

HORSMONDEN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH ANNUAL MEETING HELD REMOTELY AT 7:30PM ON MONDAY, 19 APRIL 2021

Present:

Cllrs March (Chair), Davis, Larkin, Richards, Russell and Sheppard

By telephone:

Cllr Jenkinson;

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk), Jackie Stanton (Assistant Clerk)

13 members of the public

PCSO Tom Costin

Declarations of Interest:

Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct were invited. No interests were declared.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Stevens.

2. PUBLIC SESSION -The public are entitled to raise any subject matter of relevance to the Parish and have up to three minutes each to speak. The content will be briefly minuted.

PCSO Tom Costin gave an update on local issues, including:

Bassetts Farm site had reports of youths congregating and security of the buildings. The landowner had now brought in a 24 hours security company which had improved the situation.

Concerns over people trying to sell to residents in the Matfield and Brenchley areas by door-knocking with some aggression had been reported. PCSO Costin asked residents to try to be aware of who was at their door and may consider using a door peephole or side window to see who was there before answering the door.

He also raised issues of dog thefts which caused concern, currently in the Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells areas. He alerted residents regarding when out walking and leaving their dog in a garden when they were out. He said a form of alerting criminals

about a possible opportunity for theft was by engravings or signage on brickwork or surfaces showing “D1” or “D2” indicating the number of dogs or even cats.

The Chair will make sure information is included in the Parish News and also on the Council website.

A resident raised issues about graffiti on the sports ground/club. PCSO Costin was aware of this in Paddock Wood as well and suggested that residents should alert Kent Police Livechat or call 101.

The increasing amount of traffic speeding in the 30mph area was raised and it was felt that residents were vulnerable from speeding vehicles. PCSO advised that speed checks had taken place recently with a number of vehicles over the limit; 23 letters had been sent out to home addresses, as well as at least one vehicle speeding 46mph which was pulled over and given a ticket. He will raise this issue again to see if they can conduct another speed check on Brenchley Road.

Cllr Davis commented that the local Speedwatch had regularly focussed on Brenchley Road but had been on hold due to the COVID-19 restrictions but was due to start up again. He also said that residents were very welcome to join this valuable group who records this type of issue. More volunteers would allow more checks and gathering of data.

The Clerk advised she was waiting for a risk assessment but hoped the start-back date would be the beginning of May

Youths had apparently been seen parking at the sports field where graffiti and rubbish had been seen. This was noted by PCSO Costin.

The Chair thanked PCSO Costin and will make sure the Council alerts him if help is needed on these matters again.

Matters raised by residents included:

The importance of the need to get right the balance of housing and business in the village neighbourhood planning was highlighted and the importance of consultation. This was noted.

There were concerns about KCC curtailing transport services in the area, particularly bus services, and the need for links to other villages and towns. Services should be eco-friendly, reliable and affordable. It was suggested that the Parish Council reminds authorities and developers of this.

Litter in the parish was of concern and was seen as getting worse. What could be done about this? The Chair said the Council was very aware of this but it has limitations on what it can do, with issues such as insurance only being possible for anything inside the village 30mph limit. The Council is currently relying on people

doing their own collecting although a litter-pick would usually have taken place during the Spring.

Cllr Larkin advised that litter was of concern but most parish roads were too dangerous to pick up. She advised there was currently a petition to sign online to require Parliament to consider putting registration numbers of vehicles on all takeaway packaging

The Chair said these comments will be taken on board.

3. MINUTES OF 2019 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, an Annual Parish Meeting did not take place in 2020.

The 2019 Minutes had been reviewed and it was proposed by Cllr Richards and seconded by Cllr Russell that the 2019 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes be accepted as a transcript of what took place at the meeting. Accepted by the majority vote.

4. EMERGENCY PLANNING IN HORSMONDEN

Cllr Russell outlined the work of a small working group set up to develop a Community Emergency Plan for the village. The Plan is now on the Council website. The Plan, which was generally the work of a group who had no experience of this issue, are working to continue to evolve and hopefully improve with each new version of the Plan.

The purpose of the Plan is to provide a basis for immediate local support for villagers adversely affected by an emergency with its main emphasis on the consequence of some form of extreme weather, major fire or accident.

The Plan is not intended to replace the work of the Emergency Services and major charities but to provide for an immediate response to an emergency situation. It contains a lot of information about resources.

As a fundamental part of the Plan, the Council would like hear from people who would be willing to help in an emergency and the skills and assets they could bring.

