

Annual Report of the Parish Council



1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

**Presented at the Annual Parish Meeting on 21st May
2024 and**

**Published on the Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common
Parish Council Website**

www.hurstpierpoint-pc.gov.uk

Annual Report of the Parish Council 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Contents:

1. Introduction from the Chairman of the Parish Council
2. Report of the Chairman of the Parish Council
3. Report of the Chair of the Planning Committee
4. Report of the Chair of the Community Engagement Committee
5. Report of the Chair of the Finance, Governance & Estates Committee
6. Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 22 May 2023
7. List of Councillors, Officers, and Contact Details

1. INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Meeting of Electors, or the Annual Parish Meeting, is a relatively informal event for the community and is a totally separate meeting from the Parish Council's formal meetings. It is for the registered electorate of the parish and there is no set agenda. Someone needs to call the meeting, so it often falls to the Parish Council to organise it. There is no set format for the meeting, but it can include a presentation of the Parish Council's annual report, discussions of ideas for future action, public comment, or questions and a celebration of local community organisations.

Following on from our recent experience and practice, and the positive feedback received, we are publishing the Annual Report on our website in advance of the Annual Parish Meeting. We can then devote the Annual Meeting to being able to take questions from residents and to focus on a community theme. Last year's theme was "Interested in Volunteering?" and was held in the Village Centre. This year the venue will be the same, but the focus will not only be on the wildlife that lives in the Parish, with talks on the Lost Woods of the Low Weald and Downs project and from Ecologist Laurie Jackson, but also an opportunity to express your views about life in our Parish and what the future priorities of the Parish Council should be.

As a part of the work to achieve the Parish 2031 Neighborhood Plan in 2015, the Parish Council developed what became known as the "Parish Community Life Plan 2016-2021". It has underpinned much of what has been delivered and supported by the Parish Council during that period and since. It was due a refresh in 2021/22, but the COVID 19 Pandemic intervened. Now that we once again enjoy a full complement of Councillors, we have decided to focus on developing a plan for the next 5-10 years and beyond to not only support our assets, but also to confirm our outputs. Several of our new councillors, with fresh ideas and experiences are leading on this work, however your input is required.

What is good and not so good about living in our parish? Noting what the Parish Council is currently responsible for representing and delivering, what

should we focus on for the next 3-5 years? What does the nature in our parish mean to you, and what do you do to protect and encourage it?

So do come and join us on the 21st May from 7pm. Meet the current team of councillors and enjoy free tea and coffee. It should be a great opportunity to network with other groups within the Parish, and to celebrate our generous and supportive community. You can also complete the questionnaire online: <https://www.hurstpierpoint-pc.gov.uk/questionnaire/> if you prefer, or if you are unable to attend on the night.

I hope that you enjoy reading our report and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. Contacts details are set out at the end of this document.



Malcolm Llewellyn, Chairman of the Parish Council

2. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Overview

It only seems like yesterday that last year's report was being drafted. Since the collective celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III, the past year appears to have gone by in the "blink of an eye". Whilst we have all been impacted in one way or another by increased costs, I would highlight that the Parish Council has continued throughout to ensure that those services and facilities that you expect continue to be delivered or be available. Similarly, we have invested and upgraded our facilities despite the issues that have been faced. Unfortunately, some of those have related to a significant increase in vandalism across the Parish Council estate. In particular, at the Public Conveniences on Pitt Lane and Trinity Road, and at the Court Bushes Community Hub. You will appreciate that these are not victimless crimes in that as a consequence, facilities have not been available when needed by the community, and the cost of repairs must be found from within existing budgets. In turn, that will undoubtedly have an adverse impact on future Council Tax requirement. Your support in helping to reduce vandalism within the Parish would be appreciated.

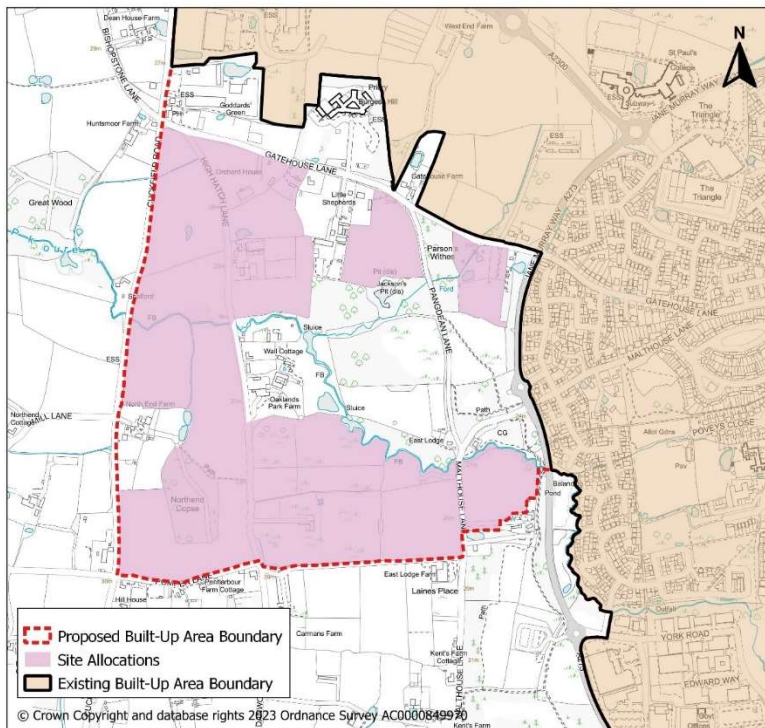
As ever, I will not seek to duplicate that detail here but recommend that you read the reports that follow by the respective chairs of the committees. Instead, I would like to focus on 3 particular areas:

District Plan Review

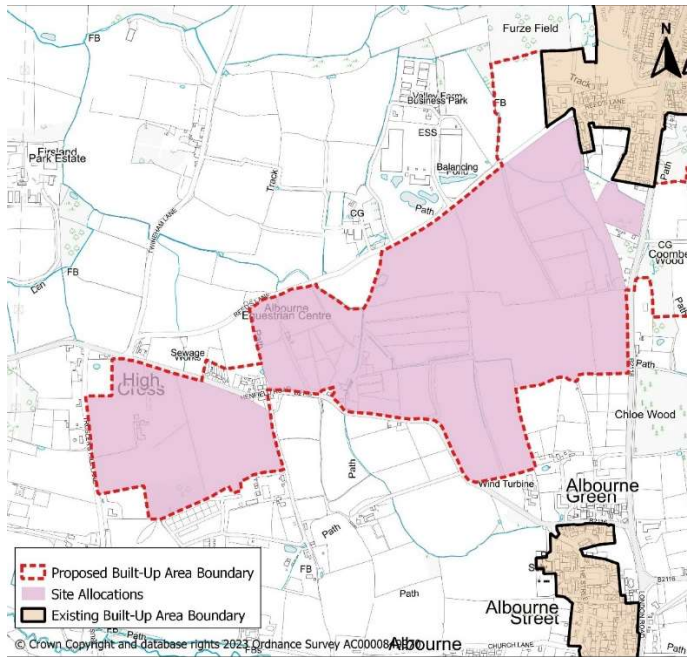
This is another annual report in which I have sought to draw attention to the District Plan Review 2021-2039, and the impact that it could have on the Parish. Following on from the Regulation 18 public consultation in late 2022, parish and town councils through 2023 were invited to various meetings with councillors and officers from MSDC. Those engagements resulted in the strengthening by MSDC of some of the language and envisaged protections around aspects of the draft plan, including clustering in the sites around Sayers Common, but disappointingly the underlying scope and intent of the

plan did not change. It is the view of the Parish Council that whilst the need to have a made plan in place is appreciated, the current draft remains essentially developer led in the areas that are in scope, and that the outcome as proposed is unlikely to meet the needs of the community; indeed that it will have a long term adverse impact upon it.

