

HORSHAM FOREST NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL
Clerk: Mrs M Vinall, 40 Rookwood Park, Horsham, RH12 1UB
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MINUTES OF MEETING 20th JULY 2020 7:30PM
(VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING HOSTED BY CLERK)

Present: Messrs. N. Friswell, M. Grubb, J. Milne, J. Olson, G. Sitton, G. Stanley and B. Travers
Mrs. D. Sumpter (Chairman)

District Councillors: Mr. P. Burgess, Ms. R. Fletcher and Ms. B. Walters

County Councillors: Mr. A. Baldwin, Dr. N. Dennis and Mrs. M. Millson

Public:

Press: 0

Apologies: DC Dr D. Skipp

Mrs. Sumpter invited DC Mr. Burgess to update this Council on cycling initiatives in the town centre.

Mr. Burgess referred to the local cycling and walking initiative (LCWIP) and referred to the "walking initiative". He commented that walkers are not so keen on being incorporated into one report. He also clarified that the cycling initiative is not concerned with leisure cycling but for cyclists that have a reason for cycling, e.g. work, library, shops, schools. This project is scheduled to run from 2020-2030.

The plan centres on routes A-B, using direct lines into town and concentrating on a circle, 5 km round into Horsham Centre. Broadbridge Heath, North Horsham and Southwater were included. Warnham PC is proposing a route from Warnham, passing Warnham Mill into Warnham Road and North Parade but this is not being considered at this time.

As the documents progress, they have and will be referred to PDAG, HDC Council Cabinet, Horsham Cycling Forum, Stakeholders and other interested parties. The final draft is about to be circulated and this should include Neighbourhood Councillors and some members of the public (although, to what level has not been confirmed and as at 20th July, FNC had not received this draft document).

A significant sum of money will be needed to implement the whole proposal. DC Mr. Burgess referred to money from new builds. *(NC Mr. Milne commented that he hoped money would be concentrated on one proposal rather than piecemeal. He suggested that a figure of £20m has been mooted to complete the whole scheme).*

LCWIP has initially put forward the following proposed routes:

- (from North Horsham there are possibly two routes)
- 1a A264, along Rusper Road through Littlehaven to Kings Road and then North Parade
 - 1b Along Giblets Way, North Heath Lane to North Parade
 - Roffey – along Crawley Road to Kings Road
 - Forest – along Bennetts Road, turning left into Queen Street and then into town centre

- Southwater – along to Hop Oast roundabout, entering town via Boars Head Pub. (or Two Mile Ash Road)
- Broadbridge Heath, down Farthings Hill into town

DC Mr. Burgess referred to the many hazards along the routes that will have to be assessed and noted that any improvements will have a cost implication.

The final draft is due to be published and presented in October. In the meantime, DC Mr. Burgess will confirm whether the consultation process can be added to FNC website. (later DC Mrs. Fletcher said that when there has been full public consultation, cycling schemes that are already in place in England have tended to be more successful as they have gained from local knowledge and local involvement).

Separate to LCWIP, the first tranche of WSCC money received from Central Government and specifically for immediate cycling initiatives, has been awarded. Horsham Town has one initiative.

Tranche 1 will see a **temporary** dedicated cycling and walking route in one of the two lanes in Albion Way (from Bishopric turning along to Sainsbury roundabout). There are many reservations about how this will be received and how it will work, e.g. turning into Bishopric. However, by Horsham being involved with Tranche 1 allows possible access to Tranche 2 and an application for the second round of funding that ties in with LCWIP, has been submitted. DC Mr. Burgess said that currently traffic flow in Albion Way is around 45% compared to pre-Covid 19 statistics.

East Street – CC Mrs. Millson raised the question about the introduction of a traffic order that is closing East Street from 10.00 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. allowing restaurants to have larger outdoor eating areas. There is confusion whether this includes cyclists and if it transpires that they are excluded, there will be negative reaction. This is the only cycle route into Horsham Town Centre from Forest. DC Mr. Burgess confirmed that he will urgently follow up this concern.