In respect of the current pandemic emergency, the Parish Council is extremely grateful for the group of volunteers who stepped forward to support those who needed help in our community. In this instance the Council was able to provide financial assistance towards stock for the Food Bank and other support for the volunteers whilst not being formally involved. This gave the volunteers maximum flexibility in providing their support to the community.

The Council is looking for some new volunteers (whose personal details would never be made public in the Plan) who would be willing to be one of the group of volunteers. If anyone is interested, they should please contact the Clerk.

One of the parish volunteers thanked the Council for their cooperation, as well as the Village Hall Committee, particularly relating to the Food Bank and said all the residents who helped with the Food Bank had been wonderful volunteers.

One parishioner, who had experience in this field, would be able to offer some support with the Plan and could identify areas of responsibility and gaps in the Plan. The huge ground swell of volunteers during the pandemic had allowed learning which could help going forward.

Cllr Russell said the Council would welcome extra help and guidance and suggested a meeting with the working party.

A further resident offered his inclusion within his particular professional area of expertise.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT AND OTHER PC UPDATES:

The Chair highlighted the responsibilities each Councillor took on board to support a variety of parts of the village which helps and supports the Chair.

In his absence the Chair reported that **Cllr Stevens** was responsible for the village green which has a new contractor, Capel Groundcare, taking over maintenance. The types and frequency of treatments and improvements will be discussed at the 26 April Parish Council meeting.

With more housing in the future, there may be a need for allotments. The Council is responsible for finding a site for allotments and is looking for suitable areas. The Clerk advised that 11 people have registered their interest for an allotment.

The Chair wished to thank a number of people and organisations in the village for their unstinting help and support over the past year.

These included:

- Kate and Andy Mills at Heath Stores;
- Ola and the Heath Pharmacy team;
- Food Bank volunteers who have all been amazing and have made life for people better in many ways and taken some of the stress out of people's lives.
- St Margaret's volunteers and others who have volunteered to make a difference.
- David Coatsworth who helped tirelessly and was so generous with his time and help with a shielded family.
- Village Hall Trustees who worked hard to open up the hall to allow its use for the Food Bank;
- The Institute and Social Club who have been decorating, socially distanced. The village is looking forward to meeting up again;
- John Couchman who keeps the play area clean and safe for children and parents;

- Diana Morton and the Neighbourhood Planning Group who have worked over and above what was needed to get where we are today.
- Parish Clerk who is amazing in all sorts of ways and also the assistant clerk who have worked way beyond the call of duty;
- Thanks to all parish councillors who have learned new skills during lockdown, which may not have come too easily, but who have made it work.

CLlr Jenkinson – Neighbourhood Planning

After regular and detailed meetings regarding a Neighbourhood Plan, with the help of consultant, Jim Book, a further draft has been completed after reviews and amendments from the Steering Group and Parish Council.

The next step in the process is for the Plan to be reviewed by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and afterwards for it to be sent to Intelligent Examinations for a “health check” to ensure that the Plan complies with the necessary Regulations and requirements.

After further review in May, and after any changes or amendments, the Parish Council will hopefully adopt the Plan prior to Regulation 14, when it will be circulated to all residents and stakeholders for a six-week Consultation period.

There will be a summary of the Plan sent to every household in the Parish signposted to view the Plan on the website. Paper copies will also be available on request.

Provision for responses will be made electronically or on paper. Further details will be confirmed at a later date.

Affordable Housing: currently Tunbridge Wells Borough Council requires 35% of the homes built on site to be affordable. Proposed changes to the Planning System suggest only sites over 40-50 homes will be required to provide affordable homes. Therefore possibly 80+ homes could be built in Horsmonden over the next few years because of the proposed sites. The definition of affordable homes is broad—rent-starter homes-discounted market sales-shared ownership-rent to buy.

The housing needs Survey indicated the need for 18 homes in Horsmonden and 14 homes for older residents, two of which should be affordable.

CLlr Richards - Planning and Local Plan Consultation

CLlr Richards advised the meeting that the Planning Committee had successfully continued via Zoom over the past year. The Committee has been quite busy with a few major developments but with a number of general extensions and changes. The hope is to switch back to face-to-face meetings soon. The Council’s foresight to move to paperless meetings in the past years helped make the meetings work.

The Tunbridge Wells Local Plan is in the Pre-Submission Consultation period. This is available for comments by everyone online until 4 June. The Local Plan includes three

main housing sites, a possible new village hall and medical centre and a possible school extension. If residents have not commented yet, they are encouraged to do so.

CLlr Davis – Highway Improvement Plans (“HIPs”)

CLlr Davis explained that HIPs are a wish list for improvements which the Council ask Kent Highways to carry out for the benefit of the Parish. Some improvements have been implemented in the past years - parking restrictions around the entrance to school is a current project.

