

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL - FINANCE RISK & CHANGE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

**Meeting of the Finance Risk & Change Governance Committee held on
Wednesday 20th March 2024 at 10:30am in the Committee Room at The Henfield Hall.**

Present: Cllrs J Jones (Chairman), E Goodyear, G Perry, R Shaw, M Morgan and S Leader.

In attendance: Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager - OM) and Cllr May.

MINUTES

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chairman and Cllr Goodyear both declared an interest in item 12 as they are trustees of the Henfield Hall.

2. APOLOGIES

Cllr Potts.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21st FEBRUARY 2024

Approved. Signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

a) Committee Terms of Reference - Update.

The Verge Working Group will discuss whether any changes are needed to the Village Amenities (VAC) or Recreation and Open Spaces Committees' Terms of Reference at their next meeting.

b) Cemetery Lighting - Update.

A quotation for the installation of the new drivers is awaited from the lighting suppliers. There will then be some negotiation over costs.

c) Henfield's "Big Thank You" – Update.

The event is likely to be postponed until September 2024. It is hoped a Working Group meeting can take place in April.

d) Community Transport Minibus – Update.

Community Transport Sussex have provided a report on usage. There is £1,610 remaining from the grant this year, but they have agreed to carry forward any balance to the next financial year. The OM and Youth Coordinator will promote further.

e) Skills Matrix – Update.

A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. The intention is to ask Councillors to complete the document and then review annually in April. The Committee discussed whether the matrix should be used when considering co-option applications and the suggestion was made to look at the format of the application form. It was agreed that it would be helpful to add an additional column to ask about the level of knowledge or experience as a differential. Cllr Leader suggested social events, which would help to increase awareness of fellow councillors' skills and experience, and Cllr Goodyear added that bespoke workshops have been offered to Council by the West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC).

Action Point: Cllr Goodyear to add an additional column as described above.

f) BP Guild Summer Event

The risk assessment has been received and the BP Guild have received their TENS licence. The event application form has been chased and invitations have been sent to community groups and organisations. The Children and Young People Committee will have a stand.

g) 80th D-Day Anniversary

There will be a short service and wreath laying at the War Memorial at 11am on the 6th June. There will also be a Beacon lighting as part of the national beacon lighting event at 9.15pm on the Rothery Field.

Action Point: Cllr Goodyear and Cllr Morgan to discuss whether to arrange a procession to the Rothery Field from the War Memorial at 9pm.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

Cllr May asked for further clarity on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The Chairman explained that the agenda item was to specifically review and approve the IDP template and guidance notes, not the actual content of the projects as the information is currently out of date. The relevant Community Organisations will be contacted in April in order to provide updates on their projects. Cllr May read aloud an email that she had sent to Committee members prior to the meeting. The Committee confirmed that the IDP does not exclude Parish Council Infrastructure projects; its purpose is to include all infrastructure projects that Full Council agree are suitable for inclusion and will require Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or S106 funding for capital expenditure. The Committee will consider further at a later stage what is appropriate to publicise on its website, particularly with regards to financial information.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

6. UPDATE ON THE TANYARD BARN DEVELOPMENT

Cllr Morgan reported that a new application with a reduced size has been submitted to Horsham District Council (HDC). He clarified that the lease will be to the Parish Council with a sub lease to the Sheddars. A 20 year lease instead of a 5 year lease has been negotiated, but HDC are refusing to permit mains drainage as requested by the Sheddars. The Sheddars are also requesting that they are only responsible for internal repairs rather than internal and external. Water Neutrality issues are being addressed by offsetting against other buildings. One year rent-free has been negotiated, but HDC are unwilling to negotiate further on the annual rental of £1,600 as this is similar to equivalent buildings in the District. It was noted that the Council do not need to negotiate further with HDC on sub lease terms as long as they are happy with the terms of the lease to them. Cllr Shaw added that the application will be discussed at the Plans Advisory (PAC) meeting on the 28th March and a large number of attendees is expected. He added that PAC do not generally promote or publicise that individual applications are being discussed, as this could be interpreted as predetermination.

7. MOTION: TO APPROVE THE REVIEW OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HEALTH & SAFETY REGISTER AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY REGISTER

A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Goodyear stated that the only amendment is to the Business Continuity Register. An increased rating has been applied to the risk of having a low number of Councillors, due to the lack of Councillors and capacity issues experienced recently. The risk level has been increased from low to medium. Cllr Shaw asked whether the fraud and dishonesty risk was considered too high, but Cllr Goodyear explained that this was the score given prior to controls being put in place which then lowers it. Cllr Leader asked whether rental increases at the Hall would be considered a risk, it was agreed that it might be in future.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Morgan and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Health and Safety Risk Register.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Perry and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Business Continuity Register.

Action Plan: Cllr Goodyear to consider the potential risk of Hall rental increases in future.

8. REVIEW AND APPROVE THE BUSINESS PLAN ACTION PLAN

A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee discussed each section, and the following amendments were suggested. To remove 'per annum' from the trails delivery and to leave aiming for six trails in total as a longer-term aim. This is due to lack of capacity of Councillors and funding. The Recreation and Open Spaces Committee (ROS) will continue to work on this. In addition, to note that the Safer Routes Group has been wound down as no progress was being made due to lack of co-operation from landowners. The overall aims will now be dealt with by ROS.

