

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL - FINANCE RISK & CHANGE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting of the **Finance Risk & Change Governance Committee** held on
Tuesday 31st October 2023 at 7:00pm in the Committee Room at The Henfield Hall.

Present: Cllrs E Goodyear, J Jones (Chair), G Perry, M Morgan, J Potts, A Davey and R Shaw.

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

A G E N D A

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

None.

2. **APOLOGIES**

None.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12th SEPTEMBER 2023**

Approved, signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

a) Community Awards Update

Cllrs Davey and Shaw along with two members of the public have formed a working group. The OM will arrange and attend a meeting shortly to begin making plans. Cllr Goodyear has provisionally booked the Garden Room at the Henfield Hall for 18th May 2024.

Action Point: The OM to arrange a working group meeting to discuss Community Awards.

b) Cemetery Lighting Update

The Clerk has written to the West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC), hoping that they may be able to offer some legal advice via the National Association of Local Councils. There has still not been a response from the installer on their recent attempts to negotiate with the supplier.

c) Land at the Rear of 8 & 9 Kings Field.

It came to light that the resident making the request to purchase the land does not own the property, but rents it. His landlord is not willing to purchase the land but the resident asked whether he might move the fence line and rent the additional land instead. The Clerk has asked whether the resident's landlord would be agreeable to this but has not had a response. It was agreed that it would not be wise to enter into a rental agreement for this land due to the potential for ownership and boundary disputes in the future.

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**

None.

6. **REVIEW THE CURRENT VERSION OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN**

A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed not to remove any of the items on the current infrastructure delivery plan (IDP). There was however some doubt as to whether many of the target completion dates for projects are realistic in the current economic climate. It was agreed to postpone seeking formal approval of the IDP until January. In the meantime consideration will be given to scoring the projects against set criteria in order to give them a priority order.

7. **REVIEW THE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CROSS COMMITTEE ITEMS**

Cllrs Morgan and Perry have met to discuss various areas that cause confusion and cross over between the Village Amenities (VAC) and Recreation and Open Spaces (ROS). Suggestions to resolve this included one committee dealing with property and land owned by the Parish Council

and the other would deal with the rest, splitting it geographically by area or one committee dealing with green and growing areas and the other built or structural areas, including the Cemetery.

Cllr Morgan offered to draft some new terms of reference for these two committees. Cllr Goodyear added that this committee is the best place to resolve any cross-committee issues. It was also suggested that the Chairman of these committees could sit on each other's committees so that they are present in meetings to discuss cross committee issues.

It was agreed to update the Children and Young People Committee's terms of reference to reflect that a Youth Coordinator has now been employed and that responsibility for the play areas and skate park has also moved to this committee.

It was also agreed that all legal matters including licence and lease agreements will be signed off by FR&CG committee, although initial discussions can take place with the relevant committee prior to final agreement.

Action Point: Cllr Morgan to draft new terms of reference for the VAC and ROS committees.

8. REVIEW STANDING ORDERS & THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Cllr Goodyear suggested that, if Council agree to adopt the Civility and Respect pledge, it could be included as part of the Code of Conduct. Otherwise it was agreed that no changes are needed.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Potts and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to make no changes to the Standing Orders or Code of Conduct.

9. CONSIDER THE FREQUENCY OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2024

Following discussion it was generally agreed that it is easier to keep track of meetings when they take place on a set day in the month, rather than on a six weekly cycle. There is no statutory obligation to hold regular meetings other than three full council meetings per year. There was also general agreement that meetings should be scheduled monthly but that chairmen should feel comfortable and confident to cancel them if there are no pressing matters to discuss or decide, or if agendas are particularly short. VAC and ROS Chairmen were asked to consider whether they may be able to alternate meetings. The Plans Advisory and Museum meetings schedule would remain unchanged. It was agreed that the Parish Office would draw up a draft schedule for meetings to be circulated for agreement.

Action Point: The Parish Administrator to draft a schedule for meetings next year with the return to monthly meetings for all committees with the exception of Museum and Plans Advisory.

10. CONSIDER THE DRAFT 2024/25 BUDGETS, PRECEPT, PROVISIONS & RESERVES

Draft budgets were circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that provisions are to be taken from precept this year rather than from General Reserves as they were last year. It was also noted that the Children and Young People Committee have requested an increase in the recreational equipment budget from £4,000 to £6,000. It was agreed that with regards to staff costs, a best guess will have to be made as there has still not been an announcement on the local government pay review for this year. Cllr Goodyear advised that budgets should be realistic and not cost cutting, particularly as the impact on Council Tax for local residents is minimal. Cllr Morgan advised that there may need to be a substantial increase in the license fee for the football club as this has not been reviewed for many years. Cllr Goodyear has requested a meeting with the football club but has had no response so far. Budgets will be discussed further at an extraordinary meeting of this committee on the 14th November, as the ROS committee have not yet met to discuss their budget in detail.

11. CONSIDER ADOPTING THE NALC CIVILITY & RESPECT PLEDGE

Information on the pledge was circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Goodyear explained that this is being promoted by the National Association of Local Councils and that, by signing it, the Council would be agreeing, amongst other pledges, to support lobbying to strengthen the standards regime. It was all agreed to recommend signing the pledge to Full Council.

Action Point: The Clerk to include adopting the Civility and Respect Pledge on the agenda for Full Council in November.

12. **FINANCE**

- a) Confirmation of Reconciliation of Bank Accounts (September).
Signed and dated by two Councillors.
- b) Internal Controls (To Include Audit Check of Expenditure) – September.
Signed and dated by two Councillors.
- c) Approve £750 Grant to the Henfield Community Partnership.
This has been budgeted for. The Chairman of the Partnership will be attending Full Council in December to give an annual report.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Morgan and **VOTED SIX IN FAVOUR WITH ONE ABSTENTION** to approve the £750 grant to Henfield Community Partnership.

- d) Consider the Cyber Insurance Quotation of £351.68.
Following discussion it was found to be unclear whether Henfield Council need this insurance cover, as the insurer has judged the risk to be lower than average. It was agreed that the risk is likely to be mostly reputational as no bank details are stored on Parish Council systems other than on Barclays online banking. There are no payments taken via the website and no parishioners data is held by the Parish Council other than the electoral register. There was also some concern that significant changes may need to be made to current computer systems in order for them to be compliant with the requirements of the policy, such as two factor authentication. It was agreed to seek advice from WSALC.

Action Point: The Clerk to seek advice from WSALC as to whether the cover is required and to investigate what changes to current computer systems may be needed.

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

The Chief Executive of Horsham District Council, Jane Eaton, will be attending the Full Council meeting in November and has asked for questions to be submitted in advance if possible. Each committee Chairman was asked whether they could supply a question. Cllr Perry will email the Clerk with her suggested questions regarding the land for sale at Brookside Farm and the lack of electric car charging points in car parks. Cllr Morgan will ask for an update on water neutrality and why a grant was refused on this basis for installation of a water bottle refill station as it fits criteria for reducing plastic waste. Cllr Goodyear commented that she will only allow one question to be asked regarding the padel tennis application by the Leisure Centre. Cllr Kendall has also submitted a question to the Clerk.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

12th December 2023.

Meeting Closed at 8.25pm.