



HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT for 2022/2023

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

Thank yous

My normal custom is to save my thank yous until the last part of this summary but this year I think it appropriate to start with them.

First and foremost I would like to thank Cllr Mike Morgan who is stepping down as one of our two District Councillors after the 4th May elections. Mike has served this community faithfully and diligently for over 35 years as a Parish Councillor and latterly as an Independent District Councillor. What you don't see is the reliance that we all place on Mike's knowledge and wise counsel in much of what we do as a Parish Council. We are delighted that he has agreed to stay on as a Parish Councillor but I just want to say thank you to Mike for all his support to all of us whilst I have been Chairman. Mike does so much to help and support our community putting Henfield first and we should recognise that contribution - thank you Mike from all of us.

This is the last time that I will be reporting as Parish Council Chairman, having served my maximum six years. I want to thank all of you in the community, Kevin our Clerk and his team and all of my fellow Councillors for their support. When I became Chairman I had a tough act to follow in Ray Osgood who thankfully agreed to continue working on our Neighbourhood Plan to its conclusion. Ray left a very well organised effective Parish Council. My task was to modernise and use my business experience to further improve the way that we work. Along the way I found out how to build a new road and car park at the Leisure Centre, how to repel Mayfield (now Berkeley Homes) who were threatening to build a 7,000 home town on our doorstep, how to work with other community organisations in the village to understand what is needed, and then to turn this into a plan including working out how we might finance it. This has been challenging, interesting and rewarding - I have learned a lot. This and creating a business plan detailing our priorities and working together to bring £2m of investment, are all things I feel proud of. But the thing that I am most pleased about is the way that the County, District, Parish Councillors (all volunteers), Clerk and his team all work together in a really effective way to get things done. It is interesting that this gets noticed beyond our borders and two years ago I was elected Chairman of the Horsham Association of Local Councils, representing the 32 Parish Councils that form Horsham District.

Thank you also to my long suffering wife Carol for putting up with the hours that I spend making sure that everything is completed to my own high standards - she is very patient!

The last thank you is probably the most important one. Sadly the war in Ukraine continues to rage and we should thank those residents and employers who have welcomed the Ukrainian families into our community and made them feel at home. Let us hope and pray that they can return to their loved ones before my successor stands here next year.

Some Headlines for the Last 12 months

- We held a very successful series of events across the weekend of the Queen's Jubilee and I managed not to go up in flames when lighting the beacon at the Rothery!
- We climbed further out of the Covid Pandemic but then Lloyds Pharmacy went into meltdown. A combination of switching to online providers and help from our MP to allow support from the medical centre for our most vulnerable residents appear to have largely helped us through this.
- The Community Scout Pavilion is finally under construction thanks to a lot of effort by the Clarkes Mead Trust and generous contributions by our residents and local organisations.
- To support the cost of living crisis we bought a community fridge to supplement the excellent work by the food bank volunteers.
- We learned that Sainsbury's are coming to Henfield from May 2023.
- We used our community bus funding to help local community groups to have fun beyond Henfield with free transport.
- We formed a new Children & Young People Committee.
- We agreed a future design for the Kings Field with our sports and leisure centre.
- We planted trees and wildflowers on many of our verges and created a community orchard, all to support biodiversity and to recognise that this is a rural village.
- Our High Street was beautifully resurfaced.
- We have a new speed limit of 40mph across the Common and shortly on the stretch between Henfield and Woods Mill.
- We reviewed 104 planning applications even though water neutrality has meant that there were very few new homes being built. We tried to preserve trees from being removed by encouraging reduction or where they needed to be removed that they were replaced. A further delay by HDC in the new Local Plan is a concern because it could expose us to more speculative planning proposals, something we have to watch diligently.
- The extension to our cemetery was consecrated by Bishop Ruth of Horsham on 31st January.
- Henfield Museum had more than 1,300 visitors to see its popular temporary displays and digitised 3,000 postcards and photographs.
- Our finances remain sound but like everyone we have higher energy costs to pay for things like village lighting and we are investing more in our young people which means that our Precept will increase by 10% this year to £304,789, an increase of £10 per annum for a Band D property.

Finally to the May Elections where our District and Parish Councillors are selected. Some of our District & Parish Councillors are standing down this year, we thank them for all of their hard work. If you would like to get involved why not put your name forward to become a Parish Councillor ? It's not all about sitting in meetings, its often about getting out into the community and making things happen. If you are interested please to talk one of us or Kevin Wright at the Parish Office.

