

NORTH HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

PROPERTY COMMITTEE – THURSDAY 8th February 2024

COMMITTEE REPORT

Note the numbers below refer to the item number on the agenda:

1. Public Forum

The Public Forum will last for a period of up to 15 minutes during which members of the public may put questions to the Committee or draw attention to relevant matters relating to the business on the agenda. Each speaker is limited to 3 minutes. The business of the meeting will start immediately following the public forum or at 7.45 pm whichever is the earlier

3. To receive any Declarations of Interest from Members of the Committee

Members are advised to consider the Agenda for the meeting and determine in advance if they may have a **Personal, Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Registrable Interest** in any of the Agenda items. If a Member decides they do have a declarable interest, they are reminded that the interest and the nature of the interest must be declared at the commencement of the consideration of the Agenda item; or when the interest becomes apparent to them. Details of the interest will be minuted.

If the interest is a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**, Members are reminded that they must take no part in the discussions of the item at all; or participate in any voting; and must withdraw from the meeting chamber, unless they have received a dispensation.

Where you have an **Other Registrable Interest** (which is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest), Members are reminded that they must withdraw from the meeting chamber after making representations or asking questions.

5. Chairman's Announcements - For information and noting only.

New Initiative for Small Business Growth – Shared Premises Scheme

Horsham District Council (HDC) is offering a new revenue stream to Parish Council (PC) partners with capacity to offer their kitchens in community spaces with selected small food businesses currently operating from their home. HDC are asking PC's to register their interest.

If the Committee would like to discuss this further, then this can be added onto the April agenda.

Resident Request

A resident in Birches Rd asked the Parish Clerk if they could have a skip outside their property, which would mean on the open space near Birches Rd play park. In liaison with the Chairman & Vice Chairman of the Property Committee, the Clerk did not grant this permission, due to the damage that may be caused to the ground and the lack of access for a vehicle to drop off a skip.

The resident was advised that they could apply to WSCC for a licence to place a skip on the road.

Earles Meadow 1st Harwood Guides Dispensation Request

At the Property meeting on 7th December, minute no PR/072/23 refers, Members approved the Guides request to hold an evening in the Outdoor Classroom area at Earles Meadow on 15.01.24. However, as the weather was so cold, they have postponed the evening until March-date to be confirmed. They have been advised that the same conditions stated will still apply.

Decision: To note any announcements.

6. Finance

See Appendix A and the detailed I & E report circulated via email with the agenda.

Members are requested to recommend to the Finance & Administration Committee that the expenditure for projects previously approved, but not completed by 31st March 2024, is earmarked. The following is a list of such projects as at 22nd January 2024:

- ROSPA Works £1274.05 – ‘Play Area & M Crts Maint’ budget.
- Pressure Washing of Playgrounds £362.95 – ‘Play Area & M Crts Maint’ budget.
- Tree works (including insurance claim) £3540.00 – ‘Open Spaces’ budget.
- Periodic Electrical Testing (RMH) £2150.00 – ‘Elect. Eqp Insp’ budget.

(In addition – any expenditure approved at this meeting).

Decision:

- (i) To note the Financial Report to 31st December 2023.**
- (ii) Decision: To recommend to the Finance & Administration Committee that the expenditure for projects previously approved, but not completed by 31st March 2024, is earmarked.**

7. Completed Works

Members are asked to note the following works and ratify any detailed expenditure that has been completed since the last meeting in December 2023.

