



HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL HENFIELD PARISH MEETING

TUESDAY 1st MARCH 2022 AT 7:00pm

IN THE HENFIELD HALL AND VIA ZOOM

In attendance: Cllr M Eastwood (Chairman), E Goodyear, G Perry, J Jones, A Donoghue, C Simmonds, M Morgan, J Potts, D Jemmett, R Shaw, A Sharp and D Grossmith.

Apologies were received from Cllrs N Stevens, N Farrell and R Kendall.

Present: Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager), Mrs B Samrah (Parish Administrator) and 37 members of the public. 4 members of the public also joined via Zoom conferencing.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

1. WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN OF HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The Chairman welcomed all those in attendance and commented that our hearts go out to all the people of Ukraine, and that he hopes for peace and common sense to prevail soon. He then introduced new Parish Councillor Daryn Grossmith and West Sussex County Councillor Sarah Payne.

The Chairman explained that last year, due to Covid restrictions, there were four shorter online meetings. These proved very popular and were well attended and so this year HPC planned a combined face to face and online event. During the lockdowns Henfield Parish Council (HPC) continued to meet but used Zoom and transmitted live on Facebook. HPC recorded around 250 views a month so when HPC returned to meeting face-to-face, equipment was purchased to allow us to continue to transmit a live feed and a catch up recording of our face-to-face meetings, hence the set up at today's meeting.

2. PRESENTATION OF ROYAL BRITISH LEGION LONG SERVICE POPPY APPEAL AWARDS TO HENFIELD RESIDENTS

The Chairman thanked Derek Newman, who has been raising funds for the Royal British Legion for 30 years. Unfortunately he was unable to attend to collect his award.

3. AGREEMENT TO THE MINUTES OF 2021 MEETING

The Chairman summarised the content of the 2021 meeting by mentioning the following points that were discussed:

- Delays to the Local Plan.
- The return of Fairfax developers at Sandy Lane.
- Saving the Haven.

- Refurbishment of the toilets, library and the car park.
- Replacement of the Henfield Hall roof
- Replacement of the Leisure Centre sports hall floor.
- New Parish Council website and increased use of social media.
- Call for more Community Speedwatch volunteers.
- Pot holes.
- Dog waste.

The Chairman signed the minutes of the 2021 meeting.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman commented that he hopes 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 couldn't have happened without all the volunteers who have stepped forward to organise appointments (three of them Parish Councillors), deliver vaccinations, organise safe queuing, give lifts, manage car parking and many other voluntary activities. This helped to keep the majority of residents safe during the pandemic. Our Vicar reported a 20% reduction in funeral numbers year-on-year and it allowed the Medical Centre to continue to deliver its other services to the community. He expressed his thanks to all of those that volunteered with a special mention for 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. He commented this was a fantastic commitment that has made a real difference.

The last 12 months

HPC have been continuing to move forward with priorities including the following:

- Installation of two mobile Speed Indicator Devices 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 and Sussex Police to keep residents safer.
- The new cemetery extension is now being used for burials.
- Resumption of the Remembrance Day parade.
- Following some increased instances of vandalism to the refurbished public toilets and bus shelter, CCTV and more robust shutters have been installed.
- Henfield Museum continued to develop its website which has allowed them to take exhibits to the community online. They have also started to digitise their collection of photographs and postcards.
- Activity trail at Chessbrook Green replaced.
- Skate Park was partly resurfaced.
- A new 'Three Parishes Trail' was designed and tested for launch in the Spring.
- A successful bid for 350 young trees from the Queen's Green Canopy Project and planting is under way. Some have planted in the Sandpit Field (east of the Bowling Green) as part of the plan to create a Community Orchard.
- Wildflowers 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.
- Works Officers and Litter Pickers continue their work to keep the village and countryside looking neat and tidy.
- HPC 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.
- HPC finances are sound and well managed, such that HPC should end the year marginally within budget. HPC have maintained the precept for the coming year to an increase of 3% for a Band D property.

Thank You

To Brian Stone, one of the Works Officer team who residents will have seen out and about keeping the village neat and tidy. Brian retired at the end of January with HPC's thanks for all of his hard work. HPC have now recruited a new Works Officer to work with Dick Nye and Robin Wadey who do a great job for the village.

