

MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL at 7.30 P.M. ON MONDAY 2ND MARCH 2009

Present: Cllr Robins (Chair)
Councillors March, Fletcher, Stevens, Parker, Hughes and Kerrigan.

In attendance: Lucy Noakes (Clerk)
2 members of the public
TWBC Cllr Callow

Declarations of Interest:

Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct were invited. Cllr March declared an interest in agenda point 8.1 as she is a member of the Parochial Church Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr King (KCC)
Cllr Clemson (attending a funeral)

2. PUBLIC SESSION

There were no members of the public wishing to address the Council.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd February 2009 were taken as read and proposed for approval by Cllr Kerrigan, seconded by Cllr Stevens. Carried.

4. MATTERS ARISING

These matters were dealt with elsewhere in the meeting.

5. PLANNING

5.1 Planning Applications

Planning Application No:	TW/09/00275/LBC/CLC
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent – To demolish and rebuild brick external wall to northern face of barn from ground floor to first floor levels.
Location:	Bassets Farm Oast, Maidstone Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge.
Recommendation:	Approval
Proposed:	Chair. Unanimous.

Planning Application No:	TW/09/00282/FUL/SEP
Proposal:	Extension to detached garage and part conversion to annexe
Location:	Ash Oast, School House Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge
Recommendation:	Refusal.
Proposed:	Cllr Hughes, seconded Cllr Stevens. Unanimous.

Planning Application No:	TW/09/00001/FUL/SEP
Proposal:	Revised Application details – Single storey rear extension
Location:	Rowan Cottage, School House Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge

Recommendation:	Approval.
Proposed:	Cllr March, seconded Cllr Parker. Unanimous.

Planning Application No:	TW/09/00199/FUL/SJM
Proposal:	Change of use of an agricultural storage building to form two B1 business units with parking areas.
Location:	Middle Barn, Pullens Farm, Lamberhurst Road, Horsmonden.
Recommendation:	Approval.
Proposed:	Cllr Stevens, seconded Cllr Fletcher, unanimous.

5.2 **Report of Permissions Granted and Refused**

Permissions Granted.

TW/09/00160/FUL/ARJ – 45 Orchard Way, Horsmonden, Tonbridge.

TW/08/04102/FUL/SEP – Land adjoining Park Lodge, Brick Kiln Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge.

Permissions Refused.

TW/08/04014/FUL/SEP- Corner Cottage, Hayman’s Hill, Horsmonden, Tonbridge.

5.3 **Other Planning Matters**

i) Mousetrap Farm, Churn Lane

The Clerk had received correspondence from Richard Hazelgrove at TWBC Planning to say that although a planning officer had visited the site, there was no evidence that it was being used as a workshop. Planning Officers will also be checking the site for the planning application, so if they see anything then, they will report it back.

ii) Bassett’s Farm, Maidstone Road

Mrs Bloom from the TWBC planning enforcement team has now taken on this case and is in the process of discussing it with the Legal Services Team to see what Legal options there are. Mrs Bloom had enquired whether or not the Councillors knew if the marquee hire company had ceased form this property. Cllr Stevens said that he believed that the buildings were still being occupied and that it is possible that the marquee company is still operating from the premises. Clerk to report back to TWBC.

iii) Cowden, Brenchley Road, Brenchley

Richard Hazelgrove from TWBC planning had informed the Clerk that the owners of this property would be making an application soon, as they wish to regrade and reduce the earth bund, which is classed as an engineering operation. He will keep HPC up to date with the case as it progresses.

iv) Land next to Tucks Villas

This piece of land had been placed up for sale by the owner, who was advertising it as suitable for tipping. TWBC had informed the clerk that landfill is a County matter and would therefore be dealt with by KCC and is out of TWBC jurisdiction. However, from looking into the matter Richard Hazelgrove (TWBC) did say that as operations at the site had ceased more than 12 months ago, it would appear that the owner would need fresh planning permission prior to using the site for this purpose again. Clerk to contact KCC.

v) Gafford’s Cottages

The Clerk had reported to TWBC Planning that there was a large caravan sited at Gafford’s Cottages. Richard Hazelgrove had informed the Clerk that this was being used by the owner’s son and daughter-in-law whilst they were relocating and they were shortly to move into their own property. As the mobile home had none of its own utilities and could not be lived in independently it did not require planning permission. This also applied because it was not permanently fixed to the ground.

