

**HORSHAM FOREST NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL**  
**Clerk: Mrs M Vinall, 40 Rookwood Park, Horsham, RH12 1UB**  
**Tel: 01403 269265 E-Mail: [fnchorsham@sky.com](mailto:fnchorsham@sky.com)**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING 21<sup>st</sup> JUNE 2021 7.30 p.m.**  
**(VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING HOSTED BY CLERK)**

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

**District Councillors:** Mr. T. Hogben, Dr. D. Skipp and Ms. B. Waters

**County Councillors:** Dr. N. Dennis, Mr. J. Mercer, Mr. J. Milne (also attending in his County Councillor role)

**Public:** 1 member of public, 2 members of Cycle Forum, 2 Neighbourhood Wardens

**Apologies** DC Ms. R. Fletcher

Mrs. Sumpter welcomed Mr. Jay Mercer to this Meeting who is now County Councillor for Horsham East. CC Mr. Mercer explained that whilst this is his first time as a County Councillor, he is familiar with WSCC because he was a Senior Officer within Education.

Mrs. Sumpter also welcomed DC Mr. Tony Hogben who is now HDC Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Horsham Town, Parking and Communications.

**01.06.21 Minutes of Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

There was one amendment, referring to North Street Subway instead of Albion Way Subway. The Minutes were proposed by Mr. Travers and seconded by Mr. Friswell.

**02.06.21 Presentation by Neighbourhood Wardens**

Neighbourhood Wardens, Alison and Maria joined the Meeting; Maria was introduced to Neighbourhood Councillors. Maria thanked everyone for the smooth transition into her new role that was already rewarding. She was previously a Youth Worker and Personal Trainer.

Alison detailed issues that are current in Forest Neighbourhood and referred to the recent tragedy in Bennetts Field. The suicide of a young girl was referred to throughout the Meeting with the need to act swiftly to support Millais students during this difficult time. Alison explained that friends of the deceased child had visited Bennetts Field to lay flowers and at that time she and Maria were there to be on hand to assist in any way.

Alison also explained that, again, there are reports of drug abuse in Bennetts Field. She has no first-hand knowledge and so is changing her patrol times to try to intervene.

There is a problem with the illegal use of electric scooters in the neighbourhood. WSCC is currently preparing a Press Release.

Children have built BMX jumps close to Bens Acre. This is prohibited and the Neighbourhood Wardens are directing the children to the areas that are available for this sport – Horsham Skate Park and Highwood. (Separately, NC Mr. Puckle is concerned about the poor standard of work being carried out by contractors at the Skate Park in Horsham Park and this is being pursued). Also, the question was posed as to whether there should be more BMX jump provision at this site).

Alison ended her Presentation by saying that the Neighbourhood Wardens are currently involved with a project to celebrate diversity and will welcome any input. The project will include social media, recipe book and new posters.

Mrs. Sumpter thanked Alison and Maria for attending this Meeting and asked that they continue to provide such a positive and welcome presence in our Neighbourhood. Alison said that she will welcome any Neighbourhood Councillor who would like to join a patrol.

Alison and Maria left the Meeting.

#### **02.06.21 Presentation by Mr. Francis Vernon, Horsham Cycle Forum**

Mr. Vernon, accompanied by Forest resident, Ms. Louise Skipton-Carter, joined the Meeting to talk about one of the Cycle Forum initiatives, "Making Carfax work for Everyone". Using slides, Mr. Vernon showed how contra-flow cycling could work from Copnall Way through to Medwin Walk/Way and this will involve minimal expense. The route from Copnall Way is fairly straight forward and requires little work but at the bend near the Crown pub, there may be a problem with the way in which cars and buses accelerate to turn and use the whole width. Mr. Vernon is suggesting that bollards are placed here to reduce the width and provide a safe cycle route. The West Street crossing may also be an issue, and the proposal is to make this a continuous footway, i.e. making it a pedestrian right of way. Another area of concern is the Blackhorse Way turning and a solution might be to reverse the give way sign from Causeway to Blackhorse Way.

