



HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of Henfield Parish Council
held on Tuesday 5th November 2024 at 7.00pm in The Henfield Hall.**

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

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

MINUTES

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

None.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Cllrs May and Willard.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 1st OCTOBER 2024**

Approved. Signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a) WSALC Annual General Meeting and Conference.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman both attended this event which they felt was very interesting and worthwhile. Speakers included Chief Constable of Sussex Police Jo Shiner who put into context the huge challenges faced by Sussex Police, noting the amount of resources it takes to police weekly protests and counter protests in Brighton, Policing at Gatwick airport, the issue of rural crime, the 140 miles of coastline and hidden crime such as violence against women, girls and other vulnerable people. She highlighted again the need to report all incidents of crime to enable Sussex Police to build data to allocate resources. Other speakers included a representative from Transport Southeast, who although having good proposals don't have authority to spend so are awaiting response from central government. There was also a planning update which included mention of the current Local Plans in for examination. It was noted that there is likely to be more emphasis on locating new housing where there is already sufficient transport links and infrastructure.

Cllr Payne joined the meeting.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

None.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

6. **WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Payne reported that the budget for WSCC is currently out for consultation, the link to respond has been shared by email. She emphasised the huge pressure to fund adult and child social care and it was noted that £24 million has been included for support for the elderly. There is also likely to be a pay rise for WSCC staff subject to union negotiation. There is likely to be a 5% rise in the WSCC portion of Council Tax, this will be debated in February. It was confirmed that the communication regarding electric vehicle charging seems to have improved and that she is attempting to find out more information about the Active Travel scheme for Henfield, which has been allocated a significant amount of S106 funding without any consultation with the Parish Council or St Peters School. The

Chairman requested a meeting with Cllr Payne and Cllr Morgan in order to discuss further. Current campaigns being promoted by WSCC include recruitment of foster carers and retained firefighters, promotion of pension credit and a campaign to discourage abuse of WSCC Highways staff. Cllr Ayres asked whether there was any news on the Partridge Green bus service. Cllr Payne confirmed that there are currently no plans to alter this as Stagecoach, as a commercial company, have already made the decision. At a recent meeting their Director stated there has been no point in consultation. There is a protest march on Saturday and she encouraged all to sign the petition available online.

Action Point: The Clerk to arrange a meeting to discuss the Active Travel Plan for Henfield.

Two members of the public joined the meeting.

7. **HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Perry reported that there has been a recent decision taken to increase car park and green waste collection charges, which although controversial, was felt to be the least worst option while still providing these services cheaper than other areas. She also advised to monitor the Rampion 2 progress. The cable route does not pass directly through Henfield Parish but there are likely to be impacts on traffic. Cllr Potts added that there is a vote open for the £100,000 allocated to the People's Budget for charities and community groups. He encouraged all to vote for Henfield Youth Club who have applied to take eighteen youth people on a life skills weekend trip in May. He added the hearing dates for the Local Plan are 9th and 16th of December and 13th and 20th of January 2025. There is no news yet on the Horsham District Council (HDC) budget.

8. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE UPDATED LOCAL AUTHORITIES (MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2003**

A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. Several years ago the Parish Council took the decision to pay 10% of the allowance given to HDC Councillors. The HDC rate increased last year. The proposal is to increase the allowance to reflect this again, at £601.17 per year.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Grossmith, **SECONDED** by Cllr Kendall and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the updated Local Authority Members Allowances.

9. **MOTION: TO APPROVE A REPLACEMENT FOR THE PROPER OFFICER, SHOULD THE PROPER OFFICER BE ABSENT**

This follows a recommendation from the Finance Risk and Change Governance Committee (FRC).

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Morgan and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Operations Manager as a replacement for the Proper Officer should the Proper Officer be absent.

10. **MOTION: TO INVESTIGATE AND IF APPROPRIATE TO APPLY FOR A DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDER (DMMO) IN RESPECT OF THE FOOTPATH RUNNING BETWEEN CRAGGITS LANE AND BISHOP LANE, HENFIELD**

Cllr Morgan explained that this has been discussed at the Village Amenities and Open Spaces Committees. This route has been in use for at least 50 years and it is felt important to maintain access to the newly built Scout building. In order to be considered for approval there needs to be testimony from twenty people confirming uninterrupted continuous use for at least twenty years. It was noted that in making an application the landowners may be prompted to close the route. The opinion of the three landowners concerned is unknown.

It was **PROPOSED** Cllr Morgan **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to progress this application

Action Point: Cllr Morgan to progress the application for a DMMO.

11. **CONSIDER HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL'S YEAR FOR 2025**

The Chairman explained this was discussed by FRC at their most recent meeting, their suggestion being the Year of Community Health and Wellbeing. Previous years have included the Year of Young People and the Year of Biodiversity which have proved very successful in raising awareness,

facilitating events and bringing groups together. Cllr Simmonds asked that disability access is included; he is part of a group that has recently formed to address issues in the high street. Cllr Leader asked that carers are also recognised, therefore **it was all agreed by a show of hands to make 2025 the Year of Community Care and Wellbeing**. The Chairman added that at least two Councillors will need to volunteer to be involved in coordinating, identifying and approaching potential groups to be involved such as the Haven, Self Help group and Medical Centre.