At this stage, DC Mr. Burgess left the Meeting but before doing so, County Councillors expressed their disappointment that they were not being involved in the draft LCWIP documents. (DC Mr. Burgess said he would follow this up). In more general terms, County and Neighbourhood Councillors referred to all the past and recent cycling initiatives/consultations/draft documents that do not seem to have been considered and asked for joined up thinking. The comment was also made that this important initiative should have been part of the Public Realm document (see later paragraph on this subject).

01.07.20 Minutes of Meeting held on 15th June 2020

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

02.07.20 Matters Arising

09.01.20 Highways

Again, Forest Neighbourhood Councillors raised their extreme disappointment in the standard of work carried out by contractors in St. Leonard's Road. Mr. Friswell felt that if this work is deemed acceptable, as Council Taxpayers, residents should question the contract. CC Mr. Baldwin said that he recently visited roads within Forest area with WSCC Highways Area Manager, Mike Thomas, and he had highlighted the fact that since 2013, St. Leonard's Road has been programmed for re-surfacing. However, Highways explained that there are roads in the district with

more deteriorating surfaces and for this reason, St. Leonard's Road re-surfacing has lost its place in the programme.

Resolved this Council will continue to monitor the surface of St. Leonard's Road and to highlight the need for its resurfacing

04.03.20 The Local Plan

Forest Neighbourhood Council has been asked to comment on the draft proposal for the way in which the Community Infrastructure Levy is managed. The three Neighbourhood Councils will be arranging a virtual meeting with HDC Carol Algar and Susannah Shaw to discuss the implications in more detail. Due to Covid-19, the Neighbourhood Plan (Blueprint) will be delayed and this means that neighbourhoods will be allocated a lower level of CIL. In addition, Neighbourhood Councils believe Blueprint, (from August 2020 if officially re-designated), will be directly involved with the draft proposal.

Resolved the three NC Councils will submit one response to the draft proposal

06.03.20 Noticeboards

Mr. Olson has volunteered to attempt to repair the two noticeboards (New Street and North Street Subway entrance) and will take over key ownership. If any form of official permission is needed, this will be addressed.

FNC would like to find other outlets to advertise its meetings but at this stage, no suitable venues have been suggested.

03.05.20 Forest Boys School

Mr. Friswell is disappointed that Forest Boys is proposing to become co-educational and he asked the status of the single sex school in Worthing. CC Mr. Baldwin explained that this is a matter to be solely decided by Forest Boys School Governors and if they decide to go down this route, it will become a co-educational school. He believes the same discussions are taking place at a Worthing School.

The discussions are being driven by falling pupil numbers at Forest Boys School.

07.06.20 Operation Watershed

Referring to the past issues at Ayshe Court Lakes and the water course, Mr. Friswell understands that there are WSCC Water Bailiffs and that this Council should ask for copies of their reports.

Resolved whilst CC Mrs. Millson has not heard about the Water Bailiff role, she will try to find out more information. She doubts there has been any involvement with Ayshe Court Lakes.

07.06.20 Local Transport Plan

Mr. Friswell commented that the route, Horsham to Capel should be looked at in conjunction with A24 corridor (Worthing to Horsham). CC Dr. Dennis explained that Horsham to Capel is not a trunk road and part of the route is in Surrey and SCC is unlikely to endorse any proposals. Informally, the comment was made that there is a tendency to overlook this way towards London and this includes the rail route through Dorking to London.

08.06.20 New Street Speed Application – speed in general terms

Following on from the last meeting, CC Dr. Dennis visited the general area with WSCC Mr. Mike Thomas. He especially looked at the proposal for a pedestrian crossing in Depot Road (by Ayshe Court). This part of the road was deemed too narrow for a pedestrian crossing or a pedestrian refuge area. He also felt that there was not enough traffic to warrant the installation.

Crossing is a major problem at school drop-off times and the fact that older residents from Ayshe Court have difficulty in crossing the road to join the bus queue, were points raised at this meeting.

Until recent times crossing at this point was managed by a School Lollipop Lady but this service was withdrawn and it is assumed this was for financial reasons.

The next stage is to contact Kingslea School to discuss its School Travel Plan and to see if this can be used as a tool for pressing for a pedestrian crossing installation and/or reinstatement of the School Lollipop Lady. Councillors felt that a simpler pedestrian crossing (belisha beacon idea) was feasible. CC Mrs. Millson commented that sometimes pedestrian crossings could in themselves cause accidents.