Mr. Vernon explained that the Copnall Way proposal has been discussed with HDC through Public Realm document and the Bus Company, both of whom are relatively positive. The proposal has also been presented to The Horsham Society and informally to Denne NC.

The next part of Mr. Vernon's Presentation related to Medwin Walk and involves two way cycling and removing the bush at the junction towards North Street. This is more problematic, and Neighbourhood Councillors were concerned about the removal of the bush which acts as a natural deterrent for pedestrians and how the scheme would work on market days.

Mr Vernon then referred to New Street that is in Forest Neighbourhood and the problems encountered by cyclists. Mrs. Skipton-Carter said that she regularly cycles into Horsham Town and when in New Street, has encountered aggression and competitiveness from car drivers. She said that cars can, at times, mount the pavement.

Mr. Vernon and Mrs. Skipton-Carter asked whether they could work with Forest Neighbourhood to develop proposals that would make New Street more people friendly and better for residents and shops. Both CC Mr. Dennis and Mrs. Sumpter explained the recent Resident Questionnaires and 20 mph application that was refused and CC Mr. Dennis reiterated the problems that side road residents perceive if any change is implemented.

Mrs. Sumpter thanked Mr. Vernon for his excellent Slide Presentation and said that this Neighbourhood Council would discuss the Carfax implications and put forward its comments. About New Street, Mrs. Sumpter reiterated CC Mr. Dennis' comments that "it is very very difficult to get the support of residents and it becomes an "impasse". However, Neighbourhood Councillors are keen to join a site meeting to look at proposals.

Mr. Vernon and Mrs. Skipton-Carter then left this Meeting.

#### **03.06.21 Matters Arising**

##### **04.03.20 The Local Plan**

Whilst no information is known, The Local Plan may be released on 28<sup>th</sup> July. Later in the Meeting, DC Dr. Skipp said that this is the dominating issue at HDC and it is coming up to the time when decisions have to be made.

**05.03.21      Bridleway off Arun Way (Friends of Chesworth Farm and Wilder Horsham)**

Mrs. Sumpter explained that the upgrade to the Bridleway will involve a different route to the one that is currently used. Mrs. Sumpter will speak to a member of the Horsham Allotment Committee.

There is a joint neighbourhood council meeting to receive the presentation from "Wilder Horsham" on 1<sup>st</sup> July.

**07.04.21      Street Naming**

Whilst HDC Jenny Smith, Facilities Management Coordinator has responded to our concerns and explained the procedure, no-one has answered the query concerning the naming of Turpitt Court.

Mr. Puckle has researched good policy for street/development naming which states it is not good practice to use living persons' names. He will prepare a response to HDC.

**Resolved**

**09.05.21      Other Business**

HDC Planning Enforcement has quickly taken a strong stance **against "We Buy Any Car"** who had been using the YMCA site in Gorings Mead. It is understood that "We Buy Any Car" will be making a formal planning application and this will be closely monitored by this Council.

**Bennetts Field** – Mrs. Sumpter is currently involved in talks to further secure Bennetts Field from traveller incursion. (Later in the Meeting, the member of public referred to the way in which a site at his old address was secured by using steel "dragon's teeth" that are 4-5" in diameter. He said that whilst this was initially more expensive, it was value for money as wooden posts deteriorate over time. Mrs. Sumpter will put forward this suggestion).

**SHELLEYTHON (continuous reading of Shelley's poetry)** is scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> July in Horsham Nature Garden and The Bandstand.

**04.06.21      Public Forum**

The member of public explained that he had recently relocated to Horsham and is very keen to be involved in the upkeep of Ayshe Court Lakes. He has attended two successful working parties, mostly working at the top lake. Mr. Richard Black, Sussex Wildlife also joined the Group.

The Group is very keen to clear the invasive laurel at the Depot Road end as this is making the area "gloomy" and it would also like to remove the invasive rhododendrons in the middle of the lower lake. The rhododendron removal is specialist work and the member of public said there are grants that they believe they can access.

However, referring to the major task, de-silting the lake, this is a major expense, and he is suggesting that Section 106 monies is applied for. Currently he is re-visiting original ownership (although in the past, FNC has concluded that these lakes are Crown Property owing to bankruptcy).