Malcolm Eastwood, Chairman, Henfield Parish Council

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Office in the Henfield Hall Monday to Friday 9am to Midday
Telephone 01273 492507 **Email** office@henfield.gov.uk

Full Council meets 1st 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	Meets six weekly
Plans Advisory	Meets – 7:00pm	1st & 3rd Thursday of every month
Open Spaces	Meets – 9.30am	Meets six weekly
Village Amenities	Meets – 10.30am	Meets six weekly
Museum	Meets – 7.30pm	Last Wednesday of the month, quarterly
Joint Commons	Meets 9.30am	Meets quarterly
Children and Young People	Meets 10.30am	Meets monthly

Individual Committee Reports

Finance, Risk and Change Committee (FRC) Report 2022/23

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.

2022 saw Parish Council business starting to return to normal.

- In 2022 the Parish Council produced a Business Plan. The Three Year Business Plan sets out the areas additional to day-to-day operations, on which the Council proposes to focus for the ongoing benefit of the community. It builds on the Parish Council's seven strategic priorities.
- The live streaming of the Full Council meeting each month via Zoom and Facebook continues to be popular.
- Council Reserves (savings) fall into categories - General reserves/ Allocated reserves where the Council allocates its monies against specific projects. In order to explain these reserves FRC have also produced a short business case for each of the projects.
- Community Bus - FRC set up a working group to look at getting the best use of the Community Transport bus in the village. The Bus is now available to be booked by local groups and societies.
- Good News this year is that a Community Transport scheme will now include electric cars which will be available for hire.
- The Council's Carbon Reduction plan continues to be implemented and in January the Council agreed to transfer a sum of money from High Street banks to two ethical banks (Charity Bank & Unity Bank).

- In September FRC approved a sum to be used for projects to assist with the current cost of living issues. The Council is very aware of the need to support initiatives in the village to help residents cope. As part of this the Parish Council purchased the fridge for the Community Fridge project, which will be located at the Leisure Centre.

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

Next financial year (2023/24) the Council precept will be increased to £304,789.. This is an increase of 9.9% and is the equivalent of a £10 increase per household. The Council wished to keep the increase as low as possible and will this year be using money in General Reserves to fund more of the Council's work.

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; Russell Shaw; Nita Farrell.

Recreation and Open Spaces Committee (ROS) Report 2022-2023

Over the last year our Committee has considered a wide range of projects related to Henfield's sport and recreation areas, play equipment and countryside. One significant change is that we have welcomed the new Children and Young People's Committee and during this year the budget which ROS previously managed for play equipment and playgrounds has been moved to their stewardship. Prior to this, the Committee decided to **refurbish the Mound and Tunnel** for under 5s at the King's Field play area which was finally completed recently. This proved to be a complicated technical project but we knew this play equipment had been valued by generations of young Henfielders, so it is great to see it back in action. Other ROS projects, such as upgrading the skatepark and providing more shade in play areas, will now also be managed by the Children and Young People's Committee.

Recreation and Open Spaces Committee has maintained regular communication with many of our local sports clubs. This included several meetings on drainage and playing surfaces and general use of the Memorial Field, Rothery Field and Kings Field. In some cases, plans were shelved in the light of the extended drought last summer. The Committee has supported local sports clubs in arranging training sessions and community events during the year and considered new projects such as the proposal for **replacing cricket nets** near the pavilion, and the plan to bring **Padel tennis** to Henfield. The Committee hopes to review and monitor key aspects of the playing fields and equipment in our village over the next year and this has already resulted in plans for some replacement signage on the Rothery and Kings Fields to clarify our ownership or offer guidance on use.

Trees and wildlife have again been a priority for the Committee, in line with the Parish Council's ambition to increase nature recovery locally. The **Henfield Green Canopy** project, with support from many local and people and community groups including the Parish Council has resulted in West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) planting **25 trees in road verges** this winter. These were specially chosen small trees, approved by the Highways Department, which should provide some lovely blossom in the springtime. Our **designated Community Road Verges** are still being maintained with wildflowers/bulbs through the help of volunteers. The newly planted **Community Orchard** at the Sandpit Field now has 15+ fruit trees and some nut trees including walnut and purple filbert. The Parish Council has installed a water trough in the orchard, with a wildlife guard made by Henfield Shed, to allow visitors to water trees in the

drier months. We are grateful for reports from John Willis (tree warden) which have assisted the Committee.

Footpaths and encouraging countryside access have been considered at several meetings and each member of the Committee is walking a designated area to monitor the state of the stiles and footpaths. Where we find problems or concerns, these are being reported to the WSCC Public Rights of Way team. The **Henfield Trails** project continues and will soon have additional details about the expected wildlife that can be seen within our village boundaries.

Henfield's Works Officers' team continues to do a sterling job of keeping Henfield's recreation and open spaces as good as we can manage and we appreciate their continued efforts.

Gill Perry - Committee Chairman

Committee Members: Richard Kendall (Vice-Chair); Malcolm Eastwood; Chris Simmonds; Daryn Grossmith; David Jemmett and Andrew Sharp.

