

NORTH HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

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Message from the Chairman

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

It is with pleasure that, as Chairman of North Horsham Parish Council, I introduce the Annual Report for the year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

We began the year with the local Parish Council Elections in May 2023 and I'm pleased to say that the majority of my fellow Councillors, once again stood for election.

However, we did bid farewell to Ian Wassell and Donald Mahon who decided not to stand for election. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank them both for all their efforts and contributions to the Parish Council during their terms of office and wish them all the very best for the future.

However, at the closing of nominations for the election last year, the Parish Council had only managed to fill 14 of the 19 seats and we therefore had 5 seats vacant. I am delighted that at the March Council meeting we were able to fill one of the seats by the Co-option of Sam Raby who I am sure is going to be a great asset to the Council.

The Parish Council therefore continues to have 4 vacancies, and anyone interested in applying to be co-opted as a Councillor should contact the Parish Clerk or refer to the Councillor vacancy page on the Parish Council website, which includes eligibility information together with an application form.

Last year, the Parish Council also bid farewell to David Beaken, one of the Council's longest serving members of staff and known to many as one of the helpful and welcoming caretakers at Roffey Millennium Hall. All at the Parish Council wish David a long and restful retirement.

On a local level, unfortunately, the Parish Council has not been able to hold the liaison meetings with key stakeholders for both the former Novartis site on Parsonage Road and the Mowbray development to the north of Horsham, due to the pause in development caused by the Water Neutrality situation. However, I am delighted that the North of Horsham Parish Liaison Group will be meeting for the first time in almost 18 months at the end of April and it is hoped that these will now return to their previous quarterly schedule.

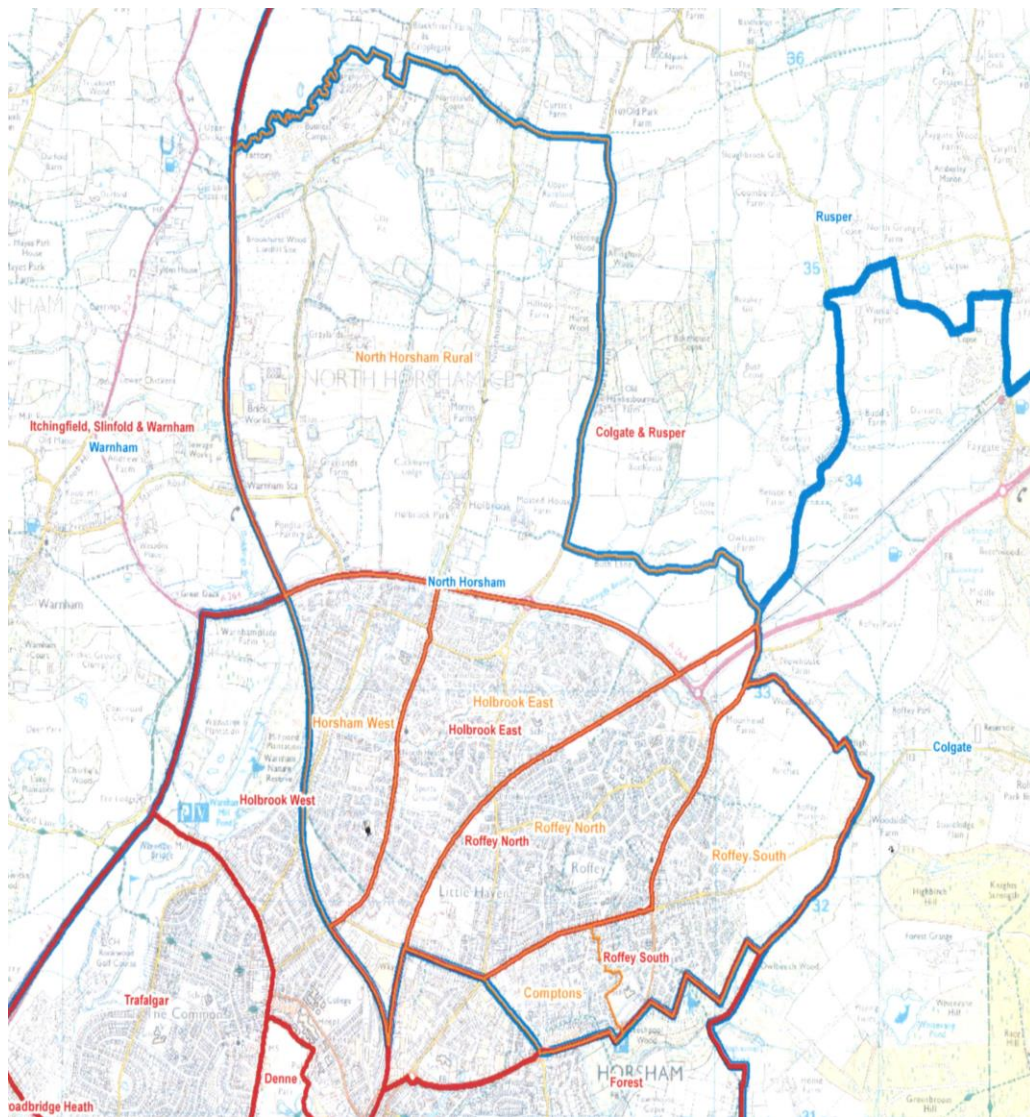
The recent cost of living increase, especially the considerable increases in utility costs, has impacted the Parish Council's finances as they have for everyone. However, I am delighted that through careful financial management, the Council has been able to weather the storm and is looking to invest in its assets in 2024/25 through the refurbishment of the washrooms at North Heath Hall and upgrades to playground equipment at Birches Road and Amberley Close.

