

# NORTH HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

PROPERTY COMMITTEE – THURSDAY 4<sup>th</sup> April 2024

## COMMITTEE REPORT

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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.**

Bench in Jackdaw Lane Bus Shelter

At the last Property meeting, min no PR/082/24 refers, Members wanted to check the cost quoted included the bench. After checking, the bench cost had not been included, so the total to install the bench is £330.00 + vat on the bench. The Deputy Clerk emailed all Property Members to advise of this, Cllrs Davidson & Searle responded confirming they were happy for this increased expenditure to be recommended to the CIL Working Party – this item is on the agenda for their next meeting.

Earles Meadow Conservation Group (EMCG) - Website

EMCG have advised that their new website is now in use – Search 'EMCG Horsham' to find it. The website is intended to show the biodiversity of the Earles Meadow Public Open Space and its rich variety of flora and fauna, the gallery is a new addition. NHPC's ownership and involvement in maintenance etc is stated.

### Earles Meadow Veteran Oak tree

The tree surgeon has sent the following update on the veteran oak tree:

*After I surveyed the Earle's Meadow Oak last year, I discussed my findings with Alex Livingstone at Arborweald consultancy and we felt it may have been suffering from Acute Oak Decline (AOD). This was due to the presence of the Oak Buprestid beetles (Agrilus biguttatus), the rapid decline in health and the bleeding points on the stem. These can all be present in some cases of AOD which is normally caused by a combination of factors. When I was at a conference before Christmas, I found out that forest research have a process for reporting and confirming sitings of AOD. I went through the online reporting process which includes uploading photos and descriptions of the tree and I was informed that it was unlikely that the tree had AOD. I believe this was due to the way in which the crown had declined and the pictures of the bleeding lesions on the stem.*

*Unfortunately, the pathogens that are present will still be putting a great deal of stress on the tree and the Oak buprestid beetles (Agrilus biguttatus) in particular can severely weaken trees.*

*I will visit the oak again in the summer to assess its crown health and whether there is any improvement on last year.*

### S106 funding for a New Boiler for Roffey Millennium Hall (RMH)

During all the discussions regarding the heating in the halls at RMH, Members suggested that S106 funding could be obtained for when a new boiler is required at RMH and noted that the S106 deadline was August 2024. The Deputy Clerk has been in touch with The Planning Obligations Officer at Horsham District Council (HDC) to enquire about using S106 funding and they advised the following:

*As well as adhering to the terms of the legal agreement, we also have to be able to justify using section 106 funds towards projects with reference to the CIL regulations, which means ensuring projects are directly related to the specific new development in that they mitigate its impact.*

*While the new infra-red heating system enabled the hall to address demand placed on it by development, I'm not sure that a replacement boiler can be justified in the same way. However, should you wish to provide us with a justification, we would be happy to consider it further.*

There are earmarked funds set aside for a new boiler when required, so this matter will be added to a future Property agenda when a new boiler is anticipated to be required.

### Feedback from Hirers

Feedback has been received from a hirer at RMH regarding the Caretaker, stating that Neil was very kind to set the tables up for them, which saved them time and was much appreciated.

Hirers using the halls have feedback about the new heating, stating:

- *The new heaters that have been installed are brilliant. I've been so used to the portable heaters and they always took so long to heat up during the cold months. It makes such a difference to walk into a warm hall already and the fact that it's also adjustable. So much better!*
- *The Heating is certainly more efficient now!*
- *Used the hall last night & noticed the heaters, all looks very neat. Had no complaints from my Judo players, so very happy.*

#### Oak tree at Earles Meadow (not veteran oak)

HDC have confirmed that the oak to be felled should be replaced with a Field Maple, as suggested in their conditions on the planning application and located as close to the felled tree as possible. The Deputy Clerk has liaised with the Chairman of the Property Committee and he is in agreement with this. The Deputy Clerk has also asked our Tree Surgeon for his comments on the location of the replacement tree and he has confirmed the location is acceptable.

#### Parking on Birches Road Recreation Area

It has been noted that a car has been parking on the recreation ground at Birches Road play area and churned up all the grass, it is thought to be a resident who lives alongside the area. The Deputy Clerk has written to all residents alongside the area advising that parking on the recreation ground is strictly prohibited. Officers are looking at the costing for no parking signage to be placed on the recreation ground.

