

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

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

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

Declarations of Interest:

Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct were invited.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

KCC Cllr Alex King (attending the conservative party conference).

2. PUBLIC SESSION

Cllr Robins addressed those present to inform them of the recent death of Bernard Fowler who was clerk to the Parish Council for 39 years. Cllr Robins said that Mr Fowler and his wife had been very active members of the parish during their lifetimes and had devoted a great deal of their time to various activities throughout the community. They would be greatly missed. A minutes silence was held as a mark of respect for Mr Fowler.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7th September 2009 were taken as read and proposed for approval by the Chair, Carried.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The matter of security at the Institute was again raised and Cllr March said that there had been a delay with the lowering of the brick wall to the front left hand side of the entrance as the person contracted to carry out these works had been suffering an injury. It was hoped that this work could be rescheduled as soon as the contractor was well enough to carry it out.

The Clerk pointed out that it was important for the Council to make every effort to prevent persons from climbing up on to the roof of the building in order to avoid any further damages to the roof and also to avoid any liability claims being made against the Council in the event of someone falling off the roof and hurting themselves.

It was suggested that another coat of anti climb paint be put on all exposed areas which could be used for climbing.

The Co-option of a new Councillor onto the Council was raised, as the clerk had that afternoon heard back from TWBC to say that an election would not be necessary as less than 10 parishioners had written to the Returning Officer at TWBC. It was suggested that the Clerk schedule a public meeting for 19th October which could be used to decide an interviewing party and discuss criteria which may be desirable for the new candidate. Clerk to advertise vacancy as widely as possible.

5. PLANNING

5.1 Planning Applications

Planning Application No:	TW/09/02496/FUL/GM2
Proposal:	Internal alterations to ground, first and second floors to create 2nd dwelling with new dormer window
Location:	Highlands Oast, Marle Place Road, Horsmonden
Recommendation:	Approval
Proposed:	Cllr Stevens, seconded Cllr Fletcher. Unanimous.

Planning Application No:	TW/09/02836/FUL/ARJ
Proposal:	Conversion of detached barn to annexe
Location:	Lampkyns, School House Lane, Horsmonden
Recommendation:	Approval.
Proposed:	Cllr March, seconded Cllr Clemson. Carried.

Planning Application No:	TW/09/02828/LBC/ARJ
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent: Conversion of detached barn to annexe
Location:	Lampkyns, School House Lane, Horsmonden
Recommendation:	Approval.
Proposed:	Cllr March ,seconded Cllr Parker, carried.

Planning Application No:	TW/09/02899/FUL/SEP
Proposal:	Single storey extension to kitchen /dining room
Location:	Orchard Lodge, Spelmonden, Road, Horsmonden.
Recommendation:	Approval.
Proposed:	Cllr Stevens, seconded Cllr Parker. Unanimous.

5.2 Report of Permissions Granted and Refused

Permissions Granted.

TW/09/01937/FUL/TA1 – Park Farm, Smallbridge Road, Horsmonden

TW/09/02095/FUL/TA1 – Orchard House Farm, Maidstone Road, Horsmonden.

TW/09/02284/FUL/CW1 – 49 Orchard Way, Horsmonden.

TW/09/02538/FUL/SEP – Drum and Monkey Cottage, Grovehurst lane, Horsmonden

TW/09/02367/FUL/CW1 – The Granary, Kirkins Farm, Maidstone Road, Horsmonden

Permissions Refused.

TW/09/02330/FUL/GM2 – Stiles Oast, Maidstone Road, Horsmonden

TW/09/02329/FUL/GM2 - Stiles Oast, Maidstone Road, Horsmonden

The Clerk also mentioned that she had received notification from Peter Hockney at Maidstone Planning Department to say that Wind direct had now withdrawn their application for a wind farm at Marden and would no longer be pursuing the scheme or any variation of the scheme on the site at Marden.

6. FINANCE

6.1 Parish Council Accounts to 4th October 2009

The following accounts in respect of the period up to 4th October 2009 were presented to the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Clemson and seconded by Cllr Hughes to accept the accounts as shown. Unanimous.

