

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL - FINANCE RISK & CHANGE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting of the **Finance Risk & Change Governance Committee** held on **Tuesday 16th January 2024 at 7:00pm** in the Committee Room at The Henfield Hall.

Present: Cllrs J Jones (Chairman), E Goodyear, M Morgan, S Leader and G Perry.

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

MINUTES

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

None.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Cllrs R Shaw and J Potts.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12th DECEMBER 2023 AND THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 3rd JANUARY 2024**

a) Naming of Councillors Attending Meetings.

The minutes of the 3rd January meeting referred to a Councillor as a 'member of the public' as she did not attend the meeting as a Councillor belonging to this committee. Cllr Goodyear explained that this has been standard practice since the implementation of GDPR. It was felt that as she is a Councillor and was seeking clarification on emails she had sent to the Parish Office as a Councillor, she should be referred to as such as, but in attendance rather than present. Therefore, the minutes were amended to reflect this.

Both sets of minutes were approved, signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

a) Committee Terms of Reference.

A draft terms of reference for the verge management working group under Recreation and Open Spaces (ROS) committee was circulated prior to the meeting. They will be discussed at the ROS meeting tomorrow.

b) Cemetery Lighting Update.

A response has not yet been received from the lighting supplier to the request for replacement or refund of the failed Cemetery lights.

c) Henfield's "Big Thank You."

A planning meeting due to take place today was cancelled due to illness. The event has been booked for 18th May. Cllr Goodyear commented that she has taken on board comments in the January Council meeting regarding how the event is promoted. This will be discussed further at the next event planning meeting.

The Chairman reminded the committee that the Football Club licence issue has not yet been resolved. Cllr Goodyear commented that she has sent several requests to the Club Chairman for a meeting as the Football Club had previously asked to meet but had no response. She added that maybe the Council should now move to drawing up the new Licence with new costings as we are unable to discuss with the Football Club. She has researched appropriate rates to charge. Cllr Morgan added that the situation has changed since the now expired licence was granted. It was noted that the Football Club still have an outstanding electricity bill and will shortly also be sent an invoice for their share of grass cutting.

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. UPDATE ON THE TANYARD BARN DEVELOPMENT

Cllr Morgan has met with Horsham District Council (HDC) and UKPN regarding a new power supply for the barn. HDC will cover the cost at around £3000 and are dealing with the issue of water neutrality. Cllr Morgan has also met with the Sheddors and the architect; he advised that the plans for the extension are going to be significantly reduced. The planning application will be heard by HDC planning committee in April. Cllr Leader recommended looking at the Community Ownership grant as a possibility for funding.

7. REVIEW OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN (IDP)

A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. The OM explained she has sought guidance from HDC strategic planning department on what information they require. It is hoped that the IDP could be simplified and priority ordering considered. Timescales and whether projects are realistic will be considerations. It was agreed to remove the Safe Routes item as the working group no longer meets, but to await a response from HDC before any further changes are made. It was also agreed that it is not appropriate to include the IDP on the website. This is because it is merely a wish list of potential projects that can apply for S106 or CIL funding which, if successful following the application process, would only represent 50% of the project cost. It would not be appropriate to raise the hopes of external clubs and groups by having the list in the public domain as it is by no means a commitment that the various projects will go ahead. It was also noted that the majority of the projects are owned by external organisations and not the Parish Council. With regards to the list of smaller Henfield Parish Council potential projects, it was agreed to remove the Village Square item as plans for a memorial bench have now been finalised and no further significant works are planned.

8. REVIEW OF COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

a) Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct was circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that the date on the version circulated may not be the most recent but was based on the HDC adopted version. Cllr Goodyear had also circulated to the committee a link to the Local Government Association (LGA) guidance that explains the Code of Conduct, the Civility and Respect pledge and Conflict of Interest rules in more detail, with some practical examples. It was all agreed to amend the Code of Conduct to reference this guidance and to include the link. It was also agreed to include mention of working groups in section 1 (4). Cllr Leader requested page numbering and Cllr Morgan suggested asking new Councillors to sign a document to confirm that they have read and understood the Code of Conduct. It was noted that all new Councillors have received it, and that the new councillor training also covers the issues mentioned above in detail.

Action Point: The Clerk to make the amendments mentioned above and to circulate by email to the committee before taking to Full Council for approval.

b) Complaints.

