

## **HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**Meeting of Henfield Parish Council  
held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.00pm in The Henfield Hall.**

**Present:** Cllrs E Goodyear, J Jones, G Perry, A Davey, D Grossmith, D Jemmett, R Kendall, S Leader, A May, M Morgan, J Potts, R Shaw and C Simmonds.

**In attendance:** Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager), Ms G Campsey – Youth Coordinator, Ms J Eaton - Chief Executive of Horsham District Council (HDC), Mr M Boffey – Leader of Horsham District Council and Cllr S Payne – West Sussex County Council (WSSC).

### **MINUTES**

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

None.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Cllr M Eastwood and J Jones.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 3<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

Approved, signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reminded Councillors of the Remembrance events at the weekend. Councillors are invited to attend the poppy cross laying event beginning at 11am in St Peter's Church on Friday, two minutes silence at the War Memorial on Saturday at 11am and to gather at the War Memorial on Sunday for the parade at 9.10am.

*The Chairman adjourned the meeting.*

**OPEN FORUM**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

*The Chairman reconvened the meeting.*

6. **DISCUSSION WITH JANE EATON – CEO AT HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Questions from Councillors had been submitted in advance.

1. How have policy and administration changed since the new Liberal Democrat regime?

Ms Eaton described a very able, committed and community minded cabinet. She also mentioned that Henfield Parish Council is held in high regard and is seen as a good example of a well-run Parish Council. There are now eight Green Party members as well as Liberal Democrats and there will be an increased focus on climate change and biodiversity. The future of the Capitol Theatre and Drill Hall are under discussion, as both buildings are requiring modernisation as neither are carbon efficient. A Climate Action Plan is being developed, the main problem being private homes. There is also consideration being given to vehicles, with private small vehicles likely to be battery powered and larger vehicles such as rubbish collection lorries being powered by hydrogen. The Food Waste collection is due to commence in April 2026 but funding this is problematic. The Council is also dealing with inflation and cost of living pressures as well as two development consent orders for Rampion 2 and Gatwick.

2. What is the reason for the delay in installation of electric car charging in the two HDC car parks?

Ms Eaton explained that the delay was being caused by the electricity suppliers who have described capacity issues in the area. It was pointed out that the delay in installation is causing difficulty for the Henfield Electric Car Club who chose to pilot their first scheme in Henfield. This project is an 18 month proof of concept which will determine whether the scheme can be rolled out in other local towns and villages and has already begun.

3. Is there a concern that, with regards to the land for sale at Henfield levels, that this has been marketed as having potential for biodiversity and water neutrality enhancement so may appeal to developers looking to offset?

Ms Eaton explained that as there is limited grazing on land there is little to offset in terms of water neutrality although there is potential for biodiversity net gain. This may not even be of benefit for development in Henfield and could be outside of the area for example Crawley. It was pointed out that Adur District Council buy land to offset their own social housing development. She pointed out that the land is likely to remain of benefit to wildlife as it is within the Nature Recovery Network and that it would represent a potential business opportunity for someone wishing to sell biodiversity credits. HDC decided not to purchase the land due to the uncertainty around what the financial yield might be.

4. How will water neutrality impact smaller projects?

Ms Eaton explained that every project that results in an increase in usage of mains water will be problematic. This was asked in relation to an application for a grant to install an outside water bottle refill station in the High Street which was refused, despite the aim being to reduce plastic waste. She also pointed out that sometimes the environmental benefits of one project can be outweighed by the delivery, such as large diesel trucks covering many miles collecting food waste.

5. Will HDC be pushing back on the proposed housing numbers for the District, which are set by government?

She explained that a resident survey suggests that it is unclear whether these houses may be needed. There are currently 750 families waiting on a housing list, with the average wait for a three bedroom home being five years. However it was acknowledged that most Councillors find that the way the numbers are calculated is problematic, particularly the affordability criteria and the need to take allocation from other areas where land supply is an issue. There was a suggestion that there may be some reform to this. Currently water neutrality doesn't give scope to deliver the required 1,200 homes per year. Water neutrality has not yet been tested in a Local Plan, although it will be by Crawley's Local Plan at the end of November, however their circumstances are different to Horsham District's. It was noted that regardless of the Local Plan, a full planning process and proof of water neutrality will still be needed. It was also noted that Southern Water's plan to address the issue is much more long term and developers may find it too difficult to build in the District in the medium term. With regards to the quality of homes built, the Local Plan will feature higher environmental standards than previously and it was noted that lessons have been learned from the recent development in Broadbridge Heath.

Finally Ms Eaton welcomed ideas on how HDC could work more closely with Henfield Parish Councils and feed ideas into policy making. She also praised Henfield Parish Council again, suggesting that HDC could facilitate sharing of best practise with other local Parish Councils.

Ms Eaton left the meeting at 7.43pm.

## 7. **WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**

The Chairman explained that Cllr Payne had been asked to highlight any issues particularly relevant to Henfield.

Cllr Payne joined the meeting at 7.46pm.