Horsmonden Parish Council Accounts as at 4th October 2009

	Balances
Current account b/fwd 07.09.09	£ 7,317.11
Deposit account b/fwd 07.09.09	£ 22,482.50
Interest received (Deposit Account)	

Item	Ref	Receipts	Payments
EDF Energy Networks Ltd	400658		£ 691.15
Mrs L Noakes - September salary	S/O		£ 608.61
HM Inspector of Taxes (tax & NI Mrs L Noakes)	400659		£ 52.46
Mr C J Couchman - sept.clock and playarea	400660		£ 78.92
Mr S Jones - Sept scavenging	400661		£ 60.36
Southern Electric Contracting-June, Jul, Aug, Sep Maintenance	400662		£ 508.67
Specialist Hygiene Services Ltd	400663		£ 164.45
P.J.Electrical Ltd (VG Box service)	400664		£ 79.35
EDF Energy1 Ltd (street light supply 01.07.09- 30.09.09)	400665		£ 284.90
Land Registry	400666		£ 50.00
Second half of precept from TWBC		£ 23,955.00	
Ist VAT reclaim for 2009/10		£ 5,569.08	

Current Account as at 04.10.09	£ 4,738.24
Deposit Account as at 04.10.09	£ 52,006.58

TOTAL
BANK: £ 56,744.82

6.2 Comments from the Auditors visit on 2nd October 2009

The Clerk reported that she had received the half yearly visit from the Auditor which the Council had appointed from Kent Audit, on Friday 2nd October. The Auditor had been very pleased with the accounts and finances but had a couple of comments for the Council.

- He noted that the Clerk did not have a valid contract of employment and felt that this was a matter which the Council should address.
- He reminded the Council that all payments made under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 should be agreed and noted as payments under section 137 of the Act, as there are strict guidelines upon the amount which a Council can pay out under section 137.

Section 137 payments come into force when the Council needs to make a payment for certain purposes not otherwise authorised. Horsmonden Parish Council currently makes payments under section 137 on an annual basis to provide a wreath for the war memorial, a donation towards the Churchyard maintenance and a donation to Ready Call. The Council is well within the current limitation of payments which can be made in this way, but must ensure that they are authorised and noted in the correct way, so that the Auditor can keep a note of the amount paid out under Section 137.

The Auditor will be looking more closely at the Council's Risk Assessment procedures next time he comes. It was suggested that the Council should look closely at all their property, or anything which they manage, and assess the potential risks associated with owning or managing the property or facility. The Council noted that this would include the play area equipment, all buildings owned and managed by the PC, the Village Green and trees etc. The Council should be seen to assess the risk and take all reasonable precautions to secure their property.

It was suggested that the Clerk obtain copies of the leases for the Sports Ground and Tennis Clubs so that the Council could ascertain who was responsible for certain areas of responsibility on these grounds.

6.3 Precept 2010/2011

Councillor Hughes suggested that the Council will need to look closely at three new areas of expense when assessing the Precept needed for 2010/2011. These were:

- The Public Conveniences
- Assistance for the Clerk
- Rebuilding of reserves, which have been greatly depleted recently.

7. HIGHWAYS AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

7.1 Highways

Cllr Stevens reported on the following:

- He had been speaking to Richard Kaupert about the drainage outside Freestons on the Maidstone Road. Clerk to email Richard Kaupert about this to remind him
- Richard Kaupert has spoken to the owner at Sandhole Cottage. KHS cannot enforce the removal of the lumps of wood which are on the verge, but Richard Kaupert is trying to get red/white marker posts put on the verge instead, which would remove the hazard for road users.
- Cllr Stevens asked the Clerk to obtain for him the telephone number for Aubrey Furner, so that he can ring him to discuss the verge cutting.
- The horse chestnut tree on the corner of the village green still looked healthy and had managed to escape the leaf infestation which a lot of horse chestnuts are suffering from.
- The Hedge between Highlands Oast House and the junction of Ruck Lane (sweet chestnut hedge) seems to be overgrown. Councillors to assess.
- The metal posts and rails for renewal at Bassets Farm, Maidstone Road are now ordered.

It was mentioned that there is a conifer tree outside number 4 or 5 Orchard Crescent which overhangs the pavement by a long way. Councillors to take a look at this when passing.

7.2 **Street lighting**

There had been a complaint about the fact that the street light on the Brenchley road was not yet operational. Clerk had drawn a cheque to be signed at the meeting so that she could request EDF to reconnect the light.

7.3 **Festive lighting**

The Clerk had received communications from EDF that the system for requesting UMSO lighting over the festive period had now changed. EDF now require to know the PC's requirements much sooner so that they can provide a certificate for the Council to use with the supplier of their choice.

The Festive lights were discussed in detail and it was agreed that the Christmas lights would be installed again on the Green this year, but they would only remain in place subject to no vandalism taking place.

Councillor Robins proposed from the Chair that the Council allow Cllr Stevens to purchase 250 new coloured bulbs for the festive lights, subject to Cllr Stevens obtaining competitive quotations and using the cheapest supplier. Unanimous.

The Christmas lights will be installed on 12th December and will be taken down on Wednesday 6th January 2010.

The electrical use for UMSO purposes will be the same as last year, as the majority of the lights will be plugged into the electrical box on the green, which is metered. Clerk to calculate and let EDF know.

