



HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT for 2020/2021

An Introduction and Summary of the year from our Chairman, Cllr Malcolm Eastwood.

A catch up from our March 2019 meeting

Last year we heard from our Medical Centre about our Connector Plus initiative combatting loneliness and isolation. We also heard about the Commons Management Plan and about the Henfield Trails, an initiative to attract visitors to explore our lovely countryside and our shops.

You raised concerns about road safety at the school, about the Henfield Halls leaking roof, whether there could be an open forum for traders and residents to increase support for our local shops, litter on the playing fields, and the usual pot-hole question. You said you liked our work on keeping the verges tidy and what our litter pickers did to keep the village tidy.

Managing the Covid 19 threat

Our response to the first lockdown was to call together some of our community leaders and implement a plan in less than a week. The Henfield Haven was converted into the Henfield Helpline and became a distribution centre for food and medicines. Parish Council resources were diverted to support these efforts and our volunteers delivered a Helpline leaflet to every home. The Parish Office moved from face-to-face meetings and enquiries to Zoom meetings and more use of phone and email to keep things going, we didn't ever shut down even though we locked down.

250 volunteers came forward and during the lockdowns many of them have provided lifeline support to 500 people who have needed to self-isolate. Our High Street also stepped up to the challenge and we can be very grateful that we were able to keep local supply lines open and that they worked hard to achieve social distancing. We must remember our local retailers when things go back to something normal, we need to repay their support by continuing to buy local. Our community spirit shone through during this crisis, it was great to see the children's messages to the older folks isolated at home or in our care homes. Thanks to a team effort we have managed to limit the impact of Covid in our community.

The same spirit has been applied to the vaccination programme where Storrington Medical Centre were one of the first in West Sussex to start vaccinating including our residents and they are doing a great job. Thanks to them and now to Henfield Medical Centre who have worked hard to bring the vaccines into the village well over 2000 people have been vaccinated against Covid19, a superb effort. Our Councillors have been helping to book hundreds of appointments, volunteers and the Friends of the Medical Centre have been marshalling the vaccination efforts and providing transport allowing the Medical Centre staff to concentrate on the clinical aspects of their work, another real team effort.

Planning Issues

Covid has had an impact on where we expected to be with our Planning priorities. Both our Neighbourhood Plan and the Horsham Local Plan have been delayed as a result of Covid19. We hope to go to a referendum on our NHP in May 2021 and these sites together with additional ones in the Local Plan will, if supported, mean an additional 370 homes being built in Henfield Parish during the local plan period (to 2036). Please get out and vote, this is important.

The long-awaited site decisions from Horsham's Local Plan are expected in the next few weeks. It was notable that 42% of all the letters received about the Horsham Local Plan Strategic Sites were about Mayfield and only 36 of the 1,744 comments received were in favour. If you sent a letter, thank you, let's hope our District Councillors are listening to their voters when they in turn vote on the sites to be bought forward and developed!

The Government issued a White Paper entitled Planning for the Future which we, along with many others felt shifted the decision on sites to far in favour of the developer and in fact significantly reduced the role of local communities and parish councils in decision making. Supported by our MP and the District Council we pushed back with sound logical arguments and this appears to have forced a rethink to take place.

Finally, one issue that we thought was resolved was Fairfax, who lost their appeal against the refusal to develop land at Sandy Lane. Sadly they are back a mounting a further appeal. Getting our NHP made is important because it will give us real protection against these kind of speculative developers as well as bringing investment through CIL funds into the parish.

What have we been able to achieve?

