



# HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT for 2021/2022

## **An Introduction and Summary of the year from our Chairman, Cllr Malcolm Eastwood.**

### **Communication during the pandemic**

Last year, because of Covid restrictions we ran four Online Bitesize events on four different evenings. These proved very popular, were well attended and so this year we are planning both a face to face and an online event.

Covid has also challenged us to think differently about how we run our Parish Council Meetings. During the lockdowns we continued to meet but used Zoom to make our decisions and decided that our Council Meetings which are open to the public should be transmitted live and we used Facebook to do that. The response was surprising as we recorded around 250 views a month, which was an increase of 40%; either you were pleased to have found something to keep you amused when you couldn't go out much or you were genuinely interested in what we are doing! We preferred to think the latter was true and so when we returned to meeting face to face, we bought some equipment which allows us to continue to transmit a live feed and a catch up recording of our face-to-face meetings.

I want to mention Covid one last time and then hope we can say that 2022 is the year that we move forward toward normality. Henfield Medical Centre has now delivered over 35,000 vaccinations largely to our local residents including those who are normally served by Steyning Medical Centre. This quite superhuman effort couldn't have happened without all the volunteers who have stepped forward to organise appointments (three of your Parish Councillors gave up a lot of their time to do this), deliver vaccinations, organise safe queuing, give lifts, manage car parking and many other voluntary activities. This has helped to keep the majority of us safe during the pandemic, in fact our Vicar reports a 20% reduction in funeral numbers year on year and allowed the Medical Centre to continue to deliver its other services to the community. I want to say a big thank you to all of those that volunteered. I normally don't pick out individuals, but I do want to give a special mention Peter and Jackie Bates who have been on hand to organise all of the volunteers and have taken the last shift virtually every day to ensure that everything is ready for the next day - a fantastic commitment that has made a real difference - thank you Peter and Jackie.

### **This Year's Topics**

We are going to cover three topics this year and then we will throw the meeting over to a Question & Answer session when you can raise any subjects which interest or concern you. The topics are:

1. Biodiversity
2. Planning Update
3. Looking Forward: Our Priorities for 2022/3 and beyond

## **Some Headlines for the last 12 months**

We have been continuing to move forward with our priorities including the following headlines:

- We have installed two mobile Speed Indicator Devices (known as SIDs) which are currently deployed on Henfield Common and in Upper Station Road providing useful information on driver behaviour and encouraging drivers to obey speed limits. These will be used in conjunction with our Community Speedwatch volunteer activity sessions to keep our residents safer.
- The new Cemetery extension is now being used for burials.
- It was great to be able to resume our Remembrance Day parade, something we all value and for the village to be proud of.
- Sadly, following some increased instances of vandalism to the refurbished public toilets and bus shelter we have needed to install CCTV and more robust shutters.
- Henfield Museum has continued to develop its website which has allowed us to take exhibits to the community online and they have started to digitise their collection of photographs and postcards.
- In Chessbrook Green the Activity Trail which had reached the end of its life was replaced.
- On the Kings Field the Skate Park was partly resurfaced.
- A new Three Parishes Trail was designed and tested for launch in the Spring.
- We successfully bid for 350 young trees from the Queen's Green Canopy Project and planting is under way. Some will be planted in the Sandpit Field (east of the Bowling Green) as part of our plan to create a Community Orchard there.
- Wildflowers which attract bees and insects have been planted on our verges along with 10,000 crocuses on the verges leading into the village creating a colourful display in spring for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- New Working Groups have been established to look at Safe Routes (for walkers, off road cyclists and horse riders), a Community Highways Scheme and Biodiversity including completion of phase 1 of a habitat survey and our journey toward carbon neutrality.
- Our Works Officers and Litter Pickers continue their work to keep the village and countryside looking neat and tidy.
- We have committed a further £10,000 toward the new Community Scout Building making £20,000 in total, subject to the trust raising the rest of the funds.
- Our finances are sound and well managed such that we will end the year marginally within budget. We have managed to maintain our Precept for the coming year to an increase of 3% for a Band D property.

