

## HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of Henfield Parish Council  
held on Tuesday 7th July 2020 at 2:30pm via Zoom Conferencing.**

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

**In attendance:** Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Administrator), Mr D Stevenson (Chairman, Henfield Haven CIO), Cllr R Noel (District Councillor, Horsham District Council (HDC)), Rev P Doick and Mr R Osgood (Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group)

### MINUTES

#### **1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS 'INTERESTS**

The Chairman declared a prejudicial interest in item 8 as a Trustee of the Henfield Haven.

#### **2. APOLOGIES**

Cllrs N Farrell and C Simmonds.

#### **3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2020**

Approved, to be signed by the Chairman at a later date in the Parish Office.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

##### a) Youth Club lighting

This project is now complete.

##### b) S106 update regarding the Henfield Hall and Henfield Leisure Centre

The Deed of Variation is in the Parish Office waiting to be signed. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Cllr Morgan.

**Action Point: The Chairman and Cllr Donoghue to attend the Parish Office to sign the deed.**

##### c) Cllr Potts to provide the Parish Office with some wording for Facebook, asking dog owners to keep their dogs on a lead when around livestock

Cllr Potts confirmed that he will not now be supply some wording, as the situation does seem to have improved recently.

##### d) Henfield Queen's Voluntary Award Letter of Congratulations

The Chairman sent the letter as agreed. This item will be discussed further under item 8.

##### e) Showcase Tour BP Guild support

The Chairman confirmed he has responded positively to HDC and he hopes that the event will stimulate activity in the High Street.

**Action Point: The Clerk to follow up possible marshalling assistance from the BP Guild with Cllr Simmonds.**

f) Meeting with Henfield Hall representatives

This will be discussed under the Museum agenda item.

g) Neighbourhood Plan Postal Ballot request to Horsham District Council & CIL impact if delayed

The Chairman confirmed he has submitted the request for a postal ballot to HDC, but has not had a response.

**5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

*The Chairman adjourned the meeting.*

**OPEN FORUM**

The Chairman invited any of those in attendance to speak, to which they declined.

*The Chairman reconvened the meeting*

**6. COVID 19 – PROGRESS REPORT**

The Chairman confirmed that the helpline is continuing, however call volumes have dropped, possibly due to restrictions on travel being relaxed. Belinda Samrah is still working 5-10 hours per week monitoring calls. The Haven will be reopening from 13th July so the helpline will move out by then with Belinda working remotely. Budgens have agreed to continue their shopping supply for home delivery service throughout August, possibly into September. There is still a core of volunteers (although some have returned to work) and vulnerable people needing assistance, although Belinda is starting to encourage some to venture out where appropriate.

Cllr Jones confirmed that there had not been much assistance from HDC and they are still considering the suggestions put forward, including a suggested shelter outside Budgens. Pavement markings were not felt to be necessary as they are wide enough to manage social distancing. HDC has distributed business support packs where requested. The public conveniences have been risk assessed and are due to re-open on the 20th July, providing the additional hygiene measures agreed are in place. Cllr Perry confirmed that play areas opened yesterday with appropriate signage, which has been much appreciated by parents. Encouraging to see parents sensibly using wipes and hand sanitiser.

**7. HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Morgan reported that the Leisure Centre had applied to HDC for a £10,000 discretionary grant but following lobbying from himself and Cllr Potts the Leisure Centre has been awarded a grant for £25,000, for which they are very grateful. He also reported that the cabinet member has inspected car parks and agreed that the library car park is a priority for renovation. The existing surface will be dug up and re-laid, with new lights and electric car charging points installed. Planters will be replaced and signage moved. If Councillors have design suggestions please contact Cllr Morgan.

Cllr Potts reported that the Local Plan process is still continuing to the current timetable as per the response from the Secretary of State. Legal advice has been sought and he hopes there will be further decisions made in late September. There has been a revision in the standard methodology for calculation of the basic number of houses that the District needs, which has resulted in a drop from 965 to 920 home per annum. This doesn't include the 5% buffer, or the duty to co-operate numbers.

Cllr Potts also reported that the impact of Covid 19 has resulted in an increase in costs to HDC of £850,000 per month, mostly due to loss of income from parking, rent holidays, leisure centre defaults and a pause on developer contributions. This is despite a £1.5 million government grant, further grants are not expected. He expects there to be cuts and perhaps assets sold.