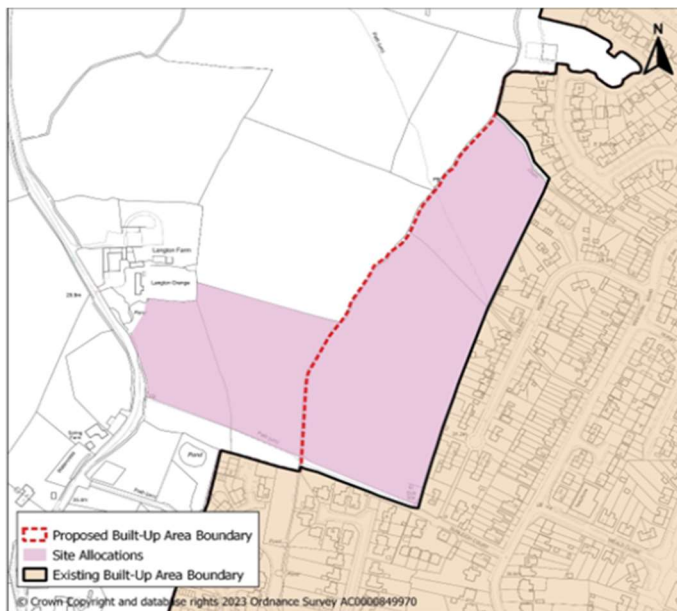
The Plan proposes two significant sites to be built on land north of Hurstpierpoint/west of Burgess Hill (Plan 1) and to the west of Reeds Lane in Sayers Common and Albourne (Plan 2). Combined, the new sites proposed contain 1350 and 2393 homes respectively. It is also proposed to build 90 new homes at land west of Kemps, Hurstpierpoint (Plan 3).



Plan 1



Plan 2



Plan 3

The Parish Council, along with some 1300 other organisations and individuals, made a representation in February to the Regulation 19 (Submission Draft) Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 -2039. The response was made having regard to the legal and procedural requirements, including the duty to cooperate and whether the Plan is sound. The latter is the context of whether the plan is positively prepared, justified and effective, and consistent with National Policy. In outline, the response focused upon:

- Local housing need
- Spatial distribution of housing within the High Weald
- Spatial distribution and the urban focus of development
- Spatial distribution with a focus of development on the three main towns of the District
- Spatial distribution and the proposed allocations of extensions to smaller existing settlements
- Coalescence
- Housing mix
- Transport
- Biodiversity

In a little more detail on the specific locations:

- **Land to the West of Burgess Hill/North of Hurstpierpoint -**
The proposed scale of development in this area should not be permitted without an accompanying Masterplan which details a satisfactory layout to include a significant landscape buffer along the southern and western edge of the development allocation and designation of land beyond this as part of a local gap allocation to protect the surrounding countryside.
- **Land at Sayers Common, particularly South of Reeds Lane -**
The proposed scale of development envisaged at Sayers Common should not be permitted without an accompanying Masterplan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan. These should detail how development would be delivered in conjunction with a significant landscape buffer, particularly along the southern edge of the development area to preserve the local gap between Sayers Common and Albourne, and how

required infrastructure will be delivered in a timely manner and at a scale that will meet the needs of existing and future residents. The proposed policy wording is not sufficiently robust. Residents of Sayers Common have experienced extensive problems with surface water flooding and foul drainage, and recent further development in the area has failed to address this. Resolution of such drainage should be compellingly evidenced as a pre-requisite to any further development in and around the village.

- **Land to the West of Kemps, Hurstpierpoint** - The proposed allocation of 90 dwellings on the site would be harmful to the character and the setting of the Langton Lane Conservation Area and the rural character and amenity of the site, including as experienced from the local footpath. The number of dwellings is excessive, and the allocation should either be substantially reduced or removed from the Plan.

The Parish Council's full response can be found on our website. We now await the appointment of the independent Planning Inspector who will review MSDC's submission draft District Plan, and the representations made by all parties including ourselves. To be clear, the threat to our community, as we know and love it, has not gone away. We very much value our Parish as a separate entity rather than being merged as a suburb of a greater Haywards Heath/Burgess Hill conurbation.

Facilities and Services

Elsewhere in the report there are details covering how we are continuing to invest in and to improve our facilities, and of how we are funded, and where those funds are committed. County and District Council Tax rises are capped at 3% pa, unless the council has adult social care responsibilities when a further 2% rise applies, or where a referendum is held to show support for a higher increase. Parish and town councils do not face the same cap on rises in Council Tax, so there are opportunities for parish and town councils to take on the funding and delivery of non-statutory services from those authorities, especially if those communities want those services to continue.

This Parish Council was faced with one of those requirements in 2015 when MSDC decided not to continue to provide Public Conveniences. The community decided that these remained important. The Public Conveniences have not been closed in Pitt Lane and Trinity Road, but are now funded by



Pitt Lane Public Conveniences

the Parish Council at a cost of 5.5 % of our Council Tax Precept in this financial year; before the impact of any vandalism.



Methodist Church, Cuckfield Road

In a similar scenario, the Methodist Church on the Cuckfield Road was closed in December 2023, and the Parish Council called for groups affected by the closure to express whether they would support it being run as a community venue. The option now exists for it to be bought and run by a community interest group. With the above in mind the work that you are being asked to contribute to will not only help identify the future strategy and direction for the Parish Council, but also in terms of business planning map out what

funds are required over the next 5-10 years to maintain and invest in our current assets and services. It is important that the community not only identifies what the Parish Council should maintain, but also whether there

are non-statutory services that might be at risk, or have already ceased, at District and County level, and which are deemed important enough by the community for the Parish Council to consider, with a consequent increase in the Council Tax.

Highways, Cycleways & Footpaths

This area is not covered by other Chair reports and is not within the direct control of the Parish Council but one that we aim to influence and contribute to on behalf of residents and other organisations as appropriate.



Cut through wood at top of Brown Twins Road into Hurst Meadows

After some 20+ years since the first Sustrans study and subsequent proposals, the section of the east/west cycle route from Sayers Common to Hassocks that is within Hurstpierpoint has commenced delivery by WSCC contractors and should be complete by August. We are advised that the requirement for a similar connection to The Triangle and the new Centre for Outdoor Sport remains within the Burgess Hill People and Connectivity Programme.

In June 2021 the Parish Council resubmitted a previous 2019 Community Highway Scheme (CHS) to address changes to some parking arrangements in the High Street, South Avenue, Brighton Road and Cuckfield Road. Also

included were changes in Reeds Lane and London Road, Sayers Common. WSCC were recently able to deliver those changes.

Promoted by residents and the Community Shop, Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) have also been delivered to change the speed limit between Hurstpierpoint and the traffic lights on London Road, Albourne, and parking arrangements around the Community Shop in Sayers Common.

In response to requests from residents, and other organisations, TROs have been submitted to change the speed limit on roads leading to the 20 mph zone around Hurstpierpoint College, waiting restrictions around the Willow Way and Chalkers Lane Junctions on Cuckfield Road, and a proposal to extend the 20mph zone within Hurstpierpoint to encompass St Lawrence



High Street parking changes



Footpath from West Furlong Lane to the Brighton Road

School and High Street west to The Horse and east on Hassocks Road to the Highfield Drive junction. A TRO request has also been submitted to limit Reeds Lane, Sayers Common to 7.5 tonnes except for access.

There is also a CHS request in place to provide an all-weather footpath from the Cuckfield Road and College Lane to Hurstpierpoint College. Finally, we have been advised that the footpath from West Furlong Lane to the Brighton Road should be upgraded in this financial year.

Councillors

Some may recall that we entered the elections on 4th May 2023 with 2 long standing vacancies, and that also 3 of the existing councillors decided not to stand again. With significant effort, we were able to start the 2023-24 with 10 Councillors but 5 vacancies. However, this equated to the 2/3rd required for us to be able to adopt the General Power of Competence. A position that allows council business to be simpler to conduct and more able to respond to the needs of the community within the bounds of what a parish council is there to support and enable. Following the election, and the intervening period, we have been very successful in co-opting 6 new councillors from within the Parish. They bring with them fresh ideas, contacts, and a range of skills and experience that are a welcome addition to the Council. They are Sarah Baldey, Susan Dyke, Barry Forster, Mark Froud, Annette Street, and Lindsay Thompson.