## **Thank You**

To Brian Stone - one of our Works Officer team who you will have seen out and about keeping the village neat and tidy. Brian retired at the end of January with our thanks for all of his hard work. We are now recruiting a new Works Officer to work with Dick Nye and Robin Wadey who do a great job for us.

To our Clerk Kevin Wright and his office team, Rebecca Grantham and Belinda Samrah all of whom have needed to show great flexibility in their working patterns and activities over the last 12 months and have continued to deliver for us alongside our team of litter pickers who have been out there working when regulations have allowed.

To our new County Councillor Sarah Payne who has made a difference helping us to secure some support from WSCC, our District Councillors Mike Morgan and Josh Potts for continuing

to put our community at the centre of everything they do at Horsham and to our Parish Councillors for working hard to keep things moving forward despite the challenges that we have all faced.

Finally, a thank you to all of our residents for their encouragement, help and for those who have stepped forward to provide practical help to those who needed it - well done.

**Malcolm Eastwood, Chairman, Henfield Parish Council**

### **HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**Office** in the Henfield Hall (currently by appointment only)  
**Telephone** 01273 492507 **Email** office@henfield.gov.uk

**Full Council** meets 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month at 7pm in the Henfield Hall

**Members:** Malcolm Eastwood (Chairman); Elaine Goodyear (Vice-Chairman); Ann Donoghue; Nita Farrell; Daryn Grossmith; David Jemmett; Jane Jones; Richard Kendall; Michael Morgan; Gillian Perry; Josh Potts; Andrew Sharp; Russell Shaw; Chris Simmonds; Nigel Stevens.

### **Committee Structure of Council**

Finance Risk & Change	Meets – 7:00pm	3rd Tuesday of every month
Plans Advisory	Meets – 7:00pm	1st & 3rd Thursday of every month
Open Spaces	Meets – 9.30am	2nd Wednesday bi- monthly
Village Amenities	Meets – 9.30am	2nd Wednesday bi- monthly
Museum	Meets – 7.30pm	Last Wednesday of the month, quarterly
Joint Commons		Meets – Bi-monthly

### **Individual Committee Reports**

#### **Finance, Risk and Change Committee (FRC) Report 2021/22**

This Committee comprises the Chairman of the Parish Council's sub committees and the Chairman & Vice Chairman of Council. The remit of this Committee is to deal with all matters financial, regulatory, change projects and items not addressed by other Council Committees. It also has oversight of the Parish Council's risk registers.

2021 continued to be an interesting year:

In May the emergency legislation permitting Parish Council meetings via Zoom ceased and the Council moved back to "in person" meetings. But in order to maintain transparency and enable residents to easily participate in meetings, the Parish Council took the decision to purchase a widescreen TV & camera to enable the Council to still use Zoom and to continue to live stream its main monthly (1st Tuesday of the month) meeting on Facebook.

FRC also established a new working group to oversee the Council's work on Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction. This resulted in the Parish Council's Carbon Reduction Plan being produced and approved in October.

This Plan will enable the Council to improve biodiversity in the Parish and move the Parish Council towards becoming carbon neutral in all its activities. Already we have completed a Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the Parish (assisted by Sustainable Henfield 2030), introduced new recycling streams in the Parish Office and commenced an energy audit.

In September, FRC approved the Parish Council Community Resilience Framework. Community Resilience is about what most of us would do instinctively in times of trouble or crisis. This Framework will enable the Parish Council to be able to respond to community emergencies and work with various Henfield groups to help the community & local business.

This Council is committed to maintaining services in the Village to as high a standard as finances allow, for the benefit of Henfield residents and visitors.

Next financial year (2022/23) the Council precept will be increased to £277,355. This is an increase of 3% on a Band D equivalent property.

I hope that you feel from what you read in this year's report and those of the Council's sub committees that we provide a good service for your money

### **Elaine Goodyear - Committee Chairman**

**Committee Members:** Malcolm Eastwood (Vice Chair); Ann Donoghue; Jane Jones; Gill Perry; Nigel Stevens

### **Recreation and Open Spaces Committee (ROS) Report 2021-2022**

The last year, 2021, was a challenging one for everyone, but the Recreation and Open Spaces Committee has continued to meet every other month and has aimed to ensure our local open spaces, play areas and sports facilities are cared for and developed.

