

## HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of Henfield Parish Council  
held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 7:00pm in the Henfield Hall.**

**Present:** Cllrs M Eastwood (Chairman), E Goodyear, M Morgan, J Jones, R Shaw, D Jemmett, J Potts, A Sharp, Daryn Grossmith and A Donoghue.

**In attendance:** Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager), Cllr S Payne (WSCC), Mr R Bradley from West Sussex Fire Service via Zoom and one member of the public.

### MINUTES

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS 'INTERESTS**

None.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Cllrs N Stevens, R Kendall, G Perry, N Farrell and C Simmonds.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

Approved, signed by the Chairman.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

a) Downs Link Footpath Access

Cllr Payne raised this issue with WSCC and the Countryside Ranger for the Downs Link as the original design was not DDA compliant. A site visit will be arranged for January 2022, in order to consider further with a view to either securing the site so that is not unsafe or progressing a suitable solution for safe use.

b) Use of S106 and CIL Funding for St Peter's School

The Chairman explained that CIL funding can be used for the school but that we should be cautious about funding schemes which should be delivered by WSCC, which also receives S106 funding.

5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a) Remembrance Commemorations

The Chairman commented that the event was well organised and well attended by Councillors. He thanked Cllr Morgan and all those at the Henfield Club. Cllr Morgan mentioned that a deputy and successor will be needed for his role. The Chairman asked all Councillors to consider whether they may be able to take this on.

**Action: To be added to January Parish Council agenda so that we might nominate a deputy.**

The Chairman also commented that a team including Councillors and the Parish Clerk had won the annual Henfield Hall Quiz and displayed the trophy.

*The Chairman adjourned the meeting.*

### **OPEN FORUM**

The Chairman invited the member of the public to speak but he declined.

*The Chairman reconvened the meeting.*

6. **WEST SUSSEX FIRE SERVICE COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Group Manager of Protection at West Sussex Fire Service gave a short presentation on the proposed changes to the Risk Management Plan and highlighted the following proposals:

- An enhanced retained operating model to address the issue of recruitment and retention.

- Improvements to day cover to include weekends as well as mid-week.
- Weekend cover to be included for rural areas.
- Non-attendance at certain low risk commercial buildings during the day on fire alarm only calls.
- Charging for repeat call outs to the same premises.
- Use of new technology to enable remote viewing of incidents.
- Introduction of emergency response standards.
- Review of specialist appliances such as 4x4 and boats.

He encouraged all Councillors to respond to the consultation and stated he would send further information to be circulated. This can also be shared on social media with local residents. These changes are not budget driven but are focused on improvements to the current service and there is likely to be further recruitment.

**Action: Councillors to respond to on-line survey please and circulate details on social media to residents.**

## 7. HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr Morgan reported that the pop-up shop in Horsham had been successful and he hopes it may role out to other villages. The cost for garden waste bin collection will rise to £44. Horsham District has been rated in the top 10 for new businesses which is a good sign of recovery. Regarding High Street parking concerns, he believes that Horsham parking enforcement officers can now book people parked on zig zag lines, where previously this was the remit of the Police. He has a meeting to discuss the issue further next month.

Cllr Potts reported that Horsham District Council (HDC) has a new leader - Jonathan Chowen, as well as several new cabinet members. Top priorities for the new leader will be the environment and the Local Plan. There has also been discussion on holding face-to-face meetings with HDC across the District in order to increase engagement, Cllr Potts and the Chairman urged caution not to undermine the already good relationship Henfield Parish Council (HPC) has with HDC through our District Councillors and avoid the potential to cause confusion through bi-lateral conversations. Cllr Potts also reported that LEAP grants are still available for start-ups and small businesses and he wondered whether this may be of interest to businesses attending the monthly or weekly markets.

**Action: Explore whether we could send details to attendees at the markets via the Hall and Community Partnership who should have contact details.**

## 8. WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

A report from Cllr Payne was circulated prior to the meeting.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Cllr Payne for the report. She commented that she is still pursuing the potential speed reduction on the A2037 and hopes to have a decision by Christmas. The Chairman added that the Community Speedwatch team would be keen to assist by monitoring adherence to a new speed limit by setting up a new site close to any new speed limit sign.

