



# NORTH HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NORTH HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT ROFFEY MILLENNIUM HALL, CRAWLEY ROAD, HORSHAM ON THURSDAY 9<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2025 COMMENCING AT 7.30pm

**Councillors:** A. Britten\*, Mrs. K. Burgess, P. Burgess, J. Davidson (Chairman), Mrs. G. Davidson-Fernandez, Mrs. J. Gough, R. Knight, D. Mahon, S. Raby, T. Rickett B.E.M., D. Searle\*, N. Simmonds, J. Smithurst, S. Torn, G. Turner, R. Turner and Mrs. S. Wilton (Vice-Chairman)

\* denotes absence

**In attendance:** Sarah Norman (Clerk)

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### FC/90/25 Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

### FC/91/25 Apologies for absence

The Council received apologies and reasons for absence from Cllrs. Britten and Searle. Following discussion, Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the reason for the apologies for absence from Cllr. Britten.

No apologies had been received from Cllr. Mahon who later arrived, during the discussion of Agenda item 5.

County Cllr. Baldwin had also sent his apologies together with District Cllr. Emery.

### FC/92/25 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interests.

### FC/93/25 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were **AGREED** and were signed by the Chairman as being a correct record.

### FC/94/25 Solar Panels at Holbrook Tythe Barn

Having **NOTED** the successful grant application for funding of £5,000 from the HDC Climate Change Fund, Members discussed and considered the proposals and quotations for the installation of solar panels at Holbrook Tythe Barn, with and without the batteries. Members also discussed the timing of the project, the funding of the balance to be met by the Parish Council and the implications on the De Minimus calculations.

***Cllr. Mahon joined the meeting but as he had not been present for the debate, did not take part in the vote for this item***

Following a full debate, Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the installation of Solar Panel with batteries at Holbrook Tythe Barn using Company A, at a cost of £20,025 inc VAT to be funded by General Reserves on the understanding that the works would be undertaken and invoiced before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

**FC/95/25 Forecast for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, Budget and Precept requirement for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026**

Members **NOTED** the statement in the Clerk's report regarding restrictions on voting outlined in Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, particularly that where a member has at least two months arrears of Council Tax he or she must not vote on any matter relating directly to the setting of next year's Council Tax (though they may remain in the meeting and may speak).

Members proceeded to discuss the budget and the recommendation from the Finance and Administration Committee Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024 (Min. FA/47/24 refers).

It was **NOTED** that as Members had agreed under the previous item to proceed with installation of the Solar Panels at HTB, it would be necessary to amend the Precept Calculations to move the £15,000 identified for the project from proposed expenditure for 2025/26 to the Final Funding 2024/25 section but it was **NOTED** that this would in no way affect the final figures for the Precept required and the per house charge.

Following a full debate Members **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** (subject to the amendment noted above) the following :-

- i. Recommended Forecast for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 as circulated and published with the Agenda
- ii. Recommended Budget for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 as circulated and published with the Agenda
- iii. Recommended Precept requirement of £401,537 for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 equivalent to a Band D property charge of £44.73 per annum - an increase of £1.88 per annum or 4.4 % on the 2024/25 per house charge.

A final version of the approved Precept Requirements for 2025/26 is appended to these Minutes.

**FC/96/25 Decisions made by delegated power since 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 for ratification**

96.1 DC/24/1214 - The PET Committee previously objected to this application due to concerns raised about the noise levels. Amended plans were submitted but due to the 14-day deadline for responses, it was necessary to deal with this under the Delegated Authority Process. The PET Committee Members were canvassed for their opinion and after liaising with the Chairman of the Council together with the Chairmen of PET and F&A Committees, it was agreed to maintain the previous objection.

96.2 Members were reminded that at the meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024, the recommendation from the CIL Working Party for expenditure of £195.11 plus VAT for the purchase of a new bin was ratified (FC/84/24 refers). When processing it was realised that the cost of the weighted base and delivery had not been included and the additional cost was £29.36 plus VAT. The CIL Working Party Members were canvassed for their approval and after liaising with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council together with the Chairmen of the F&A Committees, there was no opposition to the approval of the additional expenditure.

The above decision was **RATIFIED**.

