

**MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL at 7.30 P.M. ON MONDAY 5th JANUARY 2009**

**Present:** Cllr Robins (Chair)  
Councillors Clemson, Parker, March, Fletcher, Hughes, Stevens, Cheesman and Kerrigan.  
It should be noted that Cllr Kerrigan left the meeting early and was not therefore present for the discussions on Planning section 5, Highways section 7.1, correspondence section 9 or AOB section 10.

**In attendance:** Lucy Noakes (Clerk)  
5 members of the public  
Cllr King (KCC)

**Declarations of Interest:**

Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct were invited. Cllr Parker declared an interest in 5.1 planning applications TW/08/03885/FUL and TW/08/04078/FUL as both of these properties were neighbouring to her own. Cllr March declared an interest in 6.2 Annual Parish precept, as a member of the Parochial Church Council. Cllr Robins declared an interest during the discussion under 8.2 as he felt that he had a clash of interests in this matter.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Callow (TWBC)  
Cllr Slade (TWBC)

**2. PUBLIC SESSION**

Mr Guntrip and Ms Davies addressed the meeting regarding a stile in a field off Grovehurst lane which had been boarded up at the bottom, preventing dogs from passing through. It was suggested that the Clerk contact the landowner if possible to ask if the boarding could be removed, and failing this, to contact the Footpaths agency which is part of Kent Highways.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Following two corrections pointed out by Cllr March, the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008 were taken as read and proposed for approval by Cllr Hughes, seconded by Cllr Parker. Unanimous.

The Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008 were taken as read and proposed for approval by the Cllr Hughes, seconded by Cllr Clemson. Carried.

**4. MATTERS ARISING**

These were dealt with elsewhere in the meeting.

**5. PLANNING**

**5.1 Planning Applications**

Planning Application No:	TW/08/04102/FUL/SEP
Proposal:	Change of use of part of agricultural land to residential and post and rail fence with indigenous hedge to be planted parallel with new fence.
Location:	Land Adjoining Park Lodge, Brick Kiln Lane, Horsmonden,

	Tonbridge
Recommendation:	Approval.
Proposed:	Cllr Stevens, seconded Cllr Fletcher. Unanimous.

Planning Application No:	TW/08/04008/CEU/SJM
Proposal:	Lawful Development Certificate (Existing) – Open storage of wood chips prior to collection.
Location:	Broadford Oast, Goudhurst Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge
Recommendation:	Approval.
Proposed:	Chair. Unanimous.

Planning Application No:	TW/08/04014/SEP
Proposal:	Detached Garage/storage building and new gates to existing entrance
Location:	Corner Cottage , Haymans Hill, Horsmonden, Tonbridge
Recommendation:	Refusal.
Proposed:	Chair. Unanimous.

Planning Application No:	TW/08/03885/FUL/TA1
Proposal:	Change of use of redundant agricultural building to dwelling house
Location:	Twin Valleys, Lewes Heath, Horsmonden ,Tonbridge
Recommendation:	Refusal.
Proposed:	Cllr March, seconded Cllr Clemson. Unanimous

Planning Application No:	TW/08/03698/FUL/TA1
Proposal:	Construction of building for fruit cold storage
Location:	Apple Growers Association, Lamberhurst Road, Horsmonden , Tonbridge
Recommendation:	Approval.
Proposed:	Cllr march, seconded Cllr Stevens. Unanimous.

Planning Application No:	TW/08/04078/FUL/ARJ
Proposal:	Single storey front extension
Location:	Goudhurst view, Lewes Heath, Horsmonden, Tonbridge
Recommendation:	Approval.
Proposed:	Cllr Stevens seconded Cllr Hughes. Unanimous.

## 5.2 **Report of Permissions Granted and Refused**

### Granted

TW/08/03802/LBC/CLC – Ash Farm, School House Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge.

TW/08/03441/FUL/ARJ – Hill Top, Lewes Heath, Horsmonden, Tonbridge

TW/08/03555/TREECA – Brook bank, Lamberhurst Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge

Application withdrawn

TW/08/0618/FUL/SEP – Land adjoining Park Lodge, Brick Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge

Planning Appeal Granted

TW/08/00919/LBC/CLC – Corner Cottage, Haymans Hill, Horsmonden, Tonbridge

TW/08/00918/FUL/CLC – Corner Cottage, Haymans Hill, Horsmonden, Tonbridge

### 5.3 Other Planning Matters

It was reported that a large satellite dish had been installed on the property to the left of the building site on the old Woodgates Yard site. Clerk to investigate.

