

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of Henfield Parish Council
held on Tuesday 5th December 2023 at 7.00pm in The Henfield Hall.**

Present: Cllrs E Goodyear (Chairman), J Jones, G Perry, D Grossmith, D Jemmett, R Kendall, A May, M Morgan, J Potts, R Shaw and C Simmonds.

In attendance: Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager), Cllr S Payne - West Sussex County Council (WSSCC), Mr P Crowe – Chairman of Henfield Community Partnership (HCP) and one member of the public.

MINUTES

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

None.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Cllrs M Eastwood and S Leader.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7TH NOVEMBER 2023**

Approved, signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman suggested that as the Parish Council has fewer councillors at the moment, that the Council ought not to take on any new projects until March. The only exceptions to this would be emergency or legal matters. It was all agreed to support this principle.

The Chairman added that there will be a collection box in the Parish Office for donations to Crisis at Christmas. It was suggested that in lieu of Councillors sending each other Christmas cards.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

The member of the public declined the offer to speak.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

6. **REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HENFIELD COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (HCP)
MR PAUL CROWE**

Mr Crowe explained that HCP is on a sound financial footing and continues to run the Artisan Market, Bump to Baby, Computer Club and Hidden Henfield website, which has significant traffic. He also mentioned SH2030 who are now self-governing but within the HCP framework but with their own bank account. They continue to offer an enabling service offering support and guidance and ran the well-attended 'Get Involved' event so help other organisations find members and volunteers. It was explained that they are part of the wider Horsham District Association of Community Partnerships and are considered to be well run and effective, in contrast to many others in the area. They will be working on a new five year plan to commence in 2025 and have set up a group to focus on how to solicit input from the community as to what the priorities are for the village. They are keen to encourage new members as their activities are currently constrained by resources. It was noted that the future of the market will be considered January to March as the market would not be due to recommence until April. There is a festive market next Sunday with fifty stalls and the market continues to be well supported

by stall holders. It was noted that it is difficult to assess numbers of visitors due to there being multiple entrances. Mr Crowe also updated on the leisure centre mezzanine project. Horsham District Council (HDC) are designing the tender process which will begin in January. Building work is due to begin in summer and it is hoped the facility will be open for the beginning of the academic year. Input is being sought from the board of governors at St Peter's School as well as Steyning Grammar lower school. Mr Crowe thanked the Parish Council for the grant that they provide annually which is used for operational costs such as running the website and insurance.

7. **WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Payne highlighted that Southern Water are offering a community centre grant up to £1,000 for help towards heating and running costs. The Clerk has circulated information about this. She added that from January WSCC Councillors will be able to attend a monthly highways drop in session in order to raise issues. This was welcome by the Parish Council. She then asked Council to note that WSCC has allocated £1.5 million to provide outreach services for children and young people suffering the effects of domestic abuse. Information on this will be passed to the youth coordinator. Cllr Payne then reminded Council that there are three consultations currently open on the WSCC budget, local cancer services and smoke free zones.

Cllr May joined the meeting at 7.39pm.

8. **HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT**

Cllr Potts reported that the Draft Regulation 19 of the Horsham Local Plan for 2023 to 2040 has now been released. The requirement for 911 home per year has dropped to 777 per year. Taking into account water neutrality issues, it is proposed that this is delivered as 480 for the first five years and 901 per year for the remaining twelve years. He expressed his disappointment at the inclusion of the Sandgate Nursery site. The draft will be considered by cabinet and HDC on the 11th December. If approved there will be a six-week consultation following. The Chairman requested that Cllr Potts find out whether comments can be submitted by letter and email as well as on the HDC website. It was noted that the Plans Advisory Committee (PAC) would be discussing the draft on Thursday and that a response from Full Council would be appropriate as this would give more weight. PAC can offer advice and guidance to residents on how to respond, as any comments or objections made must be on specific planning grounds. Individual views and comments will be welcomed and considered by PAC but they will be encouraged to submit their own individual responses to HDC directly as well. Cllr Shaw added that PAC have already had an initial discussion about the potential eight or nine potential additional sites but they will remain open minded. He reminded Council that it would not be appropriate to just say no to any of the potential sites and that the decision may need to be based on the least worst option. The importance of HDC having a Local Plan to protect against speculative development was noted by Council.