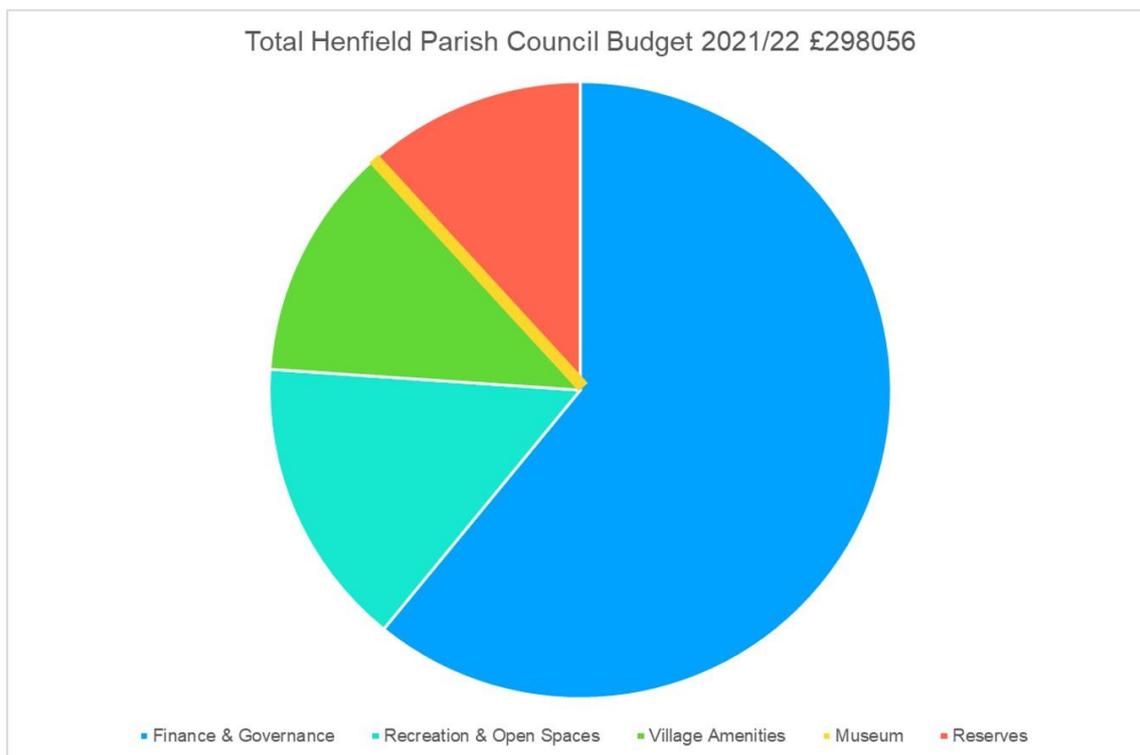
Despite Covid a lot of things have been delivered and here are a few of them.

- A successful Save the Haven campaign allowed it to reopen on 17th July thanks to the generosity of our community and the commitment of the staff, volunteers, customers and their carers. The Haven won the Queens Award for Voluntary Service (MBE).
- Our Public Conveniences were given a long overdue refurbishment and the bus shelter repainted. Sadly in response to some vandalism we will be installing a new shutter and CCTV
- Our Public Library was given a facelift.
- The path to our Youth Club was given time/light sensor-controlled lighting to help its users navigate in the dark.
- The Henfield Hall received a new water-tight roof, partly funded by £24k of S106 developer money.
- The Henfield Leisure Centre received a new floor in its main sports hall, partly funded by £24k of S106 developer money.
- A covered cycle rack was installed at Henfield Leisure Centre and the car park has been resurfaced.
- We completed the works to open the extension to Henfield Cemetery which is now available for use.
- Henfield Library Car Park has been completely reconstructed.
- We launched two Walking Trails.

- The community launched two new initiatives the River Adur Restoration group which will work with a Biodiversity group and the Safe Routes group which you will hear more about in the next 12 months.
- Henfield Parish Council launched its new much easier to use website, now has its own Facebook page, twitter and Instagram accounts and we started to live stream our Council Meetings.

Finances and Infrastructure

So what do Henfield Parish Council spend your Council Tax on? The following chart shows you this.



From this information I hope you can see that our finances are sound and that we continue to spend our funding on the things that matter to our community.

By diverting our resources during lockdown and continuing to work where it was safe to do so we avoided furloughing any staff and I would like to thank Kevin Wright, his office staff, our works officers and our litter pickers for working flexibly during this period and for having a “can do” attitude to their work which has helped us to continue to move forward and deliver so much in such a difficult year. They are credit to our community.

