



HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL HENFIELD PARISH MEETING

TUESDAY 7th MARCH 2023 AT 7:00pm

IN THE HENFIELD HALL

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs N Stevens, A Donoghue and J Potts.

Present: Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager), Mrs B Samrah (Parish Administrator), Cllr S Payne (West Sussex County Council - WSCC) and 110 members of the public.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

1. WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN OF HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The Chairman welcomed all those in attendance, ran through the agenda for the evening and introduced the speakers and Councillors.

2. AGREEMENT TO THE MINUTES OF 2022 MEETING

These were agreed.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

"First and foremost I would like to thank Cllr Mike Morgan who is stepping down as one of our two District Councillors after the 4th May elections. Mike has served this community faithfully and diligently for over 35 years as a Parish Councillor and latterly as an Independent District Councillor. What you don't see is the reliance that we all place on Mike's knowledge and wise counsel in much of what we do as a Parish Council. We are delighted that he has agreed to stay on as a Parish Councillor but I just want to say thank you to Mike for all his support to all of us whilst I have been Chairman. Mike does so much to help and support our community putting Henfield first and we should recognise that contribution - thank you Mike from all of us.

This is the last time that I will be reporting as Parish Council Chairman, having served my maximum six years. I want to thank all of you in the community, Kevin our Clerk and his team and all of my fellow Councillors for their support. When I became Chairman I had a tough act to follow in Ray Osgood who thankfully agreed to continue working on our Neighbourhood Plan to its conclusion. Ray left a very well organised effective Parish Council. My task was to modernise and use my business experience to further improve the way that we work. Along the way I found out how to build a new road and car park at the Leisure Centre, how to repel Mayfield (now Berkeley Homes) who were

threatening to build a 7,000 home town on our doorstep, how to work with other community organisations in the village to understand what is needed, and then to turn this into a plan including working out how we might finance it. This has been challenging, interesting and rewarding - I have learned a lot. This and creating a business plan detailing our priorities and working together to bring £2m of investment, are all things I feel proud of. But the thing that I am most pleased about is the way that the County, District, Parish Councillors (all volunteers), Clerk and his team all work together in a really effective way to get things done. It is interesting that this gets noticed beyond our borders and two years ago I was elected Chairman of the Horsham Association of Local Councils, representing the 32 Parish Councils that form Horsham District.

Thank you also to my long-suffering wife Carol for putting up with the hours that I spend making sure that everything is completed to my own high standards - she is very patient!

The last thank you is probably the most important one. Sadly the war in Ukraine continues to rage and we should thank those residents and employers who have welcomed the Ukrainian families into our community and made them feel at home. Let us hope and pray that they can return to their loved ones before my successor stands here next year.

Some Headlines for the Last 12 months

We held a very successful series of events across the weekend of the Queen's Jubilee and I managed not to go up in flames when lighting the beacon at the Rothery! We climbed further out of the Covid Pandemic but then Lloyds Pharmacy went into meltdown. A combination of switching to online providers and help from our MP to allow support from the Medical Centre for our most vulnerable residents appear to have largely helped us through this.

- The Community Scout Pavilion is finally under construction thanks to a lot of effort by the Clarkes Mead Trust and generous contributions by our residents and local organisations.
- To support the cost-of-living crisis we bought a community fridge to supplement the excellent work by the food bank volunteers.
- We learned that Sainsbury's are coming to Henfield from May 2023.
- We used our community bus funding to help local community groups to have fun beyond Henfield with free transport.
- We formed a new Children & Young People Committee.
- We agreed a future design for the Kings Field with our sports clubs and leisure centre.
- We planted trees and wildflowers on many of our verges and created a community orchard, all to support biodiversity and to recognise that this is a rural village.
- Our High Street was beautifully resurfaced.
- We have a new speed limit of 40mph across the Common and shortly on the stretch between Henfield and Woods Mill.
- We reviewed 104 planning applications even though water neutrality has meant that there were very few new homes being built. We tried to preserve trees from being removed by encouraging reduction or where they needed to be removed that they

were replaced. A further delay by HDC in the new Local Plan is a concern because it could expose us to more speculative planning proposals, something we have to watch diligently.

- The extension to our cemetery was consecrated by Bishop Ruth of Horsham on 31st January.
- Henfield Museum had more than 1,300 visitors to see its popular temporary displays and digitised 3,000 postcards and photographs.
- Our finances remain sound but like everyone we have higher energy costs to pay for things like village lighting and we are investing more in our young people which means that our Precept will increase by 10% this year to £304,789, an increase of £10 per annum for a Band D property.

Finally, to the May Elections where our District and Parish Councillors are elected. Some of our District & Parish Councillors are standing down this year, we thank them for all of their hard work. If you would like to get involved why not put your name forward to become a Parish Councillor? It's not all about sitting in meetings, its often about getting out into the community and making things happen. If you are interested, please talk one of us, or Kevin Wright at the Parish Office."

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Cllr Goodyear explained that 2023 has been dedicated as the Year of Young People for the Parish Council. It was felt that young people should be more of a priority in the village. A new committee has been formed and there has been a successful bid for funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The aim is to encourage our Young People to become involved in the community and to feel part of the village. Sussex Clubs for Young People are assisting with the recruitment of a youth coordinator who it is hoped can bring all interested parties together.