I would like to express appreciation for the hard work of councillors, staff, volunteers and residents who have worked for their local community over the last year. The Parish Council is the layer of local government closest to its community and it is there to help local residents like you. We value the views of our local residents and welcome your comments. We look forward to hearing from you.

*Councillor Alan Britten
Chairman of North Horsham Parish Council*

NORTH HORSHAM

North Horsham parish is made up of six parish wards, Roffey North, Roffey South, Holbrook East, Holbrook West, Comptons and North Horsham Rural.



(Source: Boundary Commission for England 2018.)

Map to show the six wards of North Horsham parish from May 2019

North Horsham Parish covers approximately 1,905 hectares which incorporates approx. 9,800 properties and, as at the May 2023 election, an electorate of 16,913. The majority of housing in the parish is concentrated to the south of the A264, but the Mowbray development of 2,750 houses, a business park, schools, community buildings and green spaces on the land north of the A264 is progressing, with the first of the homes already occupied.

North Horsham Parish is neighbour to Trafalgar, Forest and Denne Neighbourhood Councils, Warnham Parish Council, Rusper Parish Council and Colgate Parish Council. An area to the east of the parish borders the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (WAONB).

North Horsham contains a wealth of green areas used for recreation, many play areas, community buildings, health facilities, shops and small businesses. It has good bus links, a railway station, cycleways and both urban and rural footpaths. The much-loved Horsham Riverside Walk passes through some of North Horsham's unspoilt woodland and HDC's only listed ancient monument, Chennelsbrook motte and bailey castle, is situated just off Lemmington Way. Whilst there is dependence on Horsham town for some of the larger facilities, North Horsham has its own identity and sense of community with long established local organisations.

PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council Office is situated in the Roffey Millennium Hall on Crawley Road and is usually open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 5pm and to 4.30pm on Fridays. Parish Council staff are able to signpost you to information about Parish Council facilities and there are leaflets about the local area and what's on in the halls.

The Parish Council meets at the Roffey Millennium Hall six times in the year and there are regularly scheduled meetings of the Parish Council's Committees - Finance and Administration, Personnel, Planning Environment & Transport, and Property. In addition to the Committees, several working parties have held meetings including the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Party to review and recommend ways in which CIL money from local development should be spent to benefit the North Horsham community.

Meetings of the Parish Council and its Committees usually start at 7.30pm, are held in public and everyone is welcome to attend. There is fifteen minutes set aside at the beginning of all Council and Committee meetings for members of the public to ask questions, raise issues of concern, make a statement about local issues or draw relevant matters to the Council's attention.

