



HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Notes of a Meeting of Recreation and Open Spaces Committee held on Tuesday 9th February 2021 at 12:30 pm via Zoom conferencing.

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs G Perry (Chairman), R Kendall, M Eastwood, N Farrell, D Jemmett, M Morgan, A Rickard and A Sharp.

In Attendance: Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager), Mrs B Samrah (Parish Administrator), Mr J Willis (Tree Warden), Mr J Rodriguez (Henfield Football Club, HFC) and one Member of the public.

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Cllr Jemmett declared an interest in Item 7 as he is a Committee Member of the Henfield Cricket Club (HCC). He will attend the Parish Office to sign the Register of Members Interests.

2. APOLOGIES

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 8TH DECEMBER 2020

These were approved, to be signed by the Chairman in the Parish Office at a later date.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman said that there had not been confirmation about the date of the works to the Coronation Oak.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

The Chairman invited the member of public to speak in relation to the Sandpit (also called the Bowl). He confirmed that he had already spoken at the latest Parish Council meeting and wondered whether any further progress had been made. The Chairman confirmed that the further investigation had continued with regards insurance, Safety and COVID-19 regulations as well as looking at planning permission, effect on wildlife and historical importance of the area.

The member of the public said that he found it extraordinary that a Council could tolerate the breaches of the rules that he felt had occurred and wondered how a council could condone this use. He said that he felt that access over private land was a problem using a narrow path from the Common. He felt that the site was presently dangerous resulting in a hole that was 1-1.5meters deep. He also said that the one in Steyning was on 2.5 miles of bridleway but nowhere near residents' homes. He further said that he hoped that if the Parish Council was considering making this an official bike track, that they would be honest with parishioners about the costs and ask for opinions of local residents. He closed by saying that as he was the nearest resident to the site he was the one bearing most of the disturbance. He felt that encouraging groups of teenagers to gather in the woods with no supervision would be a disaster, he expected the level of nuisance to increase in the Summer and that the impact on his family is an unfair burden. He understood that in the past the council has torn down the constructions that have been built before so a precedent has been set.

The Chairman confirmed that no final decision had been made and invited other comments. Cllr Morgan said that this matter had cropped up 4-5 times over last 20 years but that suggestions that groups could look after it would not work as these groups move on as they get older. He confirmed that wooden structures had been removed in the past and that there had been a small cycle track near the school on the Kings Field. He felt that the cost of getting work carried out as well as maintaining the area would prove prohibitive.

Cllr Farrell had visited the site at the weekend and only saw one structure. She confirmed that the ground was in better condition in the Sandpit and less muddy than the surrounding footpaths. She also said that there were problems with some children and teenagers in the village and that HPC should at least consider this option. She wondered what alternative areas were there for them to use.

Cllr Eastwood felt that the challenge that HPC faced was that having been approached formally as well as receiving a lot of emails in support of the site the matter could not be ignored. He also said that the area was popular with very young children too who love running up and down the slopes. He felt that a middle ground needed to be sought. Cllr Eastwood said that he felt there were two options:

- 1 To remove all structures and return the land to its original condition and ban the use of bicycles there
- 2 Arrange an inspection of the site from a Safety expert and find out what would be needed if the area was allowed to continue as a Mountain Bike track.

He added that anti-social behaviour amongst some young adults was causing problems in the village and that this might give some of them somewhere to use up their energies.

Cllr Kendall said that he felt sympathy for both sides and in his mind there were short term and longer term issues. He felt that from an insurance perspective the activities would have to stop immediately and that all interested parties needed to know this. Cllr Kendall also said that he did not feel that a group of youngsters would get public liability insurance and therefore The Sandpit would need to remain in the control of an organisation. He felt it was important to take on board what the effect on the nature of the surrounding area and on walkers or other users of the area.