**Decision: To note any announcements.**

## **6. Finance**

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

**Decision: To note the Financial Report to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024.**

## **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) 2 x radiators repaired
- (ii) Lift Inspection
- (iii) Lift Service
- (iv) Repairs to men's urinal
- (v) Partition wall repair
- (vi) Additional cctv at rear of building
- (vii) Entrance door now has exit only option
- (viii) Jet washing of external litterbin by HDC as contaminated

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

- (i) Sink downstairs replaced (and will be re-used in washroom refurb)
- (ii) Fire extinguisher maintenance
- (iii) Full flush through of pipework
- (iv) Lights repairs

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

- (i) Timer for car park lights repaired
- (ii) Repairs & washers to taps in toilets
- (iii) Fire extinguisher maintenance
- (d) All buildings**
  - (i) Workplace Environmental Assessments
- (e) Play Areas**
  - None
- (f) Multi-Courts**
  - (i) Maintenance Visit
- (g) Tree Work**
  - (i) Bramble bush and tree cut back at NHH
- (h) Open Spaces**
  - None
- (i) Bus Shelters**
  - (i) Graffiti removal by HDC - £38.00 per hr, to be funded from 'Bus Shelter Repairs' budget.
- (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) Periodic Electrical Testing
  - (ii) Lights & emergency light repairs
- (b) North Heath Hall**
  - (i) Servicing of extractor fans
  - (ii) Additional light in corridor
- (c) Holbrook Tythe Barn and surrounding area**
  - (i) New controller & thermostats needed for boiler
  - (ii) Hot water cylinder repair – quotation for £524.00 + vat, Clerk approved as per the financial regulations, to be funded from R&R EMR.
- (d) Play Areas**
  - (i) Recommended 'medium' & 'low' ROSPA works – part way through-weather dependent
- (e) Multi-Courts**
  - (i) Additional shrouding
- (f) Tree Work**
  - (i) 2 x Cherry trees at Earles Meadow to be cut back
  - (ii) Fell & replace oak at Earles Meadow (not Veteran oak)
  - (iii) Works to fallen Willow tree
- (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. Heating controller and thermostats at Holbrook Tythe Barn (HTB)**

The heating controller was discussed at the last property meeting, min. no PR/087/24 refers. Whilst an additional quotation was being sought and whilst the hot water cylinder was being assessed, the Plumber advised that the current controls running the heating are extremely convoluted, unnecessary and inefficient. Currently, there is no independent control of the boiler, the boiler is running all the time and is only cutting off on the boiler thermostat once the boiler reaches temperature.

The original controller (unrepairable) was able to be controlled via the thermostats in each room, however, the controller quote, previously obtained for £530.00 + vat wouldn't have been able to be controlled by the existing thermostats in the rooms. Therefore, two new quotations have been requested to simplify the controls giving each end of the building (Barn & Wallace room) independent control of one another, which means the boiler would only be running when it's needed and won't be running through the night whilst the building isn't in use. Each end of the building would also have a new thermostat.

The quotes obtained are as follows:

Company A: £1232.00 + vat.

Company B: Despite several chasers the quotation has not been received.

Members are asked to consider the one quotation, which, if approved, will be funded from the Repair & Renewals EMR.

**Decision: To consider the quotation for the heating controller and thermostats at HTB, to be funded from the Repair & Renewals EMR.**

**10. Upgrade of Playground Equipment**

See quotations & summary sheet, circulated by email with the agenda.

Funds have been earmarked for the past few years for upgraded equipment at the playgrounds; as at 29.02.24, a balance of £75,000 is earmarked and an additional £25,000 will be earmarked for the 24/25 financial year.

After conducting an audit of all of the equipment and referring to issues continuously raised from the ROSPA inspections, the Deputy Clerk & Facilities Officer propose that the pieces of equipment that need replacing are as follows:

Amberley Road Play Area: Trim trail, toddler play equipment & interactive boards.

Birches Road Play Area: Roundabout (replace with inclusive roundabout) & trim trail.