(a) Roffey Millennium Hall (RMH) and surrounding area

- (i) Silent soldier taken down
- (ii) Lift service
- (iii) Automatic doors serviced
- (iv) Infra-red heating in halls installed
- (v) Several lights repaired/replaced (inside & out)
- (vi) New motor for floor machine
- (vii) Re-attached spikes & anti-vandal paint to blue flashing at back of building

(b) North Heath Hall (NHH) and surrounding area

- (i) Boys toilet door put back on
- (ii) Defibrillator installed
- (iii) New light fitting in rm 3
- (iv) Repair light in rm 9 & men’s toilet
- (v) Additional drainage works carried out – all left in good condition

(c) Holbrook Tythe Barn (HTB) and surrounding area

- (i) Silent soldier taken down
- (ii) Birdmouth posts replaced/repared

- (iii) Defibrillator installed
- (iv) New PC Board for boiler
- (d) All buildings**
 - (i) Fire & Intruder alarms serviced
 - (ii) Annual drain checks
 - (iii) Gutters & drains cleared
 - (iv) HTB & NHH – high level clean incl beams
 - (v) HTB & NHH - New toilets seats fitted
- (e) Play Areas**
 - (i) HTB – Aerial runway further works
 - (ii) Installed rubber pads on gate at Amberley
 - (iii) Pressure washing to be carried out
- (f) Multi-Courts**
 - (i) Maintenance visit
- (g) Tree Work**
 - None
- (h) Open Spaces**
 - None
- (i) Bus Shelters**
 - None
- (j) Allotments**
 - None
- (k) Streetlights**
 - None

Decision: To note the completed works and ratify any detailed expenditure.

8. On-going and Planned Works

Members are asked to note that the following works are on-going and ratify any detailed expenditure: (**NEW** = since last meeting)

- (a) Roffey Millennium Hall and surrounding area**
 - (i) **NEW** - 2 x radiators not working
- (b) North Heath Hall**
 - (i) **NEW** – sink downstairs to be replaced (and re-used in washroom refurb)
- (c) Holbrook Tythe Barn and surrounding area**
 - (i) New controller needed for boiler – quote to be obtained
 - (ii) Repairs & washers to taps in toilets
 - (iii) Timer for car park lights to be repaired
- (d) Play Areas**
 - (i) Recommended ‘medium’ & ‘low’ ROSPA works – part way through-weather dependent
- (e) Multi-Courts**
 - None
- (f) Tree Work**
 - None
- (g) Open Spaces**
 - None
- (h) All Buildings**
 - None
- (i) Bus shelters**
 - None

- (j) Allotments
None
- (k) Streetlights
None

Decision: To note the on-going work and ratify any detailed expenditure.

9. Earles Meadow Conservation Group (EMCG)

See Appendix B

Members are requested to note the Earles Meadow Conservation Group (EMCG) Action Plan for 2024 with amendments shown in red. (Appendix B).

The EMCG also advised of the following update:

The Group continues to meet weekly and has maintained its numbers. In the last year it has clocked up over 900 hours of manual labour with additional time spent in maintaining records of the flora and fauna and extending skills and knowledge. The Group has caught up with regular maintenance tasks post Covid and embarked upon new projects.

Following the large loss of Ash trees, the Group has planted 14 new trees around the site and 65 hedging whips using plants supplied by the Parish Council and WSCC. It intends to continue with this planting project as and where appropriate as well as looking after the current woodland stock. In addition, it is hoped to commence a project to extend the variety of native wild flowers in the two meadows with additional seeding.

Considerable time has been spent on improving the condition and free flowing of the streams that run through the site which has resulted in reducing areas previously prone to flooding.

Members have been generous in absorbing administration costs and in providing use of their own specialised tools and equipment, when required, as well as giving time and materials for maintaining the Groups tools and equipment.

Decision: To note the EMCG Action Plan for 2024 and recent update of activities.

10. Maintenance & Proposed Works

- (i) There has been further unauthorised access to the rear and roof of RMH. Anti-vandal spikes have been re-attached and anti-vandal paint has been applied to the blue flashing at the back of building. Members are asked to consider security camera options, which the Deputy Clerk will provide details of at the Committee meeting.

Decision: To consider the options for further security at the rear of Roffey Millennium Hall (RMH) totalling either £204.65 (for 30 mins installation time, then £85.00 thereafter) + vat or approx. £57.00, to be funded from the 'General Maintenance' budget.