Details of meetings, including forthcoming meeting dates can be found on the Parish Council's notice boards which are situated across the parish and on the Parish Council's website www.northhorsham-pc.gov.uk.

North Horsham Parish Council holds the General Power of Competence (GPC) which is an accreditation achieved by having two thirds elected members, a qualified clerk and a declaration issued at the first meeting of the new four-year term of office. Holding GPC allows the Parish Council greater freedom to support its community as it is not restricted by the powers bestowed on Parish Councils by government legislation.

PARISH COUNCILLORS

Parish Councillors are active in the community, working together to bring local issues to the attention of the Council and make decisions on behalf of the local community.

North Horsham Parish Council has seats for nineteen Councillors. The May 2023 election was uncontested and therefore the Council comprised of 14 Councillors. With the co-option in March 2024, there still remain four vacancies; two in Holbrook East ward, one in Comptons ward and one in Roffey North ward.

The Parish Council operates an independently reviewed Scheme of Members' Allowances whereby an annual Allowance of £514 was payable in 2023/24 to those elected Parish Councillors who wished to receive it. The Allowance is not available to those who are co-opted.

The Parish Council nominates representative Parish Councillors to serve on several local voluntary, public and community organisations throughout the year. Examples of such organisations are Warnham Brickworks Community Liaison Committee and Horsham Association of Local Councils.

Activities in central Government impact on local Councils and Parish Council staff and Councillors keep up to date with legislation, new opportunities and current information through close working with the West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC) and Horsham District Council.

VOLUNTEERS

The Parish Council is grateful to local volunteers who have been involved in the activities of the Community Land Trust for North Horsham parish and those who are involved in the North of Horsham Parish Liaison.

The Parish Council is appreciative of the Earles Meadow Conservation Group who support them in looking after the large open space at Earles Meadow by litter picking, planting, minor repairs and conservation work.

Whilst individual projects have been singled out above, the Parish Council would like to thank all the volunteers who work to support their community, without them, North Horsham would not be the place that we all love to live and work in.

PARISH COUNCIL STAFF

North Horsham Parish Council employs eleven members of staff, three full time and eight part time. Two members of staff hold the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification. There are five administration staff and six caretakers, two at each Hall. Two of the caretakers are also litter wardens who work to keep the main streets of North Horsham clean and tidy.

The Council is committed to developing and nurturing its staff through training and opportunities for growth. All staff are given the opportunity to attend relevant short courses to improve their skill base.

NORTH HORSHAM FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The Parish Council has been delighted that the North Horsham Friendship Club has been going from strength to strength and now has over 30 regular members. The Club usually meets once a fortnight at Roffey Millennium Hall and has activities ranging from sing-a-longs to quizzes, talks from other organisations to entertainment. The Parish Council recognises that having an opportunity for those in the parish that are over 60 to meet together locally is very important and it usually provides the use of a hall and a staff member to co-ordinate the meetings.



In addition, the Club receives grant funding from the Parish Council and this year, some of the grant was used to subsidise transport costs which enabled the members to visit Kew Gardens. A wonderful day was had by all, and it is planned to hold another trip to the Races at Goodwood in September.

FINANCE

The Parish Council is funded by the Precept and Environmental Cleansing Grant. Other income is from the from halls and other assets. The table below shows actual income and expenditure over the last three years and the budget for 2024/25.

Income

	2021/22 actual	2022/23 actual	2023/24 actual	2024/25 budget
Precept	338,600	349,011	365,346	380,247
Environmental Grant	10,356	10,677	11,745	11,746
Community Infrastructure Levy funding	26,163	11,805	0	0
Compensation from HDC	0	23,072	0	0
S106 Funding	0	0	17,909	0
HDC Climate Change Grant	0	0	2,076	0
Administration	187	1,860	27,590	20,000
Allotments	948	983	982	982
North Heath Hall	54,086	64,492	67,539	66,000
Holbrook Tythe Barn	24,181	36,771	39,936	44,000
Multi Court Lettings	19,883	21,991	26,696	26,000
Roffey Millennium Hall	54,867	55,093	71,452	73,000
Total income	529,271	575,755	631,272	621,975