In January our Councillors voted for a small 2% increase in our income and expenditure for 2021/22 which will result in a 2.5% increase in your Precept to £298,056. To put that into context the cost of Henfield Parish Council is an extra £3.87 per year on your Council Tax bill if you are a Band D property owner, which is a 4.1% increase.

In January we also agreed two more important things. Following two virtual meetings held with the organisations who look after our community facilities and buildings we agreed to start placing some funds into our reserves so that we can create some funds which can be made available to make a contribution toward some of their improvement initiatives. We also agreed to set aside £10,000 in support of the Scout Community Pavilion Appeal which

we hope will allow construction work to start this year. Having a made Neighbourhood Plan is financially important because with a made plan we will receive 25% in CIL (developer) money into the village and without a made plan that reduces to 15%. If we are to achieve the things that appear in our Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) we will need as much funding as we can get. We have identified specific investment needs of around £2million which will be a challenge.

Thank you's

Finally, I just want to close with some thank yous

- to Kevin Wright our Parish Clerk and his team who do all the work, much of it behind the scenes to deliver for Henfield. A particular thank you goes to our two new staff members Rebecca Grantham and Belinda Samrah who joined us just as Covid hit and have thrown themselves into all the challenges that we have given with great energy and enthusiasm.
- to our Parish Councillors who are all volunteers but who work together to make decisions and do what we believe to be the right things for our community.
- to our District Councillors Mike Morgan and Josh Potts and County Councillor Lionel Barnard for stepping up to fight our corner when we have needed them.
- to our MP Andrew Griffith who has proven both receptive and responsive when we have needed his support notably for Save the Haven, for fighting our planning demons and in support of our Medical Centre and bringing the vaccine here.
- Finally thank you to our community for everything the people of Henfield have endured to get us through this difficult period.

Let us hope for a nice summer and the opportunity to enjoy it together in some way.

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Office in the Henfield Hall (currently by appointment only)

Telephone 01903 492507 **Email** office@henfield.gov.uk

Full Council meets 1st Tuesday of every month at 7pm in the Henfield Hall.

Members: Malcolm Eastwood (Chairman); Elaine Goodyear (Vice-Chairman);

Ann Donoghue; Nita Farrell; David Jemmett; Jane Jones; Richard Kendall;

Michael Morgan; Gillian Perry; Josh Potts; Tony Rickard; Andrew Sharp; Russell Shaw;

Chris Simmonds and Nigel Stevens.

Committee Structure

Finance Risk & Change	Meets – 7:00pm	3rd Tuesday monthly
Plans Advisory	Meets – 7:00pm	1st & 3rd Thursday monthly
Open Spaces	Meets – 12.30pm	2nd Tuesday bi- monthly
Village Centre	Meets – 12:30pm	2nd Tuesday bi- monthly
Museum	Meets – 7.00pm	Last Wednesday of the month, quarterly
Joint Commons		Meets – Bi-monthly

Individual Committee Reports

Finance, Risk and Change Report 2020/21

This Committee comprises the Chairman of the Parish Council's sub committees and the Chairman & Vice Chairman of Council. The remit of this Committee is to deal with all matters financial, regulatory, change projects and items not addressed by other Council Committees. Also it has oversight of the Parish Council's risk registers.

2020 brought its challenges to maintain the Parish Council responsibilities but in new ways. All Parish Council meetings moved on-line via Zoom and I pleased to report that not a single Parish Council or Finance, Risk and Change meeting or was missed.

Just before Lockdown in March 2020 the Parish Council launched its new website which proved invaluable in keeping the Parish informed during the year. The new site is very clear and easy to use. The specific Coronavirus pages were an immediate success and continue to be a source of information for the village.

The Parish Council also took the decision this year to improve its social media presence and you can now follow Henfield Parish Council on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) as well as [Facebook](#) We have also begun live streaming the main monthly Parish Council meeting so residents can see the work of the Council in action.

Some staff changes this year have enabled us to make changes to the work of the Parish Office and we welcomed Rebecca Grantham as our Operations Manager and Belinda Samrah as our Parish Administrator. The periods of lockdown have also allowed us to make improvements to the Parish Office installing protective screens and improving working conditions.