9. **VACANCY FOR COUNCILLOR UPDATE**

The Clerk reported that HDC has confirmed that the second vacancy is now approved for co-option. The deadline for applications is the 12th January and they will be discussed at Full Council in February. One application has been received so far. A reminder will be sent in January via the usual channels.

10. **CONSIDER BUDGETS FOR 2024/25**

A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. Individual committees have discussed their budgets and the Finance Committee has looked at the overall budget as a whole. Employment costs have been updated due to the recent announcement on the local government pay review. It was noted that the precept has increased more than last year as provisions to fund the reserves will be taken from precept rather than general reserves. The proposed increase is 12.3% which equates to an additional £1.15 per month on a Band D property. The Chairman added that a proportion of that increase relates to increasing prices. Cllr Kendall commented that this seems reasonable and that if the precept was ever capped it would be from a larger base.

11. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT 2023/24**

The Chairman quoted the report from the auditor, stating 'it is clear the Henfield Parish Council takes governance, policy and procedure seriously. All are fit for purpose'. She congratulated and thanked the Clerk and office staff. It was noted that there were no recommendations or suggestions for improvement.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Grossmith, **SECONDED** by Cllr Kendall and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Interim Internal Audit 2023/24.

12. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

(A) Finance, Risk & Change Governance

Cllr Jones reported that the main focus had been budgets and that there was an upcoming review of staff salaries.

(a) Summary of £30,296.00 Expenditure from 1st November – 30th November 2023.
Noted by Council.

(b) Select Expenditure as the Monthly Random Audit Checks – November.
Cllr Grossmith selected Liquipak Ltd.

(B) Plans Advisory

(a) The Horsham Local Plan.

Cllr Shaw commented that, further to the discussion under item 8, a site in Small Dole south of New Hall Lane has also been selected in the draft Local Plan. He added it is important to recognise that there are two sites for PAC to discuss, as well as one gypsy pitch in New Hall Lane. It was noted that HDC has just won an appeal on the refusal of permission for this pitch, but they had subsequently then included it in the Local Plan.

(C) Recreation & Open Spaces

Cllr Perry reported that the committee has recently reviewed projects. She was pleased that there has been a resident request for a bench in the Community Orchard as well as a new donated tree. She is meeting with Cllr Morgan next week to discuss ongoing verge maintenance. Cllr Perry thanked Cllr May and others who helped with the recent bulb and tree planting. There is no meeting in December of this committee.

(D) Village Amenities

Cllr Morgan thanked all who took part in the Remembrance events, in particular the Parish Administrator and BP Guild. He added there may need to be some changes next year as the future of the Henfield Club is uncertain.

(E) Children & Young People

Cllr Goodyear reported that the committee is focused on the skate park improvement project and are moving forward with plans to improve the play areas. They will be taking advice from HDC.

(F) Museum

Cllr Morgan mentioned the new exhibit of salt and pepper pots. The Chairman added that the digitisation project is looking exciting. The Clerk reported that the roving case has moved to the Evangelical Church.

(G) Joint Commons

Cllr Perry reported that the committee is working with HDC rangers and there may be some involvement with the public on the ponds at Broadmere. The committee are meeting on Thursday.

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

None.

14. **PCSO & POLICE ACTIVITIES**

The Clerk reported that a litter warden had found a large knife in a sheath in the cemetery as well as a smoke grenade. He has contacted the PCSO who will collect the items. Cllr Grossmith added that he had heard a lot of noise in the cemetery after dark at the weekend when he was walking through. The Clerk will also mention this to the PCSO.

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

None.

16. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 9th January 2023. This has been moved from the 2nd January so that it is not straight after the Christmas break. The Chairman thanked all Councillors and staff for their hard work this year.

Meeting Closed at 8.07pm.