Traffic has been atypical but some vehicles have ignored speed restrictions. Numbers are getting back to before lockdown and with the same difficulties. Speedwatch can help and Kent Highways is on the Council's side to design and carry out improvements up to a certain point of funding. There are therefore limited reserves for the Parish Council to use.

A resident asked about the Council's thoughts about the village centre crossroads. Resident have been logging accidents and have written to Greg Clark, among other actions.

CLlr Davis said that non-injury incidents are passed through to Kent County Council and asked if he could be told if any had been missed. If there is a backlog of data, it should please be sent to the Clerk. KCC had concentrated efforts to improve street furniture on Lamberhurst Road because that is where incidents generally occur. Since they are still happening, it will be important to continue to record incidents and keep records. Thanks were given for the help on this issue.

CLlr Sheppard – SIDs, Conservation Area map and Hop Pickers Line map

Speed Indicator Devices (“SIDs”) are run through Capel Groundcare where data is collected on a fortnightly basis which is reported on the Council's website. The positions are changed regularly so they cover the whole village. Data shows vehicle numbers have reduced over lockdown with reductions of speeding on all roads in comparison to previous years. Data continues to be recorded.

New Conservation Area map and Hop Pickers Line map – the Conservation Area map has been updated and is being replaced on the village green this week. In addition, a Hop Pickers Line map is being installed which is similar in design to other maps that can be found at various points near the disused railway line which ran from Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst.

CLlr Larkin - Footpaths-

There has been an unprecedented use of all parish footpaths over the past year. The increased footfall has affected the paths and the Council has endeavoured to monitor these and report faults and problems to Kent County Council who will then take this up with the landowner. Councillors have also collected a great deal of rubbish and want to thank residents who do “pick-up”.

A working group has also been created to look at paths that are not officially shown on the definitive map as Public Rights of Way and which could be lost forever should they not be registered within the next five years. This is part of a countrywide campaign called “Don’t Lose Your Way” run by the Ramblers Association. The Parish has more than 60 paths in this category. Some are not viable as they pass through private property, are impassable scrubland or are dead ends. Those that should be registered have been identified and the information will be submitted to the national database.

Problems reported to the Parish Council are reported but the more people who register these themselves, the more likely KCC will come and check them.

6. PRECEPT

Precept for year 2021-22 has been circulated.

Cllr Russell explained details but advised that there are currently no final accounts due to this meeting taking place earlier than the date final accounts can be confirmed.

The Finance Committee had prepared the precept in detail with every heading being considered. However, the most notable expense recently has been the cost of repairs and servicing to the Institute clock

Other increases include outside spaces, including Christmas lights and includes HIPs work this year and public toilets due to increased cleaning hours and electricity.

Additional reserves will include a further £6,000 for eventual replacement of equipment and special soft surface due to regular inspection noting signs of wear.

Street lighting costs are down since there are no plans for replacements or additions this year. Asset Management i.e., Institute building and village hall is up from £7,200 to £11,000. It is hoped that some replacement doors and windows will be fitted and the green door under the clock tower will be bricked up and the William Lambert plaque incorporated in the façade suitably protected, all subject to planning. There is a provision of £5,000 towards the cost of a possible new village hall or major work to the rear of the existing hall.

Overall, the Precept for 2021/22 is £95,830 up from £93,510 for 2020/21, an increase of £2,320, which is just under 2.5%.

A question about professional and legal fees was raised. This is a contingency since the lease of the play area needs to be looked at and a contingency for legal fees required.

An income and expenditure report will be available to the public during June after auditors and external auditors have reviewed it.

Youth events did not take place last year so these funds can be used this year when plans are being considered.

Cllr Richards advised that the Council is mindful that the level of general reserves do not build up. However, it may be necessary to use these should a new village hall be planned, even with Section 106 funds.

The Chair now advised that draft Minutes will be published on the Council website to seek comments as to their accuracy.

Cllr Davis wanted to record a vote of thanks to Cllr March on behalf of the Parish to record appreciation for her leadership and management over a difficult year.

Other comments from residents:

Allotments had existed on National Trust property in Lamberhurst Road and it was suggested the Council should look into this with the National Trust.

It was also noted that some attention to the green at Fromandez Drive is required. This was noted.

A resident commented that due to the number of nominations for council membership, no election will be required in May. It was noted that if anyone would like to stand for a co-opted position, residents are encouraged to put themselves forward.