## **FC/97/25 Committees and Working Parties.**

The following Committee Minutes were presented to the Council:-

- 97.1 Finance & Administration Committee Meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024
- 97.2 Planning, Environment and Transport Committee Meetings held 28<sup>th</sup> November and 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024 including the **RECOMMENDATION** for the formation of a Working Group to liaise with HDC regarding the Mowbray Community Building, with Council agreeing the membership (Min. PET/097/24 refers)
- 97.3 Property Committee Meeting held 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024

It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee Minutes as listed above be received and adopted and all recommendations **RATIFIED**.

## **FC/98/25 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies**

Cllr. Searle had provided the following written report in advance which had been circulated as part of the report to the meeting.

### **Qair Incinerator**

#### Incinerator CLG Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Cher advised that their negotiations with the replacement contractor were progressing well. It is anticipated that the main works will start in 2Q 2025 although some preparatory works will be carried out prior to the main contractor starting.

Andrew Baldwin announced he will not be standing in the May 2025 WSCC elections and will stand down as Chairman of the Incinerator CLG. Whoever wins the seat will hopefully take over as Chairman. If Unity of Sussex clashes with the elections, they may be delayed by a year. In this scenario Andrew will stay on as Chairman for another year.

## **FC/99/25 Reports from District or County Councillors**

County Councillor Baldwin who had sent his apologies had provided the following written report, a copy of which was circulated to Members at the meeting :-

- \* **Government restructuring of local government.**  
*It seems very likely that the County Council elections due in May 2025 will be postponed for a year. I will send you the email all County Councillors recently received which is self-explanatory (Copied to NHPC Members by email 08.01.25). I expect on 9 January the 3 councils (West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove) will give a joint response to Angela Rayner agreeing in principle to having a joint authority with a Mayor. Any decision would, if accepted, then have to be carefully considered by all the members of the 3 councils.*
- \* **Bohunt school and the issues around parking in Lemmington Way and can more buses stop at the school**  
*No more news yet since email on 19.12.24*
- \* **Flooding of Chennells Brook at Pondtail bridge – adjacent to Gorrings Brook**  
*For many years there have been problems, after heavy persistent rainfall, with flooding from the brook as it flows west into Warnham Millpond ( at the Nature Reserve) and also with the small narrow ditch on the west side*

*of Pondtail Road opposite the entrance to Pondtail Copse road. Please note WSCC do not have any assets in the actual location which floods and WSCC do not own any of the trees next to the brook. I am told that it is a matter for HDC , Southern Water and the Environment Agency to resolve. Having said this, WSCC have agreed to assign this to the newly created WSCC Riparian Drainage department for further investigation. This is progressing at a reasonable pace and currently is waiting on the provision from HDC of the historic planning application documentation to enable the completion of the report. I will let you know the outcome in due course.*

Cllr. Raby, in his capacity of District Councillor, updated on the Local Plan. As all Members were aware, the Local Plan inspection had been paused. This was an extremely disappointing turn of events for all those involved and especially the HDC Officers who were working so hard on this. It was understood that the main concerns of the Planning Inspector was that the plan should include more houses. A number of queries had been raised and responses sent by Officers. It is hoped that a reply from the Inspector would be received before the end of the month, but HDC were unable to influence this. There was concern that should the plan ultimately be rejected and a new review be necessary, this could result in speculative applications which would be to the detriment of the District.

Discussion then turned to the decision earlier that day at County Hall to proceed with an expression of interest to Government to be consider for the Devolution Priority Programme, in partnership with East Sussex and Brighton and Hove.

It was noted that little is known about the future of services currently being undertaken by HDC should the Unitary Authority proceed, but it was clear that if a new plan review was necessary this could have serious implications.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Raby for his report.

**FC/100/25    Report from the North Horsham Community Land Trust (NHCLT) link councillor**

Cllr Gough gave the following report to the meeting :

*As we enter 2025, we continue to spend time having discussion with our local charity and business groups such as the Horsham Chamber of Commerce, Horsham Rugby Club business group and Horsham Blueprint and wherever possible with local landowners. Our Secretary, Oeter Beckley, has produced an excellent North Horsham CLT generic power point presentation for such future meetings.*

*We are endeavouring to ensure NHCLT inclusion in the revised Novartis scheme for their site (substitution of 510 residential units in lieu of offices), as this may provide to be one of the best opportunities for us to secure some much needed genuine affordable housing within our District.*

*Lack of genuinely affordable housing in Horsham, impacts seriously on the life, opportunities, social and mental well being for our young and elderly residents and families.*

*We continue to be very grateful to North Horsham Parish Council for all their long-term interest and patient support in all that we are trying to achieve - especially the use of the Members' Room for our Board Meetings and the Amberley Room for our Annual General Meeting at the end of January.*

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Gough for her report and the continued efforts if the CLT.