Cllr Potts then reported that £580,000 has been paid out in business grants and £750,000 is still available to apply for. This will be awarded on a first come first served basis and once the deadline passes will expire.

#### **8. HENFIELD HAVEN UPDATE - from Digby Stephenson (DS), Chairman Henfield Haven CIO**

The Chairman reported that during Covid 19 the Haven has remained open as the home for the Helpline, manned 5 days per week using loaned furniture and IT equipment. It has helped over 500 households, including some from outlying villages, with a total of over 300 volunteers helping to keep vulnerable people in the community safe. Central to the service are Digby Stephenson, Belinda Samrah and Lorette Mackie and he expressed his thanks to them. Services include delivery of medication and shopping from Budgens. Rev Paul Doick has sent a letter to the Parish Council, which was circulated prior to the meeting, requesting that this support continue as it is still very much needed. DS has secured £4,500 in grants and donations for the Helpline. £3,500 remains in the fund which will be retained by the Haven. The Parish Council has paid Belinda's wages, although she gives a lot of her own time on a voluntary basis in addition to these paid hours.

DS explained that the Haven was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June, thanks to the nomination by Ray Osgood over a year ago. Sadly, six days later Impact Initiatives announced they were withdrawing the service provision without the three-month consultation or seven-month notice periods specified in the contract, therefore not giving time for the CIO to source a new provider. This has also resulted in staff redundancies. Impact Initiatives has stated that they intend to continue providing a new caring service but not through the Haven, which is also in breach of conditions in their contract. The grants of £45,000 from West Sussex County Council (WSSC) and £10,000 from HDC will now no longer be available to support the services at the Haven, as Impact Initiatives have stated their intention to repurpose them to support other services.

He then confirmed that the Haven has been overwhelmed with messages of support and donations. Working groups have been formed, a PR campaign launched to encourage customers and carers to continue using the Haven and a crowdfunding page set up with a target to raise £100,000. The café will be reopening, manned entirely by volunteers on the 13<sup>th</sup> July. The goal is that the new Haven will be a centre for support services for vulnerable people and their carers, perhaps with less emphasis on age so that it can also cater for children and young people. Services will be adjusted alongside Government Covid alert levels. The garden is being used and there may be a 1:1 hosting system for high needs customers so that carers can receive some respite. They are looking for an alternative provider, as well as considering alternative ways of operating. WSSC Leader and Cabinet Member are visiting tomorrow as their lease requires that the Haven provides three days per week high needs care and there is a possibility that the lease could be withdrawn.

Cllr Jones asked whether there will be a legal follow up of the breaches of contract by Impact Initiatives. Digby confirmed that he hopes the matters can be settled without going to Court. The Chairman confirmed that they are trying to fairly negotiate on matters such as keeping familiar furniture in the high needs room, familiarity being important for these customers, but that at this point it is a difficult relationship to manage.

Cllr Kendall asked whether Cllr Lionel Barnard (WSSC) was assisting. Digby confirmed that he had assisted by providing contacts initially. The Chairman commented that WSSC is not being very forthcoming with information and is refusing to answer questions relating to the extension of Impact Initiatives contract to June 2021 and the funding that goes with it. The grants awarded will be a matter for discussion tomorrow.

Cllr Morgan confirmed that he has spoken to the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Nick Jenkins at HDC. They are supportive and will do what they can to help.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to the Horsham District Councillors present, including Cllr Roger Noel. He confirmed that the Parish Council will continue to support the Helpline for another six months and will then look at a transition ownership to the Haven, but will consider providing funding support when the annual budgets are reviewed. He will also be approaching Woodmancote and Shermanbury

Parish Councils who have both stated that they are willing to contribute financially. He will also respond to Rev Doick's email.

Cllr Shaw commented that he has been involved in the CIO Trustees Meetings as the Outside Body Representative for the Haven and to protect the Chairman given his potential conflict of interest and praised the amount and the thought and work which the Trustees were doing to save the Haven. He agreed that the Parish Council should provide whatever support it can for this important resource.

The Chairman concluded by stating that it is thanks to Digby that there is a plan for the Haven and that the village owes him a great debt of gratitude for all of his work to save the Haven.

**Action Point: The Chairman to respond to Rev Paul Doick's letter.**

**9. MOTION: TO ADOPT REVISED COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS**

Cllr Morgan commented that the section stating that the Chairman of the Council should not serve a term of more than six years should be included in section five. He also commented that the clause that states that a legal deed should not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution needs to move to section 23 with resolutions that can be executed without notice.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Morgan, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED** all in favour to adopt the revised Standing Orders, subject to the two amendments above.

