

## **HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**Meeting of Henfield Parish Council  
held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7.00pm in The Henfield Hall.**

**Present:** Cllrs E Goodyear (Chairman), J Jones, G Perry, D Grossmith, D Jemmett, R Kendall, S Leader, A May, M Morgan, J Potts and C Simmonds.

**In attendance:** Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager) and Cllr S Payne – West Sussex County Council (WSSCC).

The Chairman made the following statement:

We were all devastated to hear the news of the untimely death of Councillor Malcolm Eastwood a week after our last meeting in December. Malcolm was elected to Henfield Parish Council in May 2015 and was Chairman of the Parish Council from May 2017 – May 2023. He was elected as a Horsham District Councillor for Henfield in May 2023.

He and I were elected at the same time, and I sat next to him at our 1st Parish Council meeting. It just seems extraordinary to realise that he will not sit at this table with us again. During his time as a Parish Councillor, Malcolm actively delivered numerous projects for the benefit of the village including the Link Road by the Leisure Centre, the walking trails in the countryside around Henfield and the renovation of the Memorial Playing Field on Henfield Common to name but a few. Malcolm successfully led the campaign in 2019 to stop 7,000 new dwellings being built by Mayfield Market Towns. I personally will not forget his rallying call to action at the protest meeting in St Peter's Church in June 2019. He was totally dedicated to Henfield and devoted his energy and enthusiasm to maintaining the best features of the community. His determination to see his various projects through was clear. If there was an issue that needed to be sorted, you would never hear Malcolm say, "someone should do something about that". If there was an issue, he would sort it or get a team involved to sort it or pass it to the authority that could sort it. He was never a spectator sitting on the side lines.

We owe him a debt of thanks for all the work he did for us.

To say he will be sorely missed is a cliché but so true. Our sympathy and thoughts are with Carol and his children Peter and Annabel.

A memorial service will be held at 2pm on 16<sup>th</sup> February at St Peters Church.

She then invited any other Councillors who may wish to speak. Cllr Morgan added that when he stood down as District Councillor, Malcolm's name to replace him as an independent Councillor immediately came to mind as someone who would do a good job. It is Horsham's as well as Henfield's loss.

The Council stood for a minute's silence.

### **MINUTES**

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

None.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Cllr Shaw.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

Approved, signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

None

5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a) Year of Biodiversity

The Chairman explained that 2024 is the Henfield Year of Biodiversity, which ties in with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of both Henfield Birdwatch and Garden and Arts. There are a number of events already

planned which are detailed in a calendar on the Parish Council website. There is also a plant of the month; January is Winter Heliotrope. The aim is to increase public awareness and lots of groups are already involved. Year of Biodiversity will be on the agenda for each individual committee to consider their contribution. The Children and Young People Committee discussed yesterday that they may arrange some volunteer or training days with the Steyning Downland scheme. Cllr Perry added that there may be a Memorial Walk for Malcolm Eastwood planned for the summer.

Cllr Payne joined the meeting at 7.08pm.

*The Chairman adjourned the meeting.*

### **OPEN FORUM**

None.

*The Chairman reconvened the meeting.*

#### **6. WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Payne spoke of her sadness at the death of Malcolm Eastwood commenting that he was a good friend. She will miss him and there will be a massive hole in the village.

She reported that she had attended a recent Public Rights of Way meeting to discuss the Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) application for Furners Lane to Woodmancote. She added her support to the officers decision to oppose the order, although she did not have a vote as she is not on the relevant committee. She has walked the route herself and will be attempting to arrange for the ditches to be better maintained so that the route is more suitable to be used for walkers. She anticipates that the British Horse Society will appeal the decision.

Cllr Payne also reported that she is continuing to campaign to improve the number 17 bus service, Cllr Perry expressed her thanks. Cllrs also requested that she raises the issue of the flooding around Woods Mill, where travelling north on the Shoreham Road is particularly dangerous when it floods, the flood extending for 150 metres and up to 10 inches deep. Cllr Payne has also been in touch with the Youth Coordinator to arrange to meet, as there is a lot of concern about the parking situation at St Peter's School.

