



HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Meeting of Recreation & Open Spaces
Committee held on Thursday
11th April 2024 at 9.30am in the Henfield Hall

Present: Cllr G Perry (Chairman), F Ayres, D Grossmith, D Jemmett, A May and C Simmonds

In Attendance: Cllrs A Willard and M Morgan, Mr J Bowes and Ms K Thomas from Henfield Football Club (HFC), Mr C Thorns from Henfield Cricket Club (HCC) Mr J Willis (Tree Officer), Mr P Johnson, Mr K Wright (Clerk) and Mrs B Samrah (Parish Administrator (PA)).

MINUTES

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

There were none.

2. APOLOGIES

Were received from Cllr Kendall.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 8th FEBRUARY 2024

These were approved, they were signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

- 1 All in one Picnic Benches for Kidders Lane – It was confirmed that these are awaiting fair weather and all three Works Officers being present to arrange fixing to the ground.
- 2 Tree at Fabians Way/Upper Station Road – The tree warden confirmed that he had carried out the remedial action that day.
- 3 Mr Johnson said that he had applied for Definitive Map Modifications Order (DMMO) at Springlands Lane. He explained that he had lived in Henfield on and off since 1985, he has walked and jogged from Neptown to Windmill Lane to Stretham Bridge for many years and used this footpath. In December a gate had been installed and a Privacy notice was erected on the footpath that he had always thought was a Public Right of Way (PROW). When he spoke to the new owner of the Springland Barn, he confirmed it was private and that although they were happy for locals to use the path they did not want large numbers of walkers using it. He had also indicated that a similar situation had arisen recently at Dagbrook Lane by Brookside Farm. Mr Johnson confirmed that there were alternative footpaths above and below Springlands but these were sometimes very impassable in bad weather.
After some enquiries Mr Johnson found out that the route may be permanently closed off if no one challenged the privacy over the next year or so. He found out that it was not on the Definitive Map of Henfield from the 1950s but that he could apply for a DMMO in terms of connectivity which he did in January this year. It requires written testimony from at least 30 people, who have walked or ridden that path on a regular basis for more than 20 years. He has received much support on social media and would be going to WSCC later in the week with a number of documents in support of the claim that this route has been used as a footpath on a regular basis for more than 20 years.
Mr Johnson said that WSCC have a backlog of approximately five years and that he may apply to the Secretary of State for Rural Affairs in January 2025 for this project to be brought forward.
The Chairman said that she was aware that the Fire Brigade or other emergency vehicle would have difficulty gaining access without using this path. Cllr Grossmith suggested that Mr Johnson contacted Cllr Sarah Paine for support.
Mr Johnson said that the Ramblers Association have been working on making sure that footpaths do not disappear through their website and the deadline for registering is 2031.
The Chairman proposed that this be taken to the next Parish Council meeting for a motion to show support and all agreed. She thanked Mr Johnson for coming along and presenting to this Committee.

Cllr M Morgan and Mr K Wright arrived at the meeting at 10am.

The Chairman asked that the Clerk make sure that this was raised at the next Parish Council meeting.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk would make sure this was on the agenda for the next Parish Council Meeting.

- 4 Storage of keep fit equipment at Rothery – It was confirmed that Get Fit have been storing equipment at the Rothery Pavilion and Ms Thomas agreed to make contact direct.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

Mr Bowes said that there were concerns about the boundary at the Memorial Field and year round use of the Memorial Field and Cllr Morgan suggested that issues such as this could be discussed at a separate meeting to finalise the HFC Licence with two Parish Councillors and Cllr Ayres agreed to assist Cllr Morgan along with representatives from HFC and HCC, Mr Thorns agreed to represent HCC.

ACTION POINT: PA would liaise with all parties and arrange a meeting in the near future.

Mr Bowes also said that there were some problems with grass cutting because of the wet ground and that some games have had to be cancelled. Mr Thorns said that he felt that the contractors were very fast when he saw them cutting the Memorial Field. Mr Bowes confirmed that contractors were looking at the drainage and goal areas of pitch. The Clerk confirmed that EDF had recently fitted a smart meter at the Rothery and hoped this would assist with working out why the electricity bill had been so high on the last two occasions.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1 Footpath/ramp between Kings Field and Deer Park –The Chairman explained that this had been installed next to school fence when Deer Park Stage 3 was built. The Clerk said that any queries should be referred back to the Management Company, Remus.
- 2 Weald to Wave Gardens and Green Space – The Chairman confirmed that she had registered the Community Orchard.
- 3 Hedge planting proposal from Henfield Community Canopy project – Cllr May confirmed that she had applied for a planting licence for hedgerows and that WSCC had indicated that they would not have a problem as long as it was planted well. She confirmed that it had been discussed at the Verges Management Working Group, that she hoped it could be planted in the Autumn and she agreed to keep this committee updated of any progress.