**Action Point: The administrator to amend the Standing Orders as described above.**

**10. MOTION: TO ADOPT REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT INCLUDING APPENDIX RE MEMBER/OFFICER RELATIONS**

Cllr Donoghue commented that an amendment is needed in order to refer to appendix C in the Code of Conduct. Cllr Morgan suggested that the document is reviewed in two years. The Chairman stated that the intention is to keep to a three year review for similar documents.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Potts, **SECONDED** by Cllr Shaw and **VOTED** all in favour to adopt the revised Code of Conduct including appendix re Member/Officer relations, subject to the amendment noted above.

**Action Point: Cllr Donoghue to amend the document to include a reference to appendix C and supply amended final version to the Parish Office.**

**11. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**(A) Finance Risk & Change Governance**

Cllr Goodyear reported that there is no financial summary this month due to the Clerk's absence but that financials are running in line with budgets. We are 25% through the financial year with expenditure at 19.2%. Income from the cemetery is down. The Council will examine three months' information at the next meeting in September.

**i) Return to 'normal working 'plan**

Cllr Goodyear confirmed that the plan has been examined by the Finance, Risk and Change Governance Committee (FRC). It is broken down into sections and includes a new schedule for meetings, with the intention to reserve meetings in person for Full Council meetings and otherwise as needed, but for the rest to continue on Zoom until guidance changes. There is also the intention to close the Parish Office to drop in visitors both from members of the public and Councillors. A new secure area that can be thoroughly cleaned will be created where the counter is situated and reserved for appointments which can be booked. The plan also gives consideration to outdoor workers, ensuring that they can maintain social distancing and have adequate PPE provided. She commented that there

is a need to be flexible and that here is no set time scale. The plan will instead be linked to the Government alert levels.

Cllr Morgan commented that it is important for the public to still have access to the Parish Office. Cllr Goodyear responded stating that changes will not necessarily be permanent but that in addition to the social distancing and safety aspect, the Parish Office staff would appreciate less interruptions during the day as this has been having a negative impact on the management of their workload. The Chairman also commented that there needs to be a trade off of resources and that the Covid 19 pandemic has highlighted a need for better phone support for residents. A new secure area would be especially appropriate for private discussions, such as those regarding cemetery matters which can no longer take place in the main office. Cllr Morgan suggested increasing office staff numbers but Cllr Goodyear commented that space in the office is limited and that wouldn't be possible while adhering to social distancing guidelines. Cllr Potts suggested specified drop in times, Cllr Goodyear agreed this could be possible but that the arrangements were going to initially focus on enabling office staff to return to work safely.

Cllr Goodyear then updated Council on the individual grievance case, stating that the individual was informed of the decision on the 26th June and given a five day period to appeal. In response to a request, an extension to this timeframe was granted until the 10th July 2020. On the 1st July a subject access request has also been submitted to the Council.

**(B) Plans Advisory**

Cllr Goodyear invited questions on recent minutes.

a) Horsham District Local Plan

The Chairman had circulated bullet points and key concerns regarding a Parish Council response to the briefing notes prior to the meeting. The Chairman confirmed this was discussed at the Plans Advisory Committee and invited any comments or suggested amendments. He highlighted the importance of not allowing exposure to speculative developers. Cllr Stevens commented that there are a number of applications that keep reappearing, perhaps hoping that HDC will not have a Local Plan and housing supply by November. He also stated that it is important that the process goes ahead rather than be delayed. He also noted that his comments regarding the mis-calculation of housing need have been removed from the HDC website. The Chairman confirmed that he will go ahead with the planned response and copy this to our MP.

**Action Point: The Chairman to draft a response to HDC regarding the Local Plan.**

**(C) Open Spaces**

Cllr Perry reported that there has not been a recent meeting but that the committee has been busy risk assessing play areas for re-opening. Cllr Morgan commented that he had received a complaint from a resident regarding young people causing noise and damage in the Sandpit Field.