7.4 **Soil sampling on Village Green**

Unfortunately the Clerk had not been able to get details of the quotation form Dukes for supply of materials from Bournes and administering the substances to the soil, in time for the meeting. It was suggested that the Clerk email a copy of the soil sample to Cllr Stevens as he may be able to get a quote for the provision of the required substances with an alternative supplier.

Cllr Parker said that she understood that students from Hadlow College had helped with the conditioning of the green at Matfield, and she wondered whether they may be interested to take on Horsmonden Village Green as a student project. Clerk to try and find out more from Brenchley Clerk.

It was noted that there was still a lot of wood chippings and sawdust on the green which was left after the Horsefair. It was suggested that the Clerk ask Simon Jones if he may be able to help to clear these up in exchange for a small payment, as they would not help the condition of the green. Clerk to contact Simon.

7.5 **Benches on Village green**

The Clerk said that she had received a complaint about the state of the benches and that at least two were now in a very poor state.

Cllr Stevens and Robins to install the bench from the old play area in place of one of the broken benches, as soon as it has been repainted.

The Clerk provided some ideas and quotations for new benches for the Council to look at. Cllr March reported that Bernard Fowlers family and friends might be interested in helping to pay for a new bench in memory of Bernard and she will contact them to find out more and provide some price guides.

It was suggested that the Clerk mention in the Parish news article the possibility of parishioners wishing to gift a bench to the parish as a way of commemorating a member of their family, following bereavement.

7.6 **Dog Fouling**

The Clerk had received a complaint about a large amount of dog fouling which was going on around the village. In particular the parishioner complaining had said that there suddenly seemed to be a large amount of dog excrement around the end of Morley Drive and the village green. The Clerk had put the parishioner in contact with the Dog Warden at TWBC.

The Clerk asked the Council if they could suggest places for her to stick up some more stickers as she has a supply from the Dog Warden but it is difficult to find positions to locate these. Cllr March said that she would try and stick a few around the village centre if the Clerk supplied her with some.

7.7 Speedwatch

The Clerk explained that the new coordinator had now taken over, but could not commence sessions until the lead for the calibrator had been renewed. She had ordered a new one form PC Ball, but was awaiting this still.

8. PARISH COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

8.1 Village Green booking form

The wording on the Village Green booking form was discussed in detail, as following the Horsefair it was considered that there may be some shortfalls in the wording of the form which should be altered and applied to anyone using the green.

It was proposed that the following words be inserted on the existing form following the paragraph explaining that full liability should be accepted by the organiser:

‘The event organiser understands that the Parish Council can only give permission for an event held solely on the Village Green’.

Other minor alterations for the form were proposed regarding the number of people attending and car parking facilities, as well as the proposal to amend the wording about the damage bond as follows:

‘The Parish Council will require a cash deposit from the organiser, prior to the event, based on £1.00 per person and subject to a maximum of £250.’

Cllr Fletcher proposed the changes as accepted and Cllr Clemson seconded this. The vote was unanimously in favour of the proposal.

8.2 Horsefair update

Cllr March explained that she and Cllr’s Robins, Clemson and Stevens had attended a meeting with CI Wilson following the Horsefair. Cllr March read aloud her notes from the meeting, which have been added to these minutes as Appendix 1(at the end).

The suggestion from the Police regarding the possible legal problems associated with this year’s meeting was that the Council should obtain written legal advice if they can.

8.3 VH lease

Cllr Parker had pointed out to the Clerk that there were now prescribed clauses which need to be inserted at the beginning of leases and that it was unlikely that Land Registry would accept a lease without these.

The Clerk had investigated and found this to be the case. She had obtained a standard lease form ACRK which she would look at in conjunction with the lease already drafted by the Council. Clerk to contact working party consisting of Cllr Parker, March and Robins, once lease is drafted.

8.4 Housing Needs

The Clerk had been contacted by Jenny Hudson (TWBC Housing) to say that Cascade were keen to meet with the Council and discuss the plot in Gibbet Lane , Horsmonden with regards to providing Social Housing. Jenny was aware that Orbit had reservations about working with Cascade on this type of project, but said that she felt this may be the only way forward and that other RSL’s had worked with Cascade to provide suitable schemes.

It was suggested that the Clerk organise a private meeting with Cascade and Jenny Hudson (TWBC). It was also suggested that the Clerk contact the Clerk of Benenden PC to find out what she could about ERHA (English Rural Housing Association) who had provided social housing there, as they were willing to work with Cascade.

8.5 Request for Budget planning items

This had been discussed under item 6.3 already and there was nothing more to add.