6. HENFIELD FOOTBALL CLUB

- 1 Storage and Licence Review - Cllr Morgan confirmed that Licences had been issued to HFC in 2010 and 2018 and that a meeting had already taken place to work through the detail of a new Licence. He highlighted some changes including: -
 - Increase in cost of licence to £500 p.a. from £100.
 - The cost of mowing to be shared equally between HFC and HPC as now. Any grass cutting above this specification will be responsibility of HFC.
 - Any other work required on pitches will be the responsibility of HFC.
 - The cost of drainage work on all pitches would be the responsibility of HPC. It is hoped that drainage works on the Kings Field could be carried out in 2025.
 - HFC will have exclusive use of the Rothery Field and Pavilion and be responsible for interior repairs and maintenance. HPC will be responsible for exterior repairs and insurance on building. HPC will be able to use Rothery Field and Pavilion in agreement with HFC.
 - HFC will be responsible for water and electricity charges.
 - HFC have asked whether the dressing for Rothery Field at a cost of £1,500 could be split between HFC and HPC for this year only.
 - The only outstanding matter is the cleaner and the Clerk agreed to let Ms Thomas know monthly or annual costs.

Cllr Grossmith asked about the Memorial Field and it was agreed the Clerk would check the agreement that had been reached with Sport England for timescale. Cllr Morgan said that all drainage work would be the responsibility of HPC and it was agreed that HPC may need to take expert advice on what was needed at the Memorial Field to improve the quality of the pitches.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk would check the details of timescales on the Sport England Agreement with regards to the Memorial Field.

It was **PROPOSED BY** Cllr Simmonds, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Grossmith and **AGREED BY ALL** to accept the responsibility for drainage for all pitches for the next five years.

It was **PROPOSED BY** Cllr Simmonds, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Grossmith and **AGREED BY ALL** to pay £750 towards the cost of dressing the Rothery Field.

Ms Thomas agreed to liaise with Clerk over this payment.

Cllr Morgan agreed to make a few minor changes and recirculate the Licence and resend to HFC for agreement. He said that as the likely costs for the Kings Field Drainage would be substantial that HFC may be able to access S106 grants that the HFC cannot access. The Clerk thanked Cllr Morgan for all the hard work he had put in and for coming to this meeting.

- 2 40th Birthday Party being held in Eric Holder Pavilion on Sunday 26th May from 11am and use of pitches for friendly matches on the same day – Mr Bowes said that HFC had applied to HDC for a TENS licence.

Mr Thorns and Mr Johnson left the meeting at 10.35am.

7. PLAYING FIELDS

- 1 Memorial Field Drainage – to receive an update. The Chairman confirmed that Works Team had checked and that the water was flowing freely.
- 2 Quote from Grasstex Ltd for Grass cutting – It was confirmed that the cost of grass cutting for the forthcoming year at £4,739.38 had been agreed by email.
- 3 BP Guild Fun Day – 15th June 2024 on the Kings Field – Cllr Simmonds confirmed that an application to HDC for a TENS licence had been successful. He also said that a good number of Henfield Clubs and societies had already agreed to be involved with the fair.
- 4 Wantley Field – The Chairman said that the licence had run out in 2018, the Clerk said that HPC cuts the grass there twice a year. It was agreed that WSCC would be asked whether there would be problems with not renewing the Licence.

ACTION POINT: PA would liaise with WSCC about the licence.

Cllrs Morgan and Willard, Mr Bowes and Ms Thomas left the meeting at 10.40am.

7 TREE WORK.

- 1 Trees along boundary of car park near Leisure Centre – It was confirmed that these trees have been purchased but will not be planted until the Autumn. Cllr May said that these trees would need protection.
- 2 Trees for Kings Field Play Area – It was confirmed that these trees had been planted on 8th March and that they were doing well. Mr Willis confirmed that he is very happy to water when necessary, at least for the remainder of the Summer. It was further agreed that if there was a drought then Cllr May would contact the Clerk to see if the Works Team could assist.
- 3 Tree Surgery – to consider quote from Southern Beeches for Surgery.

It was **PROPOSED BY** Cllr Ayres, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Jemmett and **AGREED BY ALL** to pay £515.00 for the surgery indicated on five trees.