To the 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 HPC alongside our team of litter wardens who have been out there working when regulations have allowed.

To our new West Sussex County Councillor Sarah Payne who has made a difference helping HPC to secure some support from WSCC. Also to Horsham District Councillors Mike Morgan and Josh Potts for continuing to put Henfield at the centre of everything they do at Horsham, and to the 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 Henfield's residents for their encouragement, help and for those who have stepped forward to provide practical help to those who needed it.

5. BIODIVERSITY IN HENFIELD

Cllr Elaine Goodyear explained that HPC recognised that they wanted to put Biodiversity at the centre of decision making and drew up a Carbon Reduction Plan. So far, achievements towards this include:

- Seven new recycling streams.
- New Parish Office windows installed.
- 300 saplings and 16 new fruit trees planted.

Another major achievement was the Phase 1 Habitat survey which built on the work of Henfield Birdwatch. The parish was divided into 11 areas, volunteers trained and surveys carried out May to September 2021. The aim was to map main habitats for example woodland, farmland and hedgerow, therefore identifying areas which may be important for local wildlife in order to preserve it. This in turn can show how the local area could be improved for wildlife and potentially inform planners of the important habitats present. The survey found that there is lots of green space but most of it is semi-improved

grassland (planted with non-native species and possibly fertilised) and arable land, which is not necessarily the best type of green space. The aim therefore is to increase natural grassland over the next 10-15 years; the only two current areas being Henfield Common and Oreham Common. Cllr Goodyear explained the importance of nature recovery networks and linking green spaces together so that wildlife can move around for migration and feeding. She highlighted the River Adur which is a key priority for the Horsham District as well as the Downslink, which she believes could be further improved with perhaps more planting of trees. There are also plans for potentially a fourth Common north of the village at Parsonage Farm as there is some land that cannot be built on due to an underground gas pipeline. Residents can also enhance and create nature corridors by considering the following suggestions for their own gardens:

- Encourage garden birds.
- Leave a patch of lawn to grow long.
- Plant flowering tree or berry bearing shrub.
- Sow nectar rich annuals.

Finally she thanked Sustainable Henfield 2030 and the Henfield Conservation Volunteers for all of their hard work over the last year.

6. PLANNING UPDATE

Cllr Josh Potts explained that every district requires a Local Plan which demonstrates how it will meet the social, environmental and economic needs of the area. This can in part also be achieved by a Neighbourhood Plan. The referendum for the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) was held on 6th May 2021. Results showed 2,085 votes (90.5%) voted for NHP and 218 (9.5%) against. The turnout was 48% of those eligible to vote. Cllr Potts thanked the learned and dedicated steering group, in particular Ray Osgood, for their commitment and perseverance over several years in producing the plan. New housing planned for Henfield Parish includes four new developments with 270 homes by 2031, there is also an expectation for us to deliver an additional 100 homes by 2036. The sites identified are as follows:

- Parsonage Farm: 205 homes with planning application already submitted for 235 homes (likely to be offset against the additional 100 homes).
- Wantley Hill: 25 homes, likely to be submitted as 40 homes.
- Land west of Backsettown: 30 homes, land has been acquired by the developer.
- Land south of Bowls Club: 10 homes. No update available at this time.

The Benefits for Henfield Parish will include Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) paid at 25% instead of 15% which will help HPC invest in community infrastructure projects (HPC have received £15,678 of CIL in the last 12 months) and, thanks to discussion and negotiation with developers, future plans include green space to the north of Parsonage Farm to create a recreational area and part of the site to the north of the Wantley site to create new playing fields.

Horsham Local Plan

Sites were selected and draft recommendations were ready to be considered by District Councillors in September 2021. Mayfield Market Town was not selected as a strategic site. On 14th September 2021 Natural England issued a Position Statement about the negative impact on wildlife of water abstraction in the Arun Valley. This also affects Crawley, north Chichester, part of South Downs National Park and WSCC.

