Horsham Forest Neighbourhood Council

Celebrating over 50 years of community service to the Forest Neighbourhood of Horsham



Campaigned for New Street Gardens to stop a cut through road



Prevented busy road through Booth Way maintaining cycle path



Promoted campaigns to reduce speed limits and rat-running



Supported new mowing regimes and wildflower meadows for local verges



Installed several memorial benches over the decades



Supported volunteer groups to maintain raised planters



Funded Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) on busy roads



Advised on the roll-out of on-street EV charging in the area



Campaigned for a new post box on St. Leonard's Road



Helped establish the Friends of Chesworth Farm group



Advocated for much needed improvements to Queen Street



Supported improvements to Bennetts Field and establishment of Friends Group



Promoted tree planing including the 'Queen's Green Canopy' oak



Funded Riverside Walk improvements such as the Ben's Acre bridge

A history of Horsham's neighbourhood councils

Horsham District Council was formed in 1974, following a previous 'local government reorganisation' combining existing councils including the Horsham Urban District Council. However, as a result the centre of Horsham town remained 'unparished' unlike the rest of the district.

To fill this gap, four 'Neighbourhood Councils' of Denne, Forest, Riverside and Trafalgar were formed in 1976, with their first elections in June.


Grass-roots councils to fill gap

June 2 date to watch

The Neighbourhood Councils, now three following the merger of Forest & Riverside in 1993, have ever since served as consultative bodies for town residents on the work of both Horsham District and West Sussex County councils.

In 2015 the Neighbourhood Councils helped to establish the Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Forum which lead to the Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan being made in 2022.

In late 2024, following the Government's decision to launch a new 'local government reorganisation' across Sussex and create unitary councils by merging the existing district and county councils, Blueprint triggered a local governance review for Horsham Town. This led to the Horsham District Council decision in December 2025 to create a new Horsham Parish Council, with elections upcoming on 7 May 2026. Following the creation of the new Horsham Parish Council, the Neighbourhood Councils of Horsham will formally dissolve.

Timeline

Horsham District formed 1974

1976 Forest & Riverside Neighbourhood Councils formed

Regular mtgs held providing public forums 1970s

1980s Recognised as formal consultee for planning matters

Riverside NC merges with Forest NC 1983


It's victory for road campaign

1990 Harwood/ Depot link road scrapped

Campaign leads to new pedestrian crossing on Brighton Road 1994


New crossing is a saviour

1995 Town Council proposal fails at referendum

Helped establish both Bennetts and Chesworth 'friends' groups 2000s

2003 FRNC becomes just Forest Neighbourhood

FNC Documents 'Areas of Special Character' 2003

2004 Bennetts Field exhibitions and changes

Objections lead to closure of 'Adult shop' 2006

2015 Blueprint Neighbourhood Forum established

Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan 2022

2024 LGR and local governance review

New Parish Council given go-ahead 2025

2026 7 May elections for the new Horsham Parish Council to take place

FNC dissolves 01 June 2026

Highways matters

Harwood Road CHS for speed reduction

The Community Highway Scheme application to reduce the speed limit in Harwood Road from 40 MPH to 30 MPH has now been assessed and very regrettably, whilst it passed moderation, did not score highly enough to be included in WSCC Highways work programme for 2026.

The Local Area Highways Manager will now liaise with the relevant local Councillors to look at Harwood Road as a whole. Despite prior assurances this scheme would pass, it is now understood that a larger scheme would be favoured and may be more successful.

Speed indicator device (SID) reduces speed

FNC's second SID installed on Comptons Lane, following the first on St. Leonard's Road, is active and has already received a supportive e-mail from a local resident noting that car speeds have reduced.

FNC continue to pursue a third location on Kerves lane, however the timing may prove too short to install before the dissolution of this Council.

The Chairman has worked with the Shadow Horsham Parish Council to ensure FNC assets such as our SIDs will be transferred, maintained and to continue to be operated by the new Horsham Parish Council.

A legacy of cooperation

Over the past five decades, FNC has been proud to develop relationships and sometimes partner with other agencies and local organisations, to achieve positive outcomes for our community.

