

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of Henfield Parish Council
held on Thursday 16th April 2020 at 2:30pm via Zoom Conferencing.**

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

In attendance: Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Administrator) and two members of the public.

AGENDA

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS 'INTERESTS

None.

2. APOLOGIES

Cllrs N Farrell, N Stevens and A Rickard.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4th MARCH 2020

Approved, to be signed by the Chairman in the Parish Office on 17th April 2020.

4. MATTERS ARISING

a) S106 Funding Update

The Chairman advised that the application has been approved for the Leisure Centre and the Henfield Hall to access funds, subject to the signing of the Deed of Variation. He expressed his thanks to Cllr Morgan for assisting with the process. Cllr Kendall confirmed that the legal costs are to be shared equally between both organisations.

b) Local Plan Response

The Chairman advised that a comprehensive Henfield Parish Council (HPC) response to the Local Plan has been sent to Horsham District Council (HDC). He commented that HDC have received over 5,500 online responses as well as numerous letters and emails. He has also seen objections from the National Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Inter-Parish Group. He expressed his thanks to all involved.

Cllr Potts advised that an extension for the Local Plan has been requested from the Secretary of State. The Chairman responded by stating that Catherine Howe at HDC is still working towards the original deadline of the 28th November 2020.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

The Chairman invited the members of the public in attendance to speak but no response was received.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

5. IMPACT OF THE COVID 19 CRISIS ON HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The Chairman advised the Council that the Clerk is working in the Parish Office, the Administrator is working from home and Belinda Samrah is working at the Haven for the Henfield Helpline. Works Officers are continuing to work on a limited basis, whilst observing social distancing measures. One of the Works Officers is self-isolating due to a pre-existing medical condition.

6. IMPACT OF THE COVID 19 CRISIS ON THE VILLAGE INFRASTRUCTURE AND MITIGATION TO DATE

The Chairman explained that at the start of the Corona Virus crisis there were many small groups and individuals keen to help. He thanked Cllr Goodyear for pulling together community leaders on the 18th March and coordinating a scheme that all could feed into; this resulted in the Henfield Helpline. Digby Stephenson kindly offered the use of the Henfield Haven building, with permission from Impact Initiatives, and equipment and resources were pulled together within five days, a first-class team effort. Cllr Goodyear organised the leaflet which gave out all the necessary information for volunteers to register, as well as explaining what support was available for vulnerable residents and those self-isolating. Distribution of these leaflets to every household was organised by Cllr Donoghue. The Chairman confirmed that Belinda Samrah has been employed by HPC to run the Helpline from the Haven 10am to 4pm five days a week. On top of this she and Digby are also volunteering in their own time. The Henfield Helpline has 273 local volunteers registered, (not all are currently active) and 300 people registered as needing assistance. They are currently taking approximately 200 calls per week, as well as email enquiries.

The volunteers' activities are concentrated on deliveries of food and medication, dog walking, driving residents to medical appointments and telephone contact for those who are lonely and concerned. There are two food deliveries per week from Budgens and these food parcels are then delivered by volunteer drivers to 25 people across the village. This is coordinated by Lorette Mackie, who is the manager of the Haven and is volunteering her time to help our residents whilst the Haven is closed. Jeremy's, Truffles and Rushfields are also assisting with food deliveries and Swains have also been approached. Henfield Community Partnership are regularly updating a list of all local businesses that are still open and posting this for residents to see.

The Helpline is also assisting Lloyds and the Medical Centre with deliveries of medication with around 40 prescriptions collected per day. There are two volunteers assigned specifically to deal with medical queries.

Befriending circles have been set up with groups of six residents per circle and Rev Paul Doick has made around 200 phone calls so far to local residents that have requested telephone support.

Digby has accessed total funding of £4,000 from Sussex Giving and the Martin Lewis Campaign in order to financially assist a small number of residents who are in particular hardship and will cover some of the volunteers out of pocket expenses. These funds, as well as some other donations, are being held in the Haven's account and are being administered by Digby and Belinda. Recipients are being carefully assessed. Belinda and Digby are doing an excellent job and are both very positive about the difference that the Helpline is making.

Consideration is being given to suitable cover should Digby or Belinda become unwell or need time off. Peter Shepherd has been trained to cover Digby and the Clerk confirmed that Belinda is being shadowed by a trainee logistics student, who has been helping her at the Haven.

Cllr Donoghue asked whether, now that there is a national scheme, there may be other funds available from HDC or West Sussex County Council (WSCC). Cllrs Morgan and Potts both offered to investigate this further. It was noted by Councillors that there could be a possibility of reclaiming the salary paid to Belinda from HDC. The Chairman then invited a member of the public to speak, who advised that Liz Burt from HDC is arranging distribution of funds.