The caravan will shortly be removed from the site according to the owner.

vi) Satellite Dish

It had been noticed that there was a large satellite dish on the side of Manor Cottage, Brenchley road, which is in the conservation area. Apparently the dish is now redundant and will shortly be removed. Richard Hazelgrove will chase the owners to ensure that this is done.

6. FINANCE

6.1 Parish Council Accounts to date

The following accounts in respect of the period up to 1st March 2009 were presented to the meeting and it was proposed by Cllr Hughes and seconded by Cllr Kerrigan to accept the accounts. Unanimous.

Horsmonden Parish Council Accounts as at 1st February 2009

	Balances
Current account b/fwd 02.02.09	£ 6,107.71
Deposit account b/fwd 02.02.09	£ 66,186.86
Interest received (Deposit Account)	

Item	Ref	Receipts	Payments
Mrs L Noakes - February salary	S/O		£ 540.72
Inland Revenue - tax and NI Mrs L Noakes	400593		£ 28.54
Mr. CJ Couchman - Feb clock and play area	400594		£ 76.60
Mr. S Jones - scavenging - Feb	400595		£ 58.44
Sign of the Times Ltd (50% cost of notice board)	400596		£ 909.42
Interest on current account	05.02.09	£1.04	

Current Account as at 01.03.09	£ 4,495.03
Deposit Account as at 01.03 .09	£ 66,186.86

TOTAL BANK: £ 70,681.89

6.2 Village Hall

The Parish Council had recently paid for the installation of two new windows at the back of the Village Hall, however, it had since been ascertained that these could be paid for as part of the Village Hall extension grant, and therefore the Village Hall committee agreed to return the payment of £1157.45 made by the Parish Council.

The Village Hall committee had now organised for the replacement of all seven windows in the hall and it was proposed by the chair and voted for unanimously that the Parish Council would, as landlords pay the amount which was not covered by the grant in respect of these window replacements. It was estimated that this would be in the region of £1200.00

The Clerk had received a quotation from C. A. Forward and Sons for repairing the fence to the left-hand side of the village hall. Two more quotations to be obtained for this job.

The Village Hall Committee had obtained several quotes for the block paving of the car parking area in front of the hall, and this work would now be carried out once the weather improved.

It had been decided by the village hall committee that the old kitchen would be split in two with one side becoming a store room and the other side housing bar equipment.

Cllr Stevens mentioned that the old tithe map was still housed behind the stage. It was suggested that he Clerk contact KCC Archives department at Springfield and see if they might want to accept it. The old map measures approximately 8feet by 5 feet.

It was suggested that the Clerk write a letter to the Village hall Management Committee thanking them for all their work in completing the extension.

6.3 Internal audit arrangements

The Clerk explained that she had recently been in contact with Lamberhurst and Brenchley Parish Councils to see if they still wished to continue the three way auditing process for the end of this financial year. The Clerk at Brenchley had said that the Councillors were not entirely happy with continuing this procedure and would be discussing this at their next meeting. The Clerk for Lamberhurst had retired due to ill health, and the Councillors there were also reassessing their situation.

It was proposed from the Chair that the Council now cease to continue with the 3 way arrangement and that the Clerk take steps to secure an internal Auditor who could carry out this work for the Council. The Chair proposed that the Council agree to spend up to £400(net) per annum on employing an Internal Auditor to carry out the necessary procedures for the accounts on a bi-annual basis. This was agreed to unanimously by the Council

7. HIGHWAYS AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

7.1 Highways

The Clerk reported that she had heard from Richard Kaupert that the damaged marker posts were not to be replaced by KHS as it is now thought that marker posts are not necessary in some areas, where they have been placed previously. The Clerk had asked if Richard Kaupert could get KHS to let the Council know this in writing.

Councillor Stevens remarked that there were now many pot holes opening up around the village and that the problem had been compounded by blocked drains which allowed water to flood the roads when it rained heavily. The Clerk is liaising with KHS about unblocking the drains already.

Cllr Stevens reported that the hedge at Smallbridge Cottage on Smallbridge Lane was sticking out into the road and requested that the Clerk write to the property owner to ask them to cut it back.

The Clerk had received correspondence from KHS asking if the Parish Council maintained any verges owned by KHS. The councillors said that they did not.

The Clerk had received correspondence from Mr and Mrs Boniface outlining problems which they have faced recently owing to the height of the water level down near the footpath up to Lewes Heath. Cllr Robins said that he believed the flooding problems experienced in this area were associated with the culvert which he understood belonged to Mr Bodger of Tanyard House. He advised the Clerk to write back to Mr Boniface explaining the situation and suggesting that he take up the matter with Mr Bodger as the Council could not get involved in neighbourly discussions. Cllr Robins said that he did not believe the problem to have anything to do with the footpath itself.