Just some examples include: Youth Workers, Neighbourhood Wardens, Neighbourhood Policing, Neighbourhood Watch, Saxon Weald, Royal Sun Alliance.



Recently we have been assisting the Lakeside Conservation Volunteers to find funding to investigate the de-silting of Ayshe Court lakes. While FNC might not be here to see the project completed, the wheels are in motion.

Recent planning matters

Hornbrook Farm

FNC is still waiting notice that a planning application has been submitted. The agent has submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment which Mrs. Sumpter has accessed. Whilst HDC is not asking for a more detailed assessment, the Tree Officer has reviewed existing tree preservation orders on the site.

The Triangle

FNC's comments regarding the draft planning proposal for 22 houses on the site, have been relayed to the land owner and agent. Based on the current proposals, FNC will be objecting with concerns over: the number of dwellings; drainage; landscaping and boundaries; impact on Chesworth Farm and the historical entrance gate.

Protecting many of our local trees

FNC has always prioritised safeguarding our ancient and old trees. We'd like to thank our own Tree Warden, Mike Fensom, and HDC staff, Will Jones and Andrew Bush, as together we have stopped several trees being removed.



Thank you to our current Councillors

We would like to thank again all of our past councillors and clerks, and especially those who will support FNC through the transition to the new Horsham Parish Council:

Mrs. Diane Sumpter - Chairman
Mr. Guy Stanley - Vice Chairman
Mr. Brian Travers - Treasurer
Mr. Leslie Barnes
Mr. Daniel Clement
Mr. Nigel Friswell
Mr. David Hide
Mr. Charles Puckle
Mr. Graham Sitton
Mrs. Marilyn Vinall - Clerk



FOREST
NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL

Horsham Forest Neighbourhood Council Final Edition Spring 2026

Happy Birthday Forest Neighbourhood Council

For 50 years Denne, Forest and Trafalgar Neighbourhood Councils have been looking after local interests on behalf of the residents of the unparished area of Horsham.

Since FNC was formed in 1976, communications have changed beyond recognition. Gone are the days when a reporter from the County Times attended our monthly meetings to report in print what we were doing; now we have computers, a website and social media. Despite the changes, FNC councillors, who are non-political, remained committed to representing local residents, canvassing both Horsham District Council (HDC) and West Sussex County Council and taking on issues to the best of their ability.

Over the years, FNC has held numerous public meetings (usually about controversial planning applications) to give local residents an opportunity of speaking to developers, HDC Officers, etc. Do you remember the planning applications for an 'Adult shop' in New Street, the proposed road where the Salvation Army hall now is, or the 5G telephone mast in Brighton Road? We've included some of those memories in this newsletter.

FNC has been committed to protecting green spaces and wildlife corridors, and was instrumental in the formation of other successful groups such as the Friends of Chesworth Farm, Friends of Bennetts Field and Friends of New Street Gardens.

Horsham Parish Council

The Parish Council was formed on 01 April 2026, although the 18 parish councillors will not be elected until 07 May. This is the start of a new chapter in the history of Horsham Town. Until the Parish Council has its first AGM, FNC will continue to represent you until its dissolves at its AGM on 1st June.

As this will be the very last newsletter, I would like to thank all of the councillors both past and present for their unstinting work on your behalf. Some of those who started representing residents as Forest Neighbourhood councillors, have gone on to become district and county councillors, including our current MP, John Milne. Without our dedicated councillors, FNC wouldn't have achieved very much.

- Diane Sumpter, Chairman

An environment mind map to pass to the new Parish

Forest Neighbourhood Council has been working on creating a mind map to document how as a council we contribute to or promote environmental and community focused initiatives, whether that be providing free wildflower seeds during our "mini-meadow challenge" in 2023, or through regular posts on our website and social media channels, promoting community events and groups, climate grants and recycling tips.

FNC is pleased to be able to recognise, document and promote the many groups and organisations working to support our neighbourhood residents Through the completion and monitoring of our mind map and liaison with community groups, in conjunction with HDC, Forest Neighbourhood Council will have a lasting legacy to hand over to the Horsham Parish (Town) Council, so that it can continue to support the expansion of services within Horsham Town in the future.

