

FOREST NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on 18th July 2017 at Salvation Army Hall, 7.30 p.m.

Present:	Messrs. J. Batchelor, N. Friswell, M. Hough, G. Sitton, G. Stanley, and B. Travers, Mrs. D. Sumpter (Chairman) and Ms. J. Dumbrell
District Councillors	1 DC Mr. G. Newman
County Councillors	1 CC Mr. A. Baldwin
Public	3
Press	0
Apologies	CC Dr. N. Dennis

Public participation

Ms. Ruth Fletcher and Mr. Vernon of Horsham District Cycling Forum attended the first part of this meeting to explain the purpose of the Cycle Forum. A voluntary group, it meets bi-monthly to discuss the ways in which cycling can be promoted throughout the County. A National Policy Framework is available.

They pointed out that the way forward must be to have the right infrastructure on the roads and this will also make a massive difference to cycling safety. There needs to be a network and a way in which “rat runs” can be minimised and the need to make bicycles more accessible, e.g. by providing safe cycle stands at the front of houses and around the community.

Whilst there are many grants that can be accessed, WSCC and HDC appear to have been lax in the way in which they have looked at cycling. Ms Fletcher believes that this is changing; WSCC has now set up a strategy group with dedicated officers. This is currently not the case at HDC which does have a planning framework but cyclists consider this to be “light and vague”.

Ms. Fletcher believes it is important that the Cycle Forum is involved with new planning developments at the first stage so that it can have input into cycle routes.

Mrs. Sumpter said that it is important that the Cycle Forum is involved with the Neighbourhood Plan, “Blueprint” and that whilst FNC is unable to divulge confidential information, the Planning Committee will definitely consider cycling provision when looking at new developments. The Cycling Forum has responded to the Horsham Vision consultation.

Councillors referred to cycling road safety, especially young children who are over confident and do not always wear their cycling helmets. Ms. Fletcher agreed and said that she is in contact with local schools. Councillors also asked that cyclists look at ways in which they can improve pedestrian safety when using paths.

Mrs. Sumpter thanked Ms. Fletcher and Mr. Vernon for their presentation who then left the Meeting.

Horsham District Cycling Forum –

Contacts: www.hdcf.org.uk @CycleForum Horsh info@hdcf.org.uk 01403 258830

01.560.17 Minutes of Meeting held on 19th June 2017

The Minutes were proposed by Mr. Travers and seconded by Mr. Stanley. Mrs. Sumpter signed the Minutes.

03.533.16 Bus Shelter (Melksham Close)

CC Mr. Baldwyn has been in touch with Mr. Crowley, HDC regarding the maintenance problem but without success. However, Mrs. Sumpter said that the matter will be pursued, especially as there are grants for the erection of the shelter.

Mr. Crowley suggested that advertisers might take responsibility if they adopted the shelter but this is unlikely as the route is not on a main road.

Resolved Mrs. Sumpter will continue to discuss the matter through the HDC Councillors/Neighbourhood Meetings.

It is understood that the bus cage at Melksham Close is currently being marked.

Mr. Friswell referred to the hard standing at Watercress Place. He is disappointed with the position but it is agreed that this Council will make no further comment.

CC Mr. Baldwin explained that he “walked” Harwood Road following a resident request for a further pedestrian crossing but he does not think this is realistic due to safety issues.

05.533.16 Winterton Court

Ms. Dumbrell advised that residents in New Street have received a letter from Saxon Weald stating that construction will shortly be commencing and it is anticipated the development will be completed by March 2019. Saxon Weald is still referring to the area as “Winterton Court”.

06.533.17 Litter

There has been no response to the letters sent to Mail Boxes Etc., William Hill or Horsham Barbers. On occasions the areas are clear of litter but it is thought that this is due to road sweeping.

Resolved to contact HDC John McArthur to ascertain how often HDC sweep Brighton Road

Separately, this Council bemoaned the fact that there is no longer a dedicated Town Warden who could monitor litter problems and in fact issue fixed penalties. Mr. Friswell suggested that this should be considered at the next stage of Town Charge allocations although Mrs. Sumpter cautioned that there is a fixed budget and if the cost of a Town Warden is incorporated, this would be at the expense of another budget. This Council will be involved with Town Charge discussions at the end of this year and will discuss this at that time.

04.555.17 Grass Verges in the vicinity of Kerves Lane

Mr. Hough believes that the removal of the wooden bollard and subsequent disappearance is actually “damage and theft” but Highways has confirmed that it does not believe there are any intervention levels with either the removal of the bollard or the current state of the grass verge.

Resolved to continue to monitor the situation

05.557.17 Pigeon Droppings under Iron Bridge

Mr. Sitton is hoping that his meeting will go ahead on Wednesday 19th July at 1.00 p.m. It is very unlikely that any agreed works will coincide with the dates when the Iron Bridge is to be surveyed. Mr. Sitton will advise DNC Mrs Mitchell.

09.557.17 Kingslea School

CC Mr. Baldwin corrected the Minutes that said a 20 mph lighting sign could be installed as he does not think that there are resources for this project. However, he is pressing for an illuminated sign that flashes at school opening and closing times.