The Clerk had received an email from Mrs Davenport commenting on the large amounts of litter which could be seen in the rural lanes locally. Cllr Robins suggested that the Council organise a litter picking session, meeting on the village green for 2 hours at 2pm on Saturday 14th March. It was suggested that the Clerk let Mrs Davenport know about this.

The Clerk reported that she had been in contact with the Police and Isobel Kerrigan about starting up Speedwatch again. However, Isobel had stated that she would no longer be able to act as coordinator as work pressures would not allow, although she was happy to help in other ways. It was suggested that the Clerk put an advert in Kent messenger, Courier and next addition of the Parish News asking for volunteers and explaining that a new coordinator is required. It was also suggested that the Clerk mention in the advert that the Police are offering their support and can now give a fine or summons as well as points on the licence to anyone who they catch speeding. The police will be making their own speed checks as often as time allows.

The Council had received a letter from Mr Mayne at Paygate, Maidstone Road regarding drainage issues on his property next to Cllr Stevens' yard at Hayman's Hill.

The letter was read aloud and suggested that Cllr Stevens had intervened with the drainage team when they last visited at Hayman's Hill to unblock the drains near Mr Mayne's property. Cllr Stevens explained that although he had spoken to the Gulley team on their last visit, he had not instructed them to leave without unblocking the drains or to divert the drainage to any other route.

Cllr Robins suggested that the Clerk write back to Mr Mayne explaining this to him and saying that the Council understand there is a history of poor drainage in this area, and will be liaising with KHS drainage teams to try and look at drainage on both sides of the road near Hayman's Hill.

7.2 Street lighting

The Clerk had been corresponding with KALC and the Council's insurers about the need to have safety inspections and certificates for the street lights. The advice from the insurance company had been that they had no specific requirements under the insurance policy for the lights to be inspected, but that they did demand that the lights be dealt with in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and kept in a good state of repair.

KALC had sent a communication to say that they understood that the Council must have the lights safety inspected and certificated, although they were unable to lay their hands on the legislation outlining this at present. They will try to do so in the near future and let the Clerk have a copy.

Under the circumstances Cllr March proposed that the street lights be certificated and safety inspected as each light is serviced in the first year, and this was seconded by Cllr Parker. Unanimous.

It suggested that the Clerk ask SEC to produce an inventory for the Council when they take over the maintenance in April, explaining when each light is set to come on and go off, and whether the light operates with a time clock or photocells.

7.3 Land near the sports ground entrance

Members of the Council discussed the boundary fence line between Mr Boyle's land and the Sports ground on the Maidstone Road. Cllr Kerrigan explained that he had heard that some members of the sports club have discussed the piece of land in question with Mr Boyle.

It was suggested that Cllr Kerrigan and Cllr Stevens sit down and discuss the issue with members of the sports club to see if there is a grievance over the land boundary.

8. PARISH COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

8.1 Village Green booking - Crosses on the Green for Easter.

The Clerk had received a village green booking form completed by Mr Bell in respect of putting three crosses on the green over the Easter period. Cllr Robins proposed the Council's agreement to this subject to the insurance details being provided to the clerk. Unanimous. Clerk to inform Mr Bell that the event can go ahead.

8.2 Public conveniences

Cllr March reported that a meeting had now been arranged with Richard Powell on 12th March at Swigs hall at 7pm to discuss the future of the public conveniences in Horsmonden. In the meantime Mike Mackenzie is putting together details of all the Parishes interested in joining together for a cleaning contract.

Cllr Callow mentioned that Richard Powell is due to retire in April 09 and that she was not sure who was going to take on his role yet, however, she suggested that the Council contact Gary Stevenson with any queries about the issue after Richard's retirement in April.

Cllr Robins said that the public conveniences had come up as a topic for discussion at the Parish Chairman's meeting and that it had been mentioned that TWBC are looking at special expenditure. There had been an indication that some areas who will be keeping their public conveniences will be making a contribution. Cllr Robins said this was starting to lead to three tier system whereby some areas would be allowed to keep their public conveniences without contributing at all (other than by Council Taxes) other areas would be contributing part of the costs involved, and some area would be paying the total cost. Cllr Robins suggested that this is something which TWBC need to look at carefully.