The member of public ended referring to the success of recent work as wildlife has returned to the lakes. He invited Councillors to join the next Working Party on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 9.00a.m-Midday.

Mrs. Sumpter thanked the member of public for his update and involvement in this continuing project.

#### **05.06.21 Reports from County and District Councillors**

**CC Mr. Mercer** has been appointed to the Children and Young Persons' Scrutiny Committee and is aware of the discussions surrounding the future of Children's Centres. Later in the Meeting, CC Mr. Milne said that it is more than likely that the decision to close most of the children's centres will be announced on 30<sup>th</sup> June. He believes that the savings made have already been re-allocated.

Mr. Olson, on behalf of Forest Neighbourhood Councillors, submitted its response to the Consultation before the closing date that was 17<sup>th</sup> May and this was strongly in favour of retaining the Children's Centres, especially in this neighbourhood. This Council's opinion is that the closure will end early help group work, universal access events and social support. **Resolved to forward FNC response to CC Mr. Mercer pointing out its surprise that it seems a decision has already been taken (before 21<sup>st</sup> June) when the Consultation process only ended on 17<sup>th</sup> May.**

**CC Mr. Dennis** referred to Victoria Street and the traffic amendment has been re-advertised. This will put in place single yellow lines on the right hand side of the far section with a section for "permit holders only" Parking on right hand side will be "Evenings and Sundays".

Under the Community Highways Scheme, FNC has submitted an application for a refuge in Comptons Lane. Whilst the proposed position has the backing of Highways, WSCC Stephen Douglas, Traffic Engineer is already intimating that this is not a viable siting.

CC Mr. Dennis has pictures of the poor road repairs carried out in Corunna Drive.

CC Mr. Dennis is in discussion about using a different form of road surface at the bottom of New Street that is more durable (concrete surface). This will be more costly and so he is not confident this will go ahead.

The next CLC Meeting is scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> July.

**CC Mr. Milne** referred to the appointment of Morgan Sindall Group as its partner in a joint development project. The News Release March 2021 stated:

*"West Sussex County Council has created a new property development initiative by joining forces with a leading development and construction company in a long-term joint venture.*

*The County Council will be working with Morgan Sindall Group plc to develop surplus County Council land into new homes and commercial premises."*

CC Mr. Milne specifically referred to Muggerridge Field that falls within this remit. He is also putting forward a Motion that before Morgan Sindall commence work, a list of essential use is prepared.

At this stage, Mr. Friswell spoke about the need to factor in Community facilities, e.g. Scout Huts. This has been neglected in the past with the result there are large developments with few or no young people facilities. The member of public referred to a Hillingdon initiative where that Council set the selling price of land at a level where the builder was able to set aside funds for a Scout Hut within the development.

Later in the Meeting, Mr. Friswell again referred to the importance of scouting provision; the need for youth facilities has been highlighted by recent devastating mental health issues in this district.

DC Dr. Skipp, in his newly appointed role as HDC Chairman, has opened the Well Being Centre in Horsham Town (alongside TK Maxx). He is extremely impressed by this Centre where people can “pop in” to receive help and advice – as its name suggest “well being advice”.

DC Mr. Hogben referred to his new role that includes Town Representation and he is keen to work in a positive way with groups such as Neighbourhood Councils. He believes that the new Cabinet is more politically balanced. He referred to the following:

- LCWIP where the sum of £130,000 is likely to be spent on developing the top 5 including routes into schools.
- Drill Hall future – of the three interested parties, only British Legion is now in talks. There is to be a 2-year consultation. There needs to be re-thinking about Community Assets including the future use of Highwood.
- Car Parking – as part of his remit, he is responsible for parking issues and commented that receipts are 31% down on previous years and this equates to over £1m income. There is the thought that commuter car parks will never return to previous capacity. His responsibility for car parking revenue may mean he has more access to funding for town projects.

DC Mrs. F. Haigh again referred to The Local Plan and the high level of input that is needed at this time. See discussion about Town Councils under 09.06.21.