This Council is committed to maintaining services in the Village to as high a standard as finances allow for the benefit of Henfield residents and visitors. Next financial year (2021/22) the Council precept will be increased to £298,056. This is an increase of 4.1% on a Band D equivalent property.

I hope that you feel from what you read in this year's report and those of the Council's sub committees that we provide a good service for your money.

Elaine Goodyear
Chairman

Committee Members: Cllrs. Ann Donoghue; Jane Jones; Gill Perry; Malcolm Eastwood; Nigel Stevens

Recreation and Open Spaces Committee (ROS) Report 2020-2021

Over the past year, this committee has continued to try to maintain and enhance our recreation areas and local environment despite the challenges of Covid 19.

We have carried out Risk Assessments on several occasions for the safe reopening of our children's play areas during the various stages of restrictions. The aim was to ensure as much access as was considered safe by following government and local guidelines on health and safety so that children and young people have recreation spaces and skateboarding opportunities wherever possible.

Our sports clubs have tried to use the local pitches whenever this was allowed and it is pleasing that some cricket and football were played during this year. However, there were significant issues at times with the surfaces for football being too dry at times, partly as a result of the very dry summer weather. We have been working with the local clubs and with contractors to try to improve the situation for the future.

There has remained a big focus on caring for the trees we have, implementing the recommendations from last year's arboricultural survey. Unfortunately some trees have had to be removed as a result of ash die back, but we hope to retain as many established trees as we can around the village. There are also plans in progress to plant small trees in public locations around the village which will go some way to replacing the trees we have had to lose this year.

Two of the Henfield Trails were officially launched this year, and many of you will have seen the information about these local walks in BN5 magazine, or on the council website. It is hoped that these walks provide an interesting option for lockdown exercise for local people now and will also attract more visitors to the village in future. We also continue to work with local groups to consider options to connect our village with other areas through walking, riding and cycling.

The Parish Council is hoping to set up a Biodiversity Working Group in the next few months, to respond to some exciting ideas of developing more public spaces as natural areas for wildlife, and also to work with the Wilder Horsham project with Sussex Wildlife Trust and Horsham District Council. There are also plans for wildflower planting in specified locations in the spring.

Our Parish Council works officers have continued to be a responsive and positive team, keeping the recreation areas and our local area as good as possible over the last year, despite their reduced hours of work, and the committee is grateful for their input. Our thanks also go to John Willis, the volunteer tree warden.

Gill Perry
Committee Chairman

Committee Members: Cllrs. Richard Kendall (Vice-Chair); Malcolm Eastwood; Tony Rickard; Andrew Sharp, Nigel Stevens, Nita Farrell and David Jemmett

Plans Advisory Report 2020/21

The role of this Committee is as a Statutory Consultee; to advise the relevant planning authorities on all planning applications within Henfield Parish. The planning authorities with responsibility for decision-making are Horsham District Council (HDC) and the South Downs National Park Authority.

PAC scrutinises in the order of 150 planning applications a year for Henfield Parish. Each application is evaluated against the policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework; the Horsham District Council's Planning Framework; the South Downs National Park Local Plan; the Horsham Conservation Area Management Plan for Henfield; the emerging Henfield Neighbourhood Plan, and the Henfield Parish Design Statement. Planning applications can only be determined against material planning considerations and, when objecting to an application the objections will be on the grounds that the application is in conflict with the Statutory Planning Framework and the specific policies will be quoted.

As well as commenting on individual planning applications, the PAC responds to district and regional consultation exercises and has responded to the consultation on the new Horsham District Council's local Plan, with the increasing pressure on targets for building new houses that Henfield faces.

Councillors Stevens and Perry are also members of the Steering Group that has prepared the emerging Henfield Neighbourhood Plan and its associated documents: the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment, Basic Conditions Statement, Consultation Statement, and Henfield Parish Design Statement. This Neighbourhood Plan has reached the Referendum stage; currently held up by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The PAC meets twice a month and residents are welcome to attend. The Horsham Council website provides a link for all planning applications where detailed plans can be viewed and comments made, together with planning policy documents.

