**DRAFT Recreation and Open Spaces Report 2022-2023**

Over the last year our committee has considered a wide range of projects related to Henfield’s sport and recreation areas, play equipment and countryside. One significant change is that we have welcomed the new Children and Young People’s Committee and during this year the budget which this committee previously managed for play equipment and playgrounds has been moved to their stewardship. Prior to this, the Committee were commissioned a project to refurbish the Mound and Tunnel for under 5s at the King’s Field play area which was finally completed recently. The mound proved to be a complicated technical project but we knew this play equipment had been valued by generations of young Henfielders, so it is great to see it back in action. Other projects started off in this committee, such as upgrading the skatepark and providing more shade in play areas, will now be managed by the Children and Young People Committee.

Recreation and Open Spaces Committee has maintained regular communication with many of our local sports clubs. This included several meetings on drainage and playing surfaces and general us of the Memorial Field, Rothery Field and Kings Field. In some cases, plans made were shelved in the light of the extended drought last summer. The committee has supported local sports clubs in arranging training sessions and community events during the year and considered new projects such as the proposal for replacing cricket nets near the pavilion, and the proposal to bring Padel tennis to Henfield. The Committee hopes to review and monitor key aspects of the playing fields and equipment in our village over the next year and this has already resulted in plans for some replacement signage on the Rothery and Kings Fields to clarify our ownership or offer guidance on use.

Trees and wildlife have again been a priority for the committee, line with the Parish council’s ambition to increase nature recovery locally. The Henfield Green Canopy project, with support from many local and people and community groups including the parish council has resulted in to WSCC planting 25 trees in road verges this winter. These are specially chosen small trees, approved by the Highways department, which should provide some lovely blossom in the springtime. Our designated Community Road Verges are still being maintained with wildflowers/bulbs g through the help of volunteers. The newly planted Community Orchard at the Sandpit Field now has 15+ fruit trees and some nut trees including walnut and purple filbert. The Parish Council have installed a water trough in the orchard, with a wildlife guard made by Henfield Shed, to allow visitors to water trees in the drier months. We are grateful for reports from John Willis (tree warden) which have assisted the committee.

Footpaths and encouraging countryside access have been considered at several meetings and all members of the committee are walking a designated area to monitor the state of the stiles and footpaths. Where we find problems or concerns, these are being reported to the WSCC Public Rights of Way team. The Henfield Trails project continues and will soon have additional details added on the expected wildlife that can be seen within our village boundaries.

Henfield’s works officers team continue to do a sterling job of keeping Henfield’s recreation and open spaces as good as we can manage and we appreciate their continued efforts.

**Gill Perry**

*Committee Chairman*

Committee Members: Cllrs. Richard Kendall (Vice-Chair); David Jemmett , Daryn Grossmith Malcolm Eastwood; Andrew Sharp, and Chris Simmonds