

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting of Henfield Parish Council held on Tuesday 6th April 2021 at 7:00pm via Zoom Conferencing.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs B Samrah (Parish Administrator), Cllr L Barnard (West Sussex County Council – WSCC), Cllr R Noel (Horsham District Council – HDC) and three members of the public.

MINUTES

The Chairman welcomed everyone and asked for a minute's silence for George Swalwell, who had passed away. He had been a regular at the Remembrance service each year as well as volunteering at the Museum until last year. Also, for Kevin Connell, who had been a volunteer with Community Speedwatch and at the Helpline; he had passed away last week.

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS 'INTERESTS**

There were none.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Received from Cllrs R Kendall and N Farrell.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2nd MARCH 2021 & THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 1ST MARCH 2021**

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

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

- a) Update on WSALC & HALC – The Chairman said that there had been some positive progress and that there was a meeting of HALC on Thursday 8th April with a view to appoint a new Chairman and Vice Chairman of HALC and Board Members of WSALC. He also stated that there was a meeting of Clerks from Parish and Town Councils across West Sussex on 15th April 2021.
- b) Update on Bitesize meetings and surveys – Cllr Goodyear said that she felt the Bitesize meetings had gone well and been well received. 18 members of the public had attended Meet the Chairman with 32 viewing on Facebook and a further 165 engagements. 35 members of the public had attended the Henfield Outdoors Meeting with 64 viewing on Facebook with a further 912 engagements. 32 members of the public had attended the Henfield Village Meeting, 35 viewing on Facebook and a further 152 engagements.

She also said that the survey which had been sent at the same time had received a good response; 164 Henfield Parish surveys had been completed, 101 Henfield Outdoor surveys had been completed and 135 Henfield Village surveys had been completed. She was pleased that 55% of those that responded were under 55 years and 9% under 30 years. 72% of responders were interested in the countryside, biodiversity, green space, wildlife and environmental issues. 49% mentioned parking in High Street with independent shops and in addition, parking on double yellow lines. 41% of responders felt Henfield had a thriving High Street and a positive feel to the village and 46% liked the village feel and community spirit. In relation to the Parish Council 75% said that it provided good service, 15% said maybe a good service and 10% said not a good service with no further comments.

5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had none.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

The Chairman invited members of the public to speak. One said that he had been proud to have been co-opted on to the Joint Commons Committee and had also been very proud of the way the Outdoors Bitesize Meeting had been conducted. He felt it was an excellent programme and had been well put together and maybe there should be more of them. The Chairman thanked him for his contribution.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

6. HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr Morgan said that there would be a £5.4 million deficit at end of year at HDC.

He also said that one member of the public had asked about additional signage about socially distancing etc in the High Street once more of the businesses were open. Cllr Jones did not see it as a problem, and felt it was up to individuals. Cllr Perry said that she felt more of the same signs would not work and felt it was better to wait until the High Street is busier and if necessary organise more signs. Cllr Morgan agreed to wait and see and make adjustments once businesses got going.

Cllr Potts said that he would expect things to run more smoothly at HDC as more staff are getting back to working in the office and that any delays should be lessened. He was not sure whether all staff would return to HDC in person or whether some would continue working remotely.

Cllr Morgan felt that there would not be a mass return to the office, but a gradual one. The Chairman asked about a date for the approval of the local plan, and Cllr Potts responded by saying it was not set in stone and would be scheduled for the first Council meeting following local elections.

7. WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr Barnard said that he had attended the County Council meeting on 19th March and the Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Committee meeting on 26th March. He said he was stepping down on 6th May after 25 years, with his last meeting being the Henfield Parish Council Meeting on 4th May.

8. COVID 19 UPDATE & RETURN TO FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

The Chairman confirmed that the last figures he had seen were 5,801 first vaccinations in Henfield which was 97.5% of the 1 – 9 cohorts. Only 15 people had cancelled as a result of the Astra Zeneca scare and three asked for Pfizer as an alternative. He also said that second vaccinations were taking place at Storrington at the moment and would be happening at Henfield Medical Centre shortly. He thanked those who had helped with the co-ordination of the operation including Peter Bates and the Medical Centre as well as those Councillors who had helped man the phones. He said that overall it had been a fantastic team effort by the community and he was told that with two more weeks of a full vaccine delivery it would be possible to vaccinate the rest of Henfield's adult population. The Clerk confirmed that if he got up to date figures in the next few days he would circulate to Councillors.

The Clerk stated that he and the Parish Administrator were now regularly going into the office, keeping well apart if working on the same days. It was likely that the Operations Manager would not return until she had received her COVID vaccination. Members of the public would be admitted to the outer office only and by appointment only, as the Government relaxes lockdown measures.

Cllr Goodyear stated that face-to-face Council Meetings would be returning from 7th May, since the Government did not seem inclined to extend the legislation which allows virtual meetings beyond that date. She explained that from 7th May if meetings will be making legally binding decisions then they must be face-to-face meetings. If not, they could continue as remote meetings. She explained that this would have an impact for FRC and PAC meetings, as well as some of the other Committee Meetings. She felt that the Whittome Hall could be used for socially distanced Parish Council Meetings and the Garden Room for other meetings until 21st June and

recommended that the Chairmen of each Committee look at the agenda for their meetings to see whether decisions with regard to money would be made. If so, those meetings would need to be held face-to-face. She felt that all meetings would need to be face-to-face after 21st June 2021. The Chairman confirmed that the next Parish Council Meeting would be remote. The following meetings would have to be decided individually by individual Committee Chairs.