A large mobile home had been noticed at Gafford's Cottages (end nearest to Bassett's farmyard), although no permissions have been received for this by the Council.

Cllr Robins requested that the Clerk find out about a building which has now appeared on the grounds belonging to the property next to Spout Lane, where the earth works have been carried out. This new building resembles a stable.

## 6. FINANCE

### 6.1 Parish Council Accounts to date

The following accounts in respect of the period up to 4<sup>th</sup> January 2009 were presented to the meeting and it was proposed by Cllr Clemson and seconded by Cllr Hughes to accept the accounts.

Unanimously.

#### Horsmonden Parish Council Accounts as at 4th January 2009

	Balances
Current account b/fwd 01.12.08	£ 4,356.48
Deposit account b/fwd 01.12.08	£ 72,425.38
Interest received (Deposit Account)	

Item	Ref	Receipts	Payments
J R Stevens - refund of Xmas light bulbs	400570		£ 130.71
EDF energy - supply costs on VG to 01.12.08	400571		£ 44.29
Audit commission	400572		£ 327.75
Mr. F Clark - valley gutter - Institute building	400573		£ 485.00
Mrs L Noakes - December salary	S/O		£ 546.88
Mr. S Jones - December scavenging	400574		£ 58.44
Mr. CJ Couchman	400575		£ 76.60
EDF Energy street lighting maintenance - Dec	400576		£ 143.62
Gillet & Johnson - annual clock service	400577		£ 200.10
Gillet & Johnson - clock repairs	400578		£ 152.09
Insurance claim for vandalism to Institute roof	02.12.08	£706.00	
Interest on current account	05.12.08	£2.10	
Current Account as at 04.01.09			£ 9,899.10
Deposit Account as at 04.01 .09			£ 65,425.38
		<b>TOTAL</b>	
		<b>BANK:</b>	<b>£ 75,324.48</b>

## **6.2 Annual Parish Precept and Risk Assessment for April 2009-2010**

The Proposed Precept schedule, prepared by the clerk, was handed around to members of the Council and those members of the public present. Cllr Hughes spoke about each item mentioned on the schedule and explained the decisions reached by the Finance Committee at their meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Agenda items 7.2 Street Lighting, 7.3 Christmas lights, 8.3 Toilets, 8.4 Millennium Fund, 8.5 Electricity Box and 8.6 Play area were all brought forward for discussion in detail prior to a decision being made regarding the Annual precept as these items were felt to have a significant impact on the overall precept decision. The minutes for these items have, however been recorded in numerical order in these minutes for ease of reference.

Following discussions on each relevant item on the Proposed Precept Schedule it was proposed by Cllr Hughes that the annual precept should be set at £47,910.00. This was seconded by Cllr Clemson and voted for unanimously by the members of the Council.

The annual Risk Assessment schedule had been prepared by the Clerk and was passed to all members of the Council as well as those members of the public who were present. Cllr March queried the assessment of the probability of the village green byelaws being discriminatory as 'low risk'. Cllr March reminded the Council that the suitability of the Byelaws had already been questioned when Kent Police had decided not to enforce them during the last Horsefair on the Green. The Clerk explained that she had been in correspondence with DEFRA regarding the Byelaws, but had not yet received a definite reply. It was decided that the risk should be upgraded to 'medium' under the circumstances. Clerk to chase DEFRA for an answer on the Byelaws.

As there were no other comments with regards to the Risk Assessment, Cllr Robins proposed that the risk assessment be accepted as modified above. The Council voted in favour of this unanimously.

## **7. HIGHWAYS and GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

### **7.1 Highways Report**

The following points were brought to the Clerk's attention to be added to this month's Highways report to KCC Highways:

- Drains still blocked in many places around the village, especially at Rams Hill, Maidstone Road, and outside Broadford, Goudhurst Road.
- Many of the marker posts around the village are still in a bad state of repair.
- Over hanging trees have still not been dealt with

It was also mentioned at the meeting that there had been a complaint from a parishioners regarding the number of pot holes in School House Lane. Cllr Robins agreed to take a look at this and report back to the meeting next month.

Members of the Council were not sure whether or not the water leakage problem at the Small bridge crossroads had been dealt with or not. Councillors to check and report back next meeting.

### **7.2 Street lighting – new contract for March 09.**

The Clerk had received some quotations for the new Street lighting contract which will commence after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009; however, it was felt that it would be better if members of the Council could look at this in detail before the next meeting when a decision would need to be made.