Nigel Stevens

Committee Chairman

Committee Members: Nigel Stevens (Chairman), Ann Donoghue, Malcolm Eastwood, Elaine Goodyear, Gillian Perry, Josh Potts, Tony Rickard and Russell Shaw.

Museum Annual Report 2020/21

This year, during the Covid 19 pandemic, the Museum Committee continued to meet quarterly via Zoom.

The Committee agreed a vision for the Museum and prepared a forward plan including a digitisation/IT plan. The day to day running of the Museum, with all the opening and closing following Government guidelines, continued to be managed by the Curator, Alan Barwick assisted by Assistant Curator, Steve Robotham and a loyal team of volunteers. Stephanie Richards, our Costume Curator, continued to research and share the costume displays on the Museum Facebook page. The Friends of the Museum now consists of 79 members with a core group raising vital funds for the Museum. If you would like to be a Friend (annual membership: Single £10, Family £15, Life £100) or volunteer in any capacity to help the Museum we would be pleased to hear from you via the website www.henfieldmuseum.org. Or you can leave a message via the Parish Council office.

The temporary displays in the Museum during the year included:

- St Peter's Church, Henfield, 1250th anniversary
- What We Wore in the War
- The Thames Mudlark (now available on our website)

During the very few months in 2020 that the Museum was able to open its doors, there were 536 visitors.

Included in this, were a school visit of 56 children from St Peter's school. The Museum's roving case featured Henfield and the Age of the Stagecoach display entitled "Flying Machines" which spent the early part of 2020 in the foyer of Henfield Haven.

The Museum has flourished online this year - launching a **new website** (www.henfieldmuseum.org) in August with huge thanks to Rob Gordon who led the effort on content, supported by grateful contributions by others. In fewer than 4 months, there have already been 833 unique visitors and 1,945 page views.

Colourisation/restoration of historic photographs and story-focused writing have proved to be very popular when appearing in BN5 and the Parish Magazine and on the Museum and Henfield Club Facebook pages. Progress continues on the oral history recordings as well as capturing residents' stories of life in Henfield during lockdown 2020. The Museum Facebook page currently has 640 followers and some posts during the year have reached over 10,000 people.

Our 'digital windows' on the museum have given us a much wider audience across the UK and the world.

Material produced and sold this year by the Friends included:

- Henfield at War DVD - produced by Graham duHeaume, narrated by Toby Sharp
- Henfield Commons book - 2nd print run
- Rob Gordon, contributed to the Heritage of Horsham District in 100 objects book (which includes 10 objects associated with Henfield)
- Henfield's 19th Century Egg Basket book by Eddie Colgate.

- The first 'Museum' card of a print of the 'Tipnoak Corner' painting in the Museum – other similar cards are planned for 2021.

Other ongoing initiatives include:

- The new Henfield Heritage trails
- Henfield's Natural History including Arborea and the William Borrer transcription project

Further details of these and a link to purchase items can soon be found on our website www.henfieldmuseum.org. Please pay the website a visit to learn about Henfield's rich and varied history. We look forward to when we can welcome you back inside the Museum to see the objects in person.

Ann Donoghue
Committee Chairman

Committee members: Cllrs Ann Donoghue (Chairman), Jane Jones and Chris Simmonds.
Curator Alan Barwick, Friends of Henfield Museum Robert Gordon and Leo Jago.

Henfield Commons Joint Committee 2020/21

The Commons Committee (which is a subcommittee of Horsham District Council, owners of the land) is responsible for the management of our three Commons – Henfield, Broadmere and Oreham, as well as for the Tanyard Field, at the western end of Cagefoot Lane. Sussex Wildlife Trust has awarded Local Wildlife Site (LWS) status to all three commons. LWS is the new name for Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

We are continuing to implement the Kate Ryland Management Plan for Henfield Common though the pandemic has limited our efforts. Work on controlling cattle without hard infrastructure has not yet reached a state allowing us to introduce cattle.

Part of the requirement to retain LWS status is to maintain a healthy and varied insect population. To this end, covid and weather willing, we will be introducing a more varied regime of grass cutting, which involves leaving some uncut for three or four years. This will look untidy but is essential to allowing a good insect population to survive.