Cllr Sharp had also recently visited the area and confirmed that it had been used as a bike track for 20-30 years without any accidents. He thought that the construction had happened quite recently and there was an increased risk of accidents. He felt that the structures should be removed and it should be left. He felt that it was not so close to Camellias as to create a nuisance.

Cllr Rickard said that his concern was it was a lovely place to walk and would be an ideal place for a trail and should be available for everyone to use.

Cllr Farrell reminded the Committee that because of lockdown the number of children with free time had increased dramatically and that when things returned to normal it would not be as busy.

Cllr Eastwood said that there needed to be a pause in the use of the area now in order to give HPC time to work out what to do next and what the likely costs would be. He felt that some of the adults who had been in favour of the Mountain Bike track should step forward to offer assistance and get a plan worked out. He felt that the next step would be to get advice from the Steyning Group about whether it was a suitable area. Then to arrange a safety review of the area and get advice from the insurers.

The member of the public felt that the children had not got permission before hand, they would be in the middle of nowhere without an adult nearby. He had heard the noises not only of the children's voices but also of the digging that had been carried out. He confirmed that he had put up CCTV to show people going by and how often they are using footpaths with cycles. He was dismayed that the council would consider allowing the area to be used as a track in the future.

Cllr Eastwood finished by proposing a way forward:

- 1 There be a pause in the use of Mountain Bikes in the area and a pause to any construction (leaving the structures in place)
- 2 Time for investigation into the financial implications
- 3 Seek advice from Steyning Group which runs something like it, seek a safety review.

The Chairman supported this approach that the site should be left as it was so that any safety review could assess the set-up. The Clerk confirmed that the insurance company had said that further use should not be permitted until a consultant had taken a look at that. Notices and Publicity would need to be used to inform every one of the decision.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Eastwood and **SECONDED** by Cllr Kendall and **VOTED** all in favour of following this plan.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their thoughts and contributions.

Memorial Field - Mr Rodriguez was then invited to speak and explained that at the last meeting it had been agreed to roll the Memorial Field. This had proved too large a job for the HCC roller and after expert advice it was decided that it needed to be allowed to settle, Mr Rodriguez said that it may need dressing in the future.

The Kings Field -The Clerk confirmed that the original installer had been called out to look at the Link Road Floodlight which was thought to be unfit for purpose. The contractor had been waylaid by weather.

Mr Rodriguez said that the temporary storage had not been progressed any further because of lockdown. He also said that there had been a break in at Eric Holder Pavilion last year and CCTV has been installed at the Leisure Centre and one camera is facing Eric Holder Pavilion.

Mr Rodriguez said that he would like a meeting to discuss an extension to the licence which runs out on 13th March 2021. Cllr Morgan said that if parties can agree this can be achieved by an exchange of emails. The Clerk requested that Mr Rodriguez wrote to him with the request he would respond to confirm. This would then leave more time for a small meeting of a representative of HFC, MR Pettifer, Cllr Eastwood and Cllr Morgan to finalise the extension to the licence.

The Clerk confirmed that the rabbit problem at the Memorial Field was not dealt with in time because of lockdown and now was the wrong time of year because of the number of rabbit young.

Cllr Morgan confirmed that he had drawn up the plan for HCC and that the stakes had been put up but that they did not correspond with the plan. After some discussion it was agreed that Cllr Morgan would contact Conway Thorns of the Cricket Club to confirm the exact requirements.

ACTION POINT – Cllr Morgan to contact Conway Thorns and agree requirements and draw up an accurate plan.