As the number of councillors approached a full complement of 15, John Lowman, a former Chairman of the Parish Council and long-term Parish Councillor decided that it was time to stand down. On behalf of the Parish Council, I thank him for his long and devoted service to the community, especially guiding the Council to the early adoption of a Neighborhood Plan, promoting the potential benefits of what became Hurst Meadows, and seeking to include parts of Hurstpierpoint within the proposed boundaries of what has become the South Downs National Park. On a personal note, I have valued being able to draw upon his experience, knowledge and wisdom on all matters pertaining to the Parish, and trust that his successors are able to preserve and celebrate the best that this Parish has to offer as he has successfully done in the past.

With the end of the Council year, I once again thank my fellow councillors for their support, feedback, and advice during my tenure as Chairman. My thanks to Claire Majsai as both Vice Chair of the Parish Council and Chair of the Community Engagement Committee who has not only focused on all aspects of engagement with the community, but also acted as an excellent balance to my role as Chairman, and found time to chair other working groups, such as Hurst Meadows, Events, and Sustainability. I thank Julia Shorrocks, Chair of Planning Committee for ensuring that the Parish Council

as a Statutory Consultee engages in a constructive and consistent manner with the Local Planning Authority and Duncan Ranger, who has taken on the wider role as Chair of the Finance, Governance and Estates Committee that underpins and supports all the outputs of the Parish Council.

External Assistance

Of course, the Parish Council could not deliver or support the community without the considerable assistance of volunteers, or organisations who share in achieving similar objectives. This past year has seen children from St Lawrence CE School helping to plant tree whips in Hovel Field North, and students from Hurstpierpoint College undertaking coppicing and dead hedge layer in Hurst Meadows on their Community Action Day. Others have been recording butterfly sightings within the Hurst Meadows, an excellent indicator of the health of the meadows, tending the young tree whips in Hovel Field, Edgerley Meadow and Walnut Tree Field, or clearing the arisings from the annual cut in the Heritage Apple Orchard.



Tree Planting in Hovel Field North



Plant Heritage National Plant Collection Plaque

As many of you will be aware, Martin Sadler is the key driver behind the orchard. It is entirely his efforts that have resulted in Plant Heritage adding the community orchard to the National Plant Collections directory. Thank you to one and all!

Parish Council Staff

For the past year the Council has benefitted from stability in our now smaller team of five full and part time staff. They are led by Sarah Groom, the Clerk to the Council and the Responsible Financial Officer, and very ably supported by Assistant Clerks Helen Valler and Viv Aloy, the Estates and Facilities Manager Stephen Witchell, and Maintenance Officer Hamish Raby. The Council's and residents' needs and aspirations could easily exceed both the capacity of our staff and the resources available. Whilst each member of the team has well defined areas of responsibility, and Sarah aims to both temper Council's aspirations and to balance the priorities of the team, they collectively rise to both the challenge of the unexpected and the routine. This could be at a burst pipe or a fire in an asset, or a resident who needs assistance at the Parish Council office counter. Throughout the year they have just got on and delivered. On behalf of the Council, I very much thank them for their support, dedication, and their enthusiasm for both the work of the Council and the community that we serve. We are very lucky to have such a capable and devoted team.



Malcolm Llewellyn, Chairman of the Parish Council

3. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

As ever it has been another busy year for the Planning Committee. Shifting our meetings to take place on a Monday night, we have held 12 meetings and considered over 200 applications. We aim to make our meetings as friendly and welcoming as possible and we really appreciate all the residents who have taken the trouble to attend a meeting whether to express an objection, better explain their own application or just thought they would come and have a look at what we do.

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee for both Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) and the South Downs National Park (SDNP) but it is these bodies who make the planning decisions.

Whether the application is for a tiny alteration to the internal layout or a full roof redesign or a complete rebuild we study the plans and make a decision over whether we believe MSDC should or should not give permission for the homeowner to go ahead with their plans. We always listen to residents' concerns and will do our best to support people's views.

At the time of writing, we are awaiting the appointment of a Planning Inspector to deliberate on the Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039, that includes vast numbers of units being built all around our villages. Whilst accepting that people need affordable housing, there is a limit on the amount of green space everyone wishes to see turned into housing estates. We want a future Parish that people now and for generations to come can enjoy. MSDC really did put far too much in a small space around us. We live in hope that the Inspector will agree and changes to the plan will be forthcoming. The damage to the wildlife and green spaces that make our villages such a pleasant place to live will be a high price to pay if the Plan goes ahead as suggested.

Thanks goes to each member of the Committee for their time and commitment, and to Helen Bedford for being the Vice Chair and Mark Froud for joining as second Vice Chair recently. A special thank you must go to Helen Valler and Sarah Groom for clerking our meetings and giving advice and guidance on policies and legal matters.



Julia Shorrocks, Chair of the Planning Committee

4. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

At the heart of our role as Councillors is working together with our community to try to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives here. The Community Engagement Committee takes the lead for the Council on this collaboration, and we are always seeking ways to do this better.

The highlights of our year have been varied – from the joy of the first Hurstpierpoint Wassail (pictured) to the pleasure of working with our new committee members who bring welcome expertise and experience, as well as fresh ideas.



Hurstpierpoint Orchard Wassail

The committee with the support of Parish Office staff, continued to improve the Council's communication with the Parish through our website, articles in Hurst Life, social media presence, etc. A significant challenge this year was around sharing complex information effectively and thereby encouraging residents to respond to the Mid Sussex District Draft Local Plan. Our members proactively seek and share

information that will be useful to the community, as well as using every opportunity to remind other authorities, agencies and voluntary services, of the needs of residents and businesses outside of the larger Mid Sussex towns.

Annual Parish Meeting 2023

Many of the groups who attended our Community Forum highlighted a need for more volunteers as, post-Covid particularly, numbers have dropped. The committee decided therefore to give the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting (APM) a volunteering theme, but retained the format from the previous year with stalls for local groups and opportunities for informal networking and meeting the public before and after the speakers.



Annual Parish Meeting 2023

Local people (including parish councillors, who are all volunteers) spoke about what they gained from volunteering and groups were also able to pitch their own volunteering opportunities. We had a lot of positive feedback after the event and are hoping that this year's Annual Parish Meeting will be even better. If you are interested in volunteering in your local community, Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA) can help you find a role that matches your interests.

Refreshments at the Annual Parish Meeting were again kindly served by the Melting Pot Café. The Melting Pot is run by volunteers from our local churches and takes place every Thursday morning 10.00 – 12.00 at Court Bushes Community Hub. This friendly community café serves tea, coffee, cake, cup-a-soup and toast, free or for a small donation.

Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Community Forum

This annual event, designed to complement the APM, was held on 18 January 2024 in conjunction with Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA), having been postponed from November due to extreme weather on the day. We were really pleased with the turnout again and the variety of groups represented. The Forums give a valuable opportunity to groups, (mostly but not entirely voluntary), to share with others their current initiatives and discuss any gaps in local provision and ideas for filling those gaps.

If you are involved in a local group and would like to be on our distribution list for future events and opportunities, please contact the Parish Office for details.



Community Groups Forum 2024

Parish Events

As usual, the Committee awarded grants towards popular community events such as, the Hurst Festival Super Sunday, and the Hurst Rethink Advent Calendar. We were really pleased this year to be able to support a new event, *HURSTfolk*. We focus our funding on those events that are free, and therefore accessible, to all in our community. Both financial and organisational support was offered to the High Street traders' Santa's Fun Sunday event and the festive atmosphere and opportunity to do some Christmas shopping, with Hurstpierpoint High Street closed to traffic, was much enjoyed.



Santa's Fun Sunday 2023



Hurstpierpoint Wassail Workshop

the new orchards in the evening. The wassail seems to have worked, as the apple blossom in the villages is, as I write, stunningly beautifully this year!

We were able to hold the first ever (in recent times!) Hurstpierpoint Wassail, responding to many requests from residents along the lines of "now you have an orchard, you must have a Wassail!" Local choir leader, Jo Burke, led a free workshop in the afternoon to teach the wassail songs ready for the singing, dancing, and processing between the old and

The Events Group also organised our usual stall at the St. Lawrence Fair. As ever, this was a great opportunity for councillors to chat informally to residents - though we never seem as popular as the beer or cake stalls!



Parish Council Stand, St Lawrence Fair 2023

(Even the councillors seem to have headed off to the beer and cake stalls!)