Members have received 3 quotations and a summary of things to note regarding the equipment. The quotation amounts are as follows:

Company A – Amberley £16,342.37, Birches £19,721.73  
Company B – Amberley £25,871.91, Birches £27,080.86  
Company C – Amberley £27,350.00, Birches £28,285.00

After careful consideration of each quotation, the Deputy Clerk would recommend Company B, for the following reasons:

- The equipment fits in with the style of the existing pieces of equipment.
- Less maintenance with non-painted equipment – no risk of peeling paint.
- The toddler interactive pieces look superior to the other quotations.
- The trim trail equipment looks like it's for older children, which is what is needed – the trim trail from Company A looks like it's for a younger age range, despite the age range given.
- The trim trail in grey steel blends in better.
- The majority of the play equipment already in the play areas is Company A's, so any caps etc needed can be obtained from one company and we will ask when installing new equipment if they can bring caps for missing ones on the existing pieces as they are quite difficult to source.
- There are some pieces of Company A's play equipment in Birches Rd (trim trail), but these now needs replacing and they are inferior compared to the other brand equipment.

**Decision: To consider the quotations and plans for upgraded equipment at Amberley Road & Birches Road play areas, to be funded from the Playground Upgrade EMR.**

#### **11. Use of Urns at all Buildings**

Officers have been looking at energy cost savings and have noted that some small group hirers have been using an urn for making their own teas and coffees – the urns hold a large capacity of water and cost more to run as they are left on constantly during the hire period. Groups under 35 hirers, that don't pay for teas and coffees, have therefore been advised that they should only use kettles or hot flasks.

Some of these groups have expressed that they would like to continue using the urns. Therefore, Officers would like Members to consider imposing a hire charge of £10.00 (+ vat at RMH) for use of urns for groups of under 35 hirers.

**Decision: To consider and approve a hire charge of £10.00 (+ vat at RMH) for use of urns for groups of under 35 hirers.**

#### **12. HDC's New Initiative for Small Business Growth – Shared Premises Scheme**

At the last Property meeting, under Chairman's announcements, Members were advised that 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.

Members wanted to discuss this further at the next property meeting to consider the scheme at Parish Council venues.

**Decision: To consider the scheme at Parish Council venues.**

### 13. Tree Works at Earles Meadow

The EMCG sent the following request by email:

*Adjacent to one of the boardwalks with a handrail, is a long fallen Willow that has generated "Phoenix growth" in the form of a long branch that has grown over the boardwalk. There have been problems of similar branches failing, as in essence there is no root structure to support the branch and the original tree is slowly decaying.*

*This is the case here. There were two similar branches and we were able to remove one safely but this one is beyond our capabilities and if or when it fell, in an uncontrolled way, at least it would damage the boardwalk and handrail.*

*I was wondering if this could be a case of asking your Tree Surgeon, when next on site, if he could deal with it. He would only need to bring it down clear of the boardwalk and we could deal with stripping, cutting up and disposal.*

*I have marked the offending branch with green spray paint.*

*I attach photograph. It is the lower of the two leaning branches.*



A quotation for the requested works has been obtained from our usual Tree Surgeon, totalling £120.00, which, if approved, would be funded from the 'Open Spaces' budget.

Members are asked to consider this request.

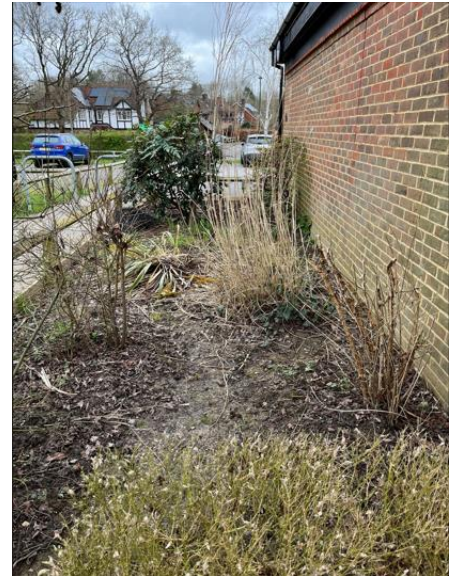
**Decision: To consider the requested tree works, totalling £120.00, to be funded from the 'Open Spaces' budget.**

**14. Flower Beds at HTB**

Following the works last year of moving the Queens Green Canopy tree to the front of the flower bed, erecting new fencing, laying down a membrane, mulch and wood chip, it has been noted that the remainder of the flower bed looks very unkempt and would benefit from the same treatment – see photos.