Action Point: The OM to make the amendments above.

Action Point: The ROS committee to contact the members of the previous Safe Routes working group to ask if they would like to be involved with the trails project.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Goodyear and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Business Plan Action Plan subject to the amendments agreed above.

9. **REVIEW AND APPROVE NEW INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN TEMPLATE AND GUIDANCE NOTES**

A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. The OM explained that she has received advice and guidance from the Strategic Planning Department at HDC, who sent the suggested template on which this version was based. The only difference being the heading of the final column which has been changed from 'Importance' to 'Evaluation' to reflect that there is no intention to priority order projects. This has resulted in seven columns of information rather than the previous sixteen columns. All agreed it was a much improved format. The guidance has been altered to include mention of a cap of £15,000 on a Parish Council contribution. Community Organisations will be contacted annually, generally in April, to ask for an update on their projects, but will be reviewed quarterly by this Committee if changes or updates are needed.

It was agreed to include a short header to the spreadsheet with the potential split of funding sources for projects as well as page numbering.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Morgan, **SECONDED** by Cllr Leader and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the IDP template and guidance note subject to the amendment agreed above.

10. **WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY AND SECURITY**

The OM explained that the website had some accessibility issues in terms of colour contrast that she was negotiating with the website developer as it was felt that this should have been addressed in the initial design. Although the changes have not yet been completed, the developers have agreed to address this at no extra cost. There was also a website security issue identified following signing up to the National Cyber Security Council service, again this was discussed with the developer who agreed to make the amendment at no cost, particularly as their monthly support is supposed to provide and identify these issues as they arise. Cllr Goodyear advised that it would be wise to begin building reserves for a new website in the future.

It was all agreed that Cllr Morgan could raise his urgent matter (item 15) as he would need to leave the meeting shortly.

Cllr Morgan advised the committee that the football club have indicated that they wish to access S106 funds set aside for pitch facilities in order to improve the existing pavilion, however his understanding was that the Council intend these funds to be used for pitch drainage as well as £30,000 towards Skate Park improvements. Barratts have yet to provide the paperwork requested to release the S106 funds for the Skate Park improvements. It is hoped that Cllr Potts may be able to assist.

11. **STORAGE FOR WORKS OFFICERS**

The Committee noted that the Works Officers do not have sufficient storage or workspace, and that the space in the proposed Tanyard Barn will not address this issue, although it might provide a small workshop area as it has power. Cllr Morgan suggested that the Council consider building a premises on their own land, perhaps near to the Leisure Centre. This would require planning permission and likely cost upwards of £30,000. As a short to medium term solution, the Works Officers could have an additional unit adjacent to their current unit for an additional £17 per week plus a one-off payment of £229.50, in order to crane the unit into position. It was also noted that it may be possible to store the road signs that are only needed once per year for Remembrance Sunday at Cllr Potts barn.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Leader and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to hire an additional unit at the current site at a cost of £17 per week plus an additional £229.50 ex VAT to position the unit.

Cllr Morgan left the meeting.

12. **HENFIELD HALL RENT REVIEW**

It has been confirmed that following the review, the rent has been increased by 20%. This is slightly lower than anticipated and budgeted for.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Perry, **SECONDED** by Cllr Shaw and **VOTED THREE IN FAVOUR WITH TWO ABSTENTIONS** to accept the proposed rent increase.

With regards to Hall maintenance, the Council would generally pay 16% of the cost as that represents the area that the Parish Office occupies. However, Cllr Goodyear will discuss this further with the Clerk as there may not be a need to pay for a share of the Hall telephone charges or such a large share of the general maintenance. The Chairman clarified that the Hall is a charity and invests any profits into upkeep and improvements. Currently they are building up funds for roof repairs.

13. **REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. The OM explained that appendix B had been removed from the previous version, as it was felt it was an alternative format for the feedback form provided in appendix A and therefore not needed. She confirmed that the form used in appendix A is the one used in practice by office staff and works well.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Goodyear and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the Performance Review document.

14. **FINANCE**

- a) Confirmation of Reconciliation of Bank Accounts (February).
Each signed and dated by two Councillors.
- b) Internal Controls (To Include Audit Check of Expenditure) – February.
Each signed and dated by two Councillors.
- c) Bank Mandates - Update.
All of the mandate changes have now been completed.

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

Cllr Perry reported that plans continue for the community walk to remember Malcolm Eastwood on July 14th. The community bus has been booked by the Council and the Community Partnership will also be contributing as well as other groups such as the Henfield Joggers and BP Guild. She asked whether the Committee could consider paying for the jazz band to attend Sussex Prairies where the walk will finish. It was confirmed that there is an events budget that could be used. Cllr Perry will find out the cost. It was also noted that Mrs Eastwood will not be attending the walk but has given it her full support.

16. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

17th April 2024.

Meeting Closed at 12.30pm.