

NORTH HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

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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 my first Annual Report for the year 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. I was elected as Chairman of the Council in May last year and have been delighted to serve my local community in this capacity.

Following the elections back in May 2023, we had several Parish Councillor vacancies. In addition, we bid a fond farewell to Rita Ginn back in April last year, who stepped down from the Council after almost 15 years of service.

Following Rita's departure, we therefore had 5 vacancies but over the past year have been delighted to welcome Donald Mahon, Neil Simmonds and Glenn Turner who have been co-opted to the Council. Whilst Neil and Glenn are new to the world of Local Councils and bring with them their "fresh eyes", Donald served on the Council previously between May 2019 and May 2023 and his experience was welcomed back.

The Parish Council therefore continues to have 2 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 Hugh Griffiths, one of the Council's longest serving members of staff and known to many as one of the helpful and welcoming caretakers at North Heath Hall. All at the Parish Council wish Hugh a long and restful retirement.

On a local level, the Parish Council has been delighted to return to holding the Liaison Group meetings for North of Horsham (Mowbray), which included a tour of the burgeoning development, which was welcomed by all those that could attend, and also the group for the Novartis site. As this report goes to print, the new planning application for the Novartis site is awaited, following the decision to replace the economic side of the proposals with affordable housing, and the Parish Council looks forward to working with the development team to result in a development for the benefit of existing and new residents of the Parish.

The recent cost of living increase, especially the considerable increases in utility costs, combined with the increases in Employer National Insurance 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 invested in its assets through the refurbishment of the washrooms at North Heath Hall and upgrades to playground equipment at Birches Road and Amberley Close.

North Horsham Parish Council, being part of HDC's Climate Action Network, is always looking at ways to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council's activities and has done this previously through projects including the installation of LED lighting and infra-red heating at some of our buildings. The Council is therefore excited to be supported by the HDC Climate Change Fund to expand these initiatives by installing solar power at Holbrook Tythe Barn, which not only reduces the reliance on carbon fuels but in the longer term, reduces the cost burden of the energy charges.

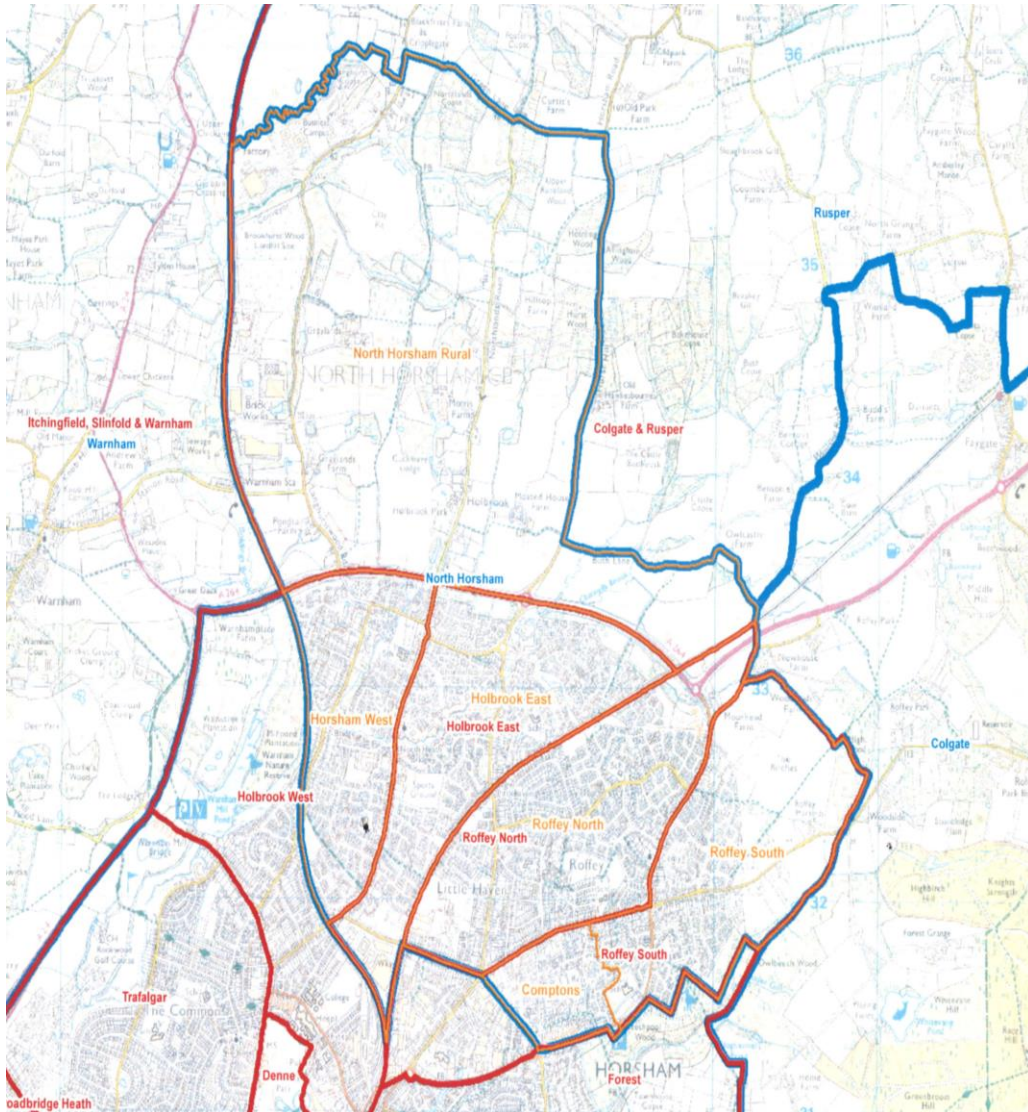
The Council has also held two Litter Picks, in partnership with St Mark's Church, Holbrook, at which dozens of black sacks of litter were collected from the roads and vergers. Our thanks go to St Mark's Church and all those that joined us in this important community initiative.