Resolved NC Mr. Olson agreed to liaise with Kingslea School regarding its School Travel Plan and possibly set up a sub-committee to pursue this issue

During CC Dr. Dennis visit to the area, WSCC Mike Thomas identified an area where there could be a Community Highways Scheme application, and this is a pedestrian refuge in Comptons Lane near its junction with Pollards Drive.

Resolved an application will be submitted and will be supported by the three local County Councillors

03.07.20 Forest Neighbourhood Council Logo

Firstly Mr. Olson was thanked for the work that has been involved in presenting various ideas for consideration. In answer to a question about the need for a new logo, it was explained and agreed that Forest Neighbourhood Council needs a visual identify as it moves forward with its social media content.

The 5 logos presented in Mr. Olson's e mail dated 19th July were discussed and it was agreed that Logo 1 be considered but the designer is to be asked to submit two further designs using the tree shape.. A different font is preferred; a more traditional choice like Logo 4.

04.07.20 Treasurer's Report

Current Account £7,741.86, Reserve Account £1,280.11. The Clerk's honorarium and expenses have been paid for July. Mr. Travers continues to try to arrange online banking and, as requested, has resubmitted the paperwork to NatWest Bank.

In answer to a question, Mrs. Sumpter confirmed that the money received from HDC is a grant.

05.07.20 Planning

20/1067	17 Orchard Rd.	Surgery to 1 x Beech tree	No objection
20/0979	17 Chesworth Crescent	Single floor extn. Loft extn.	n/o
20/1094	201 St Leonards Rd.	Single storey rear extn, first floor side extn.	n/o
20/1060	Hazelwood, Copperfields, Coolhurst	Erection of glasshouse sited on concrete strip foundation in garden	n/o

19/0700	50 Barrington Rd.	Appeal – Convert Butchers shop into 2 bed dwelling & single floor extn.	No further comment
20/1132	Flexible Machining Systems Ltd Units 2 and 3 and D3 Blatchford Road Horsham West Sussex RH13 5QR	Variation Condition 1, previously approved appn. DC/17/1647 (Proposed replacement of asbestos roof with taller Zinc roof to accommodate additional floor & office space, installation of new windows & rooflights) Relating to the proposed floor, elevations & roof plan	No objection
20/1187	Abbey House, Foundry Lane	Change of use, ground floor from D2 use (assembly & leisure) to C3 use (residential) to create 3 No. one bedroom flats.	HFNC still objects to unsuitable accommodation in unsuitable location.
20/0616	20 Comptons Lane	Demolish roof for first floor extn & single storey rear extn.	See below*
20/0742	Unit 1 Mulberry Estate Foundry Lane	Change of the building for licensed brewery shop.	n/o,
20/1189	66 Clarence Road	Level off existing hard standing to the rear and side elevation	n/o

*20/0616 Much time, money and talk has been spent on this application, including involvement of local District and County Councillors. All neighbours are in support, saying the application will improve the property, with the exception and opposition of an immediate neighbour in 18B, resident for 44 years. Several professional reports have been commissioned, notably that of a quantity surveyor, who has concluded that the new building will not cause any shading on solar panels of 18B. No reason for HFNC to object.

Planning Matters

Mr. Travers commented that DC/20/1187 is the final application for change of use at Abbey House, Foundry Lane and there will now be 15 one-bedroom flats, all of which this Council consider to be unsuitable accommodation both in size and location.

19 Hernbrook Drive - DC/19/1824 2-bedroom bungalow in front garden of this property
Forest Neighbourhood Council objected to this application and it was refused by HDC. The applicants are now appealing. FNC's original objections will be forwarded.

05.07.20 Reports

Mr. Milne (in his role as District Councillor) said that at an HDC Extraordinary Meeting held on 16th July, the financial situation after Covid-19 lockdown was explained and this is dire. To continue to run The Capitol Theatre, one Manager has been made redundant. There will be an issue with the re-opening The Pavilions and this will remain closed until a contractual dispute is settled. Again, it is a financial issue.

