

HORSHAM FOREST NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL
Clerk: Mrs M Vinall, 40 Rookwood Park, Horsham, RH12 1UB
Tel: 01403 269265 E-Mail: fncchorsham@sky.com

MINUTES OF MEETING 13th DECEMBER 2021 7.30 p.m.
(VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING HOSTED BY CLERK)

Present: Messrs. N. Friswell, J. Olson (arr.8.30 p.m.) C. Puckle, G. Sitton, G. Stanley and B. Travers. Mrs. D. Sumpter (Chairman)
District Councillors: Ms. R. Fletcher (arr.7.50), Mr. C. Mitchell and Dr. D. Skipp (arr. 7.50)
County Councillors: CC Dr. N. Dennis (arr. 8.00 p.m.) and Mr. Jay Mercer
Public: 0
Apologies Mr. J. Milne

01.12.21 Minutes of Meeting held on 15th November 2021

The current account figure was amended to £8,079.96. The Minutes were proposed by Mr. Sitton and seconded by Mr. Stanley.
(The Meeting was opened by the Deputy Chairman. Due to technical problems, the Chairman joined the meeting after item 07.10.21 Defibrillators).

02.12.21 Matters Arising

04.03.21 The Local Plan

(See comments throughout the Minutes)

04.03.21 Blueprint

Mrs. Sumpter is disappointed that the referendum date has not been set.

04.10.21 Station Road Planters

After discussion and as there has been no contact with the volunteers, it was decided that, at this time, FNC will not be following up the public liability issue. The gardeners have organised and carried out the work independently and in a voluntary capacity.

07.10.21 Defibrillators

It is understood that a national database is being set up.

Resolved FNC Mr. Puckle will prepare a local list.

11.10.21 Communication – future of meetings

Between November and this month's meeting, the pandemic situation has changed and due to the Omicron variant, it was agreed that Zoom meetings will continue until March 2022. After that time the proposal is to return to Salvation Army Hall.

In the meantime, it was agreed that Mr. Puckle and the Clerk will ascertain whether it is feasible to hold hybrid meetings. It may be necessary to purchase equipment and the Treasurer confirmed that funding is available.

Resolved to arrange a preliminary visit in January (CP and MV)

03.11.21 District Councillors

Mrs. Sumpter welcomed DC Mr. Christian Mitchell to this Meeting. Following the appointment of DC Jonathan Chowen as Leader of HDC, DC Mitchell explained that the new Cabinet will be placing the environment at the top of its agenda. DC Chowen has asked Cllr. James Wright to be Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs. In his news Release, DC Chowen said that in the same way as DC Wright is championing rural areas, DC Mitchell will champion Horsham town. DC Mitchell said that he is keen to promote and support town management, some of which are in the Public Realm document. He commented that he has attended a Shelley Memorial Committee Meeting and that this project is moving forward. It is likely that the Memorial will be placed in Horsham Park.

DC Mitchell said that the new HDC Cabinet had discussed the legally required medium term financial strategy which is a pre-cursor to the February 2022 Meeting. He explained that this strategy cannot be put in place until all Precepts have been set. Referring to 2022/2021 Special Charge, Mrs. Sumpter said that HDC Dominic Bradley (Head of Finance and Performance) did agree to contact the three NC's for their input but this has not happened. DC Mr. Mitchell will follow this up.

Relating to The Local Plan, DC Mitchell said that the water neutrality issue will inevitably lead to a recalibration of the housing numbers (reducing the number). He highlighted the fact that, in the past, Horsham District has taken housing numbers from Chichester and Crawley where there are land shortages.

DC Mitchell referred to a recent event when Mrs. Eve Mauchel and Mr. G. Newman became Honorary Aldermen of Horsham District. Both Mrs. Mauchel and Mr. Newman have also been closely involved with this Neighbourhood Council over many years and Neighbourhood Councillors were pleased that their commitments have been recognised.

04.11.21 Planning – The Forest School Application No. WSCC/047/21 Proposal to create a 3G Artificial Grass Pitch with perimeter fencing, floodlighting, macadam hardstanding, storage container, timer acoustic barrier fence and macadam access pathway

Forest Neighbourhood Council submitted a detailed objection to this application, and this has been acknowledged by Mr. Edward Anderson, WSCC Planning. Residents have contacted District Councillors with concerns, some of which were after the consultation end date but with the comment that WSCC had not contacted all households that would be affected by the proposal. It is now understood that the decision will be taken through delegated powers rather than, as originally thought, by WSCC Planning. The original timescale was for the decision to be made before the end of 2021 but if it is delegated, this will probably be February 2022.

