

HORSHAM FOREST NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL
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**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 19th NOVEMBER 2018 SALVATION ARMY HALL,
7:30PM**

Present: Mrs. D. Sumpter (Chairman), Messrs. N. Friswell, M. Hough, J. Milne, G. Sitton, B. Travers and R. Worley

District Councillors: DC Dr. D. Skipp and Mr. G. Newman

County Councillors Dr. N. Dennis (arrived 8.30 p.m.), CC Mr. A. Baldwin

Public: 0

Press: 0

Apologies: Mr. P. Colombo, Mr. G. Stanley and CC Mrs. Millson

Mrs. Sumpter opened the Meeting by welcoming Mrs. Barbara Childs who has recently been appointed HDC Director of Place. This is a newly named post introduced by CEO Glenn Chipp so the name encompassed the whole role – Planning, Economic Development, Property and Building Control (placing emphasis on “place”, i.e. investing in the district, quality of living and encouraging visitors to this area). Mrs. Childs said that she had a strong affiliation to Horsham Town and lives in the Forest Neighbourhood area.

Mrs. Childs is a qualified town planner and the majority of her HDC roles around 29 years, have been in planning. Most recently she has been involved with Strategic Development – planning the future of the district, preparing the Local Plan and 5 Year Land Supply documentation. Relating to Land Supply, she said that the document had been successful at appeal and this included a “new test” and 3 year delivery test that looked backwards as well as forwards regarding sufficient land allocation. **Development Management** is managed by a major project team.

Economic Development – Mrs. Childs said that despite Brexit, the focus is to keep the area buoyant and reasonably successful. Specifically referring to the town centre, there are voids but relative to other parts of the country these are low.

Referring to residents’ working patterns, Mrs. Childs explained that 40% “out commute” and HDC would really prefer to be in a position that would significantly reduce this figure. She referred to the fact that recent land applications include ½ million business floor space.

Whilst HDC is not required to provide events in the town, this is considered a key initiative and whilst the main purpose is to ensure residents “have good times”, it also encourages visitors who would not normally visit Horsham and who may then realise that it is a nice town and decide to return. The initiatives such as The Rotary Trail are encouraging people to visit shops that would not normally be along their shopping route. The 2013 “BID” initiative (contributing to an organisation which is run by businesses to give added value) is still alive. In common with countrywide trends, town centre use is changing and Mrs. Childs acknowledged that the future might mean that there are more domestic buildings. She also said that, in the future, there needs to be more emphasis on the evening economy.

Property – this is looking, as a whole, at the HDC Estate i.e. high profile buildings such as the newly opened “The Bridge” Leisure Centre, HDC owned shops and, importantly, making investments for the future. Mrs. Childs emphasised the need to make good investments so the Council is more self-sustaining as Central Government is gradually reducing local authority grants.

Building Control – Mrs. Childs referred to the fact that this is a private operation and is connected to Horsham and Crawley – something of an enigma within the system. There is no monopoly and no regular team. Building Control Officers visit sites at key points of development to confirm building control regulations and structural integrity. The matter has recently been referred to MP Jeremy Quin asking whether an Advisory Group should be formed to assess whether building control should become a statutory requirement; however, the response was basically that if this happened and was brought in, it would be a very significant change. From the comment, it would seem the matter is now in abeyance.

Mrs. Childs said that this is where groups such as Neighbourhood Councils have an important role to be re-active when following building developments.

Sense of Place and Environment – there always has to be compromise and, referring to the town centre, changes must be made to enable it to thrive, grow and encourage visitors in an appropriate way. In answer to a question that Horsham is still being described as a Market Town when it was felt that this identity was being lost, she explained that the town markets are thriving but it is also positive that new developments are taking place such as Piries Place because it shows that developers see Horsham as an opportunity. She acknowledged that the taller buildings in Piries Place are encroaching on the roofline from Carfax view but not to the same extent as original plans. The town markets continue to thrive.

FNC Councillors continue to regret the fact that there is not an HDC Cabinet member specifically responsible for Horsham Town.

Mrs. Childs commented about a proposal to have a new railway station in North of Horsham – another example of growth.