During the year we restored the horse trail through the woods. It is fine in dry weather but needs more work to make it useable during wet weather.

Routine maintenance on the other three areas continues. We are investigating why the Cagefoot Lane pond has lost so much water recently.

Andrew Sharp
Committee Chairman

Committee members: Cllrs Andrew Sharp (Chairman), Mike Morgan, Roger Noel, Josh Potts, Elaine Goodyear, Chris Simmonds, Gill Perry, Sheila Matthews, Peter Hudson, Eddie Colgate.

Village Amenities (VAC) Report 2020/21

The purpose of this Committee is to manage and develop amenities for the benefit of the people of Henfield. We deal with, amongst other matters:

- the provision, maintenance and management of public seats, floral displays, cycle racks and shelters, public toilets, bus shelters, noticeboards, Christmas lights and litter picking.
- the management of the Cemetery in accordance with legislation.
- the organisation of Remembrance events.
- transport-related issues, including Community Speed Watch.

The Committee's major project for 2019/20 was the refurbishment of the public conveniences and bus shelter. Unfortunately, several incidents of vandalism have occurred since its completion. We are now planning to replace the shutters which enable the bus shelter to be closed more readily, and to install CCTV overlooking the shelter and entrances to the toilets. Since March 2020, these facilities have had to be closed during lockdown periods, in order to protect staff and members of the public; sanitising door handles and additional cleaning measures were put in place when restrictions were eased in the summer. Following a request from users of the Youth Club, including the nursery, time-controlled lighting has been installed beside their path and car park, with care taken that the light is directed where needed, and not towards homes in Deer Park.

The major project this year has been the process of bringing the extension to our Cemetery into use, using funds which Council have been setting aside for the purpose. The first step has been the construction of new paths in December 2020; the layout of these has been determined by several practical considerations, including the need to protect tree roots and other underground features, to provide the maximum number of grave plots and to make these plots readily accessible. Whilst on site, our contractors have also improved the area around the memorial wall, where the paving had become very uneven. Native trees, already established within the hedge, will now be allowed to grow taller and five new trees have been planted at the northern end of the area during January 2021. We shall be arranging for the central area to be consecrated when circumstances permit; regulations require that we leave some of the ground unconsecrated.

We have also invested in new software to facilitate record-keeping in the Cemetery, which should make it more straightforward for office staff to carry out the Council's statutory duties and should eventually allow members of the public to access Cemetery records online.

Another project overseen by VAC has been the resurfacing of the car park at the Leisure Centre – again reserves had been set aside over a period of years to pay for this. Council have also contributed towards CCTV at the Centre and have facilitated the process of directing additional Section 106 funding (from building developers) towards the Centre and the Henfield Hall, to assist with refurbishments in both community buildings.

Residents frequently report concerns about motorists driving too fast through our village and we have decided to use further Section 106 funds to purchase two mobile Speed Indicator

Devices (SDs), to remind drivers to keep their speed down. We are in consultation with West Sussex County Council about suitable sites for these.

We are always trying to find ways to make the centre of our village more attractive, both for residents and to help our local economy by encouraging visitors. We have been pleased with the way that our flower displays have looked this year and are now asking our contractor to replant the raised bed between the dentist and the launderette in the High Street; we are looking at further ways to brighten up the area in front of the veterinary surgery, although, as we have a relatively short lease on this space, funds will be limited. We are grateful to the volunteers who have refurbished and replanted the raised bed in the Library Car Park, which has also looked attractive this year.

We are proud to be associated with the Remembrance Day events which usually take place in Henfield and know that they are valued by many residents. Unfortunately, this year the commemorations had to be rather limited, but we very much hope that those in 2021 – along with all our other village activities – will be able to go ahead with far fewer restrictions.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of this committee for their continuing hard work and for bringing their considerable expertise to our activities:

Jane Jones
Committee Chairman

Committee members: Cllrs Jane Jones, Mike Morgan, Nita Farrell, David Jemmett, Richard Kendall, Russell Shaw and Chris Simmonds.