relations

Cllr Shaw has produced a first draft which was circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Donoghue confirmed that further discussion has taken place with herself, Cllr Shaw and Cllr Perry. There are some items still to be included, some the council already have, and a proportion are a matter of law.

Cllr Donoghue asked how the committee would like this work to be progressed and where responsibility would be held, to delegate to a working group or sub committee. The Chairman expressed concerns relating to delaying of decisions if delegated to a sub- committee and Cllr Jones commented that a working group may be more suitable with the aim of bringing recommendations directly to this committee. She also commented that line management of the Clerk ought to stay with the Chairman of this committee. Cllr Stevens also supported having a working group to make recommendations to this committee and the Chairman to maintain management of the Clerk. Cllr Eastwood also supported this approach. The Chairman suggested that twice a year, this committees meetings are dedicated to personnel issues and that this is written into the Terms of Reference. The Chairman also commented that appointment of the Clerk needs to be by the Full Council following a recommendation of this committee. Cllr Eastwood suggested that this policy is reviewed every three years rather than two years, to bring it in line with other policies. He confirmed that this will be acceptable to the auditor.

It was agreed, that temporary working groups will be formed to deal with particular personnel issues. The Chairman confirmed that ongoing maintenance issues can be identified by this committee and working groups reformed as necessary.

Cllr Eastwood praised the Members and Officer Relations document and recommended that this is used as an appendix to the Code of Conduct.

**Action Point: Cllr Donoghue to delete references to sub committees in the document and replace with this committee, change the schedule for review to 'at least every three years' and update the wording to appointment of the Clerk and section 2.2.**

**Action Point: The Clerk to circulate the amended version and ensure it is included as an appendix to the Code of Conduct for recommendation to full council in July.**

**Action Point: Cllr Donoghue, Cllr Perry and the Clerk to form a working group to identify any gaps in policy by the July meeting of this committee.**

**Action Point: The Chairman to update the Terms of Reference of this committee to include twice annual personnel meetings.**

b) Recreation & Open Spaces Committee

The amended Terms of Reference was circulated to members prior to the meeting. Cllr Perry explained the remit was updated to include enjoyment of the countryside and footpaths and recommended the change.

**It was resolved** to accept the suggested update to the name and Terms of Reference.

c) Village Amenities Committee

Cllr Jones confirmed that the change is based on Cllr Kendall and Cllr Morgans recommendations which clarify the remit and avoid any overlap with Recreation and Open Spaces. She also explained that there was still an outstanding matter of responsibility for the cemetery, and that it may move to Recreation and Open Spaces once the cemetery extension is complete.

**It was resolved** to accept the suggested update to the name and Terms of Reference.

9. **HEALTH AND SAFETY AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY RISK REGISTERS – REVIEW OF ANY CURRENT ISSUES**

The Chairman confirmed there is nothing to currently report on this matter.

10. **RETURN TO NORMAL FRAMEWORK**

The document was circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Chairman highlighted that she has tried to match the plan against the Government alert levels, trying to pre-empt any announcements that made be made over time. She has divided the plan to reflect the different implications for the Council, the parish office, the local community and the helpline. Key points included the following:

- Risk Assessments will be needed in order to open buildings/facilities and may need to take place several times.
- There will be a change to meeting schedules, she suggested face to face meetings only for full council and by exception only.
- A change to how we engage with the public, to no longer physically open but to offer appointments in an altered lay out to the reception, including screening and procedures to thoroughly clean between visitors.

Cllr Eastwood praised the plan and commented that there are also plans to keep the Helpline going in conjunction with Shermanbury and Woodmancote, with funding from all three councils. He also commented that the parish office needs to be resourced properly with consideration to remote working which has proved highly effective and productive. The Chairman commented that restrictions and social distancing could be in place long term. Cllr Donoghue also praised the document and commented that it raises a lot of questions on how to re-open various buildings, facilities and businesses safely. Cllr Eastwood asked about timings, the Chairman confirmed that we are currently in government alert level 4 and to get to level 1 could take over a year as likely will not be declared until there is a vaccine. She advised that we are likely to be in level three for a long period of time. Cllr Eastwood commented that there are also implications for staff as the nature of the jobs will change as alert levels change, there will be a need for flexibility.. Cllr Donoghue suggested adding an additional column to separate remote working staff such as works officers and litter pickers. **It was resolved** to recommend this document, with the agreed additions, for approval to the full council in July.