The Chairman confirmed that HCC had received four quotes from three companies for the resurfacing of the car park at HCC ranging from £10,800 to £26,200. Cllr Morgan said that HCC was the predominant user of the Car park although others such as dog walkers and football families also used it. Cllr Rickard said that he felt that the car park and round the back of the Pavilion was very tatty and that drainage was a key issue for consideration. Cllr Jemmett confirmed that there were at least two craters on the car park which could cause serious damage to cars. Cllr Sharp questioned why all the quotes were for a tarmac surface rather than something more porous. He also felt it was important to know who would be paying for the repairs. The Clerk confirmed that there was no budget for the repairs. Cllr Eastwood said that at a previous meeting it had been agreed that HPC would contribute 50% of the cost of the repairs with HCC funding the rest. Cllr Jemmett confirmed that HCC also did not have funds to pay for half the costs of any of the quotes. He also said that there would be a lot of resistance from HCC as they felt that since HPC had helped with the cost of repairs to the Leisure Centre Car park, that HCC would hope for a similar treatment. There was a rejoinder of previous discussion of the longevity of the new surface in the event of building works proceeding for the new cricket pavilion in future. In the circumstances there was not a clear basis for moving to the full resurfacing of the area at this stage, but to instead ensure the craters were repaired.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman and **SECONDED** by Cllr Eastwood and **VOTED** all in favour.

ACTION POINT - the Works Officer would be asked to make temporary repairs to the car park and fill the large craters.

Mr D Muirden (Henfield Tennis Club, HTC) joined the meeting at 1.41pm.

Cllr Stevens joined the meeting at 1.45pm

Mr Muirden thanked the Committee for allowing him to speak about HTC. He had received the emails from the Clerk confirming the costs for the Valuation of the land at HTC including the junior court (£1,250 from Paul Holder at P, S and B) and the Legal fees for drawing up a new lease (£750 from Dan Ongley AT Griffith Smith) Cllr Morgan confirmed that HTC would need to pay £1,250 for HPC to instruct P, S and B to value the land used by HTC, once that was completed a new lease would need to be drawn up by Griffith Smith and again HTC would need to pay for that. Mr Muirden said that he would get confirmation from HTC for the total cost of £2,000. He also asked for a copy of the 1994 lease which was believed to have drawn up by Graves, Son and Pilcher, the Clerk agreed to find it and send a copy.

Mr Muirden thanked the Committee for their time and said that the HTC project was 70% complete, they had received permission from HDC for the new LED lights which would be fitted later this month and that the courts would be painted in late March or early April.

Mr Muirden and Cllr Morgan both left the meeting at 2pm.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

5. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

6. THE SANDPIT

This was dealt with under the Open Forum.

7. CRICKET CLUB

This was dealt with under the Open Forum.

8. TENNIS CLUB

This was dealt with under the Open Forum.

9. PLAYING FIELDS

This was dealt with under the Open Forum.

10. TRAILS

1. To request endorsement of the Three Parishes Trail for website and leaflet. Cllr Eastwood said that the leaflets and the metal trail marker discs were in the Parish Office. The leaflets would not be used until after the end of lockdown, the metal Trail discs needed to be attached to posts, which WSCC had agreed to but again was held up until after lockdown. He also confirmed that he had shared the Three Parishes Trail with Shermanbury and Woodmancote PC. Cllr Eastwood confirmed that he was asking the Committee to spend on the website £1,500 using the services of PMW.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Eastwood and **SECONDED** by Cllr Kendall and **VOTED** all in favour to agree to spending £1,500 with PMW to get web pages produced.

2. To request endorsement of a Birdwatch Trail, with website and leaflet – Cllr Eastwood had spoken with Val Bentley and Mike Russell of Henfield Birdwatch about preparing a trail which will concentrate on the locations where birds might be found. He was asking the Committee to ring fence £1,500 to be used to create web pages and a leaflet once the trail had been researched and created.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Eastwood and **SECONDED** by the Chairman and **VOTED** 7 in favour and 1 abstention to ring fence £1,500 for this project.

Cllr Eastwood said that would be 4 trails in total, he hoped to complete another one from The Old Railway Inn to the Bull in the Autumn and a final one to take in the Three Commons which would

probably be completed in 2022. The Chairman asked about a Smugglers Trail and Cllr Eastwood said that he was waiting to hear back from the History Group.

ACTION POINT - The Parish Administrator to liaise with Cllr Eastwood and contact the History group to see if they are agreeable to helping with this project.