The current complaints procedure was circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that it is based on the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) framework. In the second section headed Definition of a Complaint it was agreed to insert 'or Councillor' following 'members of the public'. In the section headed 'How will the Complaints procedure operate', under item 3 it was agreed to amend that the complaints review team is to be three Councillors (or two Councillors plus the Chairman of relevant committee if applicable). It was also agreed that any appeal would be heard by the Chairman and Vice Chairman and one other Councillor. Consideration will need to be given to how the Councillors will be selected. The procedure will be considered again at the next meeting of the committee. It was noted that Mulberry & Co may be able to advise as well as the West Sussex Association of Local Councils.

Action Point: The Clerk to make the two amendments mentioned above and to check whether there have been any recent updates to the NALC framework.

c) Pay & Remuneration.

The current policy was circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that this had been drawn up by a specialist HR firm. It was all agreed that no amendments were needed.

Action Point: The Clerk to alter the review date on the policy.

d) Skills Matrix.

It was noted that the skills matrix process was difficult to implement, and several Councillors had declined to complete it previously. It was also noted that when co-opting, the Council is not permitted to advertise for particular skills and that the application process does not ask specific questions in that regard. It was agreed that it would be useful to ask new Councillors to complete a simplified skills matrix, perhaps to also include areas of particular interest.

Action Point: The Chairman, Cllr Goodyear and Cllr Leader to meet to draw up a draft of a simplified skills matrix to bring back to the next meeting of this committee.

e) Conflict of Interest Statement (Code of Conduct).

See item 8 a). Useful practical examples of conflict of interest can be found in the LGA guidance which will now be included as a link in the Code of Conduct. It is hoped that these examples will help Councillors understand conflict of interest.

9. **BP GUILD SUMMER EVENT**

It was noted that there is an application form with accompanying guidance to use Parish Council land which the BP Guild will need to complete. It is not possible for them to use the Parish Council public liability insurance as it is not transferable to another event organiser. The TEN's license must also be applied for by the event organiser. With reference to the lighting of the beacon, it was all agreed that it should be reserved for special national events. The BP Guild will be invited to assist with the beacon lighting if there is a national event to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D Day on the 6th June. As the beacon is located on Parish Council land and was paid for by them, permission to light should be needed. It was all agreed to be supportive of the planned summer event and to offer guidance if needed.

Action Point: The Clerk to email the BP Guild with the application form and guidance, and to confirm that the Parish Council are unable to supply public liability insurance or apply for the TEN's license on their behalf.

10. **FINANCE**

a) Confirmation of Reconciliation of Bank Accounts (December).
Each signed and dated by two Councillors.

b) Internal Controls (To Include Audit Check of Expenditure) – December.
Each signed and dated by two Councillors.

c) Consider New Appointments to Bank Mandates.

There are five bank accounts, two of which (Unity Trust and Charity Bank) are relatively recent and do not require alterations to the mandates. There are three people named on the mandates for the remaining accounts that are no longer serving on Council, these will be removed. It was agreed that the Chairman will be added to the Natwest mandate and the Chairman and Cllr Goodyear will be added to the HSBC mandate. The Barclays account still has six people named on the mandate, which was felt to be sufficient.

Action Point: The Clerk to apply to make the changes noted above.

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

Cllr Leader ask whether anything would be done in memory of Malcolm Eastwood at the Annual Parish Meeting. Cllr Goodyear confirmed that she will be mentioning him at the beginning of her welcome speech. It was noted that the Parish Council will be well represented at the memorial service, and it would be nice if Councillors arrived and sat together. Cllr Goodyear will wear her chain of office. There is no information yet on whether flowers or a donation to charity would be preferred. Cllr Perry added that she has spoken to the family who are in favour of a memorial walk in the summer. She is also hoping to reinstate work on the Henfield Trails project.

Cllr Perry asked whether the Council would agree to pay for hire of the Garden Room in order to celebrate the end of the Year of Biodiversity, where it is hoped to have a photographic display. It was all agreed to pay for the room hire.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

20th February 2024. Cllr Leader requested that in future this committee holds these meetings on a different day or time as she is unable to attend regularly on a Tuesday evening. It was all agreed to explore the possibility of a morning meeting.

Action Point: The Clerk to establish when a suitable meeting room would be available in the Henfield Hall for future meetings.

Meeting Closed 8.40pm