Plans Advisory Committee Report (PAC) 2022/23

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 **104 planning applications** since 1st April 2022. 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 is in conflict 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. The table below summaries the work of the PAC over the period 1st April 2022 to 28th February 2023;

Total Number of Planning Applications Reviewed	104
Number Supported (No Objections)	67
Number where we Objected	24
Number deferred for further information	6

What were the Planning Applications for?

New Houses	5
Extensions to existing homes	50
Removal or Reduction in Trees	20
Other planning matters	29

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

Russell Shaw – Committee Chairman

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

Museum Committee Report 2022/23

This year, with the lifting of the Covid pandemic restrictions and following Government guidelines, the Museum opening hours got back to normal, with the grateful help of 19 regular volunteers. Work continued behind the scenes and online with thanks to the volunteer team of: Alan Barwick, Steve Robotham, Robert Gordon and Stephanie Richards.

The temporary displays within the Museum during the year included:

- A World War II Assortment to coincide with the Theatre Club's play 'Pressure'
- *Tools of the Trade - a Watchmaker's Wonderland*
- Costume and Commemoration - Royal Jubilees Remembered

The Roving Case returned, visiting Red Oaks, the Library, the Haven and the Free Church with the exhibit "*What's in the Kitchen?*" (C19/20 kitchen curiosities). Work continued on **local heritage trails** with new content planned and an additional signboard produced by CPRH in collaboration with the museum.

During 2022, volunteers welcomed **1,298 visitors in person**. The website (www.henfieldmuseum.org) continued to flourish with new material produced by Rob Gordon. Highlights include Henfield's natural history (*Arborea*), blog articles & Henfieldians Past (thanks to additional contributors), costume features and restored images. From Jan-Dec, there were **4,103 visitors** and 11,201 page views on the museum website. The museum's Google sidebar had 948 engagements this year, directing 332 clicks to the website.

A key project completed was the **digitisation of our collection** with approximately 3,000 photographs/postcards done; funded by HPC, Friends of Henfield Museum (FOHM) and a contribution from the Arts Society. Funds are currently being sourced to enable phase 2 of this project to take place early in 2023 with the digitisation of a further 700 items. **Social media work** continues: Facebook has 932 followers, the most popular posts reaching over 9,000 people/over 500 direct engagements. Twitter has 197 followers and the most popular month over 1,500 impressions. An Instagram page was started this summer, currently at 76 followers. A feature on the 'Wilberforce Waistcoat' was also published to the Museum Crush site. Our 'digital windows' on the Museum continue to give us a much wider audience across the UK and the world.

August saw the Museum's first work experience student - Lily Jackson-Brown from Newcastle University - who spent two weeks working with Rob Gordon, Alan Barwick and Stephanie Richards, on future social media content and archival research on social history, William Borrer and the Nep Town sandpit. Several **acquisitions** were funded by the Friends, including a bronze age axe horde and an 1820 image of St. Peter's.

The website giftshop and the Museum contactless payment system is now established and enabling visitors and remote interested buyers to purchase Henfield literature etc.

Material produced this year by the FOHM included:

- In addition to the card of the Tipnoak painting, a set of **six greetings cards** prepared using restored and coloured Edwardian winter photos, available in 2023.
- **Henfield High Street – a History From the 1800s to the Present Day** book, which is available to purchase at £10, plus an accompanying reprint of the **Tour of our Commons** book for £5.

Details and a purchase link can now be found at www.henfieldmuseum.org/giftshop. 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 Friends of Henfield Museum now consists of 85 members with a core group working on projects and raising vital funds. If you would like to join (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: henfieldmuseum@gmail.com. Or you can leave a message via the Parish Council office.

Ann Donoghue - Committee Chairman

Committee Members: Jane Jones (Vice-Chair); Andrew Sharp, Mike Morgan, Alan Barwick, Leo Jago and Rob Gordon.

Henfield Commons Joint Committee Report 2022/23

The Joint Commons Committee is formed from Horsham and Henfield Councillors along with interested members of the public. The task of this group is to protect, preserve and in some cases restore Henfield, Broadmare and Oreham Commons and the Tanyard Field. These are Local Wildlife Sites, recognised as having substantive nature conservation value.

How Can You Help ?

Without help we struggle to deliver the restoration aspects of our plan and so if you can spare a little time on a come-when-you-can basis to help with our work, please email henfieldconservation@gmail.com to join our happy band of volunteers. We plan to start advertising the tasks that are in our plan so that you can choose which of them interests or suits you.

Management & Restoration

Over a period of time we are developing detailed 10 year Management Plans for each of these sites. We have one for Henfield Common which we have put into action and we have recently commissioned and received one for Broadmare Common. Maintenance work includes grass cutting, ditch clearance, removing scrub to retain valuable grassland and wetland habitats.

