

## **HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**Meeting of Henfield Parish Council  
held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 7.00pm in The Henfield Hall.**

**Present:** Cllrs M Eastwood (Chairman), E Goodyear, G Perry, J Jones, D Jemmett, R Shaw, M Morgan, N Farrell, A Sharp, C Simmonds, D Grossmith and N Stevens.

**In attendance:** Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager - OM) and four members of the public.

### **MINUTES**

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS 'INTERESTS**

Cllr Morgan declared a prejudicial interest in item 9 as Chairman of the Trustees of the Henfield Club. Cllr Simmonds declared a prejudicial interest in item 9 as Chairman of the Henfield Club. Cllr Stevens declared a prejudicial interest in item 9 as a member of the Henfield Club Committee and a trustee of the Henfield Hall.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Cllrs Kendall, Potts and Donoghue. Also, Cllr S Payne (West Sussex County Council).

3. **THE DEATH OF THE QUEEN – A MINUTE'S SILENCE**

Councillors stood for a minute's silence in remembrance of the late Queen.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 6<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

Approved, signed and dated by the Chairman.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

a) Outside Body Representative Guidelines

Cllr Morgan has submitted some suggested amendments and will meet with Cllr Goodyear and the Clerk to discuss further.

**Action Point: Clerk to roll this action over to next meeting.**

b) Response to the Economic Crisis

It was noted that the Finance, Risk and Change Committee (FRC) had approved up to £1,000 to be spent at the discretion of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk, if a particular need is identified.

6. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a) The Resurfacing of Henfield High Street from 17<sup>th</sup> October to 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

This work is to be carried out overnight from 8pm to 6am, from Golden Square to Furners Lane. It was noted that previous works resulted in some disruption to bus services. Cllr Grossmith asked if it would be a low noise road surface. The Clerk replied that it would not be, as the application for this was refused previously on a cost basis. The Clerk also added that Weaver Lane will also be resurfaced. This work is welcomed as the High Street road surface is in desperate need of improvement.

**Action Point: The OM to communicate details of the road closure on social media.**

*The Chairman adjourned the meeting.*

### **OPEN FORUM**

A representative from SH2030 asked the Parish Council for support by arranging a public meeting to discuss the cost of living crisis as well as to re establish the Henfield Helpline. She handed around the report written by SH2030 with a list of suggestions and asked whether the Parish Council could use their contacts to request support from local business and

organisations. They also suggested production of a leaflet with support details and suggested that some residents may be prepared to donate their £400 winter fuel payment. They have already begun some work on identifying warm spaces in the village and it was noted that there is a lack of provision at weekends.

Cllr Perry commented that she feels the Parish Council could certainly assist with communication. The Chairman added that unlike during Covid lockdown there is no spare Parish Office time to run a helpline, but if this could be managed by volunteers we would be able to support by sharing best practices.

It was all agreed that the Parish Council could pay for room hire for a meeting of organisations and, if supplied with a list of contacts, would be willing to email local businesses and organisations to encourage them to attend. It was also confirmed that the Parish Council would not be able to collect financial donations from the public, and that it would be more appropriate for a local charity to do this. The Chairman suggested speaking to the Haven and Henfield Community Partnership for advice on this.

A resident of the Tanyard explained to the Council that foul sewage from the direction of Red Oaks has contaminated the natural water course on his property and surrounding Tanyard Field following the heavy rainfall between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> September. He has reported similar incidents to Southern Water eighteen times in the forty years he has lived at the property. Southern Water repaired a manhole cover four to five years ago and believes the capping may have deteriorated again, or there may be a blockage. It was noted that Horsham District Council (HDC) are the landowners. The resident asked the Parish Council for support in ensuring this problem is rectified as he believes there are health and environmental implications.

It was agreed that in the first instance, Cllr Morgan will approach HDC for advice on how to proceed. Consideration will then be given as to whether a report to the Environmental Health department is needed.

**Action Point: Cllr Morgan to seek advice from HDC as above.**

*The Chairman reconvened the meeting.*

7. **WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**

A report from Cllr Payne was circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman highlighted the electric blanket testing, Warmer Homes and details on the recycling of mobility equipment.

**Action Point: The OM to share the above information in social media.**

**Action Point: Cllr Perry to share the report with SH2030 as it may be relevant to their work on the cost of living crisis.**

a) WSCC Bus Strategy

It was agreed that the useful report on bus services in Henfield prepared by Cllr Perry should be shared with the ongoing West Sussex Bus Forum.

**Action Point: Cllr Perry to share the bus report with the West Sussex Bus Forum.**

8. **HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Morgan reported that work is continuing on recycling projects, with a new initiative to recycle coffee pods due to begin in the new year. He reminded Council that batteries can be left on the top of normal waste bins and that plastic bottle tops can now be left on bottles. He added that collection of small electrical items and textiles can be pre-arranged. He also reported that work on the Local Plan and the impact of water neutrality continues, as well as ongoing enforcement issues. The Chairman suggested we remind residents re batteries and bottle tops via social media.