By Law, no new planning applications can be approved until a plan is in place to ensure Water Neutrality, meaning that all new developments must not increase the rate of water abstraction. The Local Plan is therefore delayed until it can be demonstrated to be Water Neutral. This requires detailed plans to be agreed between Natural England, HDC and Southern Water and could take a further 3-6 months. The plans could include water efficiency measures, grey water recycling, reducing leakages, desalination and new water extraction sources such as a new reservoir. In the short to medium term water may need to be pumped from neighbouring authorities. There is some hope that this may result in a reduction in housing numbers. In the meantime planning applications for small builds and extensions are beginning to be considered as long as there are sufficient water neutrality measures in place.

Work of the Henfield Plans Advisory Committee

Cllr Potts explained that HPC are consultees and not decision makers but that their views carry weight at HDC. HPC can also require an application to be escalated to an HDC Planning Committee rather than being dealt with by an individual planning officer.

In the last 12 months HPC have supported 83 applications and objected to 32. There have been 11 appeals against decisions made by HDC and notable successes include Sandy Lane, where HPC working with HDC and community groups such as the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Henfield (CPRH), to defeat the developers for the second time. Great weight was also given to the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan as part of this process.

Finally Cllr Potts commented that any concerns from residents regarding planning matters or suspected work taking place without the correct permissions can be directed to the Parish Council, he or Cllr Morgan as District Councillors, or to HDC directly.

The Chairman added that there are early stages plans for 2,400 new homes at Sayers Common, including 1,800 promoted by Mayfield Market Towns, so there is a continuing need to be watchful.

7. LOOKING FORWARD

The Chairman highlighted some plans for the coming year, in particular for the **Queens Platinum Jubilee**. These include:

- **Thursday 2nd June:** Children's Activity Day on the Kings Field.
Subject to finding a high location, HPC and the BP Guild are planning to light a Jubilee Beacon at 9.45pm, in line with many other communities across the Commonwealth.
- **Friday 3rd June:** The daytime free for local street parties and activities.
Evening event: The Brighton Beach Boys concert in Henfield Hall, £15 per ticket available online now and in local shops soon.
- **Saturday 4th June:** Traders' Day in the High Street with a party atmosphere, steel band and BBQ.

- **Sunday 5th June:** The Big Jubilee Lunch on the Memorial Field with street food providers, afternoon teas, treasure hunt and fancy dress competition, plus Patcham Silver Band.

In addition 10,000 crocuses have been planted on our verges to create a colourful display and wild flowers have been planted with reduced cutting of the verges to encourage more insects and wildlife to thrive. A new Community Orchard has also been planted on Parish Council land behind the Sandpit, north of Henfield Common.

Plans for the year to March 2023

- Publish a Three Year Business Plan for Henfield Parish Council.
- Implement a new 40mph speed limit between Barrow Hill and Woods Mill, with thanks to Cllr Sarah Payne and local resident Dave Stanton.
- More investment in the maintenance and quality of our playing fields.
- Refurbish the mound and tunnel in the Kings Field Play Area.
- A new Community Building at the Scout Pavilion.
- Create some Safe Routes for off-road cycling, horse riding and walking in collaboration with local landowners, allowing more of us to enjoy our countryside.
- Construct a Community Highway Scheme to include parking and safety issues near St Peter's Primary School and measures to discourage parking on the zig-zag and double yellow lines to the north of the High Street.
- Participate in a Horsham-wide initiative to "green" along our High Street
- Work with Horsham District Council on delivery of the Neighbourhood & Local Plans, building new homes where we feel it appropriate and to a design which fits the look and feel of the village.
- Continue to build our CIL monies and reserves and work with community organisations to use these funds to deliver some of the priorities in our Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
- Deliver a fourth Henfield Trail and organise another walking event, following last year's successful walk to Sussex Prairie Gardens.
- Continue to take actions to deliver our carbon neutrality objectives.
- Henfield Museum continuing to digitise its content and taking displays out into the community.

Beyond March 2023

2023 will be the Year of Henfield's Young People

HPC will be looking for projects, initiatives and events that support younger residents.