Cllr Morgan commented that the flooding by Woods Mill has been particularly bad and there is likely to be a problem beyond just leaves in the drains. He will send Cllr Payne an email so that she can investigate further. He added that he was surprised to see that a three year study of road verges for wildlife was needed, given that so many Councils have already implemented a similar scheme.

The Chairman was positive about the pilot to encourage wild flowers on verges, but perhaps it could be rolled out faster to other areas and added that he was pleased to see the commitment to carbon neutrality through LED Lighting in all public buildings by 2030 and hoped that Henfield could follow that lead for all of its community buildings. Rampion funding may be available in order to implement further conversion to LED lighting in community buildings. Sustainable Henfield 2030 could potentially explore this further. He also commented that he was pleased to

see the work being carried out on carer support, which in turn emphasises the importance of the work at the Haven.

**9. MOTION: APPROVE & SIGN TENNIS CLUB LEASE**

Cllr Morgan explained that the Tennis Club had requested a new lease as they were having difficulty obtaining grants with only nine years to run on the current one. As the club was on charity land a chartered surveyor report was also needed. The new lease has a 25 year term with five yearly reviews. There is a small increase in rent and the addition of the ability to consume alcohol on the premises, although not sell it. The new lease and Deed of Surrender will need to be signed by two Councillors with the Clerk as witness. The trustees of the Tennis Club have already signed and previous trustees removed. Cllr Shaw advised caution in keeping trustees up to date for the future.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Potts, **SECONDED** by Cllr Morgan and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve and sign the Tennis Club lease.

Cllrs Goodyear and the Chairman would remain behind after the meeting to sign the documents and Cllr Morgan will check that all signatures are correct.

**10. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

a) Summary of £28,169.07 expenditure from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021  
This was noted.

b) Select expenditure as the monthly random audit checks (November)  
Cllr Potts selected Coles Automotive – Timing Belt and Water Pump.

c) Draft Budgets 2022/23 for Comment.

The draft was circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Goodyear explained that these would be discussed in finer detail by the Finance, Risk & Change (FRC) committee later this month. She explained that an extra 10-15 hours per week of Works Officer time has been added due to increasing workloads and an element of succession planning. This has impacted the budget and without further adjustment would result in a band D increase of 5%. Given HPC's guidance to try to keep any band D increase to 3%, the suggestion will be to take some spend off the computing, community bus, high street-lights, playing fields and trails budgets. HPC have good levels of general and allocated reserves so can utilise these to ensure that any important projects aren't negatively affected, whilst keeping precept levels sensible. FRC will consider this matter further and present a final submission to Councillors at the January Parish Council meeting.

**Cllr Donoghue joined the meeting at 7.54pm.**

Cllr Sharp added that the Joint Commons Committee may be able to assist with the Works Officer costs by paying for some additional hours. The Chairman added that it is important to make provision for extra Works Officer time, given the likely increased work-load that the Parsonage Farm development will bring.

d) Members' Allowance

Cllr Goodyear explained that the existing guidance was over 10 years old so has been reviewed by the FRC committee. The new version (circulated prior to the meeting) has a change of emphasis on opting-out rather than in and the addition that Councillors can change their mind mid-term. She explained that she hoped these changes would encourage Councillors to claim the allowance, as if they don't this can hide the true cost of running a council and potentially create a stigma around it which could result in elitism. Only elected Councillors can claim the allowance but co-opted Councillors can still claim travel and subsistence expenses. The amount of the allowance has also changed to reflect 10% of the HDC Councillors' allowance, based on 2021/22 figures. The allowance is taxable at source at

the basic rate. The new rules will come into effect from April 2022 and provision has been made in the budget. Cllr Goodyear asked that all Councillors advise the Clerk whether they would like to opt out before April.

**(B) Plans Advisory**

Cllr Shaw invited questions on recent minutes, there were none.

Cllr Morgan commented that he was pleased with the result of recent appeal hearings.

The Chairman reported that he has had preliminary discussion with HDC and WSCC regarding plans for the Wantley field; further detail will be revealed in January by the developer Lovells. Initial designs show two triangles; one as a set of homes around a village square and a second triangle to the north that includes a playing field. The developers and WSCC will be looking for HPC input on particularly the playing field and there is a possibility of more homes in the plans than were included in the Neighbourhood Plan. He also commented that he was pleased to see inclusion of social housing that might remain without the right to buy option. Discussion is likely to take place with HDC's housing company in order to build and manage them.

