

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Annual General Meeting of Henfield Parish Council held on Tuesday 7th May 2024 at 7.00pm in The Henfield Hall.

Present: Cllrs E Goodyear, J Jones, G Perry, S Leader, F Ayres, R Shaw, R Kendall, M Morgan, D Grossmith, C Simmonds, A Willard, D Jemmett and J Potts.

In Attendance: Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager), Cllr S Payne - West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and two members of the public.

MINUTES

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR FORTHCOMING YEAR**
It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Perry, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to elect Cllr Goodyear as Chairman for the forthcoming year.
2. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**
Cllr Jones declared an interest in item 20 A (c) as Trustee of the Clarkes Mead Trust.
Cllr Simmonds declared an interest in item 20 A (c) as Chairman of the Scout Fundraising Committee.
3. **APOLOGIES**
Cllrs May.
4. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR FORTHCOMING YEAR**
It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Simmonds and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to elect Cllr Jones as Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year.
5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 2nd APRIL 2024**
Approved. Signed and dated by the Chairman.
6. **REVIEW OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES**
A revised list of committee membership and outside body representatives was circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman thanked Cllr Ayres for volunteering to be on the Plans Advisory Committee (PAC). The new committee structure was all agreed by show of hands.
7. **REVIEW OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**
A list was circulated prior to the meeting. There were no changes proposed. The representation was all agreed by show of hands.
8. **APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR**
The Clerk explained that the Council is in year two of a three year contract with Mulberry & Co. It was noted by Council that there is likely to be a different individual within the organisation that will be carrying out future Internal Audits. It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Kendall and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to appoint Mulberry & Co as internal auditor.
9. **MATTERS ARISING**
None.
10. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
The Chairman reported from a recent National Association of Local Council training event on Emerging Trends in Local Government Finance. She highlighted that there was a warning not to invent projects in order to accept grants, as many local councils have been left with, in particular, buildings that they cannot afford to run or maintained. She added that she feels Henfield Parish Council (HPC) do not do this as they have a carefully considered and evaluated Infrastructure Delivery Plan. There was an emphasis on carefully setting reserves

which HPC do by having allocated reserves with a business case for each. Precept setting was also discussed, the Chairman mentioning that a town Council has recently increased their precept by 91% following a public consultation, due to withdrawal of funding from the District and County for an international standard athletics stadium. Finally she reported that only 31% of local Councils submit their accounts on time and get them all correct, this reduced to 8% during the pandemic. Council extended a thank you and congratulated the Clerk for all his hard work and consistently getting HPC accounts in on time and with no issues.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

The Chairman of the Clarkes Mead Trust, Mr Malkin attended to update Council on the progress of the Scout Community Centre. He explained that the issue with the poorly fitting doors had now been rectified and that the windows are now also installed, making the building water tight. There is also sufficient funding to pay for the windows. Unfortunately the main contractor is going into official receivership. A list of minor snagging issues has been drawn up in case they need to be addressed with the official receiver. The only other likely affect might be on warranty, but it is felt that the building has been constructed to a high standard and no issues are anticipated. The windows will have a guarantee. It was noted that the contractor went into receivership due to cash flow issues caused by a supplier, and not by any fault of their own. Work can now begin on the interior of the building. Internal doors, LED lighting, electrical work, alarms and carpenters time and a kitchen have all been donated. Council congratulated Mr Malkin and he received a round of applause for all his hard work.

It was all agreed to bring forward discussion on item 20 A (c) to enable Mr Malkin to then leave the meeting. The criteria for the funding request was confirmed in that the Council has received a letter on behalf of the Trustees of the Clarkes Mead Trust stating that the building is now watertight, the grant has been received from Garfield Weston and that the loan note scheme has been approved. **It was agreed by shows of hands, eleven in favour with two abstentions**, to release £20,000 to the Clarkes Mead Trust for the Henfield Scout Community Centre as all of the agreed criteria have been met.

Mr Malkin left the meeting at 7.16pm.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

11. **WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Payne reported that there is a consultation open for Millais School to become co-educational, that the most recent quarterly carbon performance report shows that the two solar farms in the County have generated 13 million kilowatts of electricity and that in other areas WSCC will now be collecting the arisings from grass cutting with the aim of reducing fertility of the grass, encouraging pollinators and to recycle the waste into biochar for use on resurfacing roads. She added that 99% of primary school placements received one of their top three choices. Relating to Henfield, she reported that a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) application has been received for Springlands Lane and is chasing up road markings for Deer Park. She is also dealing with an issue relating to dropped kerbs and a proposed Fairy Festival in Stonepit Lane. There is no further news on the increased bus service.