**Action Point: The OM to share details of the battery and bottle top recycling on social media.**

Cllr Jones asked about the ongoing issues at Jack Dunkleys. Cllr Morgan explained that there are outstanding enforcement notices but that a new planning application is expected shortly. The Chairman explained that he and Cllr Potts have been in discussion with the Dunkleys as agreed by the Plans Advisory Committee, and after several constructive visits and meetings they are comfortable with the design submitted in the new application. The applicant has been receptive to a collaborative discussion and the plan ensures that the proposed site design remains horticultural in nature as well as tidy and economically viable. It's not known at this stage how the new application will affect the enforcement notice but Cllr Potts is seeking to facilitate a visit by the relevant Planning Officer and Enforcement, given that this is a contentious site.

a) **Climate Change Workshops**

The Chairman and Cllr Perry attended a recent Zoom workshop, which will be followed up by an all day face to face Climate Action Planning event on the 20<sup>th</sup> October. Cllrs Perry and Goodyear will attend. Cllr Perry will also be speaking at this event,

b) **Shared Prosperity Fund Expression of Interest Update**

As part of the levelling up agenda, Henfield have provisionally been allocated £115,000 for developing safe spaces for our young people by HDC. This is subject to approval from central government and HDC await their response.

**Cllr Stevens and the members of the public left the meeting.**

9. **REVISIT THE USE OF THE HENFIELD CLUB**

Cllr Morgan explained that he and Cllr Simmonds had left the meeting prior to the original discussion at the previous meeting as they had declared an interest. It was later discussed with the Clerk and it was agreed that there had been no need to leave the meeting, that both Councillors are welcome to add their views, but that neither could take part in any vote on the matter. There was concern that an imbalance might have occurred in the discussion as those with an interest in the Hall had remained in the room.

Cllr Goodyear pointed out that there had been a lot of support for the Club in the previous discussion, and that there hadn't been a formal vote, rather a general agreement that the upstairs room at club could be used for sub-committee, working group and informal meetings. Cllr Shaw added that he had advised caution and the need to be even handed in the previous meeting. The Chairman invited Cllrs Morgan and Simmonds to give their views. They both confirmed that the upstairs room is available for meetings and that sometimes availability in the Henfield Hall is limited so this represented a useful alternative. It was agreed by all that the Club will be considered as an alternative venue.

The Chairman added that the Club are in discussion with HDC and are hoping to obtain a £10,000 grant to convert part of the space to a remote working business space with four workstations. Funding will also be needed to improve the toilets and there is a plan to install a digilock to enable easy access to the building when the Club isn't open for business.

10. **CONSIDER THE CONTENTS OF A LETTER FROM ANDREW GRIFFITH MP**

The letter was circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman highlighted that Mr Griffith is interested in supporting traffic speed reduction and is happy to attend events if available. He also mentioned the Rural England Prosperity Fund which he will ensure he is kept updated on and the Platinum Jubilee Village Hall improvement fund which the Henfield Hall are making an application for.

**Action: Chairman to investigate Rural England Prosperity Fund and assess suitability for IDP priorities in the parish.**

11. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

- (a) Summary of £37,217.78 expenditure from 1<sup>st</sup> September – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.  
Noted by Council.
- (b) Select expenditure as the monthly random audit checks – September.  
Cllr Morgan selected Chapel Interiors Wilmslow Ltd- £29.92.
- (c) Budgets for 2023/24  
Cllr Goodyear advised that each committee need to discuss their budgets for next year at their next meetings. A full draft budget will be circulated, and she asked Chairmen to also consider the overall Council budget so that it remains balanced.

**Cllr Stevens rejoined the meeting.**

- (d) Approve the External Auditor Report for 2021/22  
Cllr Goodyear thanked the Clerk for his hard work in preparing for the External Audit.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Goodyear, **SECONDED** by Cllr Grossmith and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the External Auditor report for 2021/22.

- (e) Staff Workflows  
Cllr Goodyear explained that there has been an increase in workload for the Parish Office staff, in particular with the cemetery, which is now taking up more than half the OM's time. This is reflected in the substantial increase in cemetery income. This was discussed at an extraordinary meeting of the Finance Risk and Change Committee earlier in the evening, and the intention is to bring forward a proposal for further office hours to the next Full Council meeting in November.
- (f) The Personnel Policies Compliance Statement for 2022  
This was circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Goodyear mentioned the performance reviews had been carried out as planned, correct policies and procedures were followed in recruitment of new staff and that she and the Clerk are working on new contracts for cleaning staff. There is also a pay increase imminent. The compliance review for the pension regulator is due at the end of the year.
- (g) The Business Case Summary for Each of the Council's Earmarked Reserves  
This has now been completed with the exception of one item. Cllr Goodyear explained that it was a useful process, and although not a legal requirement, was recommended by the auditor so that the public can understand why there is money held in earmarked reserves. A summary will be put on the Parish Council website.

**(B) Plans Advisory**

Cllr Shaw explained that a meeting had been cancelled due to the mourning period for the late Queen, but that an email discussion had taken place in order to submit comments about one amended application.