Cllr Farrell explained that they felt that provision for under 11's is good in Henfield, but went to speak to children from every year group at Steyning Grammar School (age 11-18) to ask what they like and dislike, and what they would like to see provided in Henfield. Consistently lack of public transport was quoted as the biggest problem but it was encouraging to hear that young people overwhelming feel safe in the village. Lots of other good ideas were put forward. Some were quick and easy to resolve such as the young people's session time at the gym and having the funfair more often. Other longer-term projects are being developed such as a High Street café, (currently being trialled at Goodness), a cinema night in May, a skate jam and graffiti wall launch in summer and a jobs and careers fair in the autumn. Hub at the Henfield Club will launch at the end of March for 16-18 year olds. There are also plans to redesign the existing skate park and the committee hope in future to develop a youth forum.

6. COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SUSSEX

Matt Roberts explained the background to Community Transport Sussex and it was noted that they are expanding all across Sussex, having 52 buses, 102 staff and 40 volunteer drivers. They provide access to transport for those that normally have some difficulty, with the aim of maintaining independence and reducing social isolation. He then introduced a new scheme launching in Henfield, an electric vehicle car club known

as 'Lecci.' Semi accessible electric cars will be available for hire with or without a driver, bookable online and eventually with an app. Costs are likely to be £5 per month to be a member of the club and £4 per hour for short term hire, with daily and weekend rates also available. Initially there will be two cars available located in central Henfield car parks with further charging points supplied and installed by Connected Kerb. A fully wheelchair accessible car will also be available with advanced notice. It is hoped the scheme will launch in June this year.

7. SUSSEX POLICE

Chief Constable Jo Shiner explained that her National Portfolio of responsibility is roads policing, working with multiple partners such as the DVLA and Highways Agency. She highlighted the difficulties with resourcing, competing priorities, the rapidly changing nature of crime influenced by technology (such as electric scooters and driverless vehicles), new and increasingly complicated crime trends emerging and the impact and intrusion that can be caused by social media. She explained that policing needs to remain politically impartial but that it is important for policing to be able to influence policy making and legislation, such as when an offence is endorsable. She also mentioned the importance of education and prevention and praised the work of the Children and Young People Committee. For example, she would like to see awareness courses for new drivers before they have committed an offence. Finally, she highlighted the importance of personal responsibility and community involvement, quoting that speeding is a crime normally committed by otherwise law-abiding people, therefore needing a change of mind set and attitudes.

8. OPEN FORUM

Questions from Members of the Public

- A resident of Baytree Court asked whether anything can be done about the parking on zig zags and yellow lines near to One Stop in the High Street. Chief Constable Shiner advised reporting to Operation Crackdown with photographs as these often lead to action. She will ask the Safer Roads Partnership if anything else can be done with regards to road furniture. Cllr Morgan stated that Horsham District Council (HDC) are having difficulty recruiting traffic wardens and that Sussex Police had blocked the Parish Council request to install CCTV cameras. The Chairman added that WSCC highways had refused the application to install barriers.
- A member of the public expressed concern around speeding on the Brighton Road. The Chairman stated that, as there is a new speed limit there is a six month wait and assessment process before Community Speedwatch can take it on as a new site. He encouraged all with concerns around speeding to volunteer for Community Speedwatch as their activities do result in action taken. He also added that the data from the Speed Indicator Devices is sent to Sussex Safer Roads and also informs Speedwatch and police activity in the village.
- A member of the public stated that there are trip hazards on pavements along Church Street. This will be investigated and reported to WSCC if necessary. She also complained that it is difficult pulling out of Church Lane due to a bend in the road. Cllr Morgan explained a mirror above the Lych Gate to assist was smashed and therefore removed.

- A member of the public expressed that Police are not visible in the village and asked for a monthly surgery in Henfield to be advertised in BN5 and the Parish magazine. Chief Constable Shiner responded that modern day policing has evolved to include much more covert policing, including plain clothes and unmarked vehicles. She added that there are 15 to 16 patrols a day in Henfield. PCSO Graham Foster added that he generally spends four out of six of his weekly shifts in Henfield and tries to be as visible as possible. He recently held an event on the High Street to invite residents to raise their concerns. This was well publicised on social media. He intends to return on a Saturday soon.
- A member of the public asked whether a piece of land adjacent to Hollands Lane could be used to construct a car park for visitors to the Downslink. Cllr Morgan will investigate who owns the land in question.
- A resident expressed concern regarding drug related activity in the village. Chief Constable Shiner encouraged reporting and commented that significant resources are allocated to deal with this issue.
- A resident expressed concern around the number of cigarette butts discarded in the village, particularly in regard to environmental damage. Cllr Perry agreed on behalf of SH2030 to investigate the impact and look at education around this issue. She also raised the issue of discarded vape pens and batteries.

9. APPROVE DATE OF NEXT YEAR'S PARISH MEETING

Tuesday 5th March 2024

The Chairman thanked all for attending.

Meeting Closed at 8.54pm