**Action Point: The administrator to include the Sandpit Field on the agenda for the Recreation & Open Spaces meeting next week.**

**(D) Village Centre**

Cllr Jones invited any questions on the recent minutes. She reported that the public conveniences are due to re-open on the 20<sup>th</sup> July subject to the installation of sanitising door handles on the exit doors. There will also be an additional member of staff employed for increased cleaning and that the toilets will close at 5.30pm instead of 7pm. She also reported that the Leisure Centre car park resurfacing work is now complete, Cllr Morgan stated he is happy with the standard of the work. Cllr Jones then reported that the cemetery extension project is progressing well. The path layout has been adjusted and there is a planting plan in place, although there are still some financial issues to resolve.

**Action Point: Cllr Jones to produce an article to publicise the newly resurfaced Leisure Centre car park.**

**(E) Museum**

Cllr Donoghue reported that the Museum Committee has not met recently but that there has been a lot of activity online, despite the Museum itself remaining closed. Re-opening will be discussed at the next meeting in August. In the meantime risk assessments will take place with the advice of the Assistant Curator. The roving exhibit has been removed from the Haven and stored safely in the museum. Cllr Donoghue also reported that there have been several useful webinars made available on topics such as income streams and digitisation.

Cllr Donoghue then reported that there had been a recent meeting with herself, three of the Henfield Hall committee, the Chairman and the Clerk, in order to discuss the issues around the planning application for an extension to the Hall for the benefit of the theatre group. It was a productive discussion with a way forward agreed by all parties present. She is currently awaiting confirmation of the inclusion of a Museum representative on the Hall Management Committee and will be conferring with the Hall on risk assessment for re-opening, which is not anticipated until September.

Cllr Rickard commented that he has enjoyed recent articles in the Parish Magazine and BN5 magazine. Cllr Donoghue commented that another book on local history will be available soon, written by Eddie Colgate. The Chairman commented that is useful to have confirmation of the Hall's direction for the future as it helps with the overall planning for community buildings in the village.

**(F) Commons**

Cllr Sharp reported that there is a meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July and that there are no major problems to report. Cllr Donoghue asked whether there had been any damage. The Chairman confirmed that there had been a few minor marks from horses on the Memorial Field, but that Cllr Sharp had met with a representative of the community to discuss the clearance of alternatives routes for horses. There has also been an increase in the amount of dog waste.

**Mr Ray Osgood joined the meeting.**

**(G) Neighbourhood Plan**

Mr Osgood confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan has reached a significant stage as a Decision Statement was published by HDC on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June. Unfortunately there is no news on our request for a postal ballot for the referendum. However, the Neighbourhood Plan having reached this point now carries significant weight and he has not been made aware of any challenges to it.

**12. REPORTS OF MEMBERS REPRESENTING COUNCIL ON EXTERNAL BODIES**

Cllr Stevens reported that there will be a Hall Executive Committee meeting tomorrow regarding re-opening the Hall. A questionnaire has been sent to groups and organisations regarding their booking and cleaning requirements. He also reported work is underway to replace the roof, however there is a shortage of materials. Re-opening may be limited to the Committee Room and the Garden Room.

Cllr Kendall confirmed that the Leisure Centre is very pleased to receive the grant from HDC. He expressed his thanks to Cllrs Morgan and Potts. He also confirmed the resurfaced car park looks good and he is hopeful the ponding problem near the entrance is now resolved.

The Chairman confirmed that there is a HALC meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July and asked for two volunteers to attend. Cllr Goodyear and Cllr Rickard agreed.

Cllr Donoghue reported that there had been an article about the school in the West Sussex County Times which has been further publicised on social media, with many positive comments being received regarding their Good OFSTED rating and efforts to re-open the school to pupils during the pandemic.

Cllr Jemmett reported that the Cricket Club is resuming matches on Saturday and that they are still awaiting guidance on the usage of changing facilities. He also reported that activities are starting to resume at the Youth Club. The nursery is beginning to extend their opening hours and there are three new committee members.

**13. SUSSEX POLICE REPORT**

The Clerk reported that the PCSO has visited the Parish Office to discuss a slight increase in anti social behaviour around the Leisure Centre area. She has attended and spoken to the individuals involved.

**14. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence to consider.

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

The Chairman gave his best wishes to the Clerk and his wife, and expressed his hopes for a quick recovery. He also thanked the administrator for her assistance during the Clerk's absence.

The Clerk also thanked the Chairman, Cllrs Goodyear and Cllr Morgan as well as other who have been supportive.

**16. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 1st September 2020 at 7:00 pm via Zoom Conferencing (**Revert to normal timing but via Zoom**).

**Meeting Closed at 4.23pm.**