



HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCE, RISK & CHANGE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

**Meeting of Finance Risk & Change Governance Committee held on Wednesday
19th February 2025 at 10:30am in the Committee Room at The Henfield Hall.**

Present: Cllr J Jones (Chairman), E Goodyear, S Leader, M Morgan, G Perry, R Shaw, and J Potts.

In attendance: Cllr May, Mr K Wright (Clerk) and Mrs B Samrah (Parish Administrator – PA).

MINUTES

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Cllr Goodyear declared an interest in item 9 and Cllr Perry declared an interest in items 8 and 9.

2. APOLOGIES

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15th JANUARY 2025

These were approved. They were signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

a) Cemetery Lighting – The Chairman thanked Cllr Grossmith for his input into this project. A local Contractor, Electric Pod, had agreed to carry out the work at cost and this was likely to be £375.00 plus VAT; additional drivers, if needed, would be £25.00 each.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Shaw, and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to carry out this work at £375.00 plus VAT, plus individual drivers if necessary

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to liaise with Electric Pod.

b) Works Officer Storage – Cllr Morgan said that planning permission would not be needed for two storage containers, each measuring 20ft x 9ft, to be placed side by side at the edge of the Leisure Centre car park, backing onto Northcroft. They would be slightly higher than the fence but would hopefully not be too intrusive for residents. Cllr Morgan confirmed that he would liaise with HDC and that the likely cost would be £3,000 for both. The Clerk advised that the current cost of storage rental is £3,500 per year. Cllr Goodyear suggested that placing the containers near to houses and the Leisure Centre might give greater security. Cllr Morgan said the containers would be robust with good locks at an additional cost and that power would be needed. The Chairman said she would like the full costs to be calculated and brought back to this Committee before being taken to a Full Council Meeting.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

Referring to agenda item 11, Cllr May said that the Biodiversity Group set up in 2021, then a meeting with Tree Wardens in 2023 as well as the Verges Working Group in 2024 had laid the ground work for this project on the verges at the entrances to Wantley Hill and Manor Way. She said that the hedgerow could be planted in the middle of the verge with grass either side or nearer to the rear of the verge (nearer houses) with grass to the front. She felt it would not hinder the ability to cut the surrounding grass. The Chairman stated that it would be important that the sight line for car drivers was not compromised; Cllr May confirmed that WSCC had already advised about preserving the sight line. Cllr Perry said that many residents had requested a hedgerow. Cllr Goodyear felt that with good management and maintenance it would do well. It was confirmed that the Works Team could maintain the hedging within their schedule of work and Cllr May said that she knew of a number of volunteers who could assist if necessary.

Cllr Morgan said he thought it would spoil the entrance to the village and he did not think it would reduce noise and that his preference would be for flower beds with shrubs. He added that he did not think that the residents in Wantley Hill Estate should be the only decision makers about this

entrance to the village. Cllr May said that the height of the hedge could be maintained at between 3 and 10 feet. The Chairman said that this would help biodiversity and would be less costly to maintain than flower beds; she suggested that spring bulbs could be planted along with hedgerow. Cllr Perry said that the hedgerow would not cost the Council anything and will be helping wildlife.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting and moved to item 11 on the agenda.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Website Issues – The Chairman said that there had been a number of problems with the website especially when searching for supporting documents. After some discussion it was agreed that Cllr Goodyear would discuss requirements with the Operations Manager, in order to prepare a specification. The Clerk advised that PMW had quoted £8,500 for a new website.

6. CONSIDER THE DRAFT OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVES DOCUMENT

Cllr Goodyear confirmed that these were in line with NALC recommendations. It was agreed that it was currently difficult to specify the number of Parish and District Councillors who would sit on the Henfield Joint Commons Committee. Subject to checking on some spellings, the document was accepted by all.

7. CONSIDER SUGGESTION BOXES

Cllr Morgan said that this idea had been tried previously and had proved to be unsuccessful. Cllr Goodyear considered that the Parish Council was accessible with a staffed office in the centre of the village, a website and telephone, also that members of the public were encouraged to come to committee meetings. Cllr Perry said that she felt there were times when the Council was not as good at communicating with the Small Dole area of the Parish as the rest of the Parish. Cllr Leader suggested a reminder at the Annual Parish Meeting encouraging people to come along to meetings. It was agreed by all that suggestion boxes would not be necessary.

8. CONSIDER POTENTIAL FUNDING FOR THE ELECTRIC CAR CLUB (HECCC) & MINIBUS AVAILABILITY FOR LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

The Chairman said that it was unclear whether the Council was being asked for more funding by Community Transport (CT). Cllr Perry said that as a charity they do not have money in reserves, but that they were doing a lot of good work. The Clerk confirmed that CT have applied for a number of grants. Cllr Goodyear confirmed that £1,000 is given each quarter to CT which in the past has been for minibuses but now includes the HECCC. She also said that the cost of hiring the minibus had doubled in price recently

The Clerk wondered whether the funding should in future be attributed 50% to each CT and HECC. It was agreed that some charities need help when setting up but should be encouraged to be self-sustaining whilst also being market aware. Cllr Goodyear said that it was important for the Youth Co-ordinator to be aware how much money was available when booking travel in the future for groups. Cllr Morgan thought that some of the groups using the minibus might be able to access grants themselves to fund travel. It was agreed that each quarter the Clerk would let CT know whether funding was for CT or HECC and that he would also ask for more information.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to liaise with Community Transport over quarterly funding and ask for more information.