Grants

At our regular meetings, the Community Engagement Committee has the important task of considering any grant applications received by the Parish Council. Priority is given in line with the Council's Action Plan, with a focus on groups who provide services which directly aim to improve the quality of life for residents in our villages. We very much encourage those groups applying for grants to come along to one of our meetings to tell us about their work. As well as helping us decide where to award grants, this also helps with the networking, signposting, and facilitating of partnership working, which is an important part of our role. As we are responsible for public money and that is limited, we cannot award grants to everyone who comes to us. This is probably the most difficult part of our work. However, we do want to make the process easier for those who are thinking of applying. Hence, we are currently working on improving the information, guidance, and forms on our website to make applying for a grant easier, with more clarity on criteria, etc.

We also have a small amount of money for health and wellbeing projects that meet a specific local need, as identified by the Council. This year, we were pleased with the result of discussions at the Community Forum, where we had expressed concern at the loneliness and isolation experienced by some older people in Sayers Common. These discussions resulted in us being approached by Mid Sussex Older People's Council, who offered to run tea parties in Sayers Common and needed funding to get these off the ground. We look forward to the first of these tea parties happening soon.

We were also able to fund a session of free defibrillator training for residents. People notice this equipment around, (much of it maintained now by the Parish Council), but lack confidence that they would be able to use it should



**Darren Kannayya (who maintains our defibrillators)
with the defibrillator at The Village Centre**

that be necessary if a casualty stopped breathing. We learnt that in fact the machines themselves are programmed to talk a user through how to use them in an emergency. Locations of defibrillators in the Parish can be found on the Parish Council website and it is worth familiarising yourself with them.

In 2023/2024 grants were given to a range of organisations from St. John's Ambulance towards a new Community Support Unit, to the Monday group who maintain styles, gates and footpaths to enable access to our beautiful countryside, to Sayers Common Speed Watch Group for funding towards a second speed indicator

display unit. We were particularly pleased to support the Christmas Toy Bank who provide gifts to the many families locally for whom affording presents for their children is a significant challenge. Details of all the other grants awarded can be found on our website.

Youth Offer

The committee were very disappointed to hear of the closure of Sussex Clubs for Young People who had been running the youth club at Court Bushes. We had been trying for some time to encourage and facilitate an improvement in provision for young people locally, so the total collapse of the youth club came as a huge blow. Unfortunately, no local authority holds a responsibility for provision of youth services and despite much effort and persistent enquiries on the part of members, we have not been able to access any information on what the future holds for the youth club. We will continue to press hard to try to get this situation remedied.

Communication

Our committee also has responsibility for developing the Parish Council's communication strategy. The website continues to grow with additional pages being added and new information being regularly highlighted. It is well worth checking it, and our Facebook page, regularly to see what the Parish Council is up to and for information on current projects, facilities, and events, ranging from volunteering opportunities in Hurst Meadows, to repairs to historically important flint walls! We have just started posting on Instagram so if you use this, please follow us there as well:



hurstandsayersparishcouncil

Parish Council Instagram Account

Our monthly article in Hurst Life is probably the most accessible source of information as it is delivered to every household in the Parish.



May 2024 | Parish Council News

Village Centre, Trinity Road, Hurstparish, BH13 3JY
Tel: 01273 832664 Email: office@hurstparish-pc.gov.uk
www.hurstparish-pc.gov.uk

**Beyond Your Doorstep:
Discover the Hidden Nature
in our Parish**

We hope to see many of you at the Annual Parish Meeting on 21st May 7pm at Hurstparish Village Centre.
Come and find out about the wildlife that lives on Hurst Meadows, the Lost Woods project, and how you can support nature recovery in the parish. This is also a chance to meet your friendly parish councillors. All village and local residents, and councillors are welcome to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works here.

Congratulations!

A big well done and thank you to Margaret Taylor, who was given a Lifetime Achievement award at the Mid Sussex Awards ceremony, having been nominated by the Parish Council. The Awards panel commented:
"Margaret Taylor's decades of service to her community, from teaching to volunteering at various organisations, highlight her unwavering commitment to serving others. Her dedication to enriching the lives of others through education and community involvement is truly commendable."
Have you ever considered volunteering in your local community but aren't sure where to start? Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA) offer a free service to match you with charities and community groups that need your time and skills. Further information can be found on the MSVA website: www.msva.org.uk/want-to-volunteer

Venues News

First the good news... The floor in the Main Hall at the Village Centre, Trinity Road was repaired, sanded, and varnished over the Easter holidays and is looking absolutely fantastic! If you are looking for a great venue for a big event, the Main Hall has room for up to 200 people and has its own kitchen and toilets. Further information can be found on the Parish Council website under "Venues".
Unfortunately, we have sadder news from Court Busby Community Club where the main function room and club lounge are currently out of action following a car accident. Fortunately, nobody was seriously injured, and the Parish Council is working hard to get this popular venue fully operational again. Please check our website for updates so to when we can start taking bookings again or speak to Parish Office staff.

Dementia Safe Places

Have you noticed these flower stickers on the windows of some of the shops, offices, and other premises around the villages? The flower sticker shows that the building is a 'Safe Place' location.
The 'Safe Place' project was created by the Parish Council to ensure that people living with dementia feel understood and able to maintain their independence and lead fulfilling lives in their local community. It gives the person somewhere safe to wait if they are feeling lost or upset rather than having to be taken to the police station which can be extremely traumatic for them.
Staff at the Safe Places have received training from a local charity on how to support lost and distressed people in this situation.
The Parish Council would like to expand this project by extending the number of shops and other premises taking part. Training and full information would be provided.
If you would like to be involved with this project by becoming a 'Safe Place' please do contact the Parish Office by the end of May. If you are currently a 'Safe Place' and would like more training or information, please do also get in touch.

Public Conveniences

As public toilets close around the country, causing anxiety and restricting the lives of many people, the Parish Council has continued to prioritise funding the maintenance of the two facilities in Hurstparish. We believe this is important, not just so that our village stays clean, but because we want all visitors and residents to enjoy being out and about and not have to worry about being "caught short". At some time in our lives most of us will have a particular need to be able to access a toilet quickly, whether because we are caring for young children, are pregnant, have prostate issues or indeed are on the road as delivery drivers, etc.

Getting Around

Did you know you can travel anywhere in our area and beyond by bus for only £2? This fare cap scheme is in place until December 2024 and offers a great opportunity to leave the car at home and try out a less stressful and more environmentally friendly way of travelling.
Timetables can be found here: www.metrobus.co.uk and here: www.compass-timed.co.uk
For older members of the community, a reminder that if you qualify for a Senior Railcard, the Parish Council can issue a discount code that gives 20% off the price of a one-year railcard. Ask at the Parish Office at the Village Centre bringing proof of your address in the parish.
If you are state pension age and would like to organise a new bus pass or renew your current one, please visit the Library on Trinity Road and the staff will be able to assist you with this. For more information, please see the West Sussex County Council website.

May 2024 Meeting Schedule

Please check the Parish Council notice boards or our website to confirm the meeting location. Members of the public are welcome to attend, and all meetings commence at 7.30pm.

Thursday 16th
Tuesday 21st
Tuesday 23rd

Finance, Governance & Estates
Annual Parish Meeting
Annual Council Meeting

Village Centre
Village Centre
Village Centre

May 2024

Parish Council Meeting

Parish Council Hurst Life Article

If you have not discovered Hurst Life yet, please have a look when it comes through your letterbox at the beginning of every month. We work hard to make our Parish Council pages as accessible and interesting as possible!

Annual Report 2023/24

Sustainability Strategy

The Sustainability Strategy Working Group consists of three members of the Community Engagement Committee who meet regularly to review progress with the Strategy which consists of an Action Plan with five objectives:

Help Nature to Recover



Brown Hairstreak Butterfly

This is the area in which we have probably seen the most progress as natural regeneration in Hurst Meadows gathers speed. We are seeing the emergence of a mosaic of different habitats through, for example, the growth of young willow and oak saplings and scrub such as bramble and blackthorn. These complement the grassland, wildflower areas, heritage orchard and ancient woodland. We have noticed birds of prey such as barn owls and kestrels hunting in Hurst Meadows as the small mammal population recovers and volunteers have recorded many bird and butterfly species including the rare Brown Hairstreak.