12. **HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Perry reported that HDC has recently celebrated its 50th anniversary in Storrington. HDC have resolved not to purchase Swan Walk and progress is being made on electric vehicle car chargers for car parks. The food waste trial is also progressing and a fund has been created to provide supported housing for refugees as well as cost of living support for lower paid staff. Locally Cllr Perry is dealing with issues relating to parking outside One Stop, dog waste in Deer Park and a potential 'Give your Stuff Away' day. Cllr Morgan added that he had attended a meeting with HDC officers and the Artisan Market to discuss the siting of the electric chargers in the Cooper Way car park. It has been suggested that the market moves further north in the car park to allow vehicles to access the charge points by driving past the entrance to the Hall. Ramps will be needed for the kerb, a decision on this is awaited from HDC. The Village

Amenities Committee (VAC) will discuss the issue of dog waste in Deer Park at their meeting this week.

13. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR 2023/24**
It was noted that there were no issues or recommendations for improvements resulting from the report. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Shaw, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the internal auditors report for 2023/24.
14. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE YEAR-END ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24**
It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Morgan, **SECONDED** by Cllr Simmonds and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the end of year accounts for the financial year 2023/24.
15. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR 2023/24**
It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Grossmith, **SECONDED** by Cllr Perry and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Annual Governance statement for 2023/24.
16. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS FOR 2023/24**
It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Kendall, **SECONDED** by Cllr Ayres and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Accounting Statements for 2023/24.
17. **MOTION: APPROVE THE CURRENT STANDING ORDERS**
There was one amendment, to remove mention of the provision for remote meetings which had been granted during the pandemic. Cllr Shaw asked whether this only applies when there are financial decisions to be made, however the Chairman confirmed that this applies to all voting including approval of minutes, therefore all committees must meet in person. It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Morgan and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Standing Orders.
18. **MOTION: APPROVE THE CURRENT FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**
There was one amendment, to include the reserves for the Children and Young People Committee (CYP). It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Willard and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Financial Regulations.

Cllr Leader joined the meeting at 7.28pm.

19. **MOTION: TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE HENFIELD FOOTBALL CLUB LICENCE**
The licence terms have been agreed by the Recreation and Open Spaces Committee following several meetings to discuss with the Football Club. In summary, the Football Club has more responsibility and are paying more for the licence. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Morgan, **SECONDED** by Cllr Grossmith and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to sign the football club licence.
20. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
 - (A) **Finance, Risk & Change Governance**
Cllr Jones reported that progress is being made on the cemetery lighting. It has been decided that the planned Big Thank You event was not workable but alternative suggestions are welcome and reminded those who have not yet done so to complete the Skills Matrix.
 - (a) Summary of £36,734.08 Expenditure from 1st April – 30th April 2024.
Noted by Council.
 - (b) Select Expenditure as the Monthly Random Audit Checks – April.
Cllr Grossmith selected Pod Point.
 - (c) Confirm the release of £20,000 to the Clarkes Mead Trust for The Henfield Scout Community Centre, providing the criteria has been met. This was discussed and agreed following Open Forum.

(B) Plans Advisory

Cllr Shaw invited questions on recent minutes.

(C) Recreation & Open Spaces

Cllr Perry reported that there had been positive discussions between the Football Club and Cricket Club and thanked works officers for displaying signage regarding No Mow May.

(a) Consider the Definitive Map Modifications Order Proposed at Springlands Lane.

It was confirmed that a formal application has been made and that Council will be contacted by WSCC formally to express their views. It was agreed to wait until all of this information is received before expressing a formal view. It was agreed that Council is keen to have walking routes but that legal issues need to be considered carefully. Cllr Simmonds added that there are other walking routes in the village to consider and that currently there is a yearlong backlog for dealing with applications at WSCC.

(D) Village Amenities

Cllr Morgan reported that there was no meeting last month but VAC is meeting this week.

(E) Children & Young People

Cllr Leader reported that there is a scooter jam this Saturday on the Kings Field and thanked Cllr Ayres for her sponsorship.

(F) Museum

Cllr Potts stated he was sad to hear about the passing of Leo Jago recently. He will be very much missed.

(G) Joint Commons

Cllr Perry thanked the Henfield Club for hosting the most recent meeting. She reported the funfair will soon be in attendance on Henfield Common. Work continues on fixed point photography and great crested newts have been seen on Broadmere Common.

21. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS REPRESENTING COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Perry reported from SH2030 that they recently had their most successful Repair Café with 54 people attending. There is a net zero event in the Hall on the 15th May. The Chairman reported that a new Hall Administrator is in position and the new Caretaker begins in June.

22. PCSO & POLICE ACTIVITIES

There have recently been some burglaries from outbuildings and vans. No one from Sussex Police arrived for the pre-arranged engagement event on the Village Square.

23. ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS TO BE RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

None.

24. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 4th June 2024.

Meeting Closed at 7.43pm.