## **FC/101/25 Chairman's Announcements**

The following were **NOTED** :

- 101.1 Members recalled that at the last meeting the most recent S106 Report was received, and it was noted that queries had been raised (Min. FC/86/24 refers). Members were advised that a response from HDC to these queries was still awaited.
- 101.2 A meeting of the VE Day 80 Working Group was held on 4<sup>th</sup> December and the members would be meeting again on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025 once enquiries for costs had been completed, prior to recommendation to the March Council meeting.
- 101.3 Members recalled that at the Council Meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 it was agreed to submit a S106 application for the purchase of smart TV screens for RMH, to replace the old projectors that are available for hirers (Min. FC/77.3/24 refers). HDC notified on 18<sup>th</sup> December that the application had been successful, and the purchase and installation would now proceed.

## **FC/102/25 Financial Matters**

### **102.1 Finance Report to show income, expenditure for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

#### **Funding to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

Precept (full year)	380,247
Environmental Grant	12,274
<b>Total</b>	<b>392,521</b>

#### **Income to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

Cost Centre	Actual income	Annual Budget	Estimated income to 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2024*
Admin	19,725	20,000	13,333
Allotments**	1,108	982	982
North Heath Hall	49,422	66,000	44,000
Holbrook Tythe Barn	28,357	44,000	29,333
Multi Court Lettings	16,936	26,000	17,333
Roffey Millennium Hall	50,829	73,000	48,667
<b>Total</b>	<b>166,377</b>	<b>229,982</b>	<b>153,649</b>

#### **Expenditure to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

Cost Centre	Actual Expenditure	Annual Budget	Estimated expenditure to 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2024*
Admin***	46,429	64,820	47,713
Grants	4,891	10,000	6,667

Burial ****	5,596	7,850	5,233
Personnel	226,305	362,150	241,433
Allotments	822	1,695	1,130
Amenity R&OS	34,367	62,350	41,567
North Heath Hall	19,393	35,185	23,457
Holbrook Tythe Barn	11,903	24,845	16,563
Roffey Millennium Hall	30,004	44,166	29,444
<b>Total</b>	<b>379,710</b>	<b>613,061</b>	<b>413,207</b>

- \* Total cost centre budget for 2024/25 divided by 8/12th.  
\*\* Allotment invoices are sent out annually. The full income is expected by the end of May.  
\*\*\* Includes, in Actual Expenditure, Annual Insurance Premium of £14,737 paid May 2024 and includes, in Estimated Expenditure, Full Year Budget for Insurance of £13,500  
\*\*\*\* Paid quarterly in Months 2,5,8 & 11

## Income

Overall, income continued to be overbudget by approx. 8% - a widening of the gap from the 5% at the end of September. With regard to the halls, both North Heath Hall and Roffey Millennium Hall were over budget for income and whilst the other two buildings and multicourts continued to be underbudget, the situation had once again improved slightly over the last month.

## Expenditure

Expenditure continued to be lower than expected at 8.1% - a very minor narrowing from the gap of 8.9% at the end of October.

## Reserves

As at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024 remaining funds, including the precept payment received together with General Reserves, stood at £392,829.

In addition, there were Earmarked Reserves of £250,679, a reduction from the balance of £255,342 at the end of Month 8 due to expenditure from the NHH Heating EMR of £3,768 for a new boiler together with expenditure from the R&R EMR of £895 repairs to the partition wall at RMH.

## Summary

There was £12,728 more income than budgeted for at the end of month 8 together with £33,497 less expenditure than anticipated.

The Council **NOTED** the Financial Report to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

## 102.2 Payment Lists

The Council **AGREED** the Payment and Transfer lists for October 2024 totalling £255,430.28 and November 2024 totalling £63,696.58 as circulated with the Clerk's report and as published on the website.