The Parish Council also encourages improved biodiversity across the villages through participation in initiatives such as No Mow May and the West Sussex County Council Community Road Verge Scheme. Members are now building links with other groups and Parish and Town Councils to look at how we can support nature recovery at the local level as we face the threats to wildlife and the countryside coming from proposed large scale building development.



Bluebells in Tilley's Copse

Reduce Waste

We have reduced waste by not purchasing new furniture for our office and by improving recycling both as part of the Conditions of Hire of our venues and through making it easier for staff to recycle within the Office. Even small changes have made a difference – purchasing mugs for the Village Centre kitchen means that hirers no longer feel that they need to bring throwaway cups if they like a longer drink!

We strongly support, and consistently encourage, Mid Sussex District Council to extend their food waste collection scheme to our Parish whilst also building links with groups such as Mid Sussex Food Partnership who look at ways to share food, that otherwise will be thrown away, with those who need it.

Increase Access to Green Spaces

The Parish Council continues to organise community nature walks in Hurst Meadows such as the very successful Bird Walk led by local ecologist Laurie Jackson in January 2024. Look out for information on these events on the (new!) noticeboards in Hurst Meadows as well as on our website and in our Hurst Life articles. We encourage and support our local pre-schools and our primary school to bring their children out to enjoy Hurst Meadows and hopefully thereby develop a love of nature. We also host a group of students through the Hurst College community day who help our Estates and Facilities Manager with land management tasks. We are always pleased to respond



positively to requests by local groups, schools and youth groups for us to lead walks in Hurst Meadows and talk about the nature to be found there. Please get in touch!

We reviewed bench provision in Hurst Meadows this year, particularly looking at the need for more “rest spots” for the less mobile. This will result in increased seating which hopefully means that more people feel confident to enjoy this lovely space.

New Bench in Hurst Meadows

The Parish Council also consistently argues for greater provision of public green spaces as part of planning agreements as we are very aware of the value of access to the countryside and nature, to the mental and physical health of our residents.

If you would like to spend more time in nature, please think about signing up to be one of our Hurst Meadows Conservation Volunteers. As well as the opportunity to take part in weekly surveys over the butterfly season, volunteers also help with important tasks as needed such as raking the Heritage Orchard and caring for the new tree whips. This is on a very informal basis – we email out to volunteers when tasks need doing and it is very rewarding to be outside working together and making a difference.



Hurst Meadows Orchard Volunteers

Reduce Carbon Emissions

The Parish Council continues to support and promote active, sustainable travel, including the provision of better bus services and the establishment of a network of cycle routes around the Parish and towards Hassocks and Burgess Hill. We have installed new bike racks and encourage “shopping local” and hence reducing car use.



Metro 273 Crawley – Hurstpierpoint – Brighton Bus

We aim to make walking in the villages safer and more enjoyable for pedestrians – for example through widening the 20mph zones and supporting the need for a road crossing outside the Sayers Common village shop. Our latest proposed initiatives, submitted to West Sussex County Council, is for the provision of all-weather surface footpath from Cuckfield Road to Hurstpierpoint College.

Towards the end of 2023 we were pleased to receive the report from a building survey carried out by Ricardo to assess the feasibility of a possible heat, solar power and energy storage project based on Hurstpierpoint Village Centre. Unfortunately, the study showed that the building was not suitable for the totality of such a project but that there is feasibility for solar PV and heat improvements, should West Sussex County Council who own the building enable us to move forward on this.

The Parish Council continues to use a renewable energy provider for electricity for its buildings and actively looks for ways to reduce energy usage.

Build Resilience

The effect of the extreme weather we now experience because of climate change has been particularly obvious this year, with heavy and persistent rainfall resulting in flooding across the Parish and particularly in Sayers Common. Councillors have been closely involved in seeking a solution to these flooding issues. A sustainable drainage solution at Reeds Lane recreation ground has been sought and the implementation of this is currently out to tender. Measures include the additional hedge planting which has already taken place and in the future the instillation of ephemeral ponds, both of which have the added bonus of being good for wildlife.

At the opposite extreme we continue to support increased urban tree planting which as the trees get bigger helps to reduce heat through shading. Future generations will hopefully be able to enjoy sheltering from the sun under the new trees that we have recently planted on South Avenue recreation ground.



New Tree Planted in South Avenue Play Area

The full version of our Sustainability Strategy can be found on the Parish Council website under “Parish Action Plans.” Please do read it in full. If you have ideas for other ways in which we could support a more sustainable community life, please contact the Working Group via the Parish Office.

Summary

This year, we welcomed Viv Aloy as our new Assistant Clerk. Viv joined the Parish Office staff just before the Annual Parish Meeting was due to take place, so she certainly jumped straight in at the deep end! She is a fabulous asset to the team and supports us with competence and humour.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the members of my committee, especially the new members – I hope it hasn't been too scary - your energy and enthusiasm are very welcome! Thanks are especially due to the Events Working Group, who put in a lot of extra time, effort and ideas, (plus many Teams meetings!)

This Annual Report gives a flavour of the range of different projects that the Community Engagement Committee has been involved in over the last year. Our Action Plan can be found on the Parish Council website if you would like more information on our plans and priorities.

We are always keen to hear from residents with positive ideas for how we can better support and engage with our community. Please do get in touch via the Parish Office.



Claire Majesai, Chair of the Community Engagement Committee

5. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE FINANCE, GOVERNANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE

Finance and Governance

The Committee sets out an action plan each year to ensure it achieves its priorities. Some of the actions completed this year included a new branding manual (made possible with the kind help of a local resident); a significant amount of work to respond to the Mid Sussex District Plan Review (2023-2039) Regulation 19 consultation; a review of the Village Centre Charity to ensure the best arrangements are in place; a new training programme for councillors and staff and a job evaluation exercise for all staff posts.

As well as stringent internal controls, the Parish Council is regularly audited by an independent internal auditor (twice a year) and an independent external auditor (at the end of each financial year). During one of the recent internal audits the following comments were made:

“The Councillors and Clerk appear to be well informed with evidence showing that councillor & clerk training has taken place. Communication between the office and councillors is professional and business-like. It is therefore clear the council takes governance, policies, and procedures seriously. It is our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council are fit for purpose and more importantly followed by councillors and office staff alike.”

The Parish Council also has a comprehensive risk management process in place. The policy and the risk assessment records are reviewed by the auditors, and they also remarked that it is evident that the type of approach used demonstrates that the Council takes its risk management responsibilities seriously. A separate financial risk assessment is reviewed by the Parish Council each March to ensure any income or expenditure risks are evaluated and any action is taken as necessary.

The record of land, buildings and equipment is kept up to date. The asset register is reviewed at six monthly intervals in line with the Internal Controls exercise and in accordance with the Asset Register Policy. An accurate and up to date value of the total assets is essential for our Annual Return to the external auditor.

The Committee is responsible for monitoring all of the individual items of income and expenditure, which it does monthly. Annually, the Committee oversees the review of charges, and budget setting for the next financial year and recommends the final figures to Full Council in December for the next April financial year. The majority of Parish Council income comes from the part of the Council Tax known as the parish precept. The amount paid by the average Band D property for 2023/2024 was £92.54. An explanation of the financial year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 follows.