**(C) Recreation & Open Spaces**

Cllr Perry also reported that a meeting had been cancelled due to the mourning period for the late Queen but that the committee had agreed to a skate park open day and had some discussion about the fire and gas canister explosions there. Cllr Simmonds added that the tree plaque that he has made is ready to be collected.

**(D) Village Amenities**

Cllr Jones invited questions on recent minutes and announced that there are to be two electric vehicle charging points with double sockets installed in the Coopers Way and Library car parks. Works to the bus shelter roof are due to start on the 10<sup>th</sup> October.

**(E) Children & Young People**

Cllr Farrell reported that there had been a long discussion about the potential use of the UK shared prosperity funds with several ideas being put forward. The preference from young people was for a High Street location and discussions are taking place with Henfield Club for the older age group. The money will need to be spent by 2025 so if successful in the bid, plans will need to be made without delay.

The Chairman added that he had discussed the application success criteria with HDC who confirmed that the top priority is the safeguarding of children and young people. The age group they are targeting is 10 and above, with the emphasis on the younger children as they are considered the most vulnerable. Location is also very important, with provision for primary age children to be as close to St Peter's school as possible with the leisure centre, youth club and proposed new community pavilion designed in conjunction with the football club on the Kingsfield all being considered as having potential. It was agreed that the High Street would be better for older children, and HDC had been impressed with their visit to the Henfield Club as a possible location, but also felt the new Scout Community Building could also be appropriate. He added that to be successful our proposal needs to align with our Expression of Wish submission and these criteria otherwise the funding will be withdrawn. He suggested that next steps should be further engagement with key stakeholders to establish success criteria which can be applied against an assessment of each site after discussion with each site owner giving each site a score. HDC will be looking to understand the selection process and the alignment with our submission and their own success criteria.

He then expressed his thanks to Henfield Community Partnership as it was seen to be a positive strength that the expression of interest had been a joint application and we will continue to involve them in the decision making process. The Chairman also advised the involvement of Sussex Clubs for Young People was seen as a positive step and encouraged further engagement with St Peter's School, to include Paul Doick as Chair of Governors.

**(F) Museum**

Cllr Jones stated that as the Museum Committee meets quarterly, there is nothing new to report.

**(G) Joint Commons**

**(a) Henfield Common Management Plan of Action**

Cllr Sharp reported that a very constructive meeting had been held and that Cllr Eastwood had put forward a very detailed Action Plan supported by a budget proposal for the year 2023/24. This seeks an increase in HDC's contribution to £18,500, but with activities split between maintenance and restoration work which is linked to the Management Plans. The Joint Commons Committee is asking the Parish Council to share the restoration component and to put in place £4,000 in its reserves to be used if HDC funding is fully utilised. He explained that as HDC funding has to be spent within the year, there is no provision for building a reserve fund to carry out larger restoration projects identified in the management plan, especially where contractor support is needed. The Chairman explained that the maintenance budget will cover grass cutting and ditch clearance but little else. However HDC rangers will contribute by cutting back the reed bed each year and there will be some financial contribution towards removing the willow trees from the reed bed. This work should commence the week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> October.

(b) **Henfield Commons Budget Proposals 2023/24**

Due to the issue described above, it was proposed that we create an earmarked reserve of £4,000 which will be considered as part of the 2023/4 financial planning work. Cllr Noel will be taking this to Finance at HDC. There is also a separate process to apply for funding from a capital budget at HDC but submissions need to be made between April and October annually.

Cllr Sharp added that he hopes that volunteers will be able to remove and reuse the reed bed material to rebuild the dam which will hold some water back but we would need some volunteers to remove and stack the reeds close to the bramble hedge on the north side. He added that work has begun at Broadmere, the floodplain has now been cut and the material removed. He hopes the conservation volunteers will now be able to start their work. He also added that the water level of the Tanyard Pond at the end of Cagefoot lane is very low and needs investigation. There may be a leak but this will be covered by the maintenance budget.

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

Cllr Perry reported that the Great Big Green Week had been a success. A solar powered bus from the Big Lemon Bus Company had a successful trip from Henfield to Brighton and back, and the company are interested in road testing a potential Sunday service.

Cllr Shaw reported that the Haven is now generating its own electricity via the new solar panels and now also have an electric vehicle charge point. He had visited today to find a very well attended mother and baby group and he expressed his thanks to the organisers.

13. **PCSO & POLICE ACTIVITIES**

The Clerk confirmed there was little to report other than the fires that had occurred at the skate park. He confirmed that these had been reported to 101 and the PCSOs who will hopefully be increasing their evening patrols. He added that Deer Park residents persist in reporting the fires to the Parish Office rather than directly to the Police at the time of the incident, as he has repeatedly advised. Parish Office reports to the Police are often several days after the incident has taken place, especially if emails are received over the weekend.

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

Cllr Morgan reported that the parking restrictions on the Bysshop Meadow estate are being withdrawn.

15. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 at 7.00pm.

**Meeting closed at 9.04pm.**