

HORSHAM FOREST NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL
Clerk: Mrs M Vinall, 40 Rookwood Park, Horsham, RH12 1UB
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MINUTES OF MEETING 16th MAY 2022 7.30 p.m. in Salvation Army Hall

Present: Messrs N. Friswell, J. Milne, J. Olson, C. Puckle, G. Stanley and B. Travers. Mrs. D. Sumpter (Chairman)
District Councillors: Ms R. Fletcher and Dr. D. Skipp
County Councillors: Dr. N. Dennis (arrived at 8.30 p.m.) Mr. J. Mercer
Public: 2
Apologies FNC Mr. G. Sitton; DCs Mr. C. Mitchell and C. Trott

Mrs. Sumpter welcomed Mr. Pete Crawford, HDC Parks and Countryside Manager to the Meeting. Mr. Crawford explained that he has been in post for 2 years although the pandemic has meant his work programme has been different from anticipated. He describes himself as overseeing “the Green Heart of the Council” with HDC owning an Estate of 200 square miles of which 400 hectares (1000 acres) are over multiple sites and around 250 sites covering country and woodland park, parks, monuments, football and sports pitches, closed and open cemeteries. He has negotiated two new contracts for grounds and tree maintenance that covers approx. 1/3 of the total estate at a cost of £400,000 p.a. He explained that HDC will only carry out works on dead, dying and dangerous trees and this occasionally frustrates members of the public. For information, HDC Andy Bush is responsible for tree preservation orders and HDC Mark Pullen is responsible for tree surveying.

Capital funding works within this neighbourhood are scheduled to be carried out in the vicinity of Riverside Walk from Bens Acre towards Hammerpond Road of replacing the footbridge, and drainage works in Bennetts Field. Finding the most cost-effective drainage system for Bennetts Field, if successful, will likely become the future blueprint for HDC’s other site where there are drainage problems. At Chesworth Farm, work has been carried out to enhance the footpath and install a viewing platform. No work is currently scheduled for Leechpool Woods.

Mr. Crawford explained his role in climate mitigation. Whilst there is no easy resolution to the problem, in the long term, he is looking at flooding water courses and how these are reacting to the changing weather patterns. He is looking at planting more trees in streets to provide shade for people and wildlife although there is now different thinking about the advantages to general tree planting. He commented that within the parks and playing fields, he estimates there is 36,000 tons of carbon locked in the soil. In answer to a question about street tree planting, he explained that modern ways do enable trees to be planted in a more confined ground space although NC Mr. Friswell believes that WSCC still specify 6 feet.

HDC is in partnership with Sussex Wildlife Trust to promote “Wilder Horsham” – working with farmers, landowners and community groups to deliver nature recovery. HDC Helen Peacock is the lead for this initiative. Nature Recovery Network Mapping is being carried out in accordance with Environment Act 2021 (Policy Paper headed Nature Recovery Network dated April 2022 is a legislation update). HDC’s goal is to become carbon neutral on its direct emissions from the fleet of vehicles and within Council buildings by 2030 and to be completely carbon neutral by 2050. Answering questions about ways in which biodiversity can be addressed, Mr. Crawford said that his Department will look at any suggested areas where mowing could be less regular and will follow up the concern that the edges along Chesworth Farm footpaths have been unexpectedly mown. He said that he is backing away from planting formal beds in community areas. About leaf blowers being used after grass cutting, Mr. Crawford said that there has to be a form of compromise as if pathways become slippery due to grass clippings, this then becomes a safety hazard.

Mr. Crawford referred to his Presentation Slide, "biodiversity net gain is an approach to a development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before". The current problem is that a developer does not have a specific obligation (to his development) and can direct funding to any area within the country. Mr. Crawford is keen that any initiative targets local areas.

Before leaving the Meeting, HDC Mr Crawford confirmed that mini management plans for smaller sites are in hand although there will be low intervention. He will again refer the request for a dog bin on HDC land in Arun Way with colleagues.

Mr. Crawford was thanked for attending this Meeting and giving such an informative and interesting presentation.

01.05.22 Minutes of Meeting held on 11th April 2022

These were proposed by Mr. Friswell and seconded by Mr. Puckle. The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

02.05.22 Matters Arising

04.03.21 Blueprint

Mrs. Barbara Childs (HDC) believes that the water neutrality issue will shortly be resolved and the Referendum should take place before the end of 2022.