CC Mr. Mercer said that this is a complex issue, trying to balance the benefits to and needs of a secondary school without adversely affecting the local neighbourhood. DC Dr. Skipp suggested the Pitch could be built in another part of the School Playing Field causing less disruption. HDC has also sent an objection letter. DC Dr. Skipp is disappointed that the current WSCC system does not allow District Councillors to have the right to speak at WSCC Planning Meetings. CC Mr. Mercer suggested that Councillors speak as residents. For speeches to have the maximum impact, it will be important for residents to use their time slots in a way that covers all the objection points.

Resolved FNC will use social media to collate a list of residents who wish to object to ensure that all objections are made known.

6.11.21 Neighbourhood Wardens

There is no further formal information available. However, Mr. Sitton did feel that changes to the warden programme are being muted.

04.11.21 Newsletter

The Newsletter has now been printed and circulated. There appears to be gaps in the delivery schedule including McLeod Road, Grebe Crescent, Oakhill Road, Pollards Drive and Comptons Lane. So far, feedback is positive and Mr. Olson was again thanked for his involvement.

Resolved that Mrs. Sumpter will follow up the circulation issue. District Councillors will be sent hard copies.

03.12.21 District and County Councillor Reports

CC Mr. Jay Mercer, who sits on the Children and Young People Services Committee, advised that OFSTED has commended WSCC for making improvements following its past report but did not award “good” to the Service. One comment was “social work was less inadequate”. He suggested that the pace of improvement is too slow.

The increasing high numbers of children with special educational needs is a particular issue for school budgets (the needs of statemented children with special needs must be met). CC Mr. Mercer referred to this rising cost, saying “there is simply not enough money”.

CC Mr. Mercer attended a Meeting dealing with administrative matters that discussed food waste collections and which tried to ascertain whether, if the programme was introduced before the official date, Central Government would meet the first costs.

20 mph speed reduction was also discussed at the meeting together with the introduction of quiet lanes.

DC Dr. Skipp again referred to The Local Plan. He believes that the final draft will be delayed by 8-9 months as there is no “quick fix” to the water neutrality issue. He said that “there is extremely good mitigation for water neutrality from Southern Water and Natural England”. Smaller developments are likely to be the most affected.

DC Ms. Fletcher commented on the publication of the first proposals for the Sustainable Transport and Capability Fund - prepared by WSP Consultants. From first appearance, the Horsham percentage of proposals appears to be good but, in reality, the two proposals are for minor works around The Forest School. It is proposed that there will be a parallel/zebra crossing to the service road and then a further crossing in Bennetts Road. In DC Ms. Fletcher’s opinion, there are serious flaws to both proposals.

Councillors discussed other suggestions for safety improvement at The Forest School. It is known that the oak tree is unlikely to be felled and that The Forest School Governors are putting forward reasons why buses cannot access the school grounds at pick up times.

Resolved to ask CC Mr. Milne for an update

On a wider scale, DC Ms. Fletcher is involved with the Conservation Area Consultation. She is particularly interested in the proposal to include Norfolk Terrace.

Relating to the new Bohunt School, DC Ms. Fletcher said that the bridge across the dual carriageway will not be in place when it is opened and, as an interim measure, school children will all be “bused” to and from the site. Therefore, there will be temporary stops appearing around the town. It will be a disciplinary offence if a child attempts to cross the dual carriageway by foot.

HDC will be looking at 2022/2023 grants and Ms. Fletcher commented that there are likely to be shortfalls. It is confirmed the Citizens Advice Bureau will continue in its current format.

CC Mr. Dennis referred to the virtual meeting that will be held on 14th January to look at regularising lorry signage around Parsonage Road/Foundry Lane (some signage is incorrect). NC Mr. Milne will be representing FNC.

Discussion followed about the lorry routes around Horsham Town. The low height of The Iron Bridge is always the stumbling block and of all the possible routes, it was agreed there is no better alternative than the existing route along Clarence Road. CC Mr. Dennis did refer to out of town signage that directs lorry drivers who are not delivering locally, to by-passes, but this is not always adhered to.

CC Mr. Dennis referred to a request to reduce Harwood Road speed limit to 30 mph. The Area Highways Manager has advised that this request does not meet the criteria and CC Mr. Dennis

agrees that the speed limits in that area needs to be looked at “as a whole” rather than individually. He does agree that a traffic island would be beneficial where the footpath route crosses over.

Relating to the CPZ’s, the request for Tanyard Close could potentially go ahead as it is a minor amendment and contiguous to the major design.

DC Mr. Olson has discussed electric chargers with Helen Peacock, HDC lead for the WSCC EV charging points project and Marc Rankin, Head of Environmental Health and Licensing, specifically about pavements that would be acceptable. It is the early phase of this project but discussions relating to off-street parking could mostly affect Forest Neighbourhood because of the housing stock. Separately, DC Mr. Olson has been appointed to HDC Housing Advisory Group.

