



HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting of Henfield Parish Council held on Tuesday 7th January 2025 at 7.00pm in The Henfield Hall.

Present: Cllrs E Goodyear (Chairman), J Jones, G Perry, R Kendall, D Jemmett, D Grossmith, F Ayres, S Leader and A Willard.

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

MINUTES

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**
None.
2. **APOLOGIES**
Cllrs Shaw, Simmonds, May, Potts and Morgan.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2nd DECEMBER 2024**
Approved. Signed and dated by the Chairman.
4. **MATTERS ARISING**
None.
5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
None.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

Two members of Henfield Community Partnership (HCP) were in attendance to talk about the Year of Care and Wellbeing. The Chairman invited them to speak under the next item to allow for discussion.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

6. **UPDATE ON YEAR OF CARE & WELLBEING**
It was noted that the Year of Care and Wellbeing is on all Committee agendas for Councillors to discuss how each Committee can contribute. Henfield Community Partnership (HCP) are taking the initial lead and have arranged a meeting for anyone interested to attend on the 22nd January at 7pm at the Leisure Centre. There will be a call out to local organisations, businesses, charities and volunteers to connect and get involved, connect and share ideas. Initially here will be an audit of current services available and to identify any gaps. There is also likely to be a wellbeing survey following an NHS model. The Chairman confirmed that dedicated website pages can be available on the Parish Council website and asked the HCP members to speak on the project at the Annual Parish Meeting.

The two members of the public left the meeting at 7.17pm.

7. **WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**
Cllr Payne reported that WSCC, East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council will be meeting on the 9th of January to discuss a joint response on whether to apply to become a unitary authority. This meeting will be live streamed and Cllr Payne will send a link to the Parish Office to circulate. If it goes ahead Mayoral elections would be in 2026. Cllr Payne also added that she has case work on a number of flooding issues and highlighted the WSCC consultation on a new Road Safety strategy. The link to respond to the consultation has been sent. She also reported that the

Waste Prevention Community Grant is also now available for funding up to £5000 for local groups with innovative plans for waste prevention.

8. **HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Perry reported that she understands that the Parish Council need to be aware that the assets owned by Horsham District Council such as the Commons will need to be managed when District Councils are removed. She added that there was a great deal of disappointment and concern that the Planning Inspector has halted progress on the Local Plan due to issues with the soundness and legal compliance of the draft. This leaves HDC and the Parish Council vulnerable to speculative development although there is still a current Neighbourhood Plan for Henfield that carries some weight. Cllr Perry also reported that she will be attending a meeting to discuss the maintenance of Danny's Pond. Some residents have raised concerns and it was noted that there are some differing opinions on how it should be managed.

9. **STRENGTHENING THE STANDARDS AND CONDUCT FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES – GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION**

The Chairman explained that there has been a white paper released and the consultation is now open. The link to respond was shared with the agenda for this meeting. The aim is to improve standards and the ability to take action on Councillor behaviour that is contrary to the Code of Conduct such as aggression, bullying and abuse. Currently Councillors can only be sanctioned if given a custodial sentence. The Chairman strongly encouraged all to respond including office staff. The deadline is the 26th February.

10. **MOTION: TO APPROVE COUNCIL EXPENDITURE AND INCOME BUDGETS FOR 2025/26**

The draft budget was circulated prior to the meeting. It has been recommended for approval by the Finance, Risk and Change Committee. It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Grossmith and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Council expenditure and income budget for 2025/26.

11. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE PARISH PRECEPT FOR 2025/26 IN THE SUM OF £373,220**

The Clerk confirmed that this represents an increase of 7% on last year's precept which is 6.8% or £8.68 per annum for a band D property. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Kendall, **SECONDED** by Cllr Ayres and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Parish Precept of £373,220 for 2025/26

12. **HENFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 4th MARCH 2025**

It is hoped that there will be a presentation on the Year of Care and Wellbeing. There will be displays on the Year of Biodiversity and hopefully from the Museum. It was suggested to invite the Chief Constable of Sussex Police again. It was suggested that there is also a display about the new Padel court at the Leisure Centre and Cllr Ayres suggested providing tea and coffee. Any other suggestions should be sent to the Clerk.