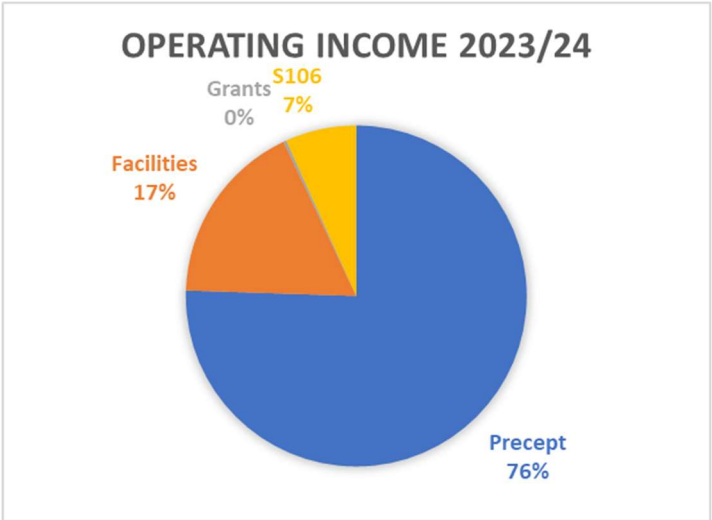
Review of 2023/24

As of 31 March 2024, the Parish Council had total funds of £506,216. Of that, the General Reserves were £77,790, with the remainder £428,426 ringfenced as Earmarked Reserves; mainly for the ongoing maintenance of Hurst Meadows which can only be used for that purpose. The Parish Council's policy remains to ensure that revenue income and expenditure are generally in balance year on year, including maintaining and investing in our facilities. However, one off, or capital expenditure, should be met from grants. In 2023/24 £1,066 was kindly received from Hurst Society for tree planting on South Avenue Recreation Ground. Developer contributions in the form of Section 106 funds were received for surfacing the Court Bushes Car Park (£23,165) and for three noticeboards for Hurst Meadows (£3,947).

Despite the continuing challenging financial climate, the Parish Council has focused on ensuring that our recreation grounds, play areas, community buildings, allotments, cemetery, street lighting, bus stops and public toilets are fit for use and available. Where possible, investments are made in maintaining and upgrading them. An update on all matters relating to our services are covered under the Estates and Facilities section.

The following pie charts and table show the end of financial year position of the Parish Council on 31 March 2024:

Income in 2023/2024



Expenditure in 2023/2024

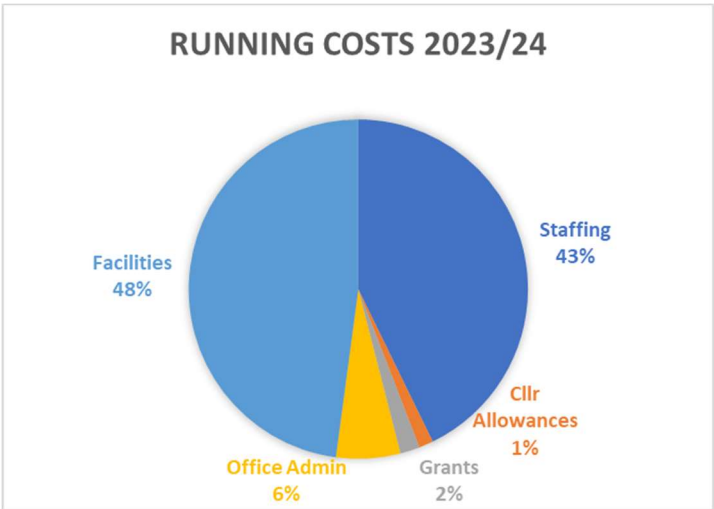


Table 1 – Income and Expenditure in 2023/2024

<u>Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council</u>		
2022/23	<u>Operating Income</u>	2023/24
281,608	Precept	303,638
10,890	S.106 agreements	27,112
2,000	Grants/Donations	1,066
82,334	Facilities	62,908
0	Capital	0
2,120	Miscellaneous	0
378,952	Total Income	402,106
<u>Running Costs</u>		
164,647	Staffing	181361
77,361	Office Administration	25,927
7,264	Councillor Allowances	5,794
0	Loan servicing	0
7,193	Grants	7,905
139,857	Facility Provision	203,037
396,322	Total Expenditure	424,024

Council Tax 2024/25

For 2024/25, the Parish Council Tax, for a typical Band D property, will rise to £95.28. This is an increase of 2.97%, or 5.3p per week. Council Tax together with other income from rents, hiring fees, allotments, and cemetery fees, is expected to cover the ongoing day to day operations and maintenance requirements. These fees and charges have increased by the September 2023 CPI rate of 6.7%. Whilst any increase is not welcomed, the Parish Council continues to maintain its General Reserve at the minimum level that is recommended for a Parish Council of its size and will once again not increase those reserves so that it is holding onto the public's money unnecessarily. To fund any improvements and project work within the Parish, external funding will be sought, such as S106 developer funds and grants where available. Where external funding is not possible the appropriate earmarked reserves held by the Parish Council will be used.

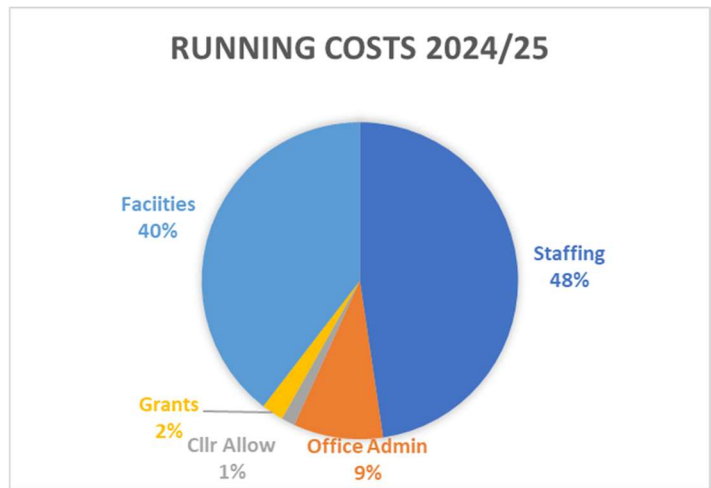
The small rise in Council Tax means the General Reserve will be maintained, the outputs of the Parish Council will not be reduced, and the closure of key assets are prevented, despite the cost increases that continue to be experienced.

In May 2023 the previous 3-year electricity and gas contracts came to an end but, noting the forward forecasts, the Parish Council only entered into 1 year replacement contracts, and will seek to take advantage of any falls in prices going forwards. Water and sewerage contracts have been combined with a single supplier at an improved rate. Economies of scale continue to be actively sought, both in how our facilities are maintained and how our services are delivered.

Early last year, having previously not replaced staff who had left, the Parish Council agreed to rebalance staff capacity. Following the appointment of our new Assistant Clerk in May 2023 with increased hours, we have also been able to increase the hours of the existing Assistant Clerk bringing the team to 4.18 full time equivalent. With specialist knowledge required to assist the Parish Council in areas such as planning consultancy, specialist support has also been bought in where required.

The following pie chart and table is the planned expenditure budget summary for 2024/25 totalling £420,336 (excluding the Village Centre which is accounted for within the Village Centre Charity). Planned work for 2024/25 includes developing and consulting on a 20-25 year Parish Strategy and business plan to assist with budget setting for years 2025-2028.

Expenditure Budget 2024/2025



Running Costs 2024/2025

Staffing	200,302
Office Administration	38,482
Councillor Allowances	5,850
Grants	9,500
Facilities	166,202
Total	<u>420,336</u>

In summary, the Parish Council has had a good year financially in 2023/24, with a small overspend of £20,783 but an over-recovery of income of £43,309 resulting in a surplus of £22,526. After transfers to earmarked reserves of £12,014 and from earmarked reserves of £36,656, this leaves a figure of £33,228 to top up the General Reserve.

Estates & Facilities

Following the merger of two Committees in May 2023, the Finance, Governance and Estates Committee is also responsible for the various Parish Council land and buildings, including Court Bushes Community Hub in Willow Way, the Village Centre in Trinity Road (a separate charity), the 50 acre countryside site known as Hurst Meadows, the Cemetery and Chapel in South Avenue, Chantry Stables (the Charity Shop), Albourne Road allotments, parish owned streetlights, South Avenue and Reeds Lane Recreation Grounds, as well as the two public toilets in Hurstpierpoint and five bus shelters around the parish.

Court Bushes Community Hub

This fantastic venue continues to increase in popularity which is reflected in the hire income. Kiddie Capers Childcare is ever more popular offering much needed support to working parents in the area. Other hiring activity attracts local groups covering a range of activities from martial arts to embroidery, and private parties. Planning permission and Section 106 funding have been secured for a new storage container for hirers which will be delivered in Summer 2024. Following the anti-social behaviour incidents involving many of the access road bollards suffering damage, and a window being shattered, the Police and PCSOs have been conducting regular visits. Three new high visibility CCTV cameras have been installed utilising S106 funding.