Cllr Payne explained that WSCC have been busy setting budgets and are seeking feedback. An additional £31 million will be spent on services for vulnerable children, £5 million on

highways and £12 million on adult social care. She also mentioned the Sussex North Water Offsetting Scheme which are looking at interim solutions for water neutrality and that feedback is sought on the Active Travel Strategy for West Sussex. There is also some hope that the number 17 bus will return to half hourly as it is currently Stagecoach's top priority. Additional evening and weekend services are also being considered.

Councillor Morgan asked whether the problem with WSCC Active Travel team not communicating with HPC could be escalated to cabinet, particularly in respect of the time taken to receive responses to queries. This has caused considerable frustration and delay in trying to obtain the parking buddies for St Peter's School.

8. **HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Potts thanked Ms Eaton and Mr Boffey for attending the meeting. He reported that he is filling in for Cllr Eastwood on the leisure centre mezzanine project. Cllr Simmonds asked whether the leisure centre had conducted any research or a survey into potential users. This will be discussed later this week. He also added that the Rural Prosperity Fund has re-opened to expressions of interest.

9. **VACANCY FOR COUNCILLOR UPDATE**

Due to the recent resignation of Cllr Davey, there are now two vacancies for Parish Councillors. These will be advertised in the normal way, on the website, social media, BN5 and Parish Magazines. The deadline for applications will be the 12<sup>th</sup> January so that a decision can be made in the February meeting of Full Council.

10. **MOTION: TO ADOPT THE NALC CIVILITY & RESPECT PLEDGE**

Information was circulated prior to the meeting. This pledge will underpin the Code of Conduct and HPC already have a lot of the requirements already in place. There is some good training on offer and the Chairman encouraged all to look at the website and attend relevant courses.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Kendall and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to adopt the NALC Civility and Respect Pledge.

11. **MOTION: TO APPROVE STANDING ORDERS & THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

These have recently been reviewed by the Finance, Risk and Change Committee (FRC) who suggested that no amendments were needed as they are both based on national policies that have not changed.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Grossmith, **SECONDED** by Cllr Morgan and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Standing Orders and Code of Conduct.

12. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Cllr Shaw reported that meeting frequency had been discussed by FRC and it had been agreed to return to monthly meetings for FRC, Village Amenities and Recreation and Open Spaces Committees, with an emphasis on cancelling meetings if they are not needed or if matters can wait until the following meeting scheduled.

- (a) Summary of £29,291.99 Expenditure from 1<sup>st</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.  
Noted by Council.
- (b) Select Expenditure as the Monthly Random Audit Checks – October.  
Cllr Grossmith selected Dectec Ltd.

(B) **Plans Advisory**

Cllr Shaw reported that there had been significant numbers of local residents attending recent meetings with respect to the Tanyard Barn application and the Wellbeck application. He also mentioned that the committee are holding a workshop on the 21<sup>st</sup> November to discuss options and debate priorities as the Henfield Neighbourhood

Plan does not run until 2040, therefore the Local Plan may require an uplift in housing numbers. All Councillors are invited to attend.

**(C) Recreation & Open Spaces**

Cllr Perry thanked the works team for their work in the Community Orchard and added that discussions are taking place on the Terms of Reference for this and the Village Amenities Committees.

**(D) Village Amenities**

Cllr Morgan reported that he and Cllr Simmonds have visited the blacksmith to discuss the design for the new bench in the Village Square.

**(E) Children & Young People**

The Chairman reported that a response is still awaited from Barratts regarding the variation to S106 funds for the skate park. This is delaying the project as it represents the bulk of the funding. Cllr Potts offered to assist where possible. The committee are also considering improvements to the play areas following a recent site visit. The Youth Coordinator is now in position and was welcomed by the Council.

**(F) Museum**

Cllr Potts invited questions as there has not been a recent meeting.

**(G) Joint Commons**

Cllr Perry reported that clarity on contracts for tree works is being sought and there has been some concern regarding the recent work to ash trees. There is also a tree that needs work, which is currently blocking the horse trail.

**13. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS REPRESENTING COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr Leader highlighted the recently circulated Community Partnership newsletter and article in BN5 magazine. Cllr Perry recently attended an HDC Climate Action Network meeting with useful presentations. Cllr Simmonds reported that the Repair Café has now repaired 150 items helping financially as well as reducing waste. Cllr Shaw reported on a successful and well attended fundraising event held for the Haven. The Chairman reported that the Henfield Hall now has a new website, Facebook page and booking system. There are also new terms and conditions which now match up to legislation. She highlighted the need for a safety steward in the event of a large number of attendees for events.

**14. PCSO & POLICE ACTIVITIES**

The Clerk stated that a recently trained PCSO would be in attendance for the Remembrance parade but that there had been no issues reported otherwise.

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

Cllr Kendall asked how Cllr Eastwood is and the Clerk confirmed that there is no information to share currently. Best wishes were extended.

Cllr May reported that she has accepted the offer of 2000 bulbs for Deer Park and that volunteers will be needed for planting, likely on the 9<sup>th</sup> December.

**16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

**Meeting Closed at 8.19pm.**