8.6 Public conveniences

The Clerk had hoped that she may have received a draft lease from TWBC by now, but despite chasing the matter on a number of occasions this was not the case. She had spoken to Julie Mellor about the amounts awaited by the Council from TWBC, but Julie had said that the details were still being worked out and that Property department were now dealing with this. Julie had apologised for the delay.

Cllr March had noted that there was an odour in both the ladies and gentlemen's toilets when visiting the other day. Clerk to ask Specialist Hygiene Services what can be done to stop this and report back to Council.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 Ewen Kellas - Flag pole o/s Institute/by war memorial.

Ewen Kellas had written to the Council to ask permission to erect a flag pole and flag outside the Institute building near to the war memorial. It was proposed from the Chair that the Working Men's Club be allowed to install the flag pole at their own cost, provided they did not need prior planning permission for this. Unanimous. Clerk to check up on whether planning permission is needed.

9.2 John Izbicki - Request to put posters on the VG advertising Club events.

John Izbicki had requested permission from the Council to put up advertising boards around the village green to advertise event to be held at the Club. The Parish Council asked the Clerk to request further information regarding the number of posters to be put up, whereabouts on the village green and how long they would be there for. Clerk to ask Planning department if permission is needed as the Green is in the conservation area.

9.3 ACRK- Parish Planning

Actions with Communities in Rural Kent had written to the council to see if they would like more information on Parish Planning. The Council did not wish to uptake this offer at present.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (DISCUSSION ONLY)

A parishioner had requested that the Council find out about the Farm shop which appears to be opening at Noakes' Cold Stores on the Goudhurst Road. Clerk to ask Planning Department if this has permission.

A parishioner had contacted Councillor March to say that he was interested in the possibility of setting up some allotments in the village. It was suggested that any interested parties should form a working party to progress this idea.

The meeting closed at 11.00pm

Next Meeting Dates

Monday November 2nd 2009 – Parish Council Meeting

Monday December 7th 2009 – Parish Council Meeting

Monday December 14th 2009 – Finance Committee Meeting

Appendix 1

Horse Fair 2009 – post-event meeting Wednesday 23 Sept. 09, 7.30pm

Present: CI Martin Wilson, Neil Robins, Mike Clemson, Ralph Stevens and Jane March.

MC visited at 9am and reported more people at the Horse Fair than at same time last year.

By Midday there were more on the roads, riding and driving.

MC suggested more traffic diversions avoiding centre and HPC should be making money from the event as the VG was in a state.

CI W reported gypsies from further afield eg Lake District, confirmed event started earlier. Gypsies charged vehicles to go on VG to offset insurance costs.

He was very pleased we were all working together for the first time. He had concerns about vehicle congestion on VG and long tailbacks on all roads.

CI W went to farmer about opening up Furnace Lane field as this had been overlooked. There was a whipround amongst gypsies to raise £200 for field hire.

No arrests – No trouble. Trotting on road interrupted traffic flow – Goudhurst Rd was shut for 1 ½ hours. Gun Back Lane was opened.

Mr Vine's comments included putting up of signs further afield for voluntary diversions. Barrier and gate the road outside the Highwayman, marking out of parking bays and then when filled the rest park in field. RS suggested Mr Vine ask Sports Ground for parking. NR said there would be a clash of pedestrians and horses.

JM reported toilets on footpath caused some wheelchair problems and a different location next year. Barriers needed across the Cut to stop horses. Most horses/ponies/young stock had halters which was safer and good practise. More horses in-hand this year, fewer trotters. Possible hitching rails if lorries unloading and parking elsewhere.

CI W stated that gypsy liability was only on VG but Mr Vine might also insure for one road closure another year, paying in instalments therefore organising over time.

CI W job to manage risk therefore he will shut a road anyway. Barriers could be put up and lorries diverted further out. Suggested KCC and TWBC sponsorship as for other large events. Costs £10k less this year.

Good feedback from police association and gypsy community some of whom had driven all night to meet up.

JM reported some locals were annoyed at the 2 pubs having to close and suggestions had been made of tables across doorway to sell soft drinks.

CI W asked if the burger van had paid the social club to park.?

JM - blanking plates had been suggested. NR – HPC might get some made up.

NR – Fromandez Drive grass was full of lorries and Lamberhurst Rd to Maidstone Rd was blocked at one point.

CI W – traffic management team will look at event/road/traffic.

He stated HPC need to be sure of what responsibilities we have.

Possibly a more ordered event might reduce spontaneity therefore reduce numbers.

NR Are we positively discriminating because we would not allow other organisations to undertake this sort of event?

CI W – letter to parish mag re appreciation of police association and gypsies. Lucy to email CI W no of words and space available for article in parish mag.

Meeting closed 8.45pm.