The Activity Trail at the Chessbrook Green has now been replaced, as the Council had been advised that it was at the end of its useful life in ROSPA safety reports. In addition, we are endeavouring to refurbish the mound and tunnel at the Kings Field play area to bring this equipment back into use for our under-fives. We have had approaches from residents who would like to see more shade for babies and toddlers in our local play areas and another approach regarding outdoor exercise equipment. These ideas will continue to be considered as and when we have appropriate funding and locations. The skateboard park in the Kings Field was partly resurfaced to improve facilities. The issue of the use of the Sandpit by cyclists was resolved and the jumps and mounds removed. It has now been established that none of the footpaths leading to the Sandpit can be used by cycles. However, the investigation highlighted that there is an appetite for more cycling infrastructure for young people in the village and the Parish will pursue alternative locations for more appropriate facilities.

The Recreation and Open Spaces Committee has continued to work with our local sports clubs to maintain Henfield's playing fields to as good a standard as we can. We have had several site meetings with sports representatives and contractors to look at surfaces and maintenance plans and liaised with the clubs on their building plans as needed. The Tennis Club has kept the committee well informed about all the developments there and a new lease has now been agreed.

A new Henfield Trail (The Three Parishes Trail) was developed and partially 'road tested'. It formed part of the successful 'Walk for Louise' in the summer when many residents enjoyed the walk to Sussex Prairie Gardens.

Local residents voiced much support for planting more trees in 2021. The local tree wardens have been working with committees and volunteers to plan several initiatives related to increase our tree cover long term. The Parish successfully bid for 350 young trees from the Queen's Green Canopy Project and many of these have been planted by volunteers in hedgerows on council land. The remainder of these 'whips' will be planted around the community orchard on the boundaries of the Sandpit Field. Several local residents offered to make substantial donations towards tree planting within the Parish, which will be progressed in 2022. In line with our commitment to Wilder Horsham District, we have continued to plant more wildflowers which are attractive to insects along the Link Road and in the cemetery

extension. WSCC Highways agreed more community verges for new planting to support pollinators too. In autumn 2021, local people volunteered to plant over 10,000 crocuses on verges leading into the village, with funding from the Parish Council and from local community groups. It is hoped that these crocuses will add to visual interest and will improve our biodiversity as well as marking our celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee when they flower in spring 2022.

Despite the challenges of 2021, our Parish Council Works Officer team, litter pickers and tree wardens have really made a positive impact on our village, ensuring it remains a pleasant place to enjoy the outdoors for all residents.

### **Gill Perry - Committee Chairman**

**Committee Members:** Richard Kendall (Vice-Chair); Malcolm Eastwood; Nita Farrell; Daryn Grossmith; David Jemmett and Andrew Sharp,

### **Plans Advisory Committee Report (PAC) 2021/22**

The role of this Committee as a Statutory Consultee is to comment upon planning applications within Henfield Parish and advise the relevant planning authorities. The planning authorities with responsibility for decision-making are Horsham District Council (HDC) and the South Downs National Park Authority.

The PAC has scrutinised 125 planning applications since 1st April 2021. Each application is evaluated against the policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework; the Horsham District Council's Planning Framework; the South Downs National Park Local Plan; the Horsham Conservation Area Management Plan for Henfield; the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (made in June 2021), and the Henfield Parish Design Statement.

Planning applications can only be determined against material planning considerations and, when objecting to an application the objections will be on the grounds that the application conflicts with the Statutory Planning Framework and the specific policies are referenced. Particular care has to be taken for applications in the Henfield Conservation Area and for work to trees with a Tree Preservation order. The PAC also uses the expertise of our parish Tree Warden, John Willis, to inform our advice to Horsham on any applications concerning trees.

As well as commenting on individual planning applications, the PAC responds to district and regional consultations; for example, the new Horsham District Council's Local Plan, with the increasing pressure on targets for building new houses that Henfield and the District faces.