The Clerk had been informed that 25 of the street lighting columns owned by the Council were still operating on the MBFU style mercury bulbs, and that these type of bulbs were to be discontinued in the next few months. The Clerk had been advised that supplies of MBFU bulbs would still be available for a while, but once these were used up, no more could be obtained by maintenance companies. It was suggested that the Clerk try to find out the approximate lifespan of MBFU style bulbs and see if the Council could purchase a supply of bulbs. This would enable the Council to undertake a 4- 5year replacement programme.

It was also requested that the Clerk find out from EDF when the lighting columns were last painted as this was thought to be included in the maintenance programme for some of the lights, and it might be possible that EDF owe a refund in respect of this.

## **8. PARISH COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION**

### **8.1 Parish Council's compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2005 .Guidelines provided by the Information Commissioners Office.**

The Clerk had received correspondence from the Information Commissioners office just before Christmas regarding the parish Councils declaration of information available under the Freedom of Information Act. The Clerk had prepared a draft of the documentation available and its sources. The Councillors agreed to have a look at the draft before the next meeting so that the schedule could be agreed for the website at the next meeting.

### **8.2 Parish Council representative for the School Board of Governors**

Cllr Hughes had written to the Clerk presenting his formal resignation from the position of Parish Council representative on the School Board of Governors with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. The Parish Council thanked Cllr Hughes for his hard work during his time in this position and accepted his resignation.

Cllr Hughes felt it pertinent to provide some details about his reasons for resigning, before the Council asked if any other member would be willing to uptake the position. The main reasons cited by Cllr Hughes for resigning were that he no longer felt comfortable being on the school board as he largely disagreed with the way in which the board operated, but felt that he would be unable to change this as he was in a minority in this view. He also disagreed with one particular action by the Headmaster. Members of the Council suggested that if there were any problems associated with the way in which the school conducted its business, then the Parish Council would have a duty to parishioners to ensure that matters were dealt with by the necessary authorities. The Clerk declared that as she has three children currently attending the primary school, she would not feel comfortable being involved in this matter and wished to take no part in this.

At this point in the meeting Cllr Robins declared that he felt he had a clash of interests in this matter as his partner works for the school, and he left the room and took no further part in the discussion. Cllr March then took over the position as Chair to the meeting.

It was suggested that some of the Councillors take advice with regards to the Councils remit on this type of matter.

Cllr Fletcher offered his services in the position as parish Council representative on the school Board of Governors and it was therefore proposed by Cllr Clemson that Cllr Fletcher take over from Cllr Hughes. This was seconded by Cllr Kerrigan and voted for unanimously. Clerk to write to the School Board of Governors informing them of their wish for Cllr Fletcher to take over after Cllr Hughes leaves the board at the end of March.

Cllr Robins re-joined the meeting at this point.

### **8.3 Toilets**

The Council had received notification from TWBC that the cleaning contract for the public conveniences in Horsmonden was to be discontinued from April 2009. However, just prior to the parish Council meeting TWBC had informed the Council that this matter was to be referred to two different Select Committees for discussion on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January.

Cllr King suggested that the Council send a representative to the Select Committee meetings arguing that there had not been a full consultation and advising of the real need for the public conveniences in Horsmonden.

Cllr Robins stated that he felt it was unfair that parishioners in Horsmonden should continue to pay in their Council Taxes for the provision of toilets in the parks and town centres, whilst losing their own facilities. It was suggested by Cllr King that there was a strong argument for town centre and park loos to be made a special expense in the Tunbridge wells precept.

It was suggested that the Clerk contact other Parishes to see if they were going to attend the meeting. Cllr March offered to attend the meeting and put forward a statement from the Council. Liz Taylor from the Farmers market was also present at the meeting and said that she would see if she could attend with Cllr March.

A discussion took place regarding the alternatives facing the Councillors if TWBC decision to discontinue the cleaning contract went ahead. Cllr March had investigated portaloos and had found that it would cost at least £2300 per annum to provide these. It was suggested that many parishioners might not like the idea of portaloos because they may be thought unsightly and less hygienic especially in the summer months. It was suggested that alternatives with regards to the cleaning contract could be investigated, such as employing a local cleaner or only having the loos cleaned every other day.

Cllr Robins suggested from the Chair that the Council were unable to make any provision for the public conveniences in the 2009/10 precept as the situation was uncertain and the Council did not know the outcome. The Council voted unanimously in favour of this decision.

