

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Annual General Meeting of Henfield Parish Council
held on Tuesday 4th May 2021 at 7.00pm via Zoom conferencing.

Present: Cllrs M Eastwood, E Goodyear, G Perry, A Donoghue, J Jones, M Morgan, A Sharp, A Rickard, R Kendall, C Simmonds, N Farrell, R Shaw, D Jemmett, N Stevens and J Potts.

In attendance: Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager), Mrs B Samrah (Parish Administrator), Cllr L Barnard (West Sussex County Council - WSCC) and Peter Hudson.

MINUTES

The Clerk welcomed all to the meeting and reminded all Councillors to remain for the two charity meetings that follow this AGM.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR FORTHCOMING YEAR

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Kendall, **SECONDED** by Cllr Potts and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to elect Cllr Eastwood as Chairman of the Parish Council for the forthcoming year.

The Chairman thanked all Councillors for their confidence in his Chairmanship and for supporting what the Parish Council does.

2. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS 'INTERESTS

None.

3. APOLOGIES

None.

4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR FORTHCOMING YEAR

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Perry, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to elect Cllr Goodyear as Vice Chairman for the following year.

5. APPOINTMENT TO COUNCIL COMMITTEES

The Clerk reported that Cllr Stevens had requested via email to leave the Recreation and Open Spaces Committee and re-join the Village Amenities committee. No issues or problems were stated so **it was agreed** to make this change.

6. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

A list was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. The Chairman commented that two representatives had been removed for the Henfield Community Partnership and that Cllr Donoghue had been added for Rampion 2. SH2030 has also been added with Cllr Perry as the representative.

The Chairman then explained that it was felt that the Museum needed a stronger voice on matters relating to the Henfield Hall therefore proposing that Council appoint a second Outside Body Representative, who should be a Councillor and member of the Museum Committee. The current representative, Cllr Stevens, is also a trustee of the Hall and quite correctly declares an interest when decisions are made about the Hall. Peter Bates is aware and has agreed that the Museum can be better represented in Hall Committees. It was therefore **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Goodyear and **VOTED ALL IN**

FAVOUR to add an additional representative for the Henfield Hall from the Museum Committee. The name of the representative will be determined by the Museum Committee.

7. **APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR**

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Simmonds and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to appoint Mulberry & Co as Internal Auditor. The Chairman added that he felt in the interest of transparency that it would be appropriate to go out to tender during the year in order to consider other options for the future and in time for next year's AGM.

8. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 6th APRIL 2021**

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

9. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

10. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a) COVID 19 Update

The Chairman confirmed that to date there have been 6,370 first doses of the Covid vaccine and 2,924 second doses to patients of Henfield Medical Centre. Another batch is due this week, which will hopefully take second doses over the half-way mark. He expressed his thanks to all who are helping to do this important work.

b) Local Traders' Sunday Market – Sunday 27th June 2021

Cllr Goodyear confirmed that a low-key Food and Drink market is planned with several stalls taking up part of the Coopers Way car park. It is hoped that several of the High Street shops and coffee shops will also open. Cllr Perry expressed her thanks to the Village Amenities committee for agreeing to allow the Sussex Greener Living milk float to also attend in the High Street on the same day.

Cllr Stevens joined the meeting at 7.14pm.

c) Walk for Louise Clark – Sunday 22nd August 2021

The Chairman reported that Louise Clark sadly died recently after a short illness. She was Church Administrator and Governor of St Peter's School, as well as playing an active role in the Sunday school and PTA. The Chairman, along with Rev. Paul Doick is arranging a commemorative walk to take place from the Church to Sussex Prairies, who have kindly offered free entry and a picnic area for all those taking part. It is hoped that there may also be a jazz band. The family have been consulted and are supportive of the planned event.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

Peter Hudson asked whether a letter of condolence had been sent to Her Majesty the Queen. The Chairman confirmed that it had and that a commemorative event is being planned for a later date when restrictions are lifted.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