Temporary Hoarding, Court Bushes Function Room

placed in the Function Room, pending full repairs, meaning that the venue is now fully open to hirers.

Sadly, Court Bushes Community Hub has also suffered a series of unfortunate incidents from floods and fires, to a very lucky escape for a driver who accidentally damaged one of the Function Room walls. Temporary hoarding has been

As with all public buildings, the safety of users is paramount and all necessary safety checks are undertaken such as electrical tests, water safety, fire alarms, fire call points, extinguishers and smoke/heat detector inspections.

The Village Centre

The Village Centre is managed by the Parish Council on behalf of the Village Centre charity, of which the Parish Council is both custodian and sole trustee.



The loyal, regular users of the facility continue including the Preschool, Gym Club and Star Dance and we welcomed many new groups this year including the Agnes Dance School, Arts Classes and many other community based organisations. The main hall has been redecorated and

Repaired and Resealed Village Centre Main Hall Floor

the floor repaired and resealed. The repairs to the floor have been very well received but came at the cost of nearly £7,000.

In the Conference Room, the ability to use the audio-visual system for remote meetings and training sessions is still well received by commercial and voluntary groups. Important health and safety measures including the fire alarms, extinguishers and smoke detector inspections have been completed. Fixed wire testing is required to be checked every five years and some minor repairs were required. Several new safety signs were ordered and installed around the building.

Hurst Meadows

The Meadows continues to be a popular and well used area by walkers with or without dogs. The whole area of woodland, grassland, hedges, ditches and footpaths continues to be maintained in accordance with the Management Plan. Actions include phased cutting and collection of the larger grass areas and the encouragement of wildflower meadows in Buckwilly and Bellows Nose.

The Heritage Apple Orchard continues to grow and develop thanks to the considerable efforts of Martin Sadler who tends and nurtures the maturing trees.

Volunteer activity has continued with groups under the supervision of Councillor Claire Majsai and our Estates and Facilities Manager Stephen Witchell,

being utilised to help with the weeding in the Wilderness and with some other significant planting. They have also completed the removal of excess arisings from the Heritage Orchard and cleared grass and broken plastic from tree whips in Walnut Tree field.



Lady Sudely Apple

Three new Parish Council noticeboards were purchased specifically for Hurst Meadows located in Hovel Field, Fifteen Acres and Buckwilly. A successful application for section 106 monies was made by the Parish Council in support of this project. A consultant has also been asked to review and summarise available Countryside Stewardship Grants to help with funding for works in Hurst Meadows.

A S106 application was approved for two new benches to be installed in Buckwilly and Walnut Tree Field in May 2024. A specimen walnut tree has been planted in Walnut Tree Field from the generous donation from the Hurstpierpoint Society.

St George's Green Flint Wall

The rebuild and repair to the previously crumbling flint wall along the southern boundary of St Georges Lane was completed last year. The remaining section is now in a bad state with large ivy stems growing out of it and has reached a point where the only option to save the flint wall is to take it down and reconstruct it. WSCC started their preparation works for the cycleway in February 2024, which has resulted in a tree being removed adjacent to this section of flint wall. To prevent future damage to the flint wall it is proposed to take down the remaining section of wall ahead of the cycleway works commencing, grind out the stump and reconstruct this section of flint wall.

South Avenue

Work continues to rejuvenate the chapel at the cemetery and repairs to the rotten sections of the chapel doors have been undertaken, along with decorating and other minor work.

Badly worn play surfaces at the South Avenue Recreation Ground play area have been replaced. The ROSPA play equipment inspection report noted only a couple of very minor items. Two memorial oak trees have been planted and cages installed to protect them on the Rec, including the Lady Barnes Memorial Oak funded by Hurstpierpoint Society and a generous memorial donation. Section 106 funding has been approved for tree guards and materials to plant a further five locally grown saplings.

Reeds Lane Recreation Ground

The design has been approved that will improve the level of drainage on the site and support Phase 2 of the improved play equipment at the Recreation Ground. The design and tendering documents have now been sent out to contractors and a contract will hopefully be awarded in early June 2024. A drainage consultant has been commissioned to help oversee works and funding will be coming from Section 106 funds.

Litter and Dog Bins

The current distribution of waste and dog bins has been completed and work is in hand to secure additional bins and to upgrade others.

Public Toilets

The Parish Council have continued to keep the toilets open and in good repair. Pitt Lane has suffered some vandalism and graffiti.

Summary

It has been pleasing to see that the revenue generated across the Village Centre and Court Bushes sites is almost to the level expected in the budget. The reduction in utility prices has given significant help to our budgeting. Gas, electricity, and water charges have stabilised and as mentioned earlier, efforts have been, and continue to be made, to renegotiate with suppliers where possible.

My thanks go to the members of the Committee, which includes some long awaited new councillors, for maintaining a critical focus on the detail, ensuring that assumptions and priorities are tested where appropriate, but always aiming to identify the best solution to meet the needs of our community. I would like to thank our Clerk to the Council, Sarah, for her diligence in both preparing for the Committee meetings and then accurately recording the outcome in a timely manner. Both the Assistant Clerks, Helen and Viv, manage the cemetery and allotments respectively and take all the bookings for the venues. The Estates & Facilities Manager, Stephen and our Maintenance Officer, Hamish who have both supported all our work with continued patience, diligence, and good humour.



Duncan Ranger, Chair of the Finance, Governance and Estates Committee

6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

22 MAY 2023

MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Monday 22 May 2023 at 7.00 pm at the Village Centre

Present: Cllr Malcolm Llewellyn (Chairman of the Parish Council). Also Claire Majsai (Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council & Chair of Community Engagement Committee), Julia Shorrocks (Chair of the Planning Committee), Duncan Ranger (Chair of the Finance, Governance and Estates Committee), Michael Avery, Helen Bedford, David Evans, Rodney Jackson, John Lowman, Bob Sampson and Lindsay Thompson. Also in attendance: Clerk, Assistant Clerks, Estates and Facilities Manager and Maintenance Officer and approx. 65 members of the public

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Helen Bedford opened the event, welcomed everyone to the meeting and ran through the housekeeping matters. Cllr Claire Majsai explained the format for the evening and that the theme was volunteering. Cllr Majsai described the reasons she enjoyed volunteering as a councillor as the sense of achievement, the new things she learnt and the opportunity to meet lots of people. In addition, regular volunteering gives a structure to the week and it had allowed her to get more involved with nature, particularly through helping managing Hurst Meadows. She pointed out that volunteering is great for teenagers as it helps them develop skills that may possibly develop into a career. The Parish Council had four vacancies for councillors, and anyone interested should contact the office. Last year's Annual Parish Meeting had identified that most of the local groups and organisations all needed more volunteers, so this theme was chosen for the meeting.

2. Welcome from the Parish Council Chairman

- 2.1 The Chairman, Cllr Llewellyn welcomed all those present to the meeting and explained that in the past the meeting had been very much an opportunity for the Parish Council to update residents on its budget and projects but now the focus of the meeting was very much on listening to the local community and celebrating the work of the local voluntary groups.
- 2.2 The Chairman listed the facilities and services that the Parish Council was responsible for including the two main venues for hire i.e. the Village Centre and Court Bushes Community Hub. The hirings were returning to normal levels at the venues but the increase in the cost of the utility bills had been significant.
- 2.3 A large programme of work had been undertaken including redecoration, new lighting, and additional cycle racks at the Village Centre and South Avenue. Court Bushes Community Hub has new WiFi throughout, a newly surfaced and line marked car park and new directional signage arranged by the Parish Council. A new native hedge has been planted at Reeds Lane Recreation Ground to eventually screen the new development and work with drainage consultants continues, to overcome the drainage challenges caused by previous development and poor maintenance. An improved footpath connection has been made between Bramble Park and Tilley's Copse and with the support of the Hurstpierpoint Society 840 tree whips have been planted in Walnut Tree Field and with the support of the Woodland 360 whips have been planted in Hovel Field.
- 2.4 The Parish Council has continued to support major community events like St Lawrence Fair, the Big Jubilee Picnic, the Hurst Festival Super Sunday, Santa's Fun Sunday and the Remembrance Sunday Parade. As a statutory consultee we have also commented on nearly 200 planning applications.
- 2.5 The three main issues were highlighted:

- i. The Community Governance Review, which involved a number of Sayers Common residents calling for their own Parish Council. Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) had concluded that would not happen until at least 2029.
- ii. The Review of the Mid Sussex District Plan by MSDC, which sets out the policies and sites for development up to 2038. The Plan proposed some 4,000 new homes in the local area. The Parish Council submitted a robust response to the proposals as part of the (“Reg 18”) consultation and will closely follow the “Reg 19” consultation later in the year.
- iii. The Parish Council was able to keep the increase in its part of the Council Tax bill, called the precept, at 5.05% for an average Band D type property. Some increase in the precept is required to cover the growing costs such as the utility bills, and for example, the maintenance costs for Hurst Meadows. When ownership of Hurst Meadows was transferred to the Parish Council a Section 106 sum was received from the developer of Bramble Park. That works out at about £17,000 per year for 20 years. This year the Parish Council has had one of the three yearly tree surveys which has resulted in that budget being committed to tree works before even funding all the other works such as grass cutting. Thus the need for volunteers to continue to support and maintain the site, and for external funding to be secured as per the Hurst Meadows Management Plan.

2.6 Finally, the Parish Council has four vacancies for councillors in the Hurstpierpoint ward (out of a total of 15 seats) and anyone interested should contact the Clerk. The Chairman opened up the floor to questions:

Q1 – The High Street is full of dangerous holes and something must be done. In response, the Chairman explained that he agreed with the comment and will continue to use any influence he can to pressure West Sussex County Council Highways to improve the road surface. The community had shown how it was able to influence WSCC to improve

the road surface outside St Lawrence School, so it is important that all residents report their concerns to WSCC.

Q2 – Who is responsible for emptying the bins in the play area in Bramble Park and why aren't there more bins/dog bins? In response to the question, the Chairman explained that the new homes in Bramble Park were on private land that was the responsibility of the Management Company for Bramble Park. The Parish Council had taken great care to understand who is responsible for the land, culverts, ditches and drainage in these area for future reference. The Parish Council has also installed new bins/dog bins where it was permitted too, in Hurst Meadows and just on the boundary of the private land at Iden Hurst, but the difficulty was also in arranging collections of the waste.

Q3 – Who is responsible for dog bins in Sayers Common? In response to the question, the Chairman explained that again the new Sayers Meadow estate is on private land and bins will be the responsibility of the Developer/Management Company. Elsewhere in Sayers Common, the Parish Council will confirm the utilisation of the existing bins and establish whether some can be either moved or added with the agreement of MSDC.

Q4 – The footpath behind Kemps has been narrowed by the landowner and is muddy and the Parish Council has washed its hand with it. In response, the Chairman agreed that it was not in a good condition and that it is one of the paths that the Parish Council has previously raised with WSCC who are responsible for maintaining the wearing surface. The landowner is responsible for keeping the growth on either side in check. The Parish Council is aware that The Monday Group have planned some work at the western end of the path but will also continue to highlight the state of this path to the WSCC Public Rights of Way Team for them to improve the path surface. Again, it is important that all residents report their concerns to WSCC.

Q5 – Why was there no “No Mow May” on the Village Garden this year? In response, the Chairman explained that previously a number of complaints were made about the appearance of the Village Garden

when 50% was given over to “No Mow May”, so this year it was agreed that Court Bushes Community Hub would participate but not the Village Garden.

Q6 – There is nothing for teenagers to do. In response, the Chairman explained that he had met with MSDC to press for a master plan for Court Bushes so that an improved skate park and pump track could be included in new designs for the site. The master plan from MSDC is awaited.

Q7 – Who is responsible for drainage at Reeds Lane Rec? In response, the Chairman explained that land owners are all responsible for their own land drainage and to ensure it can flow freely to adjoining land and on into watercourses. The Parish Council has cleared its own ditches and is in the process of designing an improved drainage solution for the Recreation Ground including an ephemeral pond to replace some of the drainage routes lost through adjacent developments.

Q8 – What can be done to help respond to the Mid Sussex District Plan Review? In response, the Chairman thanked residents for their responses to the Reg 18 consultation and stressed how important it is for them to watch out for and respond to the Reg 19 consultation later in the year. Development is currently being led by the developers and is not joined up or providing the amenities that will help support self sufficient communities The Burgess Hill Northern Arc development was taken over by Homes England to deliver a strategic vision, and that appears to be delivering results.

Q9 –Cuckfield Road/High Street Roundabout needs a crossing. In response, the Chairman agreed that the location was difficult to cross and the Parish Council had agreed to submit an extended village centre 20 mph plan to WSCC Highways for consideration.

- 3. Introduction to the Presentations by Chair of the Community Engagement Committee:** Cllr Claire Majsai introduced Police Community Support Office, Chelsea Greenfield who gave an interesting and informative talk on the role of the PCSO's and stressed how keen

she was to talk to businesses and residents to build partnerships. PCSO Greenfield had recently given a fraud prevention awareness talk at the Village Centre, due to the rise in frauds like cold callers, scams and romance fraud, and was happy to return. All residents and businesses were encouraged to sign up to the “Sussex Alerts” emails which alert you to local crime incidents.

4. Why We Volunteer Presentations: Claire Majsai then introduced the following people who gave one minute presentations on why they volunteer:

- Charlotte Wilson – Hurst Re-think
- Lottie Green – Hurst Meadows Volunteers
- Bob Sampson – Hurst Players and Parish Councillor
- Rev. Will Kemp – Melting Pot Café / The Point Church
- Shaun Hole – Sayers Common Village Shop

All groups welcomed new members and volunteers to help run their groups.

5. Volunteering Opportunities: Claire Majsai then introduced the following people who gave one minute presentations on volunteering opportunities in their groups:

- Martin Sadler – Hurstpierpoint Horticultural Society
- Lindsay Thompson – Councillor/Hurst Traders
- Lyn – Paws & Claws Animal Charity
- Nick Constantine – St Lawrence Fair
- Bridget Hamilton – Cycling without Age
- Marcus Martin – Sussex Vale Rotary Club
- Michael Nailard – Woodland Flora & Fauna Group
- Sue Elrick – Holy Trinity Church Bell Ringers
- Avril Roberts – St Peter & St James Hospice
- Bob Sampson – Hurst Players
- Donna Willis – Community Engagement Co-op Group
- Gail Millar – Befriended
- Shaun Hole – Sussex Vale Rotary

All groups and their representatives were thanked for promoting their volunteering opportunities.

6. Conclusion

Cllr Claire Majsai thanked everyone for attending and encouraged them to all stay and chat informally. Formal thanks were paid to Shirley for providing the refreshments in the kitchen and to Hurst College for providing a free mini-bus to and from the Sayers Common Village Shop. Cllr Helen Bedford and Cllr Bob Sampson and Helen Valler were thanked for arranging the evening as well as the other Parish Council staff.

Chairman

7. LIST OF COUNCILLORS, OFFICERS AND CONTACT DETAILS AT 14 MAY 2024

Councillors:

1. Cllr Michael Avery
2. Cllr Sarah Baldey
3. Cllr Helen Bedford
4. Cllr Susan Dyke
5. Cllr David Evans
6. Cllr Barry Forster
7. Cllr Mark Froud
8. Cllr Rodney Jackson
9. Cllr Malcolm Llewellyn
10. Cllr Claire Majsai
11. Cllr Duncan Ranger
12. Cllr Bob Sampson
13. Cllr Julia Shorrocks
14. Cllr Annette Street
15. Cllr Lindsay Thompson

Officers:

Sarah Groom, Clerk to the Council
Helen Valler, Assistant Clerk
Viv Aloy, Assistant Clerk
Stephen Witchell, Estates & Facilities Manager
Hamish Raby, Maintenance Officer

Contact Details:

All Councillors and Officers can be contacted through the Parish Office:

Tel:	01273 833264
Email:	office@hurstpierpoint-pc.gov.uk
Postal Address:	Parish Office, Village Centre Trinity Road, Hurstpierpoint West Sussex, BN6 9UY