Front Flower Bed



Middle Flower Bed



End Flower bed

A quotation for labour and materials has been received from our usual contractor, totalling approx. £450.00, which, if approved, would be funded from the 'Open Spaces budget'.



Members are asked to consider this quotation.

**Decision: To consider the quotation for maintenance of flower beds at HTB, totalling approx. £450.00, to be funded from the 'Open Spaces' budget.**

**15. Recycling Clothes Bin at HTB**

There is a Samaritans clothing and shoe bank at HTB. It is becoming a regular dumping ground for all sorts of so called donations which mainly get left beside the bank as people seem to stuff so much into the hatch and then jam it. There have been duvets left there and bags of clothing that get tipped out all over the floor.

The items that get left on the floor are put into the Parish Council's bin as it looks very unsightly at the front of the building. When these items get wet, they get very heavy, which adds to the additional weight to our business waste collection.

The Facilities Officer has contacted the owners of the recycling clothes bin and they have agreed to collect the donations more frequently and they will supply a no fly tipping sticker for the bin.

Whilst in discussions with us, they advised that the current donation recipient is the Samaritans and asked if the Parish Council would like the donation to go to a more local registered recipient, Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee School, which caters for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, or complex needs.

Members are asked to consider changing the donation recipient.

**Decision: To consider changing the donation recipient.**

**16. Date of next Meeting.**

**Decision: To note the next meeting to be held on Thursday 6th June 2024.**

**Lisa Underwood - Deputy Clerk  
27<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

## 1. Finance Report to show income, expenditure and reserves to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Funding at 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024

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

### Income to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Cost Centre	Actual income	Annual Budget	Estimated income to 29 <sup>th</sup> Feb*
Admin	25,194	200	183
Allotments**	982	995	995
North Heath Hall	61,260	71,000	65,083
Holbrook Tythe Barn	36,503	38,000	34,833
Multi Court Lettings	24,092	26,600	24,383
Roffey Millennium Hall	63,812	45,000	41,250
<b>Total</b>	<b>211,843</b>	<b>181,795</b>	<b>166,727</b>

### Expenditure to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Cost Centre	Actual Expenditure	Annual Budget	Estimated expenditure to 29 <sup>th</sup> Feb*
Admin***	59,400	54,570	51,148
Grants	6,531	10,000	9,167
Burial****	7,461	7,460	6,838
Personnel	305,206	349,650	320,513
Planning, Env, Trans	0	1,500	1,375
Allotments	706	1,560	1,430
Amenity, Recs and Open Spaces	35,077	56,485	51,778
North Heath Hall	25,358	30,778	28,213
Holbrook Tythe Barn	21,892	28,095	25,754
Roffey Millennium Hall	35,975	42,840	39,270
<b>Total</b>	<b>497,606</b>	<b>582,938</b>	<b>535,486</b>

\*Total cost centre budget for 2023/24 divided by 11/12th.

\*\*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 11 of the 2023/24 year, revenue income continues to be higher than the anticipated by approx. 27% - an increase of 3% to the position at the end of month 10.

**Expenditure**

Overall, expenditure continues to be approx. 7% lower than would be expected at the end of the month, a slight reduction on the gap of 8% at the end of month 10. 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. 9%.

**Reserves**

As at 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 remaining funds, including the full year precept payment received and General Reserves, stood at £318,890.

In addition, there remains additional Earmarked Reserves of £259,371 - a reduction of £946 on the figure at the end of month 10 due to expenditure on boiler repairs at North Heath Hall.

**Summary**

As mentioned above, there is £45,116 more revenue income than budgeted for at the end of month 11 together with £37,880 less revenue expenditure than anticipated but this increases to £48,811 when the S106 funded expenditure is excluded.