11. **WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Barnard confirmed that WSCC activity has been focused on elections. He added that this will be his final meeting as WSCC Councillor representing Henfield as he is stepping down, although not retiring. He added that it has been an honour to serve Henfield.

a) Lionel Barnard's Retirement

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Cllr Barnard for many years serving not only Henfield but also Cowfold, West Grinstead, Partridge Green, Dial Post and Shermanbury. He added that to his great credit Cllr Barnard has attended the vast majority of Henfield Parish Council meetings and it is also to his great credit that he has kept the village updated and taken messages back to WSCC when issues have been identified. He wished Cllr Barnard success in the future. Cllr Morgan added his thanks for all Cllr Barnard's assistance in his role at Horsham District Council (HDC).

12. **HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Potts reported that there are still Covid Support Grants available from HDC and urged all to spread the word amongst local businesses who may be able to benefit. He also reported that Jonathan Chowen, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture, has resigned, but that HDC has offered reassurance that his replacement will continue his good work.

Cllr Morgan added that kerbside collections are due to commence for used batteries. Small electrical items and textiles will need to be booked for collection. These are free services. There is also a trial currently taking place of household food waste collection, which if also adopted would put HDC in the top ten councils for recycling in the country. He also mentioned that there has been a reported increase in knife crime and anti-social behaviour in the District although overall the crime situation is improving.

a) Horsham District Climate Change Group

The Chairman confirmed that the Horsham Association of Local Councils (HALC) has requested that two representatives from local councils can be identified to work alongside HDC on their Climate Change Group, with the intention of defining strategy and direction. The Greening Steyning group are already participating so he suggested, and **it was agreed** that SH2030 could represent Henfield, rather than an individual Councillor. Cllr Perry supported the suggestion, and Cllr Morgan added that this would enable different people with varying expertise to have input. The Chairman will make this proposal to HALC.

Action Point: The Clerk to circulate the Terms of Reference.

13. **TO ACCEPT 2020/21 REPORT FROM INTERNAL AUDITOR**

The Chairman expressed his thanks and congratulations to the Clerk and invited any questions.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Shaw, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to accept the 2020/21 report from the Internal Auditor.

14. **TO APPROVE YEAR-END ACCOUNTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/21**

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Goodyear, **SECONDED** by Cllr Kendall and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Year End Accounts for the financial year 2020/21.

15. **TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/21**

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Rickard, **SECONDED** by Cllr Goodyear and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21.

16. **TO APPROVE THE ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS FOR 2020/21**

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Potts, **SECONDED** by Cllr Rickard and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Accounting Statements for 2020/21.

17. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

(A) Finance and General Purposes

Cllr Goodyear confirmed that the documents approved in items 13-16 would now be loaded to the website along with a table produced by the Chairman to explain precept costs for various property bands.

- (a) Summary of £22,290.04 expenditure from 1st April – 30th April 2021.
Noted by Council.
- (b) Select expenditure as the monthly random audit check.
Cllr Potts selected Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd - £130.00.

(B) Plans Advisory

Cllr Stevens invited questions on recent minutes.

- (i) Neighbourhood Plan Referendum - Thursday 6th May 2021.
Cllr Stevens reminded all that the Referendum takes place this Thursday and assuming the vote is in favour of the plan, it must then be made by HDC within eight weeks with an additional six weeks to allow for potential Judicial Review.

(C) Recreation & Open Spaces

Cllr Perry stated that the Sandpit consultation was useful and that the situation is currently being monitored. She asked the Council to consider how best it could meet the needs of young people going forward. She added that there have been several incidents of vandalism recently and that the cost of repairs may impact the ability to make improvements that were planned for the play areas. The project to improve Downslink access near the Guide Hut is continuing. Cllr Morgan asked whether a charge ought to be made to the personal trainer using Parish Council land. Cllr Perry confirmed that a charge hadn't been made due to Covid restrictions, as the committee wanted to assist local businesses, however it would be considered in the future.

