

# HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL - FINANCE RISK & CHANGE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting of the Finance Risk & Change Governance Committee  
held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 7:00pm in the Henfield Hall.

**Present:** Cllrs E Goodyear (Chairman), N Stevens, A Donoghue, J Jones and G Perry.

**In attendance:** Mr K Wright (Clerk) and Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager).

## A G E N D A

### 1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Cllr Stevens declared an interest in items 10 (k) and 10 (l) as he is a trustee of Henfield Hall and is the Parish Council Representative on their management committee.

### 2. APOLOGIES

Cllr M Eastwood.

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 21<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021

Approved, signed and dated by the Chairman.

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

None.

*The Chairman adjourned the meeting.*

### OPEN FORUM

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

*The Chairman reconvened the meeting.*

### 5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### a) Staffing Changes

The Chairman explained that the lead works officer has reduced his hours by 1 day and one of the other works officers has handed in his resignation with effect from the end of January 2022. There is a small pension reserve and **it was agreed** to discuss making an ex gratia payment to the retiring works officer at the next meeting. The Chairman, in discussion with the Clerk, recommended a succession plan is put in place for the retirement of the lead works officer in the years ahead and that it may be sensible to recruit a full time works officer now to work alongside him with a view to taking over in future. Cllr Perry agreed that the works team have been under resourced lately and that the role is likely to expand with time. The Chairman also commented that there will be a temporary increase in employment costs as the roles overlap. **It was all agreed** to proceed with this approach.

**Action Point: The Clerk and Chairman to work together on a job description for the role to be advertised.**

### 6. REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

A revised version was circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman explained that this issue had been raised after recent discussions with the internal auditor and at a recent WSALC Chairmans' forum. Research has shown that there is a concern that if Councillors do not claim their allowance then this can create a stigma for those wishing to claim and also hides the true potential cost of running a Parish Council. The revised document should reflect this view.

Many Parish Councils also link the allowance to a percentage of the District/Borough Councillor rate. She suggested that the Henfield Members' Allowance should be increased in line with other Horsham Parish Councils, who set their rate based on 10% of the Horsham District Councillors' allowance, which for 2021/22 is £5,210. This is set by an independent remuneration panel. Cllr Jones asked why co-opted Councillors can't receive the allowance. The Chairman explained that public funding can only be given to elected Councillors but that they can claim travel expenses. After discussion **It was all agreed** to link the rates to Horsham District Councillors with Councillors given the option to opt out of receiving the allowance. **It was also agreed** that Councillors are entitled to change their minds in regard to the allowance mid-term, but that it would be helpful to inform the Clerk prior to budgets being finalised.

## 7. REVIEW THE FUNDING AND UTILISATION OF THE COMMUNITY BUS

The Chairman explained that the Parish Council currently contributes £4,000 to the running of the Community Bus. The service runs on a Monday to Holmbush and Sainsburys in West Hove, between Henfield and Small Dole on Thursday and as a Dial a Ride service on Friday. There have been 264 customers making 198 trips in the last 6 months. The Chairman wondered whether better use could be made of the service in order to get best value for money and suggested possible trips to Horsham or for the Youth Club. She also commented that more needs to be done to publicise the service and to find out what people in the village would like from it. The Clerk commented that he usually only sees one or two people using the Thursday service and that no one has requested the Dial a Ride service for six months. Cllr Perry commented that there may still be some hesitation in using public transport due to COVID. **It was agreed** to invite the manager of the Community Transport Sussex to attend the next meeting of this committee in order to discuss potential expansion of services.

**Cllr Donoghue joined the meeting at 7.23pm.**

## 8. COMMUNITY FACILITIES REVIEW

Notes from the meetings were circulated prior to the meeting. The Operations Manager confirmed that there had been two meetings with local clubs and organisations in the village with a view to getting an update on current projects and future plans. This had been very useful and had informed some changes to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Cllr Donoghue suggested that the outside body representatives for the organisations are involved at the next review, as some of the organisations has been unclear on the purpose for the meetings.

## 9. REVIEW THE AMENDMENTS TO THE INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN (IDP)

A revised version of the IDP was circulated prior to the meeting. The Operations Manager explained that the following changes had been made;

- Addition of Henfield Hall Solar Panels at a cost of £29,000.
- Increase in costs for Youth Club works to £100,000.
- Reduction in new Scout building costs to £300,000, £50,000 still needed.
- Addition of separate item for Cricket Club car park repairs, cost £20,000.
- Reduction in cost of new Cricket Pavillion to £300,000.
- Addition of separate item for St Peter's Church Hall refurbishment, cost £10,000.
- Addition of separate item for repairs to Leisure Centre roof, cost £11,000.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to accept the amendments to the IDP.