08.01.22 Inconsistent Regulatory Highways Weight Restriction Signage

Mr. Puckle has now circulated the second draft and the intention is for this to be adopted at the June Meeting and then taken to the next level.

06.02.22 SID – speed indicator device

There are siting problems in Kings Road, and this will prohibit its use.

06.04.22 20's Plenty For Us

FNC has passed the resolution. NC Mr. Olson will now progress this.

07.04.22 Doomsday Lane

It is established that lorries are inappropriately using this route although there is a road width restriction of 6'6". WSCC Highways will be approached to replace/repair signs along this road, and this should have some impact on the current safety issues.

08.04.22 Riverside Walk

This took place on 14th May starting at Horsham Rugby Club. Around 200 people began the Walk which is fewer than previous years and this might be connected to the date and/or weather.

Mr. Puckle believes the pathway in the vicinity of Hampers Lane is a safety hazard.

Resolved Mr. Puckle and Mrs. Sumpter will make a site visit with the view to ask for Section 106 monies to install a boardwalk.

04.04.22 Planning – We Buy Any Car – DC/21/2766

DC Mr Olson and DC Mr. Milne attended this Planning Committee Meeting, and despite being recommended for approval, the application was refused. As this is retrospective, it is uncertain how the Company will react. Mr. Paul Hobbs, Principal Environment Officer, has responded to FNC's concern about the working environment for employees and has set up a Memorandum to Public Health and Licensing – Planning Consultation to put in place an agreement with Horsham Railway Station (Case Officer Steve Astles).

Resolved to formally ask Planning Enforcement to begin proceedings.

03.05.22 District and County Councillor Reports

DC Mr. Olson referred to issues within his area including grass cutting and fibre work in Sterling Way that he continues to pursue. There are vegetation issues in Oakhill Road that he will raise at a forthcoming meeting with WSCC Highways Manager Mr. Adam Bazley.

DC Mr. Olson believes that there is an application for a 5G mast in Elm Grove (close to Clarence Court). How to object to this siting is unclear. FNC is unanimous in stating this is an inappropriate position.

Resolved to carry out further investigations

CC Mr. Milne advised the first responses to the CPZ Review indicates that, in principle, WSCC will agree to include Tanyard Close but has not mentioned Arun Way or Fletchers Close and assumes the CPZ will not go further out,

GREENFIELD FARM

This is not in this neighbourhood but is of concern. Auction House London is selling this land and roadways on 25th May for an approximate sum of £5,000. CC Mr. Milne explained that the actual land and roadway land are often freehold that is retained by the original owner. When that company is liquidated, prospective buyers are “gambling” on what could happen in the future. Although Highways does not own the freehold, it has absolute right over the roadway land. The comment was made that an area in Trafalgar neighbourhood that was similarly advertised for sale was purchased by a resident consortium to protect it from future development.

CC Mr. Mercer confirmed that WSCC Children’s Social Care Services is now out of special measures – at one stage this could have been transferred to an independent trust.

The requirements of children with special needs are currently being discussed and Mr. Mercer suggested that there may be expansion at QE11 School, especially because it has a high Ofsted grading and is well esteemed. Mr. Mercer referred to the Early Years Consultative Form that is currently online and a comprehensive document about school places.

CC Dr. Dennis advised that the current Clarence Road lorry diversion is now in place. During CC Dr. Dennis’ report about renewing faded yellow lines, he referred to a change of policy regarding “give way” signs.” It would seem that the new Policy is for these to be phased out with the suggestion that this will promote smoother traffic flow.

The Forest School Headteacher has advised that the “all weather pitch” will imminently be installed but CC Mr. Mercer said that the designs are still incomplete and, when ready, will have to be published and agreed.

Reference to the poor state of St. Leonard’s Road was once more highlighted and will again be referred to WSCC Highways (this will also be raised by Mr. Milne and Mr. Mercer at the scheduled meeting with WSCC Mr. Adam Bazley).

DC Ms. Fletcher referred to Oakland Close where a resident would like to purchase part of the land that is currently owned and managed by HDC. There is anxiety about the future of this land that borders the Riverside Walk. At this time, HDC strongly rejects any idea that it wants any change to this open land.

Parade of shops, Queen Street – the ownership map shows that WSCC owns the footpath but the land in front of the shops is probably owned by HDC. The concern about mopeds and cars parking outside the shop, Papa Johns, intensifies. DC Ms. Fletcher is putting forward

several ideas, one of which is to redesignate the parking bay in Queensway to a loading bay and possibly add two loading bays along the road.