#### **7. HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Potts reported that district councillors had approved the regulation 19 document of the Local Plan at the Horsham District Council (HDC) meeting on 11 December 2023. This Local Plan will be for the period 2023 to 2040. The consultation period is from the 19<sup>th</sup> January to the 1<sup>st</sup> of March. Comments can be submitted directly to HDC on whether the plan meets the national planning requirements and whether it is legally compliant. He summarised the concerns he had regarding the local plan, specifically the inclusion of land at Sandgate nursery, given the lower targets afforded to the district by water neutrality and the lack of proper community engagement and consultation. He stated this is hugely damaging to the neighbourhood plan process which should dictate where to put the housing Henfield is required to take. However, he did emphasise the importance of having a Local Plan, not least because of the protection it gives against speculative development. Councillor Potts was pleased to see that key protections lobbied for had been reflected in the updated National Planning Policy Framework and highlighted some of the main changes. These included that HDC will no longer need to continually demonstrate a five year land supply, protection will be afforded to Neighbourhood Plans that are five years old and not the previous two years, and that urban uplift will have to be accommodated in urban centres.

Cllr Potts added that he would attend the next Plans Advisory Committee meeting.

#### **8. VACANCY FOR COUNCILLOR UPDATE**

The deadline for applications for co-option to the two current vacancies is the 12<sup>th</sup> of January. Four applications have so far been received. These will be discussed at the next Council meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> February. A third vacancy has now been advertised with a closing date of the 15<sup>th</sup> March to send in applications. This will be advertised in the BN5 and Parish Magazines as well as the usual channels online. Applications will be discussed at the Council meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> April. It will be considered

whether any unsuccessful applicants for the first two vacancies could be carried over to the third vacancy.

9. **MOTION: TO APPROVE COUNCIL EXPENDITURE AND INCOME BUDGETS FOR 2024/25**

The budget was circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that draft budgets have been discussed and approved by individual committees. The most recent draft had been altered to reflect the recent pay review which resulted in an increase in employment costs. The remainder of the budget is the same as previously circulated. Cllr May stated that in July 2023 the Recreation and Open Spaces (ROS) minutes state that it was agreed to set a separate tree planting budget of £1,500, however this has not been reflected in this budget. The Chairman explained that this should have been raised in the October and November ROS meetings when next year's budgets were being discussed, and that it is the responsibility of the committee to ensure that this happened. ROS approved their budget in the November meeting. Cllr Perry commented that she is confident that the funding will be available for any approved tree planting as there is nearly £8,500 in reserves. Cllr Morgan added that all committees have ideas and aspirations throughout the year, but when it comes to budget discussion in October, November and December they often have to be restricted or cut back for a variety of reasons, therefore anything agreed in July could be subject to change. Cllr May then asked for clarity on whether this impacts the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The Chairman explained that the IDP is a wish list of potential projects for Henfield (a majority of which are from outside organisations) that the Parish Council have agreed to support if an application is made for funding from S106 or CIL monies, therefore entirely separate from the Council's budget.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Jones, **SECONDED** by Cllr Simmonds and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Council Expenditure and Income Budgets for 2024/25.

10. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE PARISH PRECEPT FOR 2024/25 IN THE SUM OF £348,685**

This amount represents an increase of 14.4% on last year which equates to £16.50 per annum or £1.38 per month per band D property in Henfield. This increase reflects the increasing cost of living, the anticipated five-year rent review for the Parish Office and Museum and the fact that provisions will be taken from the precept this year, rather than from reserves, as was the case last year.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Grossmith, **SECONDED** by Cllr Morgan and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Parish Precept for 2024/25 in the sum of £348,685