8.3 Parish Play Area

Cllr Robins informed the Council that a fresh quotation for £46, 685.00 had been received from Playdale. It was proposed by the Chair that this quotation be accepted by the Council, and the Council voted in favour of this unanimously.

A site meeting was booked with Gill Watson, from Playdale for Friday 6th March at 1.30pm to verify the area needed and look at how the equipment would fit in. Once the exact area needed has been verified, the Clerk must let Richard Williams have details of this so that the Land Registry plan can be added to the lease before signing. Cllr Hughes said that the FAMT were meeting on 5th March and should be able to agree the lease at that meeting, so it would be helpful if the final measurements of the play area could be given to FAMT before this meeting.

It was suggested that the obligations of the Council as listed in proposed lease should be carefully checked before the Council agree to the lease, as Cllr Stevens was concerned that the Council could become liable to paying for any damages suffered to the side wall of the kindergarten building. It was proposed from the Chair that the Council give authority to a committee consisting of Cllr March, Cllr Parker, and Cllr Robins to check the proposed lease and agree it with the FAMT.

8.4 Kindergarten rebuild.

Cllr Parker had suggested that the Council should write to the Kindergarten Committee to congratulate them on the opening of the new building. Clerk to write.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 KCC – response from Mark Dance (Cabinet member for Children, Families and Education regarding information provided during the closure of Horsmonden Library)

The Clerk read out a reply which she had received from KCC Cllr Dance. It appeared from the response that the Council's letter had been misinterpreted, therefore it was suggested that the Clerk would write back for clarification.

9.2 KCC Kent Youth Service – Newsletter and Try Angle nominations

The Council did not have anyone in mind to nominate at the time. It was suggested that the Clerk pass a copy to Kate Hart-Dyke (Church), as well as the School.

9.3 KCC – Love Food Hate Waste campaign

The Clerk advised that she had put some notices regarding this campaign on the Parish Council Notice board. She had also given some leaflets about the campaign to school.

9.4 TWBC Suggestions for topics to be discussed in 2009/10 by TWBC Scrutiny Committee.

TWBCX had sent an email asking for suggestions for new topics for the Scrutiny Committee to discuss. Cllr Robins suggested that the Council should put forward the topic of double taxation for rural areas, as he felt that the discussions on the public conveniences had highlighted this issue, and there may well be other instances of 'double taxation' within the borough which should be looked at and addressed. Clerk to notify the correct parties.

9.5 West Kent mediation

The Clerk had received communications from West Kent mediation informing the Council of their works and asking for a charitable donation if possible. Clerk to write the standard letter informing the Charity that whilst the Council wishes them success in their work, the Council chooses not to make donations to specific charities.

9.6 Free training for Health Walk volunteer leader – 26th March 2009

The Clerk had already passed details of this to John Naylor as a member of the ramblers Association, and John was booked to go on the course.

9.7 QPSMR – Parish Council Surveys offered.

The Clerk had brought this to the Council's attention as a full survey service was offered. Clerk to write to QPSMR and find out if they have provided a service to any other local Parish Councils with contact details. Cllr March said that at the Parish Planning afternoon which she had attended, it had been suggested that all groups within the village should meet first to discuss the type of information which could be gained from a survey, as this was important when deciding what questions to ask.

9.8 SE Water - Planning Future Water Supplies – Stakeholder update 2009

The Clerk had received details from SE Water regarding their strategy for future water supplies. This was passed to the Councillors for reading.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (DISCUSSION ONLY)

It was requested that the Clerk email details of the KALC area meeting through to Cllr March, who intended to attend if possible.

Cllr Stevens requested that the Clerk write a letter to the School Board of Governors to say that the parish Council are concerned about the condition of the perimeter fencing around the school grounds.

Cllr Fletcher reported that there was a large hole at the side of the road on the verge on Crook Road outside the large stately house. The hole is big enough for a horse or a person to get their foot trapped and cause injury. Clerk to report to KHS and Brenchley PC.

Cllr Robins reported that he website had now been fully updated.

The meeting closed at 11.05pm

Next Meeting Dates

Monday April 6th 2009 - Parish Council Meeting

Monday May 11th 2009 - Annual Parish Meeting & Annual meeting of the Parish Council

Monday May 18th 2009 – Planning Committee

Monday June 8th 2009 – Parish Council Meeting

Monday June 22nd 2009 – Planning Committee

Monday July 13th 2009 – Parish Council Meeting