The table below summaries the work of the PAC over 11months from 1st April 2021 to 28th February 2022

Total Number of Planning Applications Reviewed	125
Number Supported (No Objections)	83
Number where we Objected	32
Number deferred for further information	10

What were the Planning Applications for?

New Houses	24
Extensions to existing homes	58
Removal or Reduction in Trees	16
Other planning matters	27

The PAC meets twice a month and residents are welcome to attend. The Horsham District Council website provides a link for all planning applications where detailed plans can be viewed and comments made, together with planning policy documents.

### **Nigel Stevens – Committee Chairman**

**Committee Members:** Russell Shaw (Vice-Chair); Ann Donoghue; Malcolm Eastwood; Elaine Goodyear; Daryn Grossmith; Gillian Perry and Josh Potts.

### **Museum Committee Report 2021/22**

This year, with the continuing Covid pandemic restrictions and following Government guidelines, the Museum opened when permitted, with the grateful help of 28 volunteers. Work continued behind the scenes and online e.g., Facebook with thanks to the volunteer team of: Curator, Alan Barwick, Assistant Curator, Steve Robotham, Costume Curator, Stephanie Richards and for his continuing work on the website, Rob Gordon.

The temporary displays within the Museum during the year included:

- What we Wore in the War - a costume display to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE Day
- Pretty and Practical - a small case with a collection of petite costume collection items
- 'The Thames Mudlark' – a private local collection of mudlarking finds (+ accompanying blog)
- Henfield's Early history - a display of items from archeological excavations at Stretham Manor
- Ships, Planes and Cars - a private collection of model ships, toy planes and cars (until 4.3.22)

The Roving Case is back out again - currently at Henfield Library - featuring 'What's in the Kitchen?' - a display of historical kitchen objects.

During 2021 when the Museum was able to open, volunteers welcomed 771 visitors in to visit the collection in person. With huge thanks to Rob Gordon, the website continued to flourish this year - with new material (including grateful contributions) and enhancements added to the website ([www.henfieldmuseum.org](http://www.henfieldmuseum.org)). Highlights included Henfield's natural history including *Arborea*, additional blogs, costume collection content, restored photos and our online giftshop. From Jan - Dec 2021, there have been over 2,500 unique visitors and over 7,000 page views on the museum website. The museum's Google sidebar has had over 500 engagements since July 2021.

A key project started this year was the digitisation of our collection of approximately 3,000 photographs/postcards which was funded by HPC, Friends of Henfield Museum (FoHM) and a contribution from the Arts Society. Restoration and colourisation of historic photographs and story-focused writing have continued and remained very popular when appearing in BN5 and the Parish Magazine and on the Museum and Henfield Club Facebook pages. The Museum Facebook page currently has 785 followers, with the most popular post reaching over 15,000 people and gaining almost 200 reactions. Work has increased on the Museum Twitter page (173 followers and over 20,000 post impressions). Our 'digital windows' on the Museum have given us a much wider audience across the UK and the world.

With the online giftshop, the Museum contactless payment system is now also linked and working. Another project concluded this year was the collaboration with the Parish Council on

the creation of Henfield's Heritage Trails (details on the website or pick up a leaflet from the Parish Office). The Friends-led oral histories project also continued, with Zoom having been used for the first time to record a former Henfield resident now living in Canada.

Material produced this year by the FoHM included:

- In addition to the card of the Tipnoak painting, a set of six greetings cards has been prepared using restored and coloured Edwardian winter photos from the Museum.
- A History of Henfield High Street 1800-2021 which will be available to purchase soon.

Further details and a link to purchase items can now be found on our website [www.henfieldmuseum.org](http://www.henfieldmuseum.org). Please pay the website a visit to learn about Henfield's rich and varied history. We extend a warm welcome to you to visit the Museum to see the objects in person.

The FoHM now consists of 76 members with a core group raising vital funds for the Museum. If you would like to be a Friend (annual membership: Single £10, Family £15, Life £100) or volunteer in any capacity to help the Museum we would be pleased to hear from you via the website [www.henfieldmuseum.org](http://www.henfieldmuseum.org). Or you can leave a message via the Parish Council office.