11. TREE WORK

To receive an update – Mr Willis said that he had looked on the HDC planning site but there was still no response about Magnolia Tree in Car Park. He felt that although it was a lovely it had been planted in the wrong place.

The Chairman said that the tree warden was waiting to hear from the Woodland Trust as to whether HPC would receive 30 trees for the triangle of land between Medical Centre and Cemetery. The Works Officer had suggested this plan in response to discussion at the last meeting.

The Chairman said that the action to recruit more volunteer Tree Wardens was progressing and that she was preparing a notice to that effect with the Operations Manager which could be released on Social media as soon as possible.

ACTION POINT - The Chairman to liaise with the Operations Manager and involve Mr Willis with the recruitment of volunteer Tree Wardens.

12. DOWNSLINK ACCESS FROM GUIDE HUT

To receive an update – The Chairman confirmed that HPC were in receipt of two quotes, for this work from PHB at £6,385.74 and Edburton at £7,453.91 but that two further quotes were outstanding from Battens and Landbuild because of Lockdown

13. ADUR RESTORATION CORRIDOR

To receive an update following meeting on 13th January 2021 – the Chairman said that the last meeting had been very interesting especially as a number of experts from Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) used mapping of Henfield as an example for other areas and any data will prove useful to HPC and other parishes involved in developing this Nature Recovery Network, from Upper Beeding up to Knepp. The project team had stressed the need to remain in contact with HDC and especially through Cllr Potts and the need to work with local land owners. Cllr Eastwood said that SWT were taking a lead in the Wilder Horsham District group. He also said there was going to be a need for deeper mapping of the trees and the wildlife. He hoped that they would appeal locally for the community to help to create a Nature Recovery Corridor.

14. YOUTH SHELTER

To receive an update – The Chairman said that she had received a reply from Debbie Slaughter of the Youth Club who understood the need to involve a wide range of ages in considering this project. She said that Cllr Goodyear had hoped that there would be a Young Persons Survey later in the year to find out opinion from a wider range of people.

15. PLAY AREAS

1. Skate Park – The Parish Administrator confirmed that she had spoken with the company who installed the Skate Park originally in 2007 and they had agreed to inspect the park and quote for repairs. This had been stalled since Lockdown
2. Chessbrook Green –The Parish Administrator confirmed that she had received one quote to replace the Activity Trail at Chess Brook Green but that a further three quotes were expected.

16. LOCAL CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT PLAN

1. Planting at Manor Way and Wantley. The Chairman confirmed that most plans had been put on hold because of lockdown. She had ordered some seeds which she hoped would arrive in March and might be suitable for use in this area She also said that two trees had died at the Borrer Bank and had been replaced.
2. Biodiversity Working Group – The Chairman confirmed that Cllr Goodyear is getting details together and she hoped there would be some progress by the next meeting.

Review Plan – The Chairman spoke about three areas of HPC’s Climate and Environment Plan relevant to this committee. ROS is working on issues in the Transport area with the Henfield Trails and the of Safe Routes working group. The Land Use area is regularly considered with the aim to increase tree planting being moved forward with projects like the proposed copse at the Medical Centre. Involving the public in decisions which affect the environment is also a key ambition in the plan and the current work on the Sandpit is an example of this. She hoped that other Committees would also look at the Action Plan to see their committee’s impact on aspects of the HPC Climate and Environment Plan in 2020-2021.

Action Point - for other committees to be asked to review the plan in March ready for a full review at FRC at the end of this council year. The Chairman will raise this at FRC.

Mr Willis left at the meeting at 2.19pm.