**(C) Recreation & Open Spaces**

The Chairman invited questions on recent minutes, there were none.

**(D) Village Amenities**

Cllr Jones reported that the newly planted area under the Indian Bean Tree is looking nice, as is the winter planting in the High Street. A grant was very quickly received from HDC for the electricity supply in the Coopers Way car park. A site survey by UKPN is taking place tomorrow.

Cllr Morgan added that he was disappointed that the culprits of the vandalism have not yet been identified from the CCTV footage. The Clerk commented that the PCSO's will be taking images to Steyning Grammar School and it is hoped that staff there may be able to help.

**(E) Museum**

Cllr Donoghue reported that the book will not be ready in time for Christmas but pre-orders are being taken. There are however some colourised photographs of Henfield in the snow that have been turned into greetings cards available for purchase. Cllr Potts asked whether the curator was planning to meet the new curator of Horsham Museum. Cllr Donoghue confirmed this was planned for the new year.

**(F) Commons**

Cllr Sharp reported that silt has been removed from the Tanyard north pond and the leak was identified and rectified in the south pond. He is hoping a grant will be received from Wilder Horsham to assist with the work to remove the Willows from the reed bed which are currently taking too much water. This will result in increased and differing water levels to increase diversity of habitat for insects.

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

A report from Cllr Stevens regarding the Henfield Hall was circulated prior to the meeting.

a) HALC face-to-face meeting with Horsham District Council

The Chairman reported that he and Cllr Jones attended this meeting which included a focus on improvements to communications between District and Parishes. The Local Plan has not progressed any further due to water neutrality issues. Natural England have confirmed mitigation must be in place before anymore new developments are approved. The strategy is likely to take four to six months in collaboration with Chichester and Crawley District Councils and will need to be signed off by Natural England. Positive progress will also need to be demonstrated by Southern Water on funding new water sources. It is notable that leakage accounts for 85 million litres of water are lost per year, which would go a long way toward solving water issues. He also emphasised that the housing numbers for Horsham District have not changed and that applications are building up at HDC. There is concern about

demonstrating a five year housing supply. There will also be a knock-on effect for the building industry, businesses wanting to expand, building of new schools and community buildings. The cost of building and purchasing new homes will likely increase as design will need to include new features for recycling and capturing water.

The Wilder Horsham project highlighted their five-year plan to address biodiversity and the climate crisis. Staff at HDC have been trained and there is a focus on identifying core nature areas and ensuring that they are connected. Baseline habitat surveys will be conducted and it is hoped that they can train some local parish council and other groups to help carry these out in order to identify gaps and create nature corridors where needed. There is a Nature Recovery Award available from 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2022 of up to £5,000 and they are also engaging with local landowners as custodians.

**Action: HDC Biodiversity Group to register as the main contact for Henfield with Wilder Horsham project**

The Chairman also attended a NALC conference. Key topics included the levelling up agenda, complaints and good governance of Councillors (sanctions have been recommended) and the new festive lighting available that is made entirely from recycled plastic bottles and aluminium. Custom designs can be made into lights for around £800 and Cllr Donoghue will raise with the school to see if they would like to run a competition for the children to design a light each year so that the existing lights (which are towards the end of their life) can be replaced gradually.

**12. PCSO & POLICE ACTIVITIES**

The Clerk reported that enquiries into the vandalism at the bus shelter are ongoing and that there have been visits to the office from the PCSOs. The car parking at the medical centre during walk-in sessions has proven difficult with some local residents waiting 25 minutes to get to their homes. Cones have been put out by Works Officers, PCSOs have attended and the situation now seems to have improved. Unfortunately there had also been some abuse suffered by volunteer parking attendants. The Chairman added that the walk-in vaccination centre at Henfield Medical Centre had been advertised on the NHS website, although not all sites are. This has resulted in large numbers of people travelling long distances to Henfield for vaccines, including one family from Liverpool.

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

Cllr Morgan asked that, as in previous years, Councillors don't send each other Christmas cards but make a donation to Crisis instead. A box for donations will be available in the Parish Office.

Cllr Potts stated that Budgens have appealed against the decision regarding signage and that RPS are being chased to replace theirs.

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

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 7:00pm in the Henfield Hall.

**Meeting Closed at 8.49pm.**