#### **06.06.21 Planning**

Mr. Travers confirmed that the Inspector has dismissed the Appeal against planning refusal for Station Studio, Station Road.

21/0642	1 St Georges Gardens	Convert loft, dormers	no objection
21/0768	105 Bennetts Road	Single storey side extn., hip end, etc.	n/o
21/1043	14 Brambling Road	Demolish conservatory, erect single storey. rear ext. & porch	Cannot access plans
21/0545	Horsham Railway Station	3 bay cantilever waiting shelter, 8 speakers	n/o
21/0808	54 Smithbarn	Single storey rear extns., 1 <sup>st</sup> floor extn over garage, etc.	n/o
21/0888	10 Highlands Road	Single storey side extn., & 1 <sup>st</sup> floor rear extn.	n/o
21/0902	32 Devonshire Road	Demolish lean-to sun room, erect single storey side/rear extn.	n/o

#### **07.06.21 Treasurer’s Report**

Current Account £10,238.68, Reserve Account £1,286.22. The Clerk’s Honorarium and Expenses have been paid for June and the annual Zoom charge has been settled, £143.88.

### **08.06.21 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies**

Mrs. Sumpter explained that Horsham Blueprint is waiting for the Statement to be signed off so that the Neighbourhood Plan referendum can proceed. It is important to ensure that any Neighbourhood Plan timings do not coincide with Local Plan dates as this will cause confusion. There is some urgency to adopting the Neighbourhood Plan as this will entitle the "neighbourhood" to directly receive 25% Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Questions for the 3 Chairs/HDC Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> July are invited.

### **09.06.21 Town Council**

Mrs. Sumpter said that this Neighbourhood Council has not had any form of discussion pro or against this suggestion that has been highlighted in West Sussex County Times. She is aware that there are residents who are keen to move forward in this way. The 1995 referendum failed, citing the principal drawback that it adds a further layer of bureaucracy. It is also noted that there are discussions about unitary authorities.

The Neighbourhood Plan, when adopted, is a way in which a Town Council proposal can be re-visited and this would avoid the need to raise a petition. The Horsham Society is also actively interested in the Town Council debate.

DC Mrs. Haigh commented that if there was a Town Council, it would be able to manage its Community Assets. At this stage, DC Mr. Hogben commented that some of the town's assets, e.g. Horsham Park, Horsham Capitol Theatre run at a huge loss plus it would mean that town residents would have to pay a larger sum than is currently paid to the Special Charge. DC Mrs. Haigh said that assets such as Horsham Capitol Theatre, Horsham Park are not town but district amenities and therefore should not be considered in the equation.

**Resolved that a Town Council proposal should be discussed in greater detail after the Neighbourhood Plan has been signed off.**

### **10.06.21 Correspondence**

**Small Electrical Textiles and Battery Collection Briefing Note dated 20<sup>th</sup> May**

**No Incinerator4Horsham**

**WSCC and HDC Newsletters with updates relating to Corona Virus, details of food grants**

**HDC Newsletter Welcome Back Fund**

**WSCC Household Waste Trial Booking /WSCC How to stop fly tipping**

**Talk Sussex Police**

**HDC Standards**

**Roadworks over Railway Bridge**

**HALC**

**Leechpool Woods**

Please note a licence has been granted for a coffee van to be sited near play area at weekends.

**WSCC COUNCILLORS "Talk with Us"**

Taking place on 1<sup>st</sup> July with WSCC Horsham Councillors.

**SASH Carer's Strategy Survey (SASH is an acronym for Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust**

**WSCC A24 resurfacing advice** – explaining the use of latest technology for resurfacing that is "more resilient to potholes"

**North Street Subway** – this flooded during w/c 17<sup>th</sup> June.

**11.06.21 Any Other Business**

NC Mr. Friswell advised that The Horsham Society is intending to re-introduce "Guided Walks around Horsham Town" and is currently preparing leaflets. Forest Neighbourhood Council agreed to promote this initiative on its social media pages and noticeboards.

NC Mr. Friswell commented that Horsham Museum is currently closed and is also being re-furbished. He understands that HDC is reluctant to continue using Horsham Museum as its Tourism Office.

The Meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.