11. **CONSIDER EXPENDITURE OF UP TO £2,500 FOR A COMMUNITY RECOGNITION EVENT**

A proposal was circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman added that the previous Citizen of Henfield Award was now considered unsuitable as in previous years the Council had been unable to make a unanimous decision on who should receive it. It is now proposed to hold a recognition event to say thank you to the numerous volunteers in the village, called Henfield's "Big Thank You." All clubs and organisations will be asked to nominate one person (or two for larger groups) to attend a reception in the Garden Room at the Henfield Hall on the evening of 18<sup>th</sup> May. Food and drinks and potentially some entertainment will be provided. It is hoped that all Councillors will attend to welcome the guests and serve the food and drink. Up to 80 attendees would be expected. No awards will be given. Cllr Kendall asked whether this could instead take place at the Annual Parish Meeting, but it was felt that a separate event would make it feel more special and entertaining for those attending. It is also hoped that, if funding permits or a grant can be found, that a promotional video featuring many of the groups could be made for prosperity and future use.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Perry and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve expenditure of up to £2,500 for the community recognition event.

12. **HENFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 5<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024**

The Chairman suggested that the three topics for presentation could be the Year of Biodiversity, the Henfield Community Fridge and the progress made by the Youth Coordinator. An update on the progress of the electric car club was also suggested. The Chairman added that she would welcome other suggestions.

13. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Cllr Jones reported that as well as the numerous budget discussions, the committee have recently addressed the terms of reference particularly in relation to verge management, continue to seek redress for the failed cemetery lights, have made grants to the Henfield Hall for solar battery storage and further small grants to the Henfield Club and St Peters Church for the upkeep of the graveyard.

(a) Summary of £25,793.39 Expenditure from 1<sup>st</sup> December – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.  
Noted by Council.

(b) Select Expenditure as the Monthly Random Audit Checks – December.  
Cllr Simmonds selected Hamfelds Home and Garden - £28.20

(B) **Plans Advisory**

Cllr Grossmith reported that there have been a number of recent controversial applications and that some enforcement issues in relation to Stonepit Lane have been escalated to HDC.

(a) The Horsham Local Plan.

The committee have met to discuss the Local Plan and intend to hold a public consultation on the 1<sup>st</sup> February. The Chairman added there may need to be an additional Full Council meeting to approve a response to HDC before the 1<sup>st</sup> March HDC consultation deadline. Cllr Leader added that the recent letter from MP Andrew Griffiths to Councillors was useful.

(C) **Recreation & Open Spaces**

Cllr Perry reported that the ROS meeting in December had been cancelled. It was noted that the flooding at Eaton Farm is now worse.

(D) **Village Amenities**

Cllr Morgan invited questions on recent minutes and added that the new memorial bench is not expected until February.

(E) **Children & Young People**

Cllr Leader reported that the Youth Coordinator is focusing on the Skate Park renovations and the youth forum. She is also very concerned regarding the parking issues at St Peter's School which she will address with Cllr Payne.

(F) **Museum**

Cllr Potts invited questions. The committee has not met since the last meeting of Full Council.

(G) **Joint Commons**

Cllr Perry reported that it has been agreed that the Commons can be used for Biodiversity events this year and that there are some governance issues to address with the legal team at HDC. It is likely that the committee will lose some of their autonomy with the Commons but in exchange for more funding, professional input, support and robust management from HDC who own the Commons. The legal team at HDC are also looking into the parking issues at Alma Terrace. It was also noted that there is the possibility of sheep returning to the Tanyard and that clearance work is due to begin there shortly.

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

Cllr Pery reported that there is a presentation on the Lost Woods hosted by SH2030 on the 17<sup>th</sup> January.

15. **PCSO & POLICE ACTIVITIES**

Nothing to report.

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

Cllr Simmonds reported that the BP Guild would like to hold an event on the Rothery Field on the 15<sup>th</sup> June. Local clubs and organisations will be invited to have a free stall to promote their group. He is aware that permission will be needed from the Parish Council. Food, drink and live music will be provided and the Beacon will be lit. There may a theme of the King's Birthday. The Chairman added that there may also be a countrywide Beacon Lighting on the 6<sup>th</sup> June to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day. Cllr Jemmett added that there are several events also planned in 2024 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Henfield Hall.

17. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

**Meeting Closed at 8.05pm**