Resolved FNC Councillors will put forward suggestions for electric charging points positions when more detail is known.

04.12.21 Planning

DC/21/2555 Beggars Roost, Brighton Road – There is a concern that this 2-bay garage is being built in front of the building line.

Resolved Mrs. Sumpter will make a site visit

Planning Applications – Dec 2021

DC/21/2592	203 St Leonards Road	Single storey rear extn & convert garage to office	No objection
DC/21/2562	15 Potters Croft	Single storey front porch extn	N/O
DC/21/2504	The Heathers, 63 Highlands Rd	2storey rear & side extn	N/O
DC/21/2509	3 Bens Acre	Erect larger replacement porch	N/O
DC/21/2477	12 Coolhurst Lane	2 storey side & single storey rear extn	N/O
DC/21/1774	Maplehurst, Kentwyns Drive	Amendment	N/O
DC/21/2501	Unit B1, Foundry Lane	Install entrance door into wall	N/O
DC/21/2587	47 Cambridge Road	Loft conversion with dormer and roof lights	N/O

DC/21/2690 18 Potters Croft Demolish garage & erect 2 storey 2 bed dwelling
 FNC OBJECTS to this application on the grounds of over-intensification of the site; out of keeping with the street scene; will set a precedent for the area; the roof line is unbalanced and not in keeping with adjacent properties; and whilst there are 2 parking spaces it will be very difficult for cars to manoeuvre and exit the plot safely.

05.12.21 Treasurer’s Report

Current Account £7,191.96, Reserve Account £1,286.28. The Clerk’s honorarium and expenses have been paid. Newsletter costs £478 have been paid. £100 donation has been made to St. Catherine’s Hospice in recognition of Mr. J’s work in maintaining the website.

06.12.21 Code of Conduct

DC Mr. Skipp explained that he had asked for Neighbourhood Councils to be included in the discussions about the Local Government Association’s Code of Conduct. This has now been adopted by Horsham District Council but there is no legal obligation for Neighbourhood

Councils to follow suit. However DC Dr. Skipp believes that if NC's do adopt the Code, there will be more transparency and residents will find it easier to access.

Mrs. Sumpter made two points – in the past and on the very rare occasion when needed, HDC Legal Department had assisted and, rather than independently, a Code of Conduct should be adopted by all three NC's.

NC's Mr. Puckle, Mr. Olson and Mr. Travers would like the HDC Code of Conduct to be adopted in its entirety. The comment was made that an independent Code of Conduct would have maintenance issues.

Resolved Mrs. Sumpter will now discuss the matter with the NC Chairs. DC Dr. Skipp agreed to circulate the adopted Code of Conduct as this has amendments to the original version.

07.12.21 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies

Mrs. Sumpter attended a positive meeting about Green Spaces and had asked for the slides to be circulated. She would send these to FNC once received. She commented that there is a Mugeridge Field Campaign Group but she is unable to ascertain who is the organiser and what steps are being taken.

08.12.21 Correspondence

E mail relating to support that is available to help family and friend carers. WSCC Cabinet approved the changes to adult care and support, e mail dated 16th November 2021

WSCC and HDC responses to Gatwick Northern Runway proposal neither of which were supportive. The decision was taken that FNC would not respond to this proposal.

WSCC Donate a Tree

WSCC Town and Parish News

WSCC & HDC covid updates including latest statistics by district

HDC Christmas Comes to Horsham District and Shop Locally

Warden Steering Group Meeting 17th January 2022

HDC Building Control Awards – Connor Hesling, Apprentice Building Control Surveyor and Sarah Collard, Customer Support Administrator.

Police Crime Commissioner Survey

ANNUAL RIVERSIDE WALK to take place on Saturday 14th May 2022 and will now be run by the Horsham Scouts.

We Buy Any Car Sales Cabin (noticed at rear of Horsham Railway Station). Jo Hopkins, HDC Compliance, has advised that a Case Number was issued at end of September 2021.

Monthly Compliance Statistics for November.

Jenny Rowley – request to help (monetarily) with an organisation involved with young peoples' mental health.

09.12.21 Any Other Business

NC Mr. Puckle again referred to the poor standard of surfacing work carried out on A281 repair work between the junctions of Brighton Road/Elm Grove/Tanyard Close. For background information, this is an area where there are regular issues that are caused by blocked drains and an underground culvert.

In this instance, the problem is in the centre of the road where it is uneven and there is ponding every time it rains. The hazard will be more serious if this water freezes and it could expand any cracks in the road surface as it thaws.

Resolved to contact Area Highways Manager WSCC directly and ask for a site visit.

The Meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.