CC Mr. Baldwin referred to the "huge blackhole" in WSCC finances with a shortfall between Central Government funding to manage Covid-19 and the actual cost amounting to approximately £34m.

Referring to a future planning application from QE11 School, CC Mr. Baldwin explained there is a need for further classrooms and if this goes ahead, part of Forest School's Playing Fields will be used. As recompense, Forest Boys School will be given an all-weather pitch. FNC will be invited to comment on the planning application when it is submitted.

CC Dr. Dennis also referred to WSCC financial issues and there is a possibility that the cap on Council Tax will be eased.

Cc Mrs. Millson previously circulated her report, reprinted below:
Report from West Sussex County Councillor Morwen Millson 14/07/20

"WSCC has now caught up with the need to hold regular formal meetings on line, with the last couple of weeks seeing online meetings of Environmental and Strategic Services Select Committee and Planning Committees.

There was also a Call-in for the former committee, to deal with a Labour Party Call-in of the Cabinet Member decision to cease to offer a Senior Citizen's railcard as an alternative to the Bus Pass. Comments included several people who had not known about the option! Despite one Tory voting against the decision, it stands, with a saving of approximately £50,000 pa. However, the option is available until the end of October, so if anyone hits State pensionable age between now and then, and would find a rail pass more useful than a bus pass, you know what to do!

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travel-and-public-transport/rail-air-and-ferry-travel/senior-railcard/>

We have a full council meeting on line on Friday - all 70 of us! This will run from 10.00 - 1.15. The main items on the agenda are the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, a reset and reboot item about getting on with normal business, taking account of the issues with Children's and Fire and Rescue Services, as well as the effects of the pandemic on the council's finances - now approximately £70 million adrift: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/news/county-council-s-response-to-covid-19-and-plans-for-recovery-to-be-discussed-at-full-council-next-week/>

The Council is advertising for a partner to make the Horsham Enterprise Park a reality: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/news/partner-sought-to-help-make-horsham-enterprise-park-vision-a-reality/>

The Civic Amenity sites are now accepting virtually the full range of materials for disposal / recycling: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/news/household-waste-recycling-sites-to-accept-more-items-from-monday-6-july/>. (My husband headed over soon after 9.00 on Saturday morning and only had to queue for about 20 minutes, so the service is reasonable if you choose your time. I wouldn't personally go on Sunday or Monday, but that's just my gut feeling!)

The West Sussex Covid-19 Plan has been published: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/news/plans-for-protecting-west-sussex-residents-from-the-spread-of-covid-19-are-published/>

06.07.20 Correspondence

"Opening High Street Fund" – FNC supported the Denne NC proposals mostly relating to signage.

WSCC and HDC News Bulletins – COVID UPDATES

Public Rights of Way – It is understood that the official “walks” have now been reinstated.

Police Advisory Support Coordinator – Mr. M. Grubb has volunteered to become FNC representative.

Joint Action Group –

Salt Bins – we are now in the system to be annually asked if any of our local salt bins need refilling. All our salt bins are currently full.

HDNC Minutes

4TheYouth – Dean Sweet has re-commenced youth reporting and what is proposed for Summer months. Mr. Friswell has contacted Dean to ask why The Snack Wagon is not visiting Bennetts Field.

NOVARTIS – a recent WSCC News Release is asking for suggestions as to which developers to approach!

07.07.20 Any Other Business

County Local Committee – Forest Neighbourhood Council will ask that the next scheduled meeting is held virtually. It will not agree to a further cancellation of this meeting.

BENNETTS FIELD – Travellers have arrived in Bennetts Field. The understanding is that they broke the gate lock. There are approximately 12 caravans on site all of which are affecting the public rights of way around Bennetts Field.

HDC is taking the necessary action for their removal and this will be carried out as quickly as legally possible. The Neighbourhood Wardens are visiting the site and will be asked for a report.

Mr. Grubb reported that, as at 20th July 2020, there has not been any allotment damage.

Prior to this illegal entry FNC Mr. Stanley toured the site with the newly appointed HDC Manager, Pete Crawford, as Mr. Stanley was concerned that there were still areas that were accessible. However, at that time Mr. Crawford did not think there was an issue (there is no evidence that the travellers tried to enter Bennetts Field at these points).