- (ii) Whilst the works mentioned in 10(i) were being carried out, it was noted that the drain off cover has been vandalised (see photo) and Members are asked to consider replacing it. The drain off ramp stops rain penetrating the brick work and mortar, which could result in damp issues. A quotation has been obtained from our usual contractor, totalling £220.00, to be funded from the 'General maintenance' budget.



Decision: To consider replacing the vandalised water drain off cover on the roof of RMH, totalling £220.00, to be funded from the ‘General Maintenance’ budget.

- (iii) Whilst inspecting all the bus shelters recently, it was noted that the shelter in Jackdaw Lane is the only shelter with no seat. Members are asked to consider installing a bench within the shelter for a cost of £110.00, from our usual contractor and if agreed recommend to the CIL working party for CIL funding.

Decision: To consider installing a bench in Jackdaw Lane bus shelter, totalling £110.00 and recommend to the CIL Working Party for CIL funding.

- (iv) The automated push button doors at RMH have been installed for just over one year and have proved to be very beneficial. At times, mainly evenings and weekends when the office staff are not present, the Caretakers often have to work upstairs, whilst hirers are booked in and leave the doors on auto – this means anyone, not related to the hirers, can walk into the building.

For additional safety and security and given the pending UK wide legislation, known as ‘Martyn’s Law’, Members are asked to consider allowing the front doors at RMH to have the option of putting on ‘exit only’, meaning that hirers already in the building can leave without the Caretaker or Office staff being present and prevents non-hirers walking into the building.

Decision: To consider allowing the front doors at RMH to have the option of putting on ‘exit only’ totalling £293.25 + vat, to be funded from the ‘General Maintenance’ budget.

- (v) A new locking system was installed on the multi court gates last year and has proven beneficial in preventing the Caretakers having to make so many journeys to let hirers in and out of the courts. However, there has been an issue with some un-authorized users in the courts, where people have been able to put their hand through the fence gaps and open the court from the other side. Unfortunately, the

locking system had to be installed higher up than originally thought as it did not fit where the smaller fence gaps are, so the shrouding does not prevent entry as its meant to (see photos).



The Facilities Officer met with a welder who can make four panels to go across the fence gaps on each court to prevent unauthorised access and a quotation totalling £725.00 + vat has been obtained, which, if agreed, would be funded from the 'Play Area & M Crts Maintenance' budget.

Decision: To consider adding additional measures to prevent unauthorised access to the multi courts, totalling £725.00 + vat, to be funded from the 'Play Area & M Crts Maintenance' budget.

12. Wish List – All Buildings

See Appendix C

An audit of each building has been carried out and a wish list of required items has been compiled, as shown on Appendix C. Only items with an available budget have been included.

Members are requested to consider the items on the wish list and, if acceptable, approve the expenditure and allocation of funds as stated, subject to the available budgets as at 31.03.24.

Decision: To consider the items on the wish list and, if acceptable, approve the expenditure and allocation of funds as stated, subject to the available budgets as at 31.03.24.

14. Washroom Refurbishment at NHH

Members are requested to review, approve and recommend to Full Council the plans and estimate, totalling £16,250.00 for the washroom refurbishment, emailed separately with the agenda.

Members should note that approx. six contractors were contacted to provide an estimate, but some couldn't carry out this type of work or others did not respond to our enquiries, so this estimate is the only one that we have been able to obtain.

Members should also note that this estimate includes the contractor carrying out the three advisory notes from the damp report, but does not include any repair costs should any issues be found.

As mentioned previously, this project will use a considerable amount of the de minimis limit for VAT in 2024/25, but this will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Parish Clerk, who will keep the Finance & Administration Committee informed. Paying a deposit before 31st March 2024 was considered, however there will be insufficient capacity within the de minimis limit for 2023/24, to be able to do this.

Decision: To review, approve and recommend to Full Council the estimate for the works to refurbish the washrooms at NHH, totalling £16,250.00 to be funded from the NHH Washroom Refurbishment EMR.