9. **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** – The Chairman confirmed that this would be on 4th May and that secret ballots could be held using Zoom if necessary. He asked everyone to think what roles they wanted and to let the Clerk know if they wish to change Committees, Outside Body roles or to stand as Chairman or Vice Chairman.

a) Approval of outside body representative role for Sustainable Henfield – The Chairman explained that the Council had agreed that one councillor should be represented on this Committee and that Cllr Perry had been carrying out that role. He wanted to formally recognise that role as one of our Outside Body positions, given its increasing importance.

10. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE CHANGE TO THE SANLAM INVESTMENT MANDATE**
The Chairman confirmed that FRC had recommended this change, but that as all Councillors are trustees it needed a vote by all Councillors.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Goodyear, **SECONDED** by Cllr Shaw and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Change to the Sanlam Investment Mandate.

11. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Summary of £29,583.11 - Period 1st March to 31st March 2021. This was noted by Council.

a) Select expenditure as the monthly random audit check – Cllr Shaw selected Stonepit Nurseries as the item for an in-depth audit this month.

The Clerk confirmed that he had provisionally completed the end of year financial accounts and all looks in order. He hoped to get the reports out to Councillors over the next few days.

(B) **Plans Advisory**

Cllr Stevens reported that there had been three meetings of the committee since the last Parish Council Meeting and invited any questions.

(C) **Henfield Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr Stevens reported that at the Referendum is being held on 6th May. If more than 50% of the votes are in favour, then HDC has to make the Plan as soon as reasonably possible. The Chairman said that the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee had contacted him with a view to preparing and publishing an article and then giving a final push for people to vote about two weeks before the referendum.

(D) **Recreation & Open Spaces**

Cllr Perry reported that there had not been a meeting since the last Parish Council Meeting.

a) The Sandpit – She confirmed that there had been continued research on the Sandpit and that a Working Group Meeting was being held on Thursday 8th April and it was hoped that a balanced conversation could be had. Any recommendations would then be taken to the Recreation and Open Spaces Committee Meeting on 13th April.

(E) **Village Amenities**

Cllr Jones reported that there had been a Committee Meeting on 9th March and she invited any questions. Cllr Morgan asked if the toilets are open. The Clerk said that they were supposed to be, but that there was a problem with the locks which would be dealt with as soon as possible by the Works Officers.

Cllr Morgan questioned how long the memorial to Sarah Everard should be left outside the launderette, explaining that the Remembrance Day wreaths were usually left for a month and asking should this be treated in the same way. Cllr Perry felt that it could be removed after a month and an announcement be put on the website and Facebook. Cllr Goodyear felt that a month was a reasonable amount of time. The Clerk confirmed he would arrange for a statement on the website and Facebook.

Cllr Donoghue asked about the large motorbike that also seemed to be parked in front of the launderette and that it did not seem right to allow that to continue whilst removing the memorial. Cllr Morgan had seen the motorbike and said that he would speak with the wardens about it.

(F) Museum

Cllr Donoghue reported that the Museum would be remaining closed until at least 17th May but would wait for Government confirmation. She confirmed that there was interest in on-line articles and that a new project might be launched in relation to Historic Street Furniture which had been raised by Sussex Heritage Trust and would be a joint project with the Village Amenities Committee.

(G) Commons

Cllr Sharp reported that there had not been a Committee meeting since the last Parish Council Meeting but that there had been some adverse activity on Broadmere Common, including the breaking of rails on the bridge, the building of a tree house and the creation of a fire pit. He confirmed that HDC and our PCSO were aware and would keep an eye on matters.

He also confirmed that there was a meeting of the Committee on 15th April to discuss the Oak near Cricket pitch and the cost of protecting this tree. The Chairman asked if there was any more news on the Sink hole on the Common and Cllr Sharp confirmed that the Works Team feel that they can trace where the water source is coming from and going to and that it should not be too big a job to alleviate the problem, when conditions allow.

12. REPORTS OF MEMBERS REPRESENTING COUNCIL ON EXTERNAL BODIES

Cllr Stevens reported on the Henfield Hall Executive Committee and that they are considering a change to the way that the contribution from the PC to the Hall is calculated. They are also considering changes to Governance, complicated by a situation where it appears that the trustees are not allowed to own the building. They have employed a contractor to investigate the foundations and whether a second floor could be added to the Museum.

Cllr Jones reported that the Clarks Mead Trust had submitted a new planning application for the Scout Centre, as the previous one had expired. They are also having an ecological impact survey carried out, which was a concern voiced at PAC.

Cllr Shaw reported that the Henfield Haven would be opening an outdoor café from 12th April and that the full café would be opening on 17th May with social distancing measures in place. He also reported that in July it would hopefully resume its role as a Day centre. The Helpline would continue with the phone being answered by the Parish Administrator until 17th May and then be transferred back to the Haven.

13. PCSO & POLICE ACTIVITIES

The Clerk confirmed that he had not heard from the PCSO for about a month, but he would contact her about Broadmere Common. The Chairman had spoken with the PCSO concerning the Sandpit and that she was arranging for patrols to keep an eye on the area over Easter.

14. ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS TO BE RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

There were none.

15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 4th May 2021 at 7:00pm via Zoom Conferencing.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.