Restoration targets slowing the loss and then preserving and growing the diversity of species. Let's look at Henfield Common which is the home to a variety of different habitats and ecosystems all packed into a relatively small area, as an example of our work.

Henfield Common Management Plan & Actions Taken in 2022/23

This 10 year Plan has identified a number of priorities. These can be summarised under five design principles which are used to guide our work.

- A. The priority is to first slow the loss of, then preserve and grow the diversity of species with an emphasis on the open marsh and grassland areas. *Some actions; starting to create margin habitats between woodland and grassland, creating a small glade to allow more light and air to encourage plant growth on the floor.*

- B. Restricting the spread of the woodland and invasive non-native plants into the open areas will support A. *Some actions: follow up the work of the BP Guild by cutting back Cherry Laurels throughout the wood.*
- C. Sustaining wetland environments by restoring slowing water flow. Introduce a more varied depth of water in the reed bed. *Some actions: strengthened and widened the leaky dam at the east of the reed bed, and removed the willow saplings from the reed bed.*
- D. Creating more room for larger oaks and encouraging a variety of trees to grow in the woodland areas, avoid uniform age structure and creating more light and air under the canopy to help the growth of ground vegetation/scrub for birds. *Some actions: creation of a new glade on North Common, surgery to low hanging branches of trees.*
- E. Measuring the results of the management plan, species increases, showing progress and making adjustments. *Some actions; we keep photographic records of areas of the common and measure the impact of our work.*

Broadmare Common

We have received an ecologist's management plan and are building an action plan based on this.

Andrew Sharp and Malcolm Eastwood - Committee Chairmen

Committee members; Mike Morgan; Gill Perry and Josh Potts.

Regular Committee attendees - John Willis- Tree Warden, Dick Nye- Works Officer, Julie Coultas- Henfield Common, Tony Baker- Conservation Volunteers and Roger Noel- Horsham District Council.

Village Amenities Committee Report (VAC) 2022/23

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 Speedwatch.

The extension to the Cemetery is now in use and the central area was consecrated by Bishop Ruth (of Horsham) on 31st January. We are very grateful to the volunteers who managed to keep the new trees watered during last summer's drought. Unfortunately, we have been advised that four pre-existing hornbeams to the northern side of the Cemetery fence are diseased and best removed. Consideration will be given to replacement planting. The programme for the **maintenance of the paths in the "old" Cemetery** has commenced. There will soon be signs to inform visitors about the **Commonwealth War Graves** in the Cemetery. We are currently carrying out a review of Cemetery fees, which were last adjusted two years ago; we aim that these remain affordable to residents, whilst at the same time reflecting the work involved for our staff.

Our **two new mobile Speed Indicator Devices** continue to provide useful information, which is transmitted to the Police database and used to inform their patrols. Our Community Speedwatch volunteers have been provided with a **new radar gun**, from S106 funding.

We are exploring with County Council teams how we might encourage **more walking and cycling to St Peter's School**.

We continue to try to enhance the appearance of the centre of our village. This year the flower beds along Bishop Lane and Coopers Way have been extended and replanted and new planters have been placed in Golden Square; both these projects were funded by a grant from Horsham District Council (HDC). We are grateful to the volunteer who continues to maintain the beds in the Library Car Park to such a high standard.

On the "Village Square" – the area in front of the veterinary surgery and the dry cleaners – repairs have been made to uneven paving. We are considering additional seating and planting in this space, which we intend should include **a memorial to Queen Elizabeth II**.

We are proud to be associated with the Remembrance Day events in our village, which are very well-attended, and thank all those who contribute towards their organisation.

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.

Children and Young People Committee Report (CYP) 2022/23

This Committee is a new standing committee of the Parish Council created in June 2022. The purpose of this Committee is to support the children and young people of Henfield from **birth to adulthood** and to encourage them to be healthy, safe and active participants in their community. The committee also seeks to make appropriate recommendations to ensure children and young people **have a voice and that their views are represented**. This committee also has responsibility for the **playgrounds and skate park** in the village.

So far the committee has;

- Set up an evening (no alcohol) location for **16 – 18 year olds on Friday/ Saturday**.
- Plans to hold various Children and Young People events during the year including a **Family Fun Day, Skate Jam and Cinema Night**.

The Parish Council is also bidding for funds for provide safe places for children (particularly after school) for 5- 18 year olds at various locations

The Parish Council is currently recruiting a **Youth Coordinator** to work with other Children and Young People organisations to shape the young person's strategy across the Parish.

Nita Farrell – Committee Chairman.

Committee Members: Chris Simmonds (Vice-Chair); Elaine Goodyear; Ann Donoghue; Josh Potts.