**Action Point: The Chairman to add an additional column for remote workers such as works officers and litter pickers.**

## **11. INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN AND SUSTAINABILITY REVIEW**

The relevant documents were circulated to the committee prior to the meeting. Cllr Eastwood confirmed that his review is now complete. He confirmed that these documents will act as a driver to the level of housing that can be put into place in Henfield. He asked that all committee members read the documents and submit any comments to him by the 30<sup>th</sup> June as they need to be submitted to Horsham District Council by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July. In terms of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), he has used the Neighbourhood Plan and contacted various other outside groups, with a particular focus on younger people. There are currently 20 items listed but he recommended reducing this to 10-15, bearing in mind the need to achieve balance and practicality and to tailor it to core projects needed to support the 370 houses that Henfield are expected to deliver. In a slight to change to the document, it has been agreed in principle with the Hall at a recent meeting to evolve the Hall into a cultural and entertainment centre with visitor space, the cost has therefore been adjusted up to £300, 000. Cllr Eastwood recommended adopting items 1-10 with item 15, the playing field at Wantley. In addition to the CIL items listed he has asked for consideration towards sewerage capacity issues, setting aside 2% to affordable housing for keyworkers to assist the school and medical centre with recruitment, prominence to the Local Climate and Environment Action Plan, both alongside Woodmancote and Shermanbury who are also prepared to commit funding. Cllr Eastwood then explained that he had a reserve list of items which include a swimming pool but he recommended against including that due to cost, as well as discussions with Cllr Morgan which had indicated that there was less justification for a pool as Henfield does not have a secondary school.

Cllr Donoghue commented that, although the school may currently have spare capacity, there could be implications of further costs to the building itself. Cllr Eastwood agreed that this could be added but that further detail would be needed

**Action Point: Cllr Donoghue to contact the school to ask for detail on what they may require.**

Cllr Eastwood then confirmed that if the medical centre need to increase capacity above a further 300 houses it is likely that they will need an additional consulting room. Cllr Perry commented that there may be long term implications of Covid 19 which mean the nature of a lot if these facilities and services may need to change which Cllr Eastwood acknowledged.

Cllr Eastwood then proceeded to list the items he recommends for inclusion as follows:

- Portable Speed Indicators x 2
- Develop and Deliver safe routes for pedestrians, cyclists, riders and vehicles
- Deliver 4 more Henfield Trails
- Henfield Hall visitor centre, museum extension and improvements
- Conversion of Youth Club to incorporate nursery and young peoples centre
- New Scout Building
- Extension to Cricket Pavillion
- Replace Football Pavillion
- Leisure centre, older component replacement
- New Playing fiels and 3g pitches at Wantley
- Allotments as a design requirement for developments of 50+ homes
- Protection for the River Adur, tributaries and flood plains
- St Peters School Improvements
- Henfield Medical Centre Improvements

Cllr Stevens recommended concentrating on items that the parish council can't possibly fund themselves from precept, and that the requirement for a further playing field at Wantley is already in place so may not need to be repeated on the IDP list. He also commented that HDC's calculation on housing numbers is incorrect, based on his own working of figures provided by the Office of National Statistics, which indicate that the annual housing need in Horsham District is closer to 600.

**Action Point: Committee members to submit comments to Cllr Eastwood by the 30<sup>th</sup> of June.**

*To resolve, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, in accordance with Standing Orders s.1(d) to exclude the press and public on the grounds that the confidential matters to be discussed under item 12 below would be prejudicial in the public interest.*

## 12. **GRIEVANCE PROCESS CONSIDERATIONS**

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that this item is discussed in closed session as the final item on the agenda in order to exclude the Administrator.

## 13. **FINANCE**

### a) Confirmation of Reconciliation of Bank Accounts

The Clerk has requested that members of this committee attend the Parish Office for this purpose. The auditor is aware of the situation and the Clerk has requested that anyone able to help contacts him directly.

### b) Internal Controls (To Include Audit Check of Expenditure) – AIRS Consultant (£450.00)

The Clerk has requested that members of this committee attend the Parish Office for this purpose. The auditor is aware of the situation and the Clerk has requested that anyone able to help contacts him directly.

### c) Progress Report 2020/21

Up to the end of May, expenditure is 13.8% of budget and we are 16.7% of the way through the year. Expenditure for June is only around £5, 000 so far. Income is as expected.

### d) Fidelity Insurance Increase

The Chairman explained that as there is occasionally up to £400, 000 in the parish council bank accounts, it is recommended that the employee dishonesty insurance cover is increased from £300, 000 to reflect this. There is an increase of £379.76 to pay which takes the total premium to £2162.23

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** to Cllr Eastwood and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to increase the insurance cover.

### d) Approve The Henfield Hall Rent Review

The Chairman reported that there has been a proposed rent increase for the parish office, linked to the Consumer Price Index increase of 8.5% as per the lease, with a break point in 2024. The Chairman has researched rental per square metre in comparable buildings. The current rent paid for the parish office is £6.40 per square metre to increase to £6.95 per square metre.. Therefore the Chairman recommended that the committee approve the increase as it appears to represent good value. Cllr Stevens stated that he will abstain from voting as he is the Hall representative.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Eastwood, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED** five in favour with one abstention.

### f) Approve an Expenditure Limit for the Clerk

The Chairman explained that there is currently no expenditure limit for the Clerk. There has recently examples of work required and it would have been very useful if the Clerk had been able to approve that spend without needing to seek approval. The Chairman confirmed, on researching other councils, this appears to be a common limit and the Clerk feels this is an appropriate contingency.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Perry and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the £300 expenditure limit for the Clerk.

**Action Point: Cllr Eastwood to amend the Financial Regulations to reflect this change.**

## 14. **ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS TO BE RAISED BY COUNCILLORS**

There were no other matters to discuss.

## 15. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

**Meeting Closed at 17.35**