2024 will be the Year of Biodiversity incorporating the 25-year anniversary of Henfield Birdwatch. HPC will be looking for activities which help us to enjoy and enhance the biodiversity in the parish.

HPC will work toward the creation of a fourth Common to the north of the new Parsonage Farm development, to include bridleway access to the Downs Link, a mountain bike track, community orchard allotments and plenty of green space to be enjoyed. HPC will also work toward the creation of new playing fields and sports pitches to the east of Wantley Hill Estate as part of the new housing development.

Subject to the availability of funding, HPC plan to deliver three of the IDP Infrastructure projects each year.

8. OPEN FORUM

Questions from Members of the Public

- A resident asked why one of the new Speed Indicator devices is facing traffic leaving the village, he believes it looks odd. The Chairman explained that until recently it had been facing the opposite direction, and that advice from Sussex Police suggests that devices are turned to face each direction. Once data is gathered and analysed, future positioning will be evaluated as the devices can be moved around the village.
- A Bishop Park resident asked whether HPC were aware of planned introduction of parking controls on the estate and asked for assistance in preventing this. The Chairman replied that HPC were not aware and asked the resident to email the Parish Office with further details. Cllr Payne added that she had been informed and was in some discussion with another resident.
- Steve Bailey (CPRH) commented that although Fairfax have walked away from the Sandy Lane site, the owners of the field are looking for another developer to sell to and there is likely to be another application. He asked whether there were any plans for the NHP to be reviewed and readopted by May 2023, as it will otherwise only carry weight for two years. This may be crucial if the Local Plan is not made in the next few months. Cllr Potts stated he had nothing further he could add on the Local Plan but was hopeful it would move forward in the next six months. The Chairman added that it is an issue to keep a watch on, and that it is likely to be discussed at a forthcoming meeting of the Horsham Association of Local Councils (also to be attended by HDC) as there are several parishes in the district with NHPs at various stages and therefore vulnerable to speculative development.
- A resident offered to assist with apparent communication difficulties at the Medical Centre and asked if they could keep residents updated better so that the community could be more sensitive to the difficulties that they are experiencing. Dr Crawford-Clarke acknowledged that there have been long wait times on the telephones and asked residents to use the E-Consult online system so that queries can be appropriately directed. She added that there are new staff being trained and they now have a full complement of doctors. The mental health support team have also been expanded. The Chairman added that there were 400 missed appointments in the last year and resources must be used effectively, he supported the use of E-Consult and added that queries need to be kept brief and succinct. He also asked residents to note that the Medical Centre had nine staff and four doctors off with COVID at the beginning of the year which has resulted in a backlog which they are working hard to clear. He asked for patience and for residents to be respectful when they contact the Medical Centre. Peter Bates, Chairman of the Friends of Henfield Medical Centre added that the resident was welcome to join the Friends and also suggested use of E-Consult as well as NHS 111.
- A resident asked whether there were specific targets for time taken to answer telephone calls and added that he was surprised at the number of part time staff at the Medical Centre, questioning their dedication to the role. The Practice Manager responded that there are no national targets for answering the telephones. The Chairman added that targets would not be appropriate, that the Medical Centre are working to improve wait times and that residents can also do their part by relieving pressure using other channels including pharmacies for minor ailments and A&E for medical emergencies.
- A resident asked if there was a procedure in place for applying for street parties. Cllr Goodyear stated that she was anticipating further guidance which would be shared with

residents, and that road closures are granted by HDC. Another resident added that applications can already be made via a link on the HDC website and that there was no fee. The resident added that he has also asked the Vicar if it might be possible to have the church bells ring from 19:52 to 20:22 hours on the Thursday the 2nd June. This has already been raised with Rev Paul Doick who is awaiting guidance on the requirements of the Churches in support of the wider community.

- A resident asked whether there would be more information on the Trails' website with regards to wildlife and history. The Chairman confirmed that Henfield Birdwatch is working on a bird layer, wildlife and history layers are also planned. Funding is in place and he hopes the first two trails will have these layers added by the end of this year.

9. APPROVE DATE OF NEXT YEAR'S PARISH MEETING

7th March 2023. The Chairman thanked all for attending.

Meeting Closed at 8.28pm.