(D) Village Amenities

Cllr Jones reported that the committee will be meeting next week and will be discussing among other topics, the recent vandalism as mentioned by Cllr Perry. There is a likely cost of £1,400 to repair the bicycle shelter at the Leisure Centre which is not covered by any insurance. Cllr Kendall asked whether these incidents have been reported to Police. The Chairman added that this is important as there seems to be an increase in the area and it helps the police to build a profile.

Action Point: The Clerk to contact PCSO Alice Moore regarding recent vandalism.

(E) Museum

Cllr Donoghue reported that the Friends of Henfield Museum have met and that the Chairman and Vice Chairman have switched roles. Both will continue to be on the Museum Committee. The Museum is due to re-open on the 17th May and the Curator is organising volunteers and will communicate regarding opening times.

(F) Joint Commons

Cllr Sharp reported that there had been a recent brief meeting in order to discuss the support and protection of the Henfield Oak. It was agreed to put the decision on hold as the likely cost is over £8,000. No immediate action is needed. He then reported that a Circus will be using

the Common from 24th May for three performances over the following three days. He has discussed the sink hole with the Works Officers and a contractor from PHB, who have suggested enclosing the stream with pipework and/or temporarily filling the hole.

Cllr Sharp then reported that Peter Hudson has decided to resign from the Joint Commons Committee. He stated that this was a great loss as Peter has been a great help over many years. He thanked him and wished him all the best for the future.

18. **REPORTS FROM MEMBERS REPRESENTING COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Chairman confirmed that HALC met last week and he has been confirmed as the new Chairman. Cllrs Jones and Goodyear were also in attendance. New Officers are now all in place and they are beginning to look at the constitution and topical issues. He proposes to write to HDC after the elections regarding the lack of progress on the Local Plan, which 93% of the Officers were in agreement with (the remaining 7% having abstained). He will also be querying progress on the Nature Recovery Network which is vital as a counter to all of the housing development in the District.

He then confirmed that as Chair of HALC he also has a place on the board of the West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC), which has all new board members and Trevor Leggo as CEO. Two Clerks will also be invited to be non-voting members and Mulberry & Co are providing training and have a new website. He commented that it appears that HALC and WSALC are now moving in the right direction and that the Parish Council can have confidence in paying their subscription fees.

Cllr Jemmett reported that the Youth Club opened last week and was well attended. He also commented that they are in need of updated computer equipment and software. Cllr Simmonds suggested that the Youth Club approach the BP Guild for assistance.

19. **PCSO & POLICE ACTIVITIES**

The Clerk confirmed that there was nothing additional to report and that he would be making contact with the PCSO shortly.

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

Cllr Donoghue asked about the position with returning to face to face meetings. The Clerk confirmed that due to the failure of the High Court case last week, it is now a legal requirement for all meetings requiring a summons to take place in person from the 7th May. This applies to all committees including the Plans Advisory and Museum Committees, regardless of whether any financial decisions are made. Failure to do this could mean that any decisions made during a meeting could be legally challenged. The Parish Office have received no guidelines but are working on a schedule which is likely to include using the Garden Room at the Henfield Hall for committees and the main hall for Full Council meetings. There are several dates where neither of these venues are available so alternatives will need to be found. Cllr Goodyear confirmed that Health and Safety is the main priority so if any staff or Councillors are not happy to attend then to please do give apologies. Cllr Potts confirmed that there is currently an ongoing consultation but that any changes to primary legislation are unlikely to take place by the end of this year. The Chairman added that meetings must be quorate but can take place with smaller groups. It was acknowledged that this will result in less public participation, with perhaps numbers attending having to be controlled, which is in turn less democratic. It was also agreed that the loss of the increased public participation seen by the Parish Council since using Zoom will be a backward step.

Cllr Stevens commented that a notice has been erected on West End Lane confirming the possible installation of Speed Indicator Devices. The Operations Manager confirmed that this was as a result of Parish Council progressing the project.

21. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 1st June 2021 at 7.00pm.

Meeting Closed 8.11pm.