Expenditure

	2021/22 actual	2022/23 actual	2023/24 actual	2024/25 budget
Administration	45,023	51,341	67,310	64,820
Grants	6,785	5,780	6,531	10,000
Burial contributions	7,461	7,461	7,461	7,850
Personnel	285,727	322,782	334,053	362,150
Planning Environment and Transport	0	0	0	0
Allotments	928	950	731	1,695
Amenity, Recs and Open Spaces	31,844	36,698	38,127	62,350
North Heath Hall	30,776	25,685	27,755	35,185
Holbrook Tythe Barn	14,855	19,445	24,325	24,845
Roffey Millennium Hall	37,739	34,025	40,088	44,166
Total expenditure	461,138	504,167	546,381	613,061

Reserves

On 1st April 2023 the General Reserve stood at £272,610 and Earmarked Reserves at £232,303. A total of £49,000 was transferred at the start of the year from the General Reserve to the Earmarked Reserves for the Roffey Millennium Hall (RMH) Boiler (£5,000), Tree Management works (£4,000), Playground Upgrade (£25,000) and NHH Washroom Refurb (£15,000). A total of £24,533 was spent from Earmarked Reserves during 2023/24, mainly on repairs and improvements to the Parish Council owned buildings and amenities such as open spaces and playgrounds (£19,533) but also a £5,000 grant to 4TheYouth, an organisation running youth events from the Holbrook

Club. At the 31st March 2024, there was £264,668 in Earmarked Reserves and a General Reserve of £300,602.

Summary

The Council expected an annual revenue spend of £582,938 when the precept was set in January 2023, with the final figure being is £546,381 - a saving of £36,557.

When setting the precept for the 2023/24 year, the Council was aiming at a General Reserve of around £172,000. The final General Reserve as at 31st March 2024 is £300,602 which is more than £128,602 in excess of the sum expected. A total of £87,000 of these General Reserves will be used to increase the Earmarked Reserves for the RMH Boiler (£5,000). Playground Upgrade (£25,000), NHH Washroom Refurbishment (£8,000), NHH Heating (£5,000), RMH lift replacement fund (£5,000), Tree works (£4,000) and replenishment of the Repair and Renewals EMR which has not been topped up for three years (£35,000). In addition, an element of the General Reserves has been budgeted to fund the expected 2024/25 expenditure. The result is that the Council is now anticipating General Reserves at 31st March 2025 of £170,000.

Earmarked Reserves

Reserve	Purpose	Balance at 31.3.2024
Repairs & Renewals	For ongoing maintenance work at the Community venues.	57,774
Election Reserve	For Parish election costs.	19,950
Revenue Reserve – VAT contingency.	To cover the Council should it exceed the de-minimus value of VAT.	7,955
Boiler at RMH	Replacement	35,000
Tree Management	To respond to tree inspection and urgent remedial work.	4,105
Planning	For professional support in relation to large development.	8,035
Roffey Youth Club	Funds from the closure of Roffey Youth Club and the winding down of the associated Charity.	621
Capital Receipt	Sale of land at North Heath Hall to be spent on capital projects from the Business Plan.	25,000
Playground upgrade	Money set aside to upgrade the Parish Council playgrounds	75,000
CIL 2021/22	Money received from development	1,040
CIL 2022/23	Money received from development	11,805
EMR 2024	Funding from 2023/24 Budgets for projects not completed by 31.03.24	5,845
NHH Washroom	Money set aside to refurbish washrooms at NHH	12,538
	TOTAL Earmarked Reserves	264,668

GRANTS

The Parish Council is pleased to have supported activities which benefited the local community during 2023/24

Details of grants made during 2023/24 are shown below: -

Grant awarded to	Amount	Purpose
Ten Little Toes	£1,000	Ongoing work
Victim Support	£500	Ongoing work
Home Start Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex	£1,100	Ongoing work
Horsham Guides	£300	Overseas volunteering
Horsham Scouts	£91	Riverside Walk
Earles Meadow Community Group	£960	Ongoing work
St Catherine's Hospice	£250	Ongoing work
4Sight Vision	£1,100	Ongoing work
Friendship Club	£1,230	Supplementals to subscriptions i.e. transport for trips, speakers, entertainment

The Parish Council considers grants at the Finance and Administration Committee Meetings. The grants policy and application form are available on the Parish Council website or contact the Parish Clerk.