Action Point: The Clerk to invite Sussex Police Chief Constable to the meeting.

13. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Cllr Jones reported that the Committee have had lengthy budget discussions and have met with Community Transport Sussex (CTS). It has been agreed to allocate the surplus bus funding to the electric car club but to ringfence £1000 for future bus trips. It is hoped that CTS will supply an update on their grant applications and a business plan in March to enable discussion on whether to fund further.

(a) Summary of £30,017.55 Expenditure from 1st December to 31st December 2024.
Noted by Council.

(b) Select Expenditure as the Monthly Random Audit Check – December.
Cllr Grossmith selected Brighton Engravers.

(B) Plans Advisory

Cllr Grossmith reported that the Committee has noticed an increase in speculative planning applications. There has been a lot of interest in the Croudace application and the Committee will be discussing this at its next meeting on the 16th January, at which point the Parish Council's view can be made public.

(a) Neighbourhood Plan Update.

It was advised not to begin a review of the Neighbourhood Plan until the Horsham Local Plan is resolved. There is funding in the budget to allow for a review next year.

(C) Recreation & Open Spaces

Cllr Perry thanked all who assisted with planting trees on the Kings Field and mentioned that there has been some discussion with a local cycling group who are interested in developing routes. Cllr Perry also mentioned the sad passing of Conway Thorns who was a regular visitor the meetings, he will be greatly missed. The funeral is at 2pm on the 16th January at St Peter's Church.

(D) Village Amenities

Cllr Kendall confirmed that the Committee is meeting tomorrow and will include discussion on Active Travel and VE Day commemorations.

(E) Children & Young People

Cllr Leader reported that the Committee is meeting next Monday and will be focussing on the skate park renovation.

(F) Museum

The Chairman reported that the Museum is pleased that further funding has been allocated in the budget for the digitisation project which will be focusing on photos and paintings. The curator is drawing up a priority list. The Friends of the Museum will be match funding and it is hoped that further grants might become available as a result.

(G) Joint Commons

Cllr Perry reported that the Tanyard Barn may be used for storage for the Conservation Volunteers and that there were discussions taking place on how to manage the pond as there have been some concerns raised about duck weed. She encouraged all to read the article in BN5 magazine regarding the Commons Management Plans.

14. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS REPRESENTING COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Grossmith reported that work is progressing on the Padel courts and that there had been a two week delay due to weather. It is hoped they will open by the end of February. The ceiling and painting is complete on the Leisure Centre project. The Village Amenities Committee will be discussing Leisure Centre car park lighting tomorrow as currently several aren't working and improvements are needed to the posts. Cllr Jemmett reported that the Youth Club is offering lots of activities, is very well attended and is in a much better financial position.

15. PCSO & POLICE ACTIVITIES

The PCSO visited the Office today and confirmed that there were no particular concerns in Henfield and that the Christmas season had been very quiet in this area. The Police continue to investigate the accident at Springhills. They are following up on leads and looking at CCTV from local businesses.

16. ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS TO BE RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

Council discussed whether it would be appropriate to have a presentation or display on local development at the Annual Parish Meeting. It was agreed to wait until the next Plans Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting to establish the position on the recent Croudace application, then to discuss further. It was noted that it is important to all communicate openly, to ensure that any information release is factual and that there is no pre-determination. It was noted that HDC planning decisions do match with the opinion of the PAC in a large majority of cases, but that HDC also need

to consider wider impacts on the District and whether they would be able to defend any potential appeals.

The Chairman reminded all that there is a visit to the Henfield Haven on the 4th February at 2.30pm.

17. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
Tuesday 4th February 2025.

Meeting Closed at 8.10pm.