12. **CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ENABLING REMOTE ATTENDANCE AND PROXY VOTING AT LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETINGS**

Details of the consultation have previously been shared with Councillors by email. It was noted that all Councillors can respond individually. The Chairman proposed and **it was all agreed to delegate FRC to formulate an overall Parish Council response**. Factors to consider raised by Councillors included the value of flexibility in circumstances such as in severe weather, or where attendees may have for example mobility issues. Generally it was agreed that meeting in person is always preferable but it might be appropriate to have the ability to request dispensation, and that it is important to be accommodating to peoples' individual needs. It was also noted that all Councillors must live in the Parish so should not have to travel great distances. Cllr Ayres added that young people have an expectation to be able to work remotely and that this may become the norm in future. With regards to proxy voting, it was felt that as long as a motion is clear, straightforward and included on an agenda in advance, that this may be appropriate. Councillors were asked to submit their views to the Parish Office for discussion at the next FRC meeting on 20th November.

Action Point: The Clerk to include a response to the consultation on the agenda for the next FRC meeting.

13. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Cllr Jones reported that the Committee has recently updated and approved the Pre-application Discussion with Developers policy in order to reflect best practise. This means that meetings in private can only take place in very exceptional circumstances, and only for sites that are included in the Neighbourhood Plan. There will be no private meetings held with speculative developers. There is also ongoing discussion on future structure of all Committees.

(a) Summary of £45,390.45 Expenditure from 1st October to 31st October 2024.
Noted by Council.

(b) Select Expenditure as the Monthly Random Audit Check – October.
Cllr Grossmith selected Stonepit Nurseries – High Street watering.

(c) Budgets for 2025/26.
The Chairman requested all Committees continue their discussion in meetings and thanked the Clerk for his work on this so far.

(B) **Plans Advisory**

Cllr Shaw reported that the Committee has requested that their views are heard on the Local Plan on the date set aside for rural parishes to respond, the 21st January. The Committee is working on its script. The application for 29 homes east of Furners Mead will be discussed this week. He added that he had been contacted by a number of very concerned residents that had received campaigning leaflets from the Conservative Party indicating that a further 1,850 homes would be built in Henfield. He stated that he felt that this leaflet was misleading, that campaigning based on fear is unhelpful and should instead be factual rather than deliberately alarming. Cllr Potts and Cllr Payne have been made aware. Cllr Noel (Woodmancote) has offered to feedback comments to the Party.

(a) Neighbourhood Plan Update.
A budget has been set aside for the review. It was noted that the Committee has been advised by HDC to take no action until the Local Plan is resolved.

(C) **Recreation & Open Spaces**

Cllr Perry reported that the Committee received a visit from the HDC Sports and Leisure Officer who has offered to assist with an overall plan for Henfield. He also has some useful contacts that might assist with potential for grant funding. The cricket club car park resurfacing project is progressing and there has recently been some bulb planting in various locations alongside the Children and Young People Committee.

(D) **Village Amenities**

Cllr Morgan invited questions on recent minutes, there were none.

(E) **Children & Young People**

Cllr Leader reported on a recent successful field trip to local skate parks with users from Henfield of various ages, both with scooters and skateboards. The newly renovated street style park at Hassocks was the most popular; this has a concrete surface. Initial findings suggest that the current Henfield skate park could be adapted in this style to include new features and a refurbishment of the current concrete surface. The users have also requested a fence surrounding to prevent very young children wandering onto the skate park as well as footballs and basketballs from the surrounding areas. Signage will also be considered.

(F) **Museum**

There has not been a recent meeting. The Chairman reported that there will be an increase in the budget for the Museum next year in order to progress the digitisation project.

(G) **Joint Commons**

Cllr Perry reported that the Conservation Volunteers are currently working on the Common and Broadmere. HDC Parks department have taken a double page spread in the January BN5 magazine to highlight how the Commons are managed and their future plans.

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

Cllr Grossmith reported that works on the new Padel tennis courts at the Leisure Centre are progressing quickly. Construction will start on the 11th November and it is hoped will be complete by early in the new year, weather dependant. There will be a lot of work to do on training, education and promotion and it is hoped that the new courts will put the Leisure Centre in a much sounder financial position. It was noted that it would be preferable for construction traffic to use the Link Road rather than the entrance via Northcroft. It has already been agreed that traffic will be limited to between the hours of 9.30am and 2.30pm to avoid school times. The contractor is responsible for the RAM's which will be signed off by all stakeholders once agreed. The safe space in the former squash courts is also progressing, floor and ceiling joists are in place; next will be stud work and lighting.

15. **PCSO & POLICE ACTIVITIES**

A recent visit from the PCSO confirmed no particular areas of concern in Henfield. Cllr Simmonds reported that he had attended the monthly meeting with the new Sargeant for Rural Affairs. He stated that there appear to be much more serious issues with violence and drugs in other villages. Resources are likely to be concentrated there but he will continue to attend the monthly meetings and is happy to raise any issues that Councillors may have.

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

Cllr Kendall enquired on the current situation with the electric car club. Community Transport Sussex (CTS) has requested funding from the Parish Council in order to continue the project and they are keen for the scheme to be locally run. Discussions are taking place with Henfield Community Partnership. Usage data and running costs will be shared with the Parish Council for consideration at the next FRC meeting. Councillors were reminded about the upcoming Remembrance events. All Councillors are requested to meet at the War Memorial on Sunday 10th November at 9am for the parade to the Church.

17. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 3rd December 2024.

Meeting Closed at 8.10pm.