9. CONSIDER AN INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN APPLICATION FROM THE HENFIELD LEISURE CENTRE

Cllr Goodyear explained that the Leisure Centre wanted to change the positioning of doors in the Leisure Centre to continue to accommodate the Community Fridge as well as maintaining the safety of children using Sharky's and accommodate the new padel courts administration and bookings desk. She advised that these doors were fire safety doors as well as being electrically powered, hence the cost. The Clerk confirmed that the Council would normally contribute 50% of the project cost, with the Leisure Centre raising the rest.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Morgan and **VOTED 5 IN FAVOUR** with 2 abstentions (due to conflict of interest) to fund £3,000 of the project.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to liaise with the Leisure Centre.

10. **CONSIDER WHETHER THE HENFIELD HISTORY GROUP CAN USE THE HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL LOGO WITHIN ITS OWN LOGO**

After some discussion it was agreed that the Henfield Parish Council Logo could only be used by the Council (including the Museum). However, it was further agreed to investigate having a version of the logo which could be used by other Henfield organisations.

ACTION POINT: The PA to liaise with Henfield History Group.

11. **CONSIDER THE PROPOSALS FOR THE MANOR WAY & WANTLEY VERGES**

Further to the discussion during the Open Forum, it was agreed that the Works Team would advise on the layout of the hedgerow and that a decision on height can be left until a later date.

Cllr Leader wondered whether the appearance of the roundabout at the Deer Park junction could be improved.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Perry and **VOTED 5 IN FAVOUR and 2 AGAINST** to adopt this project of planting at Wantley Hill and Manor Way.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to ensure that this was included on the agenda for the next Full Council Meeting.

12. **REVIEW THE LATEST COUNCIL DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Cllr Goodyear explained that when there had been a lot of large projects, such as the Link Road and the Cemetery Extension, the Lighting & Open Spaces (LOS) Committee had been split into Village Amenities (VA) and Recreation & Open Spaces (ROS) Committees. She said that there were now fewer large projects and that some matters overlapped the two committees and it made sense to combine them as "Community" Committee (a name adopted by a number of other Parish Councils). She suggested that legal, leases and licensing matters, Remembrance and similar events, and the management and maintenance of the Cemetery could be added to the remit of Finance Risk & Change Governance Committee (FRC).

It was agreed that a schedule of work carried out might be prepared in advance of the monthly Community Committee Meeting to avoid time being spent on Matters Arising if suitable. It was agreed that both VA and ROS Committees would consider this change and, if agreed by both, the matter would be discussed at the next Full Council Meeting.

ACTION POINT: The PA and OM to ensure that this is included in the next agenda for both ROS and VA Committee Meetings.

13. **THE 2025 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON TUESDAY 4th MARCH**

Cllr Goodyear said that Mrs Anne Dewdney had agreed to talk at the Annual Meeting, to raise awareness of Challenge Annie as part of Henfield Haven's 10th anniversary as well as marking 2025 as the Year of Care and Wellbeing. She said that the second half of the Meeting would be more informal, with residents able to chat with Councillors at stands showing the work carried out by the various committees. Cllr Goodyear said that setting up would be from 4pm and all were welcome to come along and help; she also said that refreshments would be offered from the kitchen (tea, coffee and wine).

Cllr Morgan left the meeting at 12pm.

14. **MOTION: TO APPROVE UP TO £15K TO PURCHASE AN ELECTRIC COUNCIL VAN**

The Clerk said that reserves for purchasing a new van were £12,385 and that a further £5,000 would be added in the next financial year. Cllr Goodyear said that the charging point to be used may have to be the one at the Leisure Centre as it is managed by the Council and therefore costs can be controlled. It was thought that charging would only be needed once a week. Cllr Perry said that she thought that Mr Siantonas would be happy to assist if needed.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Perry and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** of sourcing an electric van, to be selected by the Office and Works teams.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk, OM and Works Team to look at second hand electric vans to purchase.

15. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE AUDIT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HEALTH & SAFETY REGISTER AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY REGISTER**

The Chairman thanked Cllr Goodyear for preparing these two documents. Cllr Goodyear confirmed that there had been one off-site accident to a staff member during the year. She commented that a Hall fire drill was due.

She noted that the fidelity guarantee had increased and the Clerk confirmed that there were incremental bands. It was not clear what, if any, effect devolution would have on the Business Continuity Register. Cllr Goodyear said it would be useful to know how many councillors had received media training. Cllr Shaw agreed to look in more detail and report back. Cllr Goodyear said that it was the Resilience Plan and not this document that would be used in the event of an emergency.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Potts and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** of accepting these two registers, subject to spell checking.

16. **FINANCE**

a) Confirmation of Reconciliation of Bank Accounts (January).

Each signed and dated by two Councillors.

b) Internal Controls (To Include Audit Check of Expenditure) – (January).

Each signed and dated by two Councillors.

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

Cllr Goodyear said that she felt it would be a good idea to set up a working group to look at devolution, probably working under this Committee and on the next agenda. Cllr Perry said that the Council should also be thinking about HDC assets and what should happen to them after devolution; she understood that the Conservation Group were particularly interested in continuing to use the Tanyard Barn. Assets included public toilets, commons and car parks and the list would be added to over the next few months. Cllr Goodyear suggested that this would be an opportunity to have inter-parish meetings. Cllr Potts said it might be useful to speak to parishes that are already within unitary authorities. Cllr Goodyear said that it would be important to know where funding was available.

Cllr Leader advised that there was a free Health check and Sound bath at the Leisure Centre on Saturday as part of the year of Care and Well Being.

18. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 19th March 2025.

The meeting closed at 12.35pm.