04.05.22 Comptons Lane Improvements

This Consultation is aiming to improve safety of The Forest School children. Neighbourhood Councillors were disappointed that not all residents on adjacent roads were individually invited to attend an Open Evening organised by WSCC at Forest school. FNC social media did promote the meeting which had some effect and now, through this way, residents are being encouraged to respond to the consultation.

FNC's are disappointed that the bus laybys are not situated within the school grounds as is the case at nearby Millais and Tanbridge House School. Regardless of the introduction of the proposed laybys, stationary buses do impede the sight line, they will be pulling out rather than turning into the road which gives the driver a clearer pedestrian vision. It is understood that the preferred option has been discounted due to road issues including underground cabling and if this is the case, FNC will support the proposal. This will mean that funding is available for work to commence in 2023.

The reasons for adding the pedestrian crossings and changes to the service road are acknowledged as pedestrian safety improvements. Cycling - pupils collecting their bicycles from the school racks will be leaving the school by one route; it is suggested there are two cycle routes to exit the school and this will avoid congestion.

In general terms, FNC is disappointed that the improvements have little or no impact on the cycling routes as outlined in LCWIP. In addition, the improvements are not far-reaching or ambitious. The "improvements" could have been an opportunity to introduce a "School Street". There are obvious places where traffic could be diverted at school time, and experimental schemes throughout the country, show that there are major benefits including the unexpected outcome that there is less anti-social behaviour caused by "road rage". Central Government is not averse to rewarding major grants for such incentives.

Resolved Forest Neighbourhood Council will support the improvements to ensure current funding is used.

05.05.22 A24 Horsham to Dorking Corridor Feasibility Study Feedback Form – May 2022

This is not within FNC's area but the A24 is used by most residents in Horsham.

Resolved Mrs Sumpter and Mr. Puckle will now look at the Presentation with a view to responding to the Consultation.

Planning in May 2022

22/0604	34 Depot Road	Erect a part two-storey, part single storey rear extension	No objection but neighbours' concerns should be considered.
22/0606	60 Highlands Road	Erect single storey side extn and front porch.	withdrawn
22/0598	47 Oakhill Road	Remove garage & erect a single storey side extn.	n/o

21/2477	12 Coolhurst Lane	Erect 2-storey side extension, rear extn inc. balcony. Remodel front gable, alter materials etc.	No objection
22/0424	Ventura House, 15 St Leonards Road	Change of use, grd floor from commercial to form 3no apartments. Convert existing 1st floor & 2nd floor flat into 2no apartments, with external alterations & assoc. works.	n/o, middle apartment on ground floor has very little natural light
22/0655	1 Paget Close	Remove existing conservatory & erect two-storey front extension.	n/o
22/0765	60 Highlands Road	Erect part 2-storey, part single storey side extn & front entrance porch.	n/o
22/0769	67 Bennetts Road	2 storey extn/loft conversion to accommodate sauna/front porch extn/ rear dormers & front rooflights	n/o
22/0761	1 Aimesmill Cottage	Construct bridge over River Arun	n/o

06.06.22 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report will be presented at June Meeting.

07.06.22 Correspondence

Correspondence received during April/May

The Horsham Society – the article on the three NC's (written by Trafalgar NC Chairman).

New Street Gardens – confirmation that a replacement tree will be planted in Autumn

WestSussBus – Jess Meagher is the WSCC contact and everyone is invited to take part in this survey.

Section 106 monies – various e-mails relating to this topic, including written answers to questions.

WSCC confirmation that most primary school children were allocated their first choice school this year

Mowbray Village Highways Works notification

Horsham Museum – update on opening hours and volunteer request

HDC Parking Charges – notification was received on 27th April. FNC has no objection.

Horsham Park – has received Bee Friendly Award.

General HDC and WSCC Newsletters

- Further information about the Community Café
- Highways Members letter listing recent communications
- Shared History
- Neighbourhood Alerts
- HDC Climate Change

Confirmation that HDC is not intending to develop Rookwood Golf Course

Neighbourhood Warden Report

Shelley Memorial Project – Julian Sands event

Denne and Trafalgar Minutes

Screen Social

The Big Conversation –

The Meeting closed at 9.30 p.m. Due to the time constraint, it was not possible to complete the Agenda