17. SAFE ROUTES

1. To request endorsement to contact local landowners and begin dialogue about two Safe Routes (details attached) Cllr Eastwood explained that the Group was looking at six routes to see where improvements can be achieved and he hoped that this Committee would endorse the projects that were taken forward.
He said that he wanted to contact the three landowners in connection with the first two routes and ask for assistance with access. He confirmed that he was not asking for money but support in approaching one farmer who had already made a good track across his land but he wanted to ask if it could be made in to a formal footpath at least as far as the Business Park. The whole Committee was supportive of this initiative.
2. To consider house style for markers for safe routes including horses, cycles etc Cllr Sharp said that the Joint Commons Committee wanted to put up markers to signpost routes suitable for horses or cyclists and he did not want them to clash with anything that the Trails may have had. He suggested using oblongs 4x6inches saying Horse Trail with a silhouette of a horse head. Cllr Eastwood said that he should be mindful that the dimensions fitted on a WSCC Posts, Cllr Eastwood agreed to give Cllr Sharp the dimensions of the posts. Cllr Sharp said that for the most part his markers would be put on trees. Cllr Sharp said that the Committee had hoped green and white markers.
3. Potential lost Rights of Way – Cllr Eastwood said that there were only about half a dozen, routes that needed looking at. He said that two volunteers had given feedback already and he was very grateful for their input. He said that he would liaise with the Parish Administrator through the Safe Routes Group and then feedback to the Ramblers Association.

Cllr Kendall asked whether the two footpaths from Hewitts to Blackgate Lane, and from Bishops Lane to Car park were included in those. Cllr Eastwood thought that strictly speaking they were not footpaths but he felt they should be on the list. Cllr Kendall felt sure that the Works Officer had put down shingle or other material in the past to keep them passable.

18. BENCHES ON THE COMMON

1. To consider siting of one or two commemorative benches near the cricket pitch – The Chairman said that she had had a request from Henfield Joint Commons Committee (HJCC) that memorial benches be placed around the Cricket Pitch, subject to HCC approval rather than on the Common more generally. She confirmed that the new bench was for Denise Butlin and there was an older bench for the Ambulance Corps which is in bad state of repair (currently being repaired) and both of these could be placed on HPC land around cricket pitch Cllr Eastwood felt this was an excellent idea.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Eastwood and **SECONDED** by the Chairman and **VOTED** all in favour of placing benches around the edge of the cricket pitch near the road subject to HCC approval.

19. CLERKS REPORT

1. Financial Update – The Clerk confirmed that expenditure is currently 72.6% of budget whilst being 83.3% of the way through the financial year. It seems likely that the Committee is going to be under budget. Less has been spent on grass cutting, works officer equipment, litter picking, trails and the general expenditure budget. Currently none of the

wildlife planting budget has been spent. The Clerk also said that the Works Officer needed two larger more robust lawn mowers at approximately £900 each so a total of £1,800 which had been discussed previously and agreed. The Clerk asked whether the Committee would be happy to agree the purchases via email when he had the full details and this was agreed. The Clerk confirmed that he would speak with the Works Officer.

ACTION POINT - The Clerk to speak with Works Officer about the lawnmowers and confirm details with Committee Members by email.

2. Any further updates – The Clerk said that the Works Officer had found damage to some of the wooden posts around the swales beside the Link Road. It was a thoughtless act of vandalism. The Chairman said that this was one of the areas they had hoped to sow the wild flowers.

20. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Resident's email about the state of the footpath between Common and High Street and WSCC response. The Chairman thought this might be a Village Amenities matter and it was hoped that WSCC would sort it out as soon as possible. She asked that the resident be told about the WSCC response.
2. SDNP email concerning grass cutting of verges. The Chairman said that SDNP with WSCC were trialling a "cut and collect" approach to verge cutting in order to cut the grass less often and encourage wild flowers. She said that she doubted that Henfield would be selected for a trial but wanted the Committee to know about it.

21. ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS TO BE RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

There were none.

22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 13th April 2021 via Zoom conferencing. The Chairman asked if anyone objected to a permanent change in time to 12.30pm. Cllr Rickard said he would prefer not to change but all other Councillors were happy to bring meetings forward to 12.30pm in the future.

The Meeting closed at 2.41pm.