09.557.17 Millais School Hedge

Millais has responded and said that it inspected the hedge before removal to ensure there were no birds nesting. However, this Council (in its letter) should have explained that it is an offence to remove hedges during the bird nesting season and also RSPB should have been contacted.

04.558.17 Planning Matters

A further letter was sent to Mr. Jeremy Quin, MP relating to size of apartments in office conversions under permitted development. Regrettably no response has been received to any communication. CC Mr. Baldwin was surprised and said that he would speak to Mr. Quin.

Mr. Hough said that he disagrees with FNC comments as there is a real need for long term affordable housing. He cited young families who only have 6 month contracts and the anxiety this causes, for example school children who may not have school continuity.

03.559.17 Public Forum

The Salvation Army has trimmed the hedge but not to the fence line. This would be preferable to ensure that the pedestrian part of the lane is clear. The Salvation Army will be approached again.

10.559.17 Local Boundary Commission

The way in which the neighbourhoods have been re-aligned was discussed again and it still seems "bizarre". However, Mrs. Sumpter explained that the realignment has balanced the resident numbers within each neighbourhood council.

10.559.17 Queen Street Pedestrian Crossing

Tarmac has been placed at the deepest point of the pothole but it looks very temporary and the depth of the pothole is likely to revert back very quickly.

01.562.17 Public Forum.

No matters were raised.

02.562.17 County Councillor and District Councillor Reports

CC Mr. Baldwin referred to a serious accident that recently occurred at The Forest School where a child on a bicycle rode into a bus – (see presentation by The Cycle Forum above). He will also be visiting the school to ascertain what measures have been put in place to highlight the need for children's cycling proficiency.

CC Dr. Dennis sent a written report stating that he has met with a group of residents from the Oakhill Road and New Street areas to discuss a number of highway/traffic issues. Some are familiar but he will be referring parking on the footway by the One Stop Shop and Bedford Arms and hazards caused by parking obstructing the footway outside the Chemists.

At the June CLC Meeting it was agreed to advertise the extension of permit hours in Zone A to 9.00 pm Mon-Sat to stop evening parking on streets by visitors to the town who are trying to avoid HDC car parking charges. Park Terrace East is in Zone A.

DC Mr. Newman has received a letter from a Mannings Heath resident who would like car parking at the Kerves Lane entrance into Chesworth Farm. For many reasons, including monitoring, he is uncertain that this is a good idea. Mrs. Sumpter said that HDC are looking at the parking provision in general terms in the draft Management Plan for Chesworth Farm. She would raise this with the Friends of Chesworth Farm.

DC Mr. Newman said that the Scrutiny Committee is setting up sub committees (one item will be looking at parking problems at primary schools in the district). Sub Committees will look at how Section 106 monies is distributed and this should mean more scrutiny at the way in which Section 106 monies is allocated within the unparished areas. He is hoping to be part of a sub committee.

Separately Mrs. Sumpter asked for an FNC volunteer to join her in discussing current Section 106 monies allocations and to prepare proposals for how this should be spent in this neighbourhood.

03.562.17 Planning

The Planning Committee has submitted July application comments.. Mr. Travers highlighted the following:

DC/16/2337 124 Brighton Road – an appeal has been lodged for the conversion of the property into four apartments. This Council has raised its objections.

64 Comptons Lane – this is an application to extend and alter a property, rendering it white with black roof tiles. This Council agreed that this proposal will not fit into the street scene.

11 Weald Close (Mrs. Sumpter declared an interest and was not involved with this discussion)

This is stated as a retrospective application, although not all of the works have been carried out particularly the erection of some of the fence). The objection will be that by extending outwards the fence area that is not completed, will obstruct the site line.

DC/15/1627 46 Comptons Lane – Mr. Travers commented that whilst the third application for four properties has been approved, the developers have now lodged an appeal against the second refused application

17/1337	50 Barrington Road	Conversion of cold store to 1 bed dwelling	No Objection
17/1325	25 St Leonards Road	Replacement detached garage & studio	HFNC OBJECTS to this proposal to build a two storey property at the end of their garden with access from Higgins way.
17/1162 17/1171	52 Mcleod Road 54 Mcleod Road	Erection of joint front porch	N/O
17/1326	73 Eversfield Road	Erect 2 x 2 bed semis plus 4 parking spaces	HFNC OBJECTS to this proposal on the grounds of overdevelopment. The land available is only sufficient for one property and is not comparable to the development at 72 Eversfield. It would also overlook and overshadow the adjacent property in Bethune Road.
17/1366	64 Comptons Lane	Erect single storey front & rear extensions & roof conversion, & changing appearance of house.	HFNC OBJECTS to this proposal as it would be totally out of character with neighbouring properties. The street scene would be punctuated by a totally modern property amidst a row of standard properties. There would also be the possibility of overlooking as the houses are so close together and the roof height is to be increased.
17/1308	73 Oakhill Road	First floor extension above garage	N/O

HORSHAM PARK

There is an application to remove the “beach volley ball” area in Horsham Park (close to Park House) and to replace this with a hard surface – to be used for events and other needs.