15. Heating Repairs

The heating controller in the boiler room at HTB needs replacing as the old one is no longer able to be programmed and the heating is on all the time and only being controlled by thermostats. A quotation to replace with a single channel 7 day programmer, disconnect and remove the old controller is £530.00 + vat.

The heating downstairs in the nursery rooms is not working at NHH and room 4 upstairs is only partially heating. After conducting a part power flush, the heating is still not working and so our heating engineers have recommended that a power flush of the whole system is carried out. Members should note that 2 x compact electric heaters have been purchased (£99.98 + vat) for the nursery, so that they have some heat.

A quotation for a single day's work is £946.00 + vat, if it rolls into a second day, as the system water is very dirty, this would be £1446.00 + vat. Once the system has been flushed, the heating engineers will refill and dose the system with inhibitor to help stop the system sludging up again.

Members are requested to consider these quotations and if agreed, will be funded from the Repair & Renewals EMR.

Decision: To consider the quotations for heating repairs at HTB, totalling £530.00 + vat and NHH, totalling up to £1446.00 + vat, both to be funded from the Repair & Renewals EMR.

18. Date of next Meeting.

Decision: To note the next meeting to be held on Thursday 4th April 2024.

**Lisa Underwood - Deputy Clerk
1st February 2024**

1. Finance Report to show income, expenditure and reserves to 31st December 2023

Funding at 31st December 2023

Precept (full year)	365,346
S106 Funding	3,952
Environmental Grant	11,745
Climate Change Grant	2,076
Total	383,119

Income to 31st December 2023

Cost Centre	Actual income	Annual Budget	Estimated income to 31 st Dec*
Admin	19,790	200	150
Allotments**	982	995	995
North Heath Hall	49,032	71,000	53,250
Holbrook Tythe Barn	29,546	38,000	28,500
Multi Court Lettings	17,870	26,600	19,950
Roffey Millennium Hall	50,034	45,000	33,750
Total	167,254	181,795	136,595

Expenditure to 31st December 2023

Cost Centre	Actual Expenditure	Annual Budget	Estimated expenditure to 31 st Dec*
Admin***	49,062	54,570	44,303
Grants	3,821	10,000	7,500
Burial****	5,596	7,460	5,595
Personnel	247,380	349,650	262,238
Planning, Env, Trans	0	1,500	1,125
Allotments	563	1,560	1,170
Amenity, Recs and Open Spaces	32,090	56,485	42,364
North Heath Hall	21,049	30,778	23,084
Holbrook Tythe Barn	18,500	28,095	21,071
Roffey Millennium Hall	28,030	42,840	32,130
Total	406,091	582,938	440,579

*Total cost centre budget for 2023/24 divided by 9/12th.

**Allotment invoices are sent out annually. The full income is expected by the end of April.

*** Includes in Actual Expenditure Annual Insurance Premium of £13,884 paid May 2023 and includes in Estimated Expenditure Full Year Budget for Insurance of £13,500. The Actual expenditure also includes expenditure relating to S106 grants for the indoor sports equipment and heating at RMH.

**** Paid quarterly in Months 2,5,8 & 11

Income

At the end of Month 9 of the 2023/24 year, revenue income continues to be higher than the anticipated by approx. 22% - a reduction of 3% to the position at the end of month 8.

Expenditure

Overall, expenditure is approx. 8% lower than would be expected at the end of the month, a slight reduction of the gap of 11% at the end of month 8. However, this is affected by expenditure relating to S106 grants from HDC being included and if this expenditure was removed from the calculations, the difference would be approx. 14% lower.

Reserves

As at 31st December 2023 remaining funds, including the full year precept payment received and General Reserves, stood at £365,816.

In addition, there are additional Earmarked Reserves of £260,317- a reduction of £1,734 from the balance at the end of month 8, due to expenditure from the R&R EMR of £1,295 for drain clearance and repairs at NHH, £419.42 for boiler repairs at HTB and £20 for the installation of the defibrillators at NHH and HTB.