The sign outside the Foundry development is still there even after all homes have been sold. The Clerk will contact the developer to request its removal.

The Chair thanked everyone for joining and appreciated all their work.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:10 pm.

PRECEPT FOR 2021-22 (see Precept 21-22 document attached)

16/12/2020

Horsmonden Parish Council Current Year

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Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

Note :- (-) Net Expenditure means INCOME is greater than EXPENDITURE

		Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
100 Income							
1076	Precept	93,510	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	93,510	0	0	0	0	0
	Income - Net Expenditure	-93,510	0	0	0	0	0
110 Administration							
4000	Staff Salary	29,000	30,000	0	0	0	0
4030	Employer NI	1,600	1,800	0	0	0	0
4040	Pension	500	500	0	0	0	0
4050	Staff Travel Expenses	100	100	0	0	0	0
4080	Training	800	800	0	0	0	0
4090	Official Hospitality	200	100	0	0	0	0
4100	Bank Charges	80	80	0	0	0	0
4110	Audit Fees	1,000	1,200	0	0	0	0
4120	Parish Office Rent	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	0
4130	Hall Hire	600	50	0	0	0	0
4140	Professional / Legal Fees	0	1,000	0	0	0	0
4150	Subscriptions & Memberships	900	900	0	0	0	0
4160	Insurance	2,000	1,900	0	0	0	0
4170	Stationery & Postage	900	600	0	0	0	0
4180	Telephone & Broadband	700	750	0	0	0	0
4190	Office Equipment	100	100	0	0	0	0
4200	Website	150	170	0	0	0	0
4210	Computer consumables &	1,200	1,500	0	0	0	0
4220	Youth Events	1,500	1,500	0	0	0	0
4230	Publicity	450	50	0	0	0	0
4250	Grants & Donations Paid	2,000	2,000	0	0	0	0
4280	GDPR Costs	300	500	0	0	0	0
4290	Neighbourhood Planning	6,000	4,000	0	0	0	0
4350	Equipment Replacement	500	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Overhead Expenditure	51,580	50,600	0	0	0	0
	Administration - Net Expenditure	51,580	50,600	0	0	0	0
120 Outside Spaces							
4300	Landscaping & Groundworks	8,200	8,000	0	0	0	0
4310	Maintenance	1,500	500	0	0	0	0
4320	Christmas lights	0	4,000	0	0	0	0
4330	Treeworks	1,800	500	0	0	0	0
4340	Parish Planting Scheme	0	100	0	0	0	0
4350	Equipment Replacement	1,000	500	0	0	0	0
4360	Electricity	300	300	0	0	0	0
4370	Civic Amenities Vehicle	830	830	0	0	0	0
4390	Traffic Solutions Project	2,500	2,500	0	0	0	0
	Total Overhead Expenditure	16,130	17,230	0	0	0	0

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Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

Note :- (-) Net Expenditure means INCOME is greater than EXPENDITURE

	Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
Outside Spaces - Net Expenditure	16,130	17,230	0	0	0	0
130 Play Area						
4310 Maintenance	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	0
4350 Equipment Replacement	6,000	6,000	0	0	0	0
4400 Inspections	1,700	1,700	0	0	0	0
Total Overhead Expenditure	8,700	8,700	0	0	0	0
Play Area - Net Expenditure	8,700	8,700	0	0	0	0
140 Toilets						
4310 Maintenance	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	0
4360 Electricity	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	0
4500 Water & Sewage	500	800	0	0	0	0
4510 Cleaning	3,000	3,200	0	0	0	0
Total Overhead Expenditure	5,500	6,000	0	0	0	0
Toilets - Net Expenditure	5,500	6,000	0	0	0	0
150 Street Lighting						
4310 Maintenance	900	900	0	0	0	0
4350 Equipment Replacement	1,000	0	0	0	0	0
4360 Electricity	2,000	1,200	0	0	0	0
4600 Repairs	500	200	0	0	0	0
Total Overhead Expenditure	4,400	2,300	0	0	0	0
Street Lighting - Net Expenditure	4,400	2,300	0	0	0	0
170 Asset Management						
4700 War Memorial	0	500	0	0	0	0
4710 Clock & Clock Tower	200	500	0	0	0	0
4720 Village Hall	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	0
4730 The Institute Building	2,000	5,000	0	0	0	0
Total Overhead Expenditure	7,200	11,000	0	0	0	0
Asset Management - Net Expenditure	7,200	11,000	0	0	0	0
Total Budget Expenditure :	93,510	95,830	0	0	0	0
Income :	93,510	0	0	0	0	0
Net Expenditure	0	95,830	0	0	0	0