Is this involved with the future use of Park House?

This Council is concerned about this application for various reasons and objects to the removal of the “beach volley ball” area. It is stated that the amenity is under-used but this Council believes that when the sand is dry, it is well used and the problem is drainage.

Resolved to contact Denne Neighbourhood Council informing them that FNC would be objecting.

04.562.17 Treasurer's Report

Current Account £6,421.94, Reserve Account £1,281.20. The Clerk's honorarium and expenses have been paid for July.

Mrs. Sumpter is hoping to produce a Newsletter for October circulation.

05.562.17 Correspondence

Horsham in Bloom Neighbourhood Cup – it is agreed that this should be presented to Helen Cox who voluntarily removes litter in the Brighton Road area.

HTCP – HTCP is intending to change its Articles of Association to include North Horsham Parish Council as well as the three neighbourhood councils. Mrs. Sumpter advised that Mrs. J Apostolou will be retiring from chairmanship after 10 years' service and will also be retiring from Denne Neighbourhood Council.

Plaques – correspondence has been received via Horsham Museum suggesting that parishes and neighbourhoods forward details for further plaques to be installed in the district. It is anticipated that the funding will come from Heritage Lottery or LEADER funding.

The total project costs for plaques and new heritage trail maps is around £90K.

Councillors referred to Horsham Vision and suggests that the project should be aligned to this consultation.

Blueprint – the AGM is scheduled for 14th August. There are problems with chairmanship as Mr. Cooke is said he is unwilling to continue as temporary Chairman.

Horsham Unlimited – FNC will suggest that this group discusses the Christmas arrangements close to Hillier's 2017 and how the Christmas Fantasia impacted on 2016 sales.

06.562.17 Reports from Representatives on outside bodies

Mr. Friswell attended a recent meeting organised by Older Person's Forum about the current state of NHS in our district. He was very pleased to note that many of the comments were complimentary and it was a positive meeting.

HALC – Mr. Stanley represented FNC at recent HALC Meeting and his notes will be distributed. He referred to the talk by Mr. Chris Stark, Highways and the main points are listed below for referral:

Chris Stark, Area Highways Manager, W S C C for Horsham district.

He explained his role, team of 6 managers and traffic engineers.

Roads - He explained that A roads are inspected every month, others three monthly, otherwise 6 monthly or annual for remote, urban, residential areas.

- Out of total council budget, he gets only 7%, with majority going to Adult and child services.*
- Potholes are guaranteed for 12 months by contractor, Balfour Beatty; important that problems are reported, as they only have 4 officers.*
- Contract also includes hedges, a regular problem area. When 1/3 or more infringes on a footpath, intervention is warranted. Neighbours, etc. can tackle the landowner direct, using a council letter, but ultimately council would cut back and bill owner.*

- Council policy on potholes follows their safety guide, well tested in court cases. Low risk is >40 mm deep - watch; medium risk is 40-99 mm, and at least 150mm wide - early action; high risk is 100 mm deep and 150 mm wide – urgent action.
- Footway trips – 20-49 mm – medium risk; above is high risk.

Grass cuts -

- Urban areas are cut 7 times a year, on rolling 6-week basis. Dates are on website.
- Rural cuts are only 3 times a year, unless safety issues, visibility etc. are advised to them.

Capital works –

- Includes road resurfacing and surface dressing.
- Contractor – he revealed that bids are out for renewal of contract, to replace Balfour Beatty, w.e.f. 01/07/18, decision due in September this year.
- There is an online Active enquiry form for reporting problems, see website love.westsussex.gov.uk

T R O - Traffic Regulation Orders.

- There are changes coming in. Dependent upon number of councillors in a parish. e.g. Chanctonbury gets 1 p.a., North Horsham, with 8 councillors get 3.
- TRO is a legal order. 1. Community process 2. Developer 3. Community pays itself - current fees £7,140, excluding delivery costs, etc.

S106

- There has been a review resulting in tighter controls. S106 grants should be used for infrastructure projects and help to 'bridge the gap' [?].

Following this presentation, Councillors referred to problems with both roads and footpaths where vegetation is growing through the tarmac. WSCC is no longer able to use strong herbicides etc. and those now being used are not killing the roots. In fact CC Mr. Baldwin said that the future might be that weeds will only be controlled by pouring hot water on them!

07.563.17 Any Other Business

Mr.Hough was disappointed that he received no response to his personal letter to HDC relating to car parking. He pointed out his concerns about how car parking charges are affecting the town and community. He also commented that on the HDC website there is reference to car parking and the fact that HDC has received no complaints which he believes is not true.

This Council will respond to a request from HALC about new car parking charges in this district referring to the negative impact in North Horsham. Cars are now using roads instead of car parks to avoid charges and also shopkeepers have noted a fall in sales.

New Street Green – Ms. Dumbrell attended the New Street Green Opening and said it was very enjoyable. She understands that DC Dr. David Skipp will be contacting FNC regarding setting up a Friend's Group.

The Meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.