## FC/103/25 Annual Parish Meeting

Having **NOTED** the previous decision from the meeting held 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024, that the 2025 Annual Parish Meeting would be held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at North Heath Hall and should incorporate a community group fayre Members were advised that contact was therefore being made with a range of community groups - those that use the Parish Council halls and those that do not - to understand who would be willing to attend. It was suggested that the formal part of the meeting i.e. the accepting of the Minutes presentation of Annual Report etc be undertaken in Room 4 area, with the Fayre itself focussed in Room 1.

It was also **NOTED** that it has also been agreed that the Council look at holding another event in the summer for just youth services and organisations.

**FC/104/25 Calendar of Meetings 2025 to 2026**

Having **NOTED** the draft schedule, as circulated and published with the Agenda, Members proceeded to **RESOLVE** to **APPROVE** the calendar of meetings for the year May 2025 to May 2026.

**FC/105/25 Review of Festive Lighting**

The Clerk reported that the feedback from residents and businesses had been very positive and that comments had been made about how the lights had created a sense of community.

Discussion took place around other areas that could be included in future years such as the shops in Holbrook and the other NHPC buildings. It was **NOTED** that the funds included in the 2025/26 budget only allowed for Roffey lights for Christmas 2025 but that other areas could be considered when planning the budget for 2026/27.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** to make no changes to the Festive Lighting in 2025 and proceed with the same scheme as 2024.

**FC/106/25 Motion from Cllr. J. Davidson - That Council reconsiders the decision taken at the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023 (Min. FC/41/23 refers) to not use the Parish Council's buildings for Warm Banks**

The Chairman explained that he wanted the Council to keep this issue under review as there was concern that residents were not keeping warm and the situation may have worsened since last year due to the removal of the winter fuel allowance for many people. Cllr. Raby commented that he had seen, through his role at HDC, that there had been an increase in local people struggling and this was not just older residents but also those with disabilities.

It was acknowledged that it still would not be practical for the Parish Office to manage and run a Warm Bank at any of the buildings, but Members **AGREED** that the Clerk should reach out to existing providers of warm spaces, and other groups such as Horsham Matters, to see how NHPC can support and promote them as they provide this vital service.

**FC/107/25 Mowbray Community Building**

Members **NOTED** that at a recent North of Horsham Parish Liaison meeting, it had been suggested that the Parish Council meet with HDC and L&G to discuss the progression of the Community Building project and a small Working Group (3/4 members) be formed to report back to Council. The date of the first meeting had been set as Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 10.30am, and this would be held at Roffey Millennium Hall.

Having **NOTED** that Cllr. R. Turner would take one of the places on the Working Group, as the Chairman of the North of Horsham Parish Liaison Group, Members proceeded to **AGREE** the other members of the group would be Cllrs. Knight, Smithurst and Torn.

It was **NOTED** that the Working Group would be non-decision making and purely for feedback to Council.

**FC/108/25 Use of Toilets in Parish Council Buildings**

Members discussed the reports on social media back in December, regarding the use of the toilets at RMH not being accessible to members of the public not hiring the halls.

Members reiterated that the Parish Council has a duty to the people paying to hire the buildings, and to members of staff, to ensure as far as reasonably practicable a safe environment. Unfortunately, historically there had been issues with people causing trouble, taking drugs, hiding drugs and causing vandalism and as a result, the decision was taken some years ago to control the access to the building.

Combined with this, more recently elsewhere in the country there had been cases of violence and especially with the anticipated Martyn's Law, the Parish Council was going to be required to demonstrate the measures it takes to keep people safe. The buildings are home to numerous groups with young people involved and following the attack in Southport last year at a dance event, the Parish Council staff were approached by some groups who asked if the doors could be locked when their attendees have arrived, to prevent someone just wandering in.

It was also **NOTED** that the Parish Council works in the same way as many community buildings including HDC offices, libraries and Parish Council offices without community halls and furthermore, the running of the building is completely met by the fees the hirers pay and not by the council tax charged.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** that staff continue to use their discretion to manage access to the buildings and Members reiterated that the toilets in all of the Parish Council buildings were not public toilets to be accessible to anyone at any time.

**FC/109/25 Correspondence**

The Council **NOTED** correspondence list 1 as circulated with the Agenda, and list 2 issued immediately prior to the meeting, covering the period 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

**FC/110/25 Date of next Meeting**

The date of the next Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 was **NOTED**.

There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 8.21pm.

Signed .....

Date .....