### **Ann Donoghue - Committee Chairman**

**Committee Members:** Jane Jones (Vice-Chair); Andrew Sharp and Chris Simmonds. Alan Barwick; Leo Jago and Rob Gordon

### **Henfield Commons Joint Committee Report 2021/22**

The Commons Joint Committee (which is a sub-committee of Horsham District Council, owners of the land) is responsible for the management of our three Commons – Henfield, Broadmare and Oreham, as well as for the Tanyard Field, at the western end of Cagefoot Lane.

Peter Hudson unfortunately passed away last year and Sheila Mathews left the committee; both have contributed many years of expert advice to the maintenance of the Commons. Their advice was invaluable.

Sussex Wildlife Trust has awarded Local Wildlife Site (LWS) status to all three commons. LWS is the new name for Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

We are continuing to implement the Kate Ryland Management Plan for Henfield Common though the pandemic has limited our efforts. We continue to discuss how to introduce cattle safely.

Part of the requirement to retain LWS status is to maintain a healthy and varied insect population. To this end, COVID and weather willing, we will be introducing a more varied regime of grass cutting, which involves leaving some uncut for three or four years. This will look untidy but is essential to allow a good insect population to survive.

In addition to routine maintenance in the Tanyard we have desilted the northern pond and stopped the periodic loss of water from the south (Cagefoot Lane) pond. We have also opened a new viewpoint from the Scout Hut twitten.

Routine maintenance continues on Broadmare and Oreham Commons.

### **Andrew Sharp - Committee Chairman**

**Committee members;** Elaine Goodyear; Mike Morgan; Gill Perry; Josh Potts and Chris Simmonds, Eddie Colgate and Roger Noel.

**Regular Committee attendees** - John Willis, Tree Warden, Dick Nye, Works Officer, Julie Coultas, Henfield Common, Tony Baker, Conservation Volunteers

## **Village Amenities Committee Report (VAC) 2021/22**

The purpose of this Committee is to manage and develop amenities for the benefit of the people of Henfield. We deal with, amongst other matters:

- the provision, maintenance and management of public seats, floral displays, cycle racks and shelters, public toilets, bus shelters, noticeboards, Christmas lights and litter picking.
- the management of the Cemetery in accordance with legislation.
- the organisation of Remembrance events.
- transport-related issues, including Community Speed Watch.

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting, there have, unfortunately, been several acts of vandalism in the bus shelter and public conveniences; some of these have been so serious that we have had to close the toilets. We have now installed CCTV, which can capture images of this anti-social behaviour and we hope will be a deterrent. We have also invested in stronger, electrically operated shutters for the bus shelter. The noticeboards have been refurbished by a volunteer, for which we are grateful.

The extension to the Cemetery is now being used for burials and the central area should be consecrated during the forthcoming year. Wildflower seeds, donated by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, have been sown on the bank at the southern end. We are looking to establish a rolling programme for the maintenance of the paths in the "old" Cemetery. New software is helping our office staff to fulfil our statutory record-keeping duties.

Two mobile Speed Indicator Devices have been installed, currently on the Common and in Upper Station Road, and they are providing useful information about driver behaviour along these roads.

We continue to try to enhance the floral displays in the centre of our village. The raised bed between the dentist and the launderette now looks much more attractive, as does the planting beneath the Indian Bean tree, and there are two new planters in front of the veterinary surgery. We are grateful to the volunteers who continue to maintain the beds in the Library Car Park to such a high standard. We are currently involved in a project to "green" the High Street with additional planting, which is being funded by a grant from Horsham District Council.

We are proud to be associated with the Remembrance Day events in our village and know that they are valued by many residents. It was heartening to be able to resume these this year and we thank all those who organised them so successfully.

As a community we are all grateful, too, to our HART responders, and VAC were pleased to be able to recommend that Council give £1,000 towards re-siting defibrillators outdoors, which will make them more accessible in emergencies.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of this committee for their continuing hard work and for contributing their considerable expertise.

**Jane Jones - Committee Chairman.**

**Committee Members:** Mike Morgan (Vice-Chair); Nita Farrell; David Jemmett; Richard Kendall; Russell Shaw; Chris Simmonds and Nigel Stevens.