Summary

As mentioned above, there is £30,659 more revenue income than budgeted for at the end of month 9 together with £34,488 less revenue expenditure than anticipated but this increases to £45,419 when the S106 funded expenditure is excluded.

4.3 Management Action Plan (Reviewed 11/12/22. **Amended 07/01/24**)

Action	When	Priority	Who	Completion
<p>Wooded Areas and hedges Lift the crowns of trees to: improve sight lines towards the entrance to Earles Meadow; improve the health of young trees for the safety of users. Work to be subject to any TPO constraints in particular TPO Order 0580</p>	Preferably in Autumn/Winter and avoiding bird nesting season	As required	EMCG or NHPC Contractor	Ongoing. NHPC has provided a supply of hedging whips for EMCG to plant. Sixty-three planted in 2023. Further planting proposed when plants made available.
<p>Coppice on a rotational basis, as appropriate, areas of Hazel, Holly, Hawthorn and similar making use of cut timber e.g. for poles or dead hedging and to support the banks of the streams.</p>	Winter	Five to eight year rotation	EMCG	Ongoing
<p>Replace with Native species already found on the site, mature fallen or felled trees in order to maintain or improve the area of canopy and to prevent a net loss</p>	Planting preferably in Winter	Medium	EMCG. NHPC Contractor	EMCG has been donated 15 tree whips that will be ready for planting early 2023. 13 trees planted in 2023. Further planting proposed when plants made available.
<p>Leave a selection of dead wood, fallen and standing, to provide habitat for deadwood invertebrates, bats and hole-nesting birds</p>	Not time-specific	Low	EMCG NHPC	Ongoing
<p>Monitor tree safety on paths and take remedial action as required and or report to NHPC</p>	Throughout the year	High	EMCG NHPC	Ongoing

Take appropriate action to protect and preserve existing trees.	Throughout the year	High	EMCG NHPC	EMCG has a programme for clearing areas around existing trees that have suffered from surrounding brambles
Clear, on a biennial rotation, areas of bramble, nettle and bracken in woodland to prevent vigorous and invasive growth and allowing re-growth for wild habitats. Brash from clearance use to create dead hedges as valuable habitats for small mammals etc. Some areas to be left “wild” to improve biodiversity.	Throughout the year	Medium	EMCG	Ongoing
Pedestrian pathways Maintain a network of paths through and around the site. Mow/trim and maintain one to two metre wide paths clear of brambles through the woodland, around and through the two meadows and alongside the streams, as far as the protection of the flora and ground conditions allows. Monitor the condition and safety of the wooden boardwalks and bridges, clearing leaves on a regular basis	Throughout the year	High	EMCG NHPC	EMCG has been able to apply wood chippings to certain paths that become muddy. This has proved successful making those paths more useable. Ideally chippings should be sourced from trees felled on site.
Meadows Arrange for the annual mowing of the Upper and Lower Meadows at varying times between August and September to include removal of the cuttings and depositing in appropriate parts of the perimeter.	Autumn	High	EMCG NHPC	NHPC authorise the annual cut that is carried out by a local contractor using a tractor towing a cutter that collects the grass and also scatters the seeds. This has proved highly successful. The saved hay is used to provide nutrition to areas cleared of brambles

Control encroachment of bramble, bracken and nettles around the Meadows whilst retaining areas of valuable habitat and sources of food for wildlife	Spring/Autumn	Medium	EMCG	Ongoing
Maintain seating currently a donated seat in the Lower Meadow and a bench constructed by EMCG in the Upper Meadow	Not time specific	Medium	EMCG	The seat requires no maintenance at the request of the donor. The Bench was replaced by EMCG in 2021 using materials from the site
Maintain a small “scrape” in the Lower Meadow to provide standing water for part of the year to improve the biodiversity of the site including the introduction of additional native meadow plants	Mainly in Spring	Medium	EMCG	This was created in 2017 and provides habitat for amphibians and a source of food etc for a range of invertebrates
Clear on a rotational basis an area to the Eastern end of the Upper Meadow to the North-east corner of the site (Gorse Hill) to reduce invasive brambles etc to improve on the existing flora and wildlife.	Not time specific	Medium	EMCG	Ongoing