Cllr Kendall commented that it is encouraging that local businesses are thinking creatively about how to help and that hopefully this is in turn helping their cashflow. Cllr Shaw suggested that in future, a campaign to encourage local people to continue using and supporting local businesses would be helpful. The Chairman suggested writing to local businesses to express thanks on behalf of HPC and that BN5 magazine may be keen to be involved in running a campaign in future, which HPC would be happy to support. Cllr Morgan noted that Henfield Community Partnership may also be keen to help.

Action Point: The Chairman to write to thank local businesses for their support and to ask BN5 magazine whether they would run a campaign to support local businesses in the future once restrictions are lifted.

The Chairman also then noted that there is a need to reach out to local care homes including Red Oaks and Upper Mead in order to offer support.

Action Point: The Chairman to contact local care homes to offer support.

Cllr Perry asked whether any consideration was being given to how the helpline will evolve going forward. The Chairman confirmed that he, Belinda and Digby are meeting regularly to discuss this and that they have a large reserve list of volunteers so are confident about their ability to scale up or cover absence if needed. They also feel that they currently have sufficient funds. He noted that sickness cover for Belinda and Digby is the current priority.

The Chairman commented that he is very proud of all those involved in setting up and managing the daily efforts to keep people safe and noted that new friendships are being created. He also commented that there is a Citizen of Henfield Award, and it may be worth considering the Helpline as a future team recipient.

7. FINANCIAL UPDATE

a) Summary of £57,237.67 – Period 1st March to 31st March 2020

Noted by Councillors. Cllr Goodyear stated substantial sums have been spent on the final payment for the Link Road and joining the Local Government Pension Scheme.

b) Select Expenditure as the Monthly Random Audit Check

Cllr Morgan selected WC Hire.

c) Year End Reports 2019/20

The Clerk stated that on Tuesday he had circulated the Year End accounts and Budget Report. He thanked the Chairman and Cllr Jemmett for their assistance and invited questions. He noted that there was an overall reduction this year in total Reserves from £326,138 to £243,750.

Cllr Jemmett noted that the Miscellaneous figure was quite high under the Finance Budget and that it would be better broken down further for clarity. The Clerk explained that this figure included £9,500 spent on the new HPC website as well as printing costs for the Local Plan, a contribution to the landscape survey for the Sandy Lane appeal and to Shermanbury Parish Council for the River Adur report. None of these costs were budgeted for at the start of the 2019/20 financial year. Cllr Goodyear agreed to review whether there is the potential for adding a footnote for further transparency. The Clerk stated that there is also a monthly transparency report on the website detailing all expenditure over £500. Cllr Kendall also noted that there are some items such as the Youth Club that had no budget but did have some expenditure.

Action Point: Cllr Goodyear and the Clerk to consider adding further clarity on the Miscellaneous items in the Budget Report.

8. RESIGNATION OF THE DEPUTY CLERK

The Chairman explained that Cllr Donoghue and Cllr Jones conducted an exit interview with the Deputy Clerk, which is intended for the benefit of the Council. The following day, on her final day of employment, the Deputy Clerk lodged an individual grievance. The Council has therefore launched an investigation under its individual grievance procedure and Cllr Kendall has agreed to act as the Investigating Officer. He will endeavour to deliver the result of this investigation within 14 days; this grievance will then be considered by a panel of three Councillors.

The Chairman proceeded to thank the Administrator for stepping in to support the Clerk and confirmed that the Parish Office future staffing need will now need to be considered. He also expressed his thanks to the Clerk.

9. MOTION: TO DEFER THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL UNTIL THE MONTH AFTER THE FIRST MEETING TO BE HELD AFTER THE COVID 19 CRISIS RESTRICTIONS ARE LIFTED

The Chairman commented that new regulations state that the AGM and elections can be rolled forward 12 months but that he felt that this was not a preferable course of action.

Following brief discussion, it was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Simmonds and **VOTED** all in favour, to defer the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council until the month after the first face-to-face physical meeting to be held after the Covid 19 crisis restrictions are lifted.

10. MOTION: TO SUSPEND SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE EXCEPT FOR THE PLANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO SUBMIT ELECTRONIC RESPONSES TO HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Chairman clarified that the intention is for there to be no Open Spaces or Village Centre committee meetings but that the Finance, Risk and Change Governance Committee will meet if there is a financial imperative. Cllr Jones requested that certain items, such as the Cemetery Extension project, continue to progress. It was resolved that these can continue to be progressed via email correspondence and agreement.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Jones, **SECONDED** by Cllr Morgan and **VOTED** all in favour to suspend sub-committee meetings until further notice except for the Plans Advisory Committee which will continue to submit electronic responses to Horsham District Council.

11. HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The Chairman confirmed that he felt there are three current priorities for HPC, those being Covid 19 safety for residents and staff members, meeting Councils financial obligations and best endeavours at delivering business as usual services. He also reminded Councillors and staff to ask for assistance and support from one another if needed.

12. COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

Cllr Morgan asked about the situation regarding the public conveniences. The Clerk confirmed that the main facilities are now locked but that the disabled toilets are still accessible with a radar key. The Works Officer is continuing to check, clean and top up with toilet rolls where necessary.

Cllr Donoghue asked whether there had been any reports of anti-social behaviour or burglaries, in particular at commercial premises. The Clerk responded that there had been no reports to the Parish Office but that the situation will continue to be monitored. The Chairman noted that reports should be made directly to the police.

Cllr Morgan then commented that in addition to the Clap for Carers at 8pm on Thursday evenings, there had also been reports of Chinese lanterns. He stated that these are extremely dangerous and has asked BN5 to publicise a warning about this matter and to encourage members of the public not to light them

13. SUGGESTED ACTIONS GOING FORWARD

The Chairman stated that the Link Road lights are now switched off in order to discourage people gathering in this area and to save electricity costs. He also mentioned that the contractor has requested permission to commence installation of the additional lighting near the Youth Club, on the basis that employees will observe social distancing regulations and suitably cordon off the area from the public. Cllr Jones asked whether this could create the same issue of people congregating, but the Chairman explained the lights would not be switched on as they will be connected via a timer to the Link Road lights. The Chairman also commented that he had reminded the contractor to etch the lights on one side. It was resolved for this work to go ahead.

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 14 below would be prejudicial in the public interest.

14. MOTION: TO CONSIDER A PAY REVIEW FOR PARISH COUNCIL STAFF

The motion was duly discussed.

15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

12th May 2020 at 2.30pm via Zoom conferencing.

Meeting Closed 3.55pm.

Appendix 1 - £57,237.67 Expenditure - Period 1st March to 30th March 2020

Budgens (Various)	28.04
Amazon (Various)	18.12
Action In Rural Sussex (Consultant Fee)	450.00
PMW Ltd (Further Development plus Monthly Support)	300.00
One Stop (Various)	3.45
WC Hire Ltd (Storage Container Hire)	207.16
Solopress (Flyers for Henfield Helpline)	49.99
Community Transport Sussex (Quarterly Bus Transport)	1,000.00
Grasstex Ltd (Cemetery Maintenance – Two Months)	1,160.00
Digital River (Laptop Memory and New Drive)	71.98
Amazon Web Services (Back-up Services)	5.55
Bank Charges (Barclays)	22.90
Mr M Eastwood (Travel)	32.15
Kestrel Alarms Ltd (Repair to CCTV)	19.00
ATS Machinery Ltd (Chainsaw Repair and Various)	148.77
Litter Warden Salaries (March)	1,015.24
Salaries (March – Plus LGPS Pension Contribution)	21,387.48
Members' Allowances (January to March)	277.50
Premier Office (UK) Ltd (Photocopy Charge 20/2/20 to 20/3/20)	96.06
Mrs P Sanders (February & March Verge/Bed Maintenance)	153.00
Business Stream (Rothery Water)	32.54
EDF Energy (Public Conveniences Electricity)	73.00
Shell Garage (Petrol and Diesel)	80.72
BT (February Phone Charges)	87.30
Legal & General (Pension Contribution)	400.23
Premier Office (UK) Ltd (Copier Paper & Toilet Rolls)	113.20
ICO (Annual Data Protection Fee)	35.00
Henfield Computer Club (Loan of Projector and Screen)	10.00
Gardner & Scardifield (Batten)	2.88
Microsoft (Email Provision)	912.00
J T Mackley & Co Ltd (Final Link Road Payment)	27,691.97
CPRE (Annual Subscription)	36.00
Business Stream (Public Conveniences Water)	189.18
EDF Energy (Link Road Lights – Quarterly Charge)	398.30
A & B Matters Ltd (Quarterly Payroll Charge)	150.00
The Henfield Hall (Annual Room Bookings)	557.00
Post Office (Postage)	21.96

Transfer of Internal Funds in March 2020

£15,000.00 transferred on 24th March 2020 and £15,000.00 transferred on 31st March 2020 from the HSBC Accounts to the Barclays Current Account.