8 COMMUNITY ORCHARD

- 1 Request from two Residents for a benches to be placed there at their expense – The Chairman said that she had asked the Blacksmith to provide a quote for these benches. Cllr Ayres asked that Plumpton College be considered to make plaques. Cllr Simmonds agreed to speak with the Blacksmith. It was agreed that only two benches should be allowed at the Community Orchard.
- 2 Request from resident to plant three trees at her expense – It was confirmed that they had been planted and are doing well.
- 3 Request from Conservation Group to plant a couple of trees at their expense – It was confirmed that these trees (all fruit or nut varieties) would be planted in the Autumn.

9 VERGES

- 1 Wildflower Planting – The Chairman confirmed that seeds had been sown down the edge of the pathway at cemetery. The Clerk confirmed that it had been discovered that 42 infants and still born babies had been buried there between 1890 and 1903 and that a plaque had been agreed by the Village Amenities Committee to mark this area.
- 2 Managing Verges within the parish – The Chairman confirmed that the next meeting of the Verge Management Working Group was planned for 14th May and that Steve Hill from HDC was attending.
- 3 Plans for No Mow May – The Chairman said that a number of verges have been agreed to be left unmown and these were bottom of Mill Drive, Parsonage Road Green, Wantley Hill, Upper Station Road where it joins Fabians Way and Borrer Bank. She also said that signs would be placed in the selected verges so residents are aware the longer grass is deliberately being left for No Mow May. She also hoped that residents might support the scheme with a small patch of lawn in their own gardens.

ACTION POINT: PA would liaise with Works Team over the verges being set aside for No Mow May and register with the charity Plant Life. She would also prepare the signs.

10 TRAILS AND SAFE ROUTES

- 1 WSCC – Public Rights of Way (PROW) – routine maintenance and survey – It was confirmed that this had been carried out in March 2024.
- 2 Mill Stream Hedging – The Chairman said that there had been disquiet that the farmer had cut back a great deal of this hedging. Henfield Birdwatch is now hopeful of a good forward solution having spoken with the landowner. She was pleased to say that nightingales are back there.
- 3 Walk for Malcolm – The Chairman confirmed that this walk is going ahead on Sunday 14th July at 1pm starting at the Common and going to Sussex Prairies. Sussex Prairies have said that all walkers will be given free admission to their grounds. She said that the Community Minibus had been booked to help with transport and it was hoped that a band would perform at the Sussex Prairies. Any money raised would be donated to a brain charity.
- 4 Eroded bank on the Adur – emails from two residents – The Chairman said that two residents had raised issues with this area by Eatons Bridge and that the Environment Agency had indicated they cannot protect that bank now. The Chairman said that it is a loss of a riverbank walk and it looks a terrible mess because the bags used to provide sand had now broken down and were floating in the river and laying on the sides of the river. She said that it may flood meadow close by and the causeway. The Chairman felt it would be a good idea to ask the Environment Agency and WSCC PROW Ranger to come to talk to the Parish Council. The Clerk agreed to write and invite both.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk would invite both WSCC and Environment Agency to come and talk to the Parish Council.

11 WORKS TEAM

- 1 To consider requirement for more space for storage and workshop –The Clerk confirmed that an additional container had been rented at the yard and this will be used to store all their equipment which is currently stored behind WC and Tanyard Barn. He also said that they were able to use the Workshop there. The Chairman asked whether the Works Team could liaise with Conservation Group if there was more storage space for them.

12 CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk confirmed that £28,526 was spent in the 2023/24 financial year, which was 93.2% of budget. He also confirmed that the budget for the next year was £29,350.

13 CORRESPONDENCE

- 1 Henfield Joggers - Application for Seven Stiles Event - 22nd July 2024 – This was agreed by all. The Clerk agreed to liaise with works officers.

ACTION POINT: PA would liaise with Henfield Joggers. The Clerk to liaise with Works Team about mowing nearer the time.

- 2 Two hour session on Kings Field to promote stoolball in the village on either Sun 23rd June or Sat 29th June – This was agreed by all.

ACTION POINT: PA would liaise with the organiser.

14 ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS TO BE RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

Cllr Simmonds asked whether it would be possible to look at the footpaths that might be lost and it was agreed that it would be helpful to get further information from Mr Johnson. Both the Chairman and Cllr Simmonds agreed to liaise with Mr Johnson with a view to establishing which other footpaths are in danger of being lost. The Henfield Joint Commons Committee requested information on where HPC Works Team currently mow and that the HDC rangers might be able to assist the Parish with the overall verge maintenance map. The Clerk agreed to liaise with PA and Works Team.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk and PA to liaise with Works Team about the HDC areas they currently mow.

The Clerk asked councillors to let him know if they wished to change Committee as soon as possible so that the new Committee Structure could be agreed at the next Parish Council Meeting.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9th May 2024 at 10.00am (It was agreed that a slightly later start time of 10am would be adopted for the next and subsequent meetings.

The Meeting Closed at 11.30am