<p>Streams Monitor the condition and carry out necessary work to ensure the streams free flow through the Meadows and Wooded Areas.</p> <p>Recommendation to create a variety of bankside and aquatic habitats in the stream by leaving a selection of woody debris to vary the flow rate and create micro-habitats within the stream. Consider clearing small sections of the bank to create sunny and shaded areas, again creating habitat variety</p>	<p>Mainly Autumn and Winter</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>EMCG NHPC</p>	<p>Flooding of parts close to the streams has been substantially reduced by EMCG works over past years</p> <p>There are two particular pinch points that cause blockages a situation that could be improved by the removal of two tree trunks that have fallen across the streams. Completed</p> <p>Invasive plant-life are routinely removed from the banks</p>
<p>Parkland Grass cutting</p>	<p>During the grass growing season</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>NHPC</p>	<p>This work is carried out by Contractors employed by NHPC</p> <p>The Veteran Oak and fenced area around it is under the care of NHPC and its consultants</p>
<p>Clean the Earles Meadow stone by carefully lifting off the moss and then cleaning the stone with water and, if necessary, a scrubbing brush. No chemicals are to be used.</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>EMCG</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

<p>Wildlife Surveys Carry out annual wildlife surveys of key groups including flowering plants, birds, butterflies and invertebrates. Register on i-Record or similar National database as a repository for site records</p>	Annually	High	EMCG	Ongoing. Add records to Management Plan
<p>Informative site plan. Arrange for the preparation and production of a nature trail leaflet for visitors (to download from website and make available on-site).</p>	Not time specific	Medium	EMCG NHPC	Progressing
<p>Anti Social behaviour Monitor anti-social behaviour and report problems to NHPC. Collect litter. Encourage dog owners to clean up their dog waste.</p>	Throughout the year	High	EMCG	Ongoing
<p>Meadows. The Lower Meadow has had several years growth of Yellow Rattle that has reduced significant areas of robust grasses. A controlled introduction of new varieties of wildflowers suited to the soil conditions should be carried out to benefit wildlife and pollinators</p>	Throughout the year	Medium	EMCG	This will commence in 2024 in trial areas
<p>Website The website launched in 2018 providing information of the site for the general public and interested parties should be kept current</p>	Throughout the year	Medium	EMCG	Carry out a review in 2024

<p>Quintennial Revision of the Earles Meadow Management Plan (last revision 2015) This is essential to maintain an up to date document and to correct errors or omissions.</p>	<p>Every five years</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>EMCG NHPC</p>	<p>EMCG progressing</p>
<p>Local Nature Reserve Designation Explore the possibility of Local Nature Reserve designation With Horsham District Council/Natural England (Appendix 1)</p>	<p>Not time specific</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>NHPC</p>	<p>Views of HDC sought by NHPC and decision taken not to pursue for time being</p>
				<p>Comments in red added in respect of 2024</p>

Wish List for All Buildings - December 2023

To prioritise and then to be taken to the Property Committee meeting on 8th February 2024, depending on budgets

Budget Allocation balances as at 29.01.24

HTB

Description	Cost (excl VAT)	Budget Allocation Availability	Priority Ranking	Notes
Build Larder cupboard for brooms and mops etc	Cupboard - £180 + Tom fit £180. Total = £360	£514 in 'Cleaning Materials' budget	1	

NHH

Description	Cost (excl VAT)	Budget Allocation Availability	Priority Ranking	Notes
Light fitting to be added to the fire exit off main hall	£155.00	£488 in 'Electrical Maintenance' budget	1	