## 10. FINANCE

a) Confirmation of Reconciliation of Bank Accounts (September & October)  
Each signed and dated by two Councillors.

b) Internal Controls (To Include Audit Check of Expenditure) – (September & October)  
Each signed and dated by two Councillors.

c) To Consider the Draft 2022/23 Budgets, Precept, Provisions & Reserves

A draft budget, IDP funding Plans and explanation of provisions and reserves by Cllr Eastwood were circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk explained that under FRC committees budget there will be additional employment costs due to the staffing changes proposed which will include additional Employers National Insurance. Otherwise the proposed changes include a reduction in postage, telephone, photocopier, Hall maintenance, Neighbourhood Plan and Legal costs. There is proposed increase in Miscellaneous, Hall Bookings and Members' Allowances budgets. Overall this results in a 1.9% increase. The tax base has increased from 2,688 to 2,741 properties, a 0.5% increase in precept per property for Band D properties.

Recreation and Open Spaces and Village Amenities Committees have had separate meetings to discuss their budgets. Cllr Donoghue asked that the Museum income remains at £300 rather than the proposed increase to £400. Income so far has reached £190 this year not including the donation from the Arts Society. She also suggested reducing the expenditure from £500 to £400. **It was agreed** to take this proposal to the Museum committee meeting in two weeks' time along with details of income from the previous three years, and to discuss again at the next meeting of

this committee. The Clerk also mentioned that reserves will be updated throughout the year going forward, in order to give a more accurate ongoing picture.

- d) To Approve the Insurance Premium of £259.96 for the Council Van & Trailer  
The Clerk confirmed that this was the best quote as advised by broker Came & Co and represents an increase of 10% on last year. **It was all agreed** to approve this insurance premium.
- e) To Review the Amount Held in the HSBC Money Manager Account  
The Clerk explained that the Financial Compensation scheme only covers £85,000 held with one bank. Currently the Parish Council have £218,000 in an HSBC account. **This was noted** by the committee and **it was agreed** to investigate the possibility of moving some of this money to a more ethical bank account, as agreed in the HPC Carbon Reduction Plan
- f) Sanlam's Wealth Business Taken Over by Oaktree Capital  
This was noted by the committee.
- g) Note the Payment of £750 to the Henfield Community Partnership  
This was noted by the committee.
- h) To Consider Moving the £10K Pledged for the New Scout Building from the General Reserves to the Community Buildings' Reserve.  
The Clerk explained that it has already been agreed by Full Council to contribute this amount. It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Stevens and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to move this amount to the Community Buildings and Infrastructure Reserve.
- i) To Consider Potential Funding Towards the Leisure Centre Roof Repairs  
The Chairman explained that although no formal application has been made for funding, repairs to the Leisure Centre roof are urgent. They are hoping to fund the works by various grant applications but if unsuccessful she suggested that the Parish Council could consider topping up their funds from CIL and Council reserves. This was agreed.
- j) To Consider Potential Government Grants – Andrew Griffith's Letter  
The Chairman explained that there is some Electric Vehicle Charging point funding available and that the Parish Council have registered their interest for the two car parks as well as for the Hall. Cllr Donoghue suggested adding the Cricket Club car park. Cllr Jones commented that the Youth Investment fund may well be delayed, as on the website it states that they are still looking for someone to administer the scheme.
- k) To Consider the Replacement of the Parish Office Windows  
The Chairman explained that the Parish Office windows are considered structural and are therefore the responsibility of the Henfield Hall as landlords. Two quotes have been obtained for information and were circulated prior to the meeting. **It was agreed** to submit these to the Henfield Hall for consideration. If unsuccessful **it was agreed** that the Parish Council could consider funding the cost from CIL. Cllr Stevens commented that regardless of the source of funding, the works do need to be arranged and responsibility taken for it by the Hall as the owner of the building.
- l) To Consider a Funding Application for Solar Panels on The Henfield Hall  
The Funding application details were circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman suggested contributing £500 from the Community Buildings Reserve and £4,300 from CIL.  
It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Perry, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED FOUR IN FAVOUR WITH ONE ABSTENTION** to approve the funding application for solar panels on the Henfield Hall.

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

None.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

**Meeting Closed at 8.19pm.**