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES DURING 2023/24

The Planning, Environment and Transport Committee has considered over 130 Planning applications over the year and submitted comments to HDC. The Committee has also considered and responded to consultations as appropriate. The Parish Council will continue to work collaboratively with key stakeholders on the Mowbray development north of the A264 and on the development at the former Novartis site on Parsonage Road to try to get the best for existing residents and those moving into the new housing.

The Property Committee oversees all the Parish Council's buildings and open spaces. There are, Roffey Millennium Hall, North Heath Hall, Holbrook Tythe Barn, Amberley open space and Playground, Earles Meadow open space and Playground, Birches Road and Holbrook Tythe Barn Playgrounds. In addition to the usual maintenance schedule to ensure that the buildings stay in great condition for our hirers, during the 2023/24 year the Committee has upgraded the heating in North and South Halls at Roffey Millennium Hall (RMH) to an efficient infra-red system and it is hoped that the benefit will be seen by the hirers in the winter months. This project was fully funded by the release of S106 funds by HDC, which were specifically for improvements to RMH. The Committee has also introduced a recycling scheme at RMH, supporting the Council's aims to make changes and find ways for the Council to play their part in addressing climate change

Unfortunately, due to the impact of Water Neutrality there has been no new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding received during the 2023/24 year. However, the Working Party has met twice and as a result a defibrillator has been installed at North Heath Hall.

The playgrounds continue to be popular and there is an ongoing schedule of maintenance and inspection. The 30 Parish Council owned allotments are all occupied and there are 6 people on the waiting list. The allotments are inspected regularly.



Play area at Holbrook Tythe Barn

During 2023/24, schedules of work and inspection regimes have been undertaken at all Parish Council owned assets including all of the halls, multi courts, street lighting, bus shelters, litter bins, dog bins and notice boards.

COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES...who does what?

Municipal services within North Horsham are provided by three tiers of Local Government West Sussex County Council, Horsham District Council and North Horsham Parish Council. All Councils work together, but each authority has its own areas of responsibility and service delivery. Below is an overview of which authority provides each service.

NORTH HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roffey Millennium Hall • North Heath Hall • Holbrook Tythe Barn • Amberley Road Allotments • Holbrook Tythe Barn Play Area • Birches Road Play Area • Amberley Close Play Area • Multi Courts • Open spaces at Amberley Road, Birches Road and Holbrook Tythe Barn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earles Meadow Play Area • Earles Meadow open space • Bus shelters - 9 in various locations • Notice Boards - 9 in various locations • Street Lighting - 23 in various locations • Seats • Litter bins <p>For more details on North Horsham Parish Council visit our website: - www.northhorsham-pc.gov.uk.</p>
HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refuse collections • Waste and Recycling • Litter • Dog fouling • Housing • Environmental Health • Business Rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open spaces (some) • Tourist Information • Planning Services • Economic Redevelopment • Car Parks • Council Tax • Some Play areas <p>For more details on HDC visit their website: - www.horsham.gov.uk</p>
WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries • Highways • Footpaths • Road conditions • Street Lighting • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Services • Trees • Trading Standards • Health • Children's Services <p>For more details on WSCC visit their website: - www.westsussex.gov.uk</p>

For future meetings please see the calendar of meetings on the Parish Council website www.northhorsham-pc.gov.uk.

Hard copies of the report are available at North Horsham Parish Council Offices, Roffey Millennium Hall, Crawley Road, Horsham.

If you have any comments about the Annual Report or you would like to know more, please contact the Clerk.

If you have any comments that you would like the Parish Council to hear, then let the Clerk know.