Mrs. Childs answered the following questions:

Social and Affordable Housing – developers are held to the original decision but the problems occur when land is sold off and often new owners say that to offer 35% social and affordable housing is not financially viable. Within recent months, Central Government has introduced a requirement for all financial reports to be made public and this may have a positive effect on the social housing commitment (Councillors felt that whilst on paper it would seem that once a developer has signed an agreement, it is non-negotiable, in reality this is not the case).

Enforcement – again this is another department that is non-statutory although Mrs. Childs said that there is an excellent team at HDC and there is no intention to change the department in any way. Referring specifically to an issue in Brighton Road, she said that Enforcement is now “very much on the case” and asked Councillors to make this Department aware if they see any non-self-explanatory activity at the site.

Walking and Cycling Strategy – Mr. Milne referred to the recent Novartis site exhibition and he feels that this presents a “one off” opportunity to construct a totally off the road route bringing in the new North of Horsham development. Mrs. Childs said that she was interested in the idea and will raise the matter at a planned HDC Meeting. It would be an ambitious project, involving some form of underpass under the railway track, but nevertheless would not be a piecemeal strategy. It would definitely involve some “joined up” thinking. It is confirmed that the cost of building a bridge across the railway is too costly.

Hospital – Mrs. Childs agreed that there is an overwhelming wish for a new hospital in this area. She said that the decision lies with NHS Trust and in the past, the Trust has been offered land that HDC has identified but has not moved the ideas forward.

QUESTIONS – prior to the Meeting, Mrs. Childs circulated answers to the planning questions that had been raised by FNC Councillors. These have been noted.

Mrs. Childs was thanked for attending the Meeting and her presentation was well received. This Council is delighted that as Mrs. Childs lives in Horsham, she has first-hand experience and an interest in the Town. Mrs. Childs left the Meeting at 8.30 p.m.

01.11.18 Minutes of Meeting held on 15th October 2018

These were proposed by Mr. Friswell and seconded by Mr. Sitton. The Minutes were signed by Mrs. Sumpter, Chairman.

02.11.18 Public Forum

Mrs. Sumpter welcomed two members of the public to the Meeting who attended to update FNC on speeding issues in St. Leonard's Road. They explained that they have received SID training and the Police are fully supportive of this initiative who also commented that information can be used as "intelligence gathering".

CC Mr. Baldwin has secured temporary SID equipment and it is hoped that surveillance can start in the near future. The fact that monitoring is visible is often a long term deterrent.

It is hoped that through some form of fundraising, a SID plus Pad can be purchased and this could be in the form of crowd funding. There have been various emails about funding, including correspondence from the HDC Community Safety Officer. Mrs. Sumpter will be discussing funding with the Denne and Trafalgar NC's. CC Mr. Baldwin suggested a crowd funding initiative that could trigger a CLC grant and this Council agreed that it would look at how to submit the initial crowdfunding paperwork. CC Mr Baldwin said the cost is around £500 for the gun and £475 for the Pad.

The 30 mph signs have been fitted although comments are not conclusive as to whether they are having an effect. Unfortunately they are not illuminated and, in Winter months, this may reduce their worth. In the Summer months because of their positioning, they have at times been obscured by tree branches.

Unfortunately whilst Highways officials have visited the site and acknowledge that a pedestrian crossing would be beneficial, the cost is definitely prohibitive at this time.

The members of public advised that they are continuing to contact Heron Way School to gain its support via its "Walk to School" Policy.

Mrs. Sumpter thanked the members of public for their continuing enthusiasm for a project that should add to road safety for all members of the community.

03.11.18 Matters Arising from the Minutes

04.05.18 Town Vision

There are no updates although Mr. Sitton will inform FNC when the next town walkabout date is known. DC Dr. Skipp has carried out a separate walkabout with CEO Glen Chipp and reported that everyone is well aware of the issues surrounding the shop referred to as "Antix". There is definitely no permission for this building to be pulled down.

07.07.18 Redundant Telephone Boxes

There is no update from CC Mrs. Millson who said that she would take over the issue. Regrettably FNC Clerk advised that she had exhausted all lines of enquiry – all of which have been negative with no advice as how to proceed.

03.08.18 Horsham Park

The WW1 Remembrance Tree was planted on 11th November and was a very successful event. Mrs. Sumpter attended. This Council has not received its invoice for ¼ of the cost.