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 James Davidson
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, Chennells Brook 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 or make a statement about items on the Agenda.

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-options that have taken place since the last election, there still remain two vacancies; one in Holbrook East ward and one in Comptons ward.

The Parish Council operates an independently reviewed Scheme of Members' Allowances whereby an annual Allowance of £514 was payable in 2024/25 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 a trip to the Races at Goodwood in September last year. A great days was had by all and thankfully the weather was very kind to the group.

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 (excluding spending from Earmarked Reserves) over the last three years and the budget for 2025/26.

Income

	2022/23 actual	2023/24 actual	2024/25 actual	2025/26 budget
Precept	349,011	365,346	380,247	401,537
Environmental Grant	10,677	11,745	12,274	12,274
Community Infrastructure Levy funding	11,805	0	0	0
Compensation from HDC	23,072	0	0	0
S106 Funding	0	17,909	2,805	0
HDC Climate Change Grant	0	2,076	5,000	0
Administration	1,860	27,590	28,849	20,000
Allotments	983	982	1,108	1,000
North Heath Hall	64,492	67,539	76,339	73,000
Holbrook Tythe Barn	36,771	39,936	42,774	46,000
Multi Court Lettings	21,991	26,696	28,089	28,000
Roffey Millennium Hall	55,093	71,452	77,695	78,000
Total income	575,755	631,272	655,180	659,811

Expenditure

	2022/23 actual	2023/24 actual	2024/25 actual	2025/26 budget
Administration	51,341	67,310	78,099	59,810
Grants	5,780	6,531	7,711	10,000
Burial contributions	7,461	7,461	7,461	7,900
Personnel	322,782	334,053	352,267	390,150
Allotments	950	731	870	1,940
Amenity, Recs and Open Spaces	36,698	38,127	43,410	68,100
North Heath Hall	25,685	27,755	32,154	35,980
Holbrook Tythe Barn	19,445	24,325	18,655	25,880
Roffey Millennium Hall	34,025	40,088	47,642	51,270
Total expenditure	504,167	546,381	588,269	651,030

Reserves

On 1st April 2024 the General Reserve stood at £300,602 and Earmarked Reserves at £264,668. A total of £87,000 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), North Heath Hall (NHH) Washroom Refurb (£8,000), replenishment of the Repairs and Renewals EMR (£35,000), NHH Heating (£5,000) and RMH Lift (£5,000) . A total of £113,109 was spent from Earmarked Reserves during 2024/25, mainly on general repairs and improvements to the Parish Council owned buildings and amenities but also a £62,942 for the upgrade of playgrounds and £20,538 for the NHH Washroom refurb.

At the 31st March 2025, there was £239,180 in Earmarked Reserves and a General Reserve of £280,749.

Summary

The Council expected an annual revenue spend of £613,061 when the precept was set in January 2024, with the final figure being £588,269 - a saving of £24,792.

When setting the precept for the 2024/25 year, the Council was aiming at a General Reserve of around £170,000. The final General Reserve as at 31st March 2025 is £280,749 which is more than £110,000 in excess of the sum expected. A total of £39,000 of these General Reserves will be used to increase the Earmarked Reserves for the Playground Upgrade (£5,000), Mowbray Community Facility (£5,000), NHH Heating (£5,000), RMH lift replacement fund (£5,000), Tree works (£4,000), replenishment of the VAT EMR (£10,000) and replenishment of the Repair and Renewals EMR (£5,000). In addition, an element of the General Reserves has been budgeted to fund the expected 2025/26 expenditure. The result is that the Council is now anticipating General Reserves at 31st March 2026 of £200,000.

Earmarked Reserves

Reserve	Purpose	Balance at 31.3.2025
Repairs & Renewals	For ongoing maintenance work at the Community venues.	73,274
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	40,000
Tree Management	To respond to tree inspection and urgent remedial work.	8,765
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	37,058
CIL 2021/22	Money received from development	485
CIL 2022/23	Money received from development	11,805
NHH Heating	Money set aside to upgrade the heating at NHH	1,232
RMH Lift	Money set aside to upgrade/replace the lift	5,000
	TOTAL Earmarked Reserves	239,181

GRANTS

The Parish Council is pleased to have supported activities which benefited the local community during 2024/25

Details of grants made during 2024/25 are shown below: -

Grant awarded to	Amount	Purpose
Home Start Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex	£1,100	Ongoing work
Earles Meadow Community Group	£990	Ongoing work
NHCLT	£2,500	Ongoing work
Horsham Scouts (Riverside Walk)	£91	Riverside Walk
4 The Youth	£5,000	Ongoing work
Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance	£350	Ongoing work
4Sight Vision	£1,430	Ongoing work
Friendship Club	£1,250	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 2024/25

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 2024/25 year the Committee has upgraded washrooms at North Heath Hall, carried out major refurbishments at the play areas in Birche Road and Amberley Close.

Unfortunately, due to the impact of Water Neutrality there has been no new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding received during the 2024/25 year. However, the Working Party has met twice and as a result new street furniture of a bin and bench has been installed in the parish.

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 4 people on the waiting list. The allotments are inspected regularly.



Play area at Holbrook Tythe Barn

During 2024/25, 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.