#### **8.4 Millennium Fund**

Cllr March said that the Millennium Committee made up of herself, Cllr Clemson, Cllr Stevens and John Naylor had invited ideas for the project from members of the public and had received about half a dozen ideas in total. All ideas had been given time for thought and discussion, but if had been generally decided that a granite table with an inlaid bronze, depicting places of interest around the village, sited on the green would be best. This would be sited on the Maidstone Road side of the green, near to the dropped pavement. Clerk to write a letter for confirmation of the order to the foundry, and letters to all those who showed an interest, to let them know what has been decided upon. Clerk also to write to those property owners whose properties are to be depicted on the plaque.

#### **8.5 Electricity box – Village Green**

The Clerk read out extracts from a letter received from Ewen Kellas, on behalf of Social club members who were complaining about the siting of the electricity box on the green and asking the Parish Council to give consideration to the re-siting of the box. The Clerk was unable to acknowledge having received any other letters of complaint from parishioners about this matter.

The Chair explained to the Council and members of the public present, the reasoning for the current location of the box, which had been mainly dictated by the positioning of the cables and trees on the top end of the Green. The Finance committee had given consideration to the re-siting of the box at their meeting on 8th December, but had decided that in the current financial climate they had a duty to parishioners to keep the precept as low as possible and could not therefore justify the cost of re-siting the box at present. The box had been painted green and it was felt that this would help to make it blend in with its surroundings more easily.

#### **8.6 LGRF & Parish Play area**

There was little progress to be reported on this matter, as although the Chairman and Cllr March had met with Richard Williams to discuss the problems associated with utilities which were located on the play area site; little had been done to resolve this problem. The Council had been promised an updated survey of the area from the Francis Austen Memorial Trust, but had recently been advised by Richard Williams that they must have the site surveyed themselves. The retaining wall at the front of the play area was also a problem as it was crumbling and needed repair in places, which could be expensive; however it was not clear whose responsibility this was. Members of the Council decided that the best course of action would be to request an agenda slot at the next FAMT meeting and discuss these issues before moving any further forward with plans for the play area. (Cllr Hughes to contact FAMT regarding his request).

**8.7 Housing needs**

It was the Council's opinion that a public meeting was now required to discuss all the sites and what can be done. Clerk to contact Jennifer Hudson and arrange for a public meeting.

**8.8 Library closure**

The Clerk had not yet received a reply from Cllr Carter (KCC) on the issues raised in the recent letter.

**8.9 Sustainable Communities Act 2007 – update**

Cllr King (KCC) explained that this was still an ongoing discussion at KCC.

**8.10 Institute & Horsmonden Social Club**

The Clerk explained that she had now written to the Secretary of State to ask permission to dispose of the institute by way of setting up a trust and lease, as advised by the Solicitors Thompson Snell and Passmore. The trust draft and lease were now more or less complete and once the above permissions were received and a suitable land registry plan of the building attached to the lease, these documents would be ready for signing by all parties.

The Clerk had received correspondence from Ewen Kellas on this issue enquiring whether the Institute committee was still active and it was the opinion of the Chairman that it would be better to concentrate on the setting up of the imminent trust at this stage rather than taking on any other projects at the Institute. Chair to contact members of the Committee to see if they would be willing to become Trustees.

**9. CORRESPONDENCE**

**9.1 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council - Discretionary Rate Relief Policy**

The Clerk had received communications from TWBC to inform them that Sports clubs are now able to apply for Amateur Sports Club Status with HM Revenues and Customs, and that this could gain them an 80% business rate relief. Clerk to let the Tennis and Sports Clubs know.

**9.2 Communities and Local Government. Code of recommended practice to local authority publicity –A consultation.**

The Clerk had received this correspondence asking for an opinion on the Code of recommended Practice on local authority Publicity. Clerk to look at this for the next meeting if possible.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (DISCUSSION ONLY)**

There was no other business to be discussed at the meeting.

**The meeting closed at 11.30pm**

**Next Meeting Dates**

Monday February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009 - Parish Council Meeting

Monday March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009 - Parish Council Meeting

Monday April 6<sup>th</sup> 2009 - Parish Council Meeting

**Monday May 11<sup>th</sup> 2009 - Annual Parish Meeting & Annual meeting of the Parish Council**

Monday May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009 – Planning Committee

Monday June 8<sup>th</sup> 2009 – Parish Council Meeting

Monday June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009 – Planning Committee

Monday July 13<sup>th</sup> 2009 – Parish Council Meeting

Monday August 17<sup>th</sup> 2009 Planning Committee

Monday September 7<sup>th</sup> 2009 – Parish Council Meeting

Monday October 5<sup>th</sup> 2009 – Parish Council Meeting