03.09.18 Dog Bins

From the Neighbourhood Warden Report, it is noted the Wardens have been notifying HDC about full dog bins. However, DC Dr. Skipp urged Councillors to contact him as he continues to follow up this issue with HDC John McArthur.

03.09.18 Arun Way

There has been extensive correspondence regarding the issue of “land grabbing” in Arun Way. Mr. Perks (WSSC Rights of Way Officer) has advised by telephone to Mr. Friswell that he is aware of the situation but the County’s Definitive Rights of Way Map does not specify the width of Bridleway 1670. . Strictly speaking the Rights of Way people are not concerned about the character of the area; all that matters is the use to which the bridleway is put. He did not answer the question as to whether the occupier of the adjacent property would get permission to construct an entrance from that property on to the bridleway but that as WSSC has a statutory duty to care for the surface of the bridleway, the occupier would have to seek its permission before asking permission from the landowners (of the sub surface).

According to Land Registry this is unregistered land but this does not mean that it is not owned and it is possible this is The Francis Trust (many plots of land are unregistered and this is because it is owned by a family who have lived there pre-land registry legislation)

Resolved to ascertain The Francis Trust Solicitor and to then contact him. A letter will be sent to the resident who contacted this Council

07.10.18 NOVARTIS

Mrs. Sumpter attended the second meeting. Mr. Milne’s initial comments have already been submitted by this Council. Mrs. Sumpter referred again to expanding the cycle way. It is now noted that many of the trees have TPO’s which was an initial concern.

Resolved to forward a further letter

10.10.18 Trees in Pollards Drive

The trees have now been “supported”.

03.11.18 District Councillors’ Reports

DC Mr. Newman referred to the planning application for Glen Arun Nursing Home. This Council felt that there were no grounds to object although were concerned about the increase in traffic and also the need to extend double yellow lines. DC Mr. Newman is concerned on the grounds of “increase in traffic”.

Resolved that this Council will ask whether a comment rather than objection can be taken into consideration; this will relate to traffic issues and the possible need to extend double yellow lines

DC Dr. Skipp advised that the Kingslea Pond is now fenced and that “No Swimming” signs, will be erected around Ayshe Court Lake.

There has been a consultation on charges in the Hurst Road/Pavilions Car Park and it is agreed this will change to one hour charge rather than the current three hour minimum stay.

In answer to a question, it is confirmed that HDC is considering setting up a lottery for community causes although FNC Mr. Friswell questioned whether all community groups are aware of this proposal. Some community groups have clauses disallowing gambling.

CC Mr. Baldwin referred to the application for changes to the Forest Boys external layout and FNC confirmed it had forwarded a letter of approval dated 22nd October.

CC Dr. Dennis advised that he is aware of the ongoing issues with overgrown hedging in Station Road and understands that Highways is to meet with a member of the public.

CC Dr. Dennis gave an update about speed restrictions in New Street. He was able to confirm that the New Street proposal has not been dismissed/rejected but will be considered in the 2019 list. This is the only local Community Highways application that has been referred on in NC areas and CC Dr. Dennis is extremely disappointed. New Street residents who expressed a wish to be updated have been informed.

Queen Street regeneration – WSCC and HDC are working on a plan known as “The Deal”.

CC Dr. Dennis referred to WSCC Audit Committee and for information only, was surprised that WSCC has £15m invested with Northamptonshire County Council!!

04.11.18 Planning

64 Comptons Lane it is noted that the Applicants have submitted various photographs showing how recent approvals have not always fitted into the street scene. It is noted that FNC did object to all these recent approvals.

73 Eversfield Road – HDC Planning has now advised that the paperwork was incorrectly headed and this is a two storey building. This Council has been contacted by neighbours who are concerned about overlooking, shade issues, noise, nuisance, traffic and parking problems and this Council will object on their behalf. This Council will suggest that a single storey property (bungalow) would be acceptable.

Page Court – a number of people have enquired about rumours relating to the future of Page Court. There is no concrete information although there is the thought that Saxon Weald is looking to pull down and re-build as it is looking at every piece of land it owns to see whether it was developable.

Queens Head – there is confusion as to what exactly is happening at this site. It would seem that the exterior of the building is to remain the same whilst the interior is to be converted into flats. FNC has recently received an application to convert the ground floor into two separate apartments.

Bennetts Road – the outcome from the open meeting is that there are few reasons to object other than traffic issues and a change of design for the central part facing on to the pavement would be preferable. Mrs Sumpter had spoken to local businesses and agreed that FNC would look at the parking issues if the development proceeds.

Resolved a response is sent.

PLANNING ISSUE

Although FNC is not a statutory body, it is invited to comment on planning applications that are submitted for properties/land in this neighbourhood and on behalf of Councillors, the responses are forwarded to Planning Department by The Clerk. In recent months there has been an issue with a member of the public (both by email and a telephone call to The Clerk) who disagrees with what was said about his application. On behalf of Forest Neighbourhood Councillors, the Clerk forwarded the paperwork in the same way as all comments that this Council makes about planning applications.

HDC Planning Department validates all submitted comments to ensure they are neither discriminatory nor defamatory before being posted on line.

Planning responses November 2018

18/2286	Vacant retail units, Foundry Lane	Demolition existing two storey retail warehouse, 2198 sq ft.	No objection
2189	8 Barrington Rd	Extension to existing loft, and erection of single floor extension	No objection
2299	35 Depot Road	Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of a single storey rear extension	No objection
2338	62 Grebe Crescent	Erection of a first floor side extension over existing garage.	No objection
2105	Bourns Court, Ayshe Court Drive	Replacement of existing window grilles with double glazed sealed units in communal areas	No objection
2383	101 Heron Way	Erection of flat roof dormers to front and rear of property	No objection
17/1607	18b&20 Comptons Lane	Appeal – demolition of bungalow, erect 3 x 4 bed dwellings, parking	As our original objections were based on a Planning Inspectors decision for 94 Brighton Road it is to be hoped that this PI holds the same views with regard to nuisance to neighbours.
18/2425	64 Comptons Lane	Front & rear extensions & roof conversion	HFNC still objects to this proposal as it is out of character with adjoining properties and not consistent with the street scene.
2099	35 Oakhill Road	Retrospective for single storey rear extension	No objection
2182	25 Arthur Road	Replace flat roof with pitched roof	No objection

05.11.18 Treasurer's Report

Current Account £6,203.95, Reserve Account £1,282.03. The Clerk's honorarium and expenses have been paid for the month of November. Interest of 22p has been added to the Bank Account! It is agreed that a mobile phone will be purchased to enable a dedicated telephone line to be used for Forest Neighbourhood Council business.

06.11.18 Correspondence List that has been previously circulated and noted

Trafalgar and Denne Minutes

Appeal decision for 26 Pollards Drive - refused

HALC Draft Minutes

DITCH THE PROBLEM – an information sheet that explains riparian ownership

Correspondence regarding Winter Maintenance Plan between various Parish Councils

Bus User Survey – No. 65 affects FNC and is in Oakhill Road area

Unspent Section 106 monies - £30,800 from 44 Brighton Road and £328 from Gorings Mead. Separately there is correspondence regarding CCTV in Bennetts Field

Southwater Neighbourhood Plan – the deadline for comments was 16th November

DC/17/1607 – demolition of bungalow and erection of 3 x detached two storey four bedroom dwellings at 18b/20 Comptons Lane

Presentation Slides from Neighbourhood Planning Conference

Police Precept Survey – it seems there is to be an additional appointment of 200 local district police and we are being asked for our further opinions on the service

Appeal Judgment relating to trees – this is of importance to Parish Councils following a successful law suit where a person who was hit by a falling tree. HDC has responsibility within the unparished area of Horsham.

Neighbourhood Warden Report for November

06.11.18 Any Other Business

Blueprint – there is insufficient money available to finalise the Neighbourhood Plan and NC's are being asked to provide further sums. It is noted that HDC is not prepared to invest further money into this project. The matter will be further discussed before making any decision.

Gatwick Airport Master Plan – available online and also hard copy at Horsham Library, Consultation ends 10th January 2019.

Mr. Friswell has attended a meeting – basically about converting the emergency runway into a second runway – the Presentation Officer did say that increased air traffic would not change the level of noise on the current routes over Horsham but he could not confirm that this would be the case for future developments. **THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.40 p.m.**