

MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD REMOTELY AT 7:30PM ON MONDAY, 4 MAY 2020

Present:

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

By telephone:

Cllr Stevens

Non-attendance:

Cllr Hunn

In attendance:

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Jenkinson could not connect. Cllr Richards proposed acceptance; seconded Davis. Unanimous. (However, Cllr Jenkinson managed to connect by phone later)

2. Public Session (no decisions)

Members of the public have the right to speak for up to three minutes at the Chair's discretion on issues concerning the Parish providing the Clerk has prior notification.

None

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Noted that none of the Minutes could be initialled.

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2 March 2020 were presented, checked for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Stevens, seconded Cllr Davis and voted for unanimously by those present at that meeting.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 17 March 2020 were presented, checked for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Richards, seconded Cllr Stevens and voted for unanimously by those present at that meeting.

Cllr Jenkinson joined the meeting by phone at this point.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting 21 April 2020 were presented, checked for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Davis, seconded Cllr Larkin and voted for unanimously by those present at that meeting.

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 7 February 2020 were presented, checked for accuracy (with a correction to include Apologies from Cllr Richards) and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Davis, seconded Cllr Russell and voted for unanimously by those present at that meeting.

4. Protocol on Meetings During Coronavirus (Covid-10) Epidemic

The draft “Virtual Meeting Policy and Guidelines” was considered with some details confirmed. Proposed by Cllr Richards, seconded by Cllr Jenkinson and approved unanimously.

5. Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference for Decision Making

The draft “Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference for Committees and Officers” was considered. After two minor amendments were made, Cllr Larkin proposed and Cllr Stevens seconded its approval which was unanimous.

6. Parish Council Decisions/Finance

a) Release and distribution of Parish Emergency funds.

The Clerk advised regarding the release and distribution of Parish Emergency funds held by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council which were £1354.00. It was considered if the funds should be accepted back to the parish to become emergency funding for parish food supplies during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) situation. It was agreed that £500 of the funds will initially be spent by the volunteer group to provide non-perishable supplies. It was suggested that a record of money spent should be kept by the Clerk through invoices received from TWBC. The Clerk has, and will maintain, the records. Depending on how long the current situation continues, there may be a need to consider using money from parish funds at a later date. The release back to the parish was proposed by Cllr Stevens, seconded by Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

b) The auto renewal of the Parish Council insurance under three-year contract.

Aviva provides this insurance which is renewed on 1 June at a premium of £1830 with only an increase of insurance premium tax. Since this is a three-year term, premium rates remain the same. Acceptance was proposed by Cllr Russell and seconded by Cllr Stevens. Unanimous.

c) Renewal of Arron Services annual contract for computer and IT support.

Renewal was 1 May for £600 per year which is no increase on last year. Since everyone has been happy with the services, it was proposed by Cllr Larkin and seconded by Cllr Davis that the contract is renewed. Unanimous.

d) Renewal of Parish Grounds maintenance 2020-21.

The Clerk is still waiting for a new quote from Dukes after frequent chasing and work is continuing. The cost for 2019/20 has been £4570.00 which included a number of additional jobs. It was suggested that the contract be reviewed for next year with a number of other companies contacted. The Clerk will look at all the works required by the Parish Council and compile the details so specifications can be sent to other

contractors for consideration next year. Renewal of the current contact was proposed by Cllr Davis and seconded by Cllr Richards. Unanimous.

Cllr Stevens now left the meeting.

- e) Renewal of membership for Kent Association of Local Councils.
Renewal at 1 May was £929.40, based on a per head basis for the number of properties in the Parish. The value of membership was discussed and renewal was proposed by Cllr Larkin and seconded by Cllr Russell. Unanimous.
- f) Continuance of SIDs contract with Capel Ground Care for 2020-21.
The service was considered very good with a cost of £200.42 per month for both devices. It was proposed by Cllr Davis and seconded by Cllr Richards to renew the contract. Unanimous.
- g) Decision to allow Clerk & Assistant Clerk to carry one week's holiday over to 2020-21 and for the Council to make payment in lieu of any remaining holiday from 2019-20. Due to the level of work, the full holiday allocation had not been taken which was similar to the previous year. Outstanding holiday of one week and the payment in lieu of remaining holiday for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk was proposed by Cllr Jenkinson and seconded by Cllr Richards. Unanimous.
- h) Neighbourhood planning joint fee proposal for 2020-21 – Jim Boot and Michael Thornton. Update on progress/situation.
Jim Boot is due to continue his consultancy for the Council this year. The estimate of his costs to the end point is £6300. As Lindsey Frost, the Consultant assisting Jim had now retired, it was proposed that Michael Thornton also assisted as a consultant with specialised planning knowledge, at a cost of £5440. £2219.00 is currently left in earmarked reserved £2000 from 2019, £6,000 for this year is available. The Clerk also advised that a request can be made for another grant. It was asked when they are going to begin the engagement process but this is not known. The Steering Group is still holding meetings but quite a lot is on hold and drafting of the plans will take time. The group had recommended the appointment of Michael Thornton. Bearing this in mind, Cllr Jenkinson proposed acceptance of the joint proposal fee; seconded by Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

Cllr Jenkinson left the meeting and then called back in and did not miss any of the meeting.

- i) Public conveniences – doors.
The Clerk advised that the door guards have been replaced but the electronic locking on the ladies no longer works which is in addition to the long-standing problems with the disabled door. Cllr Larkin proposed that quotes for new electronic locks should be obtained as part of an investigation as the best way forward; seconded by Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.
- j) Retirement of Assets from the 2019-20 register.
These are to the year ending 31 March 2020. The Councillors reviewed all the assets, including deletions and additions. The old Christmas lights and bulbs are over and

above the current needs and are stored by Cllr Stevens in a small barn. It was suggested they be put back onto the asset list with a note they are in storage, not in current use and should they be needed in the future, they be portable appliance tested. Proposed by Cllr Davis, seconded by Cllr Russell. Unanimous.
The asset register was proposed by Cllr Richards and seconded by Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

7. Updates

VE Day details had gone onto the Council website, noticeboards and Facebook.

The Clerk had received some comments from councillors about the new Parish Council website and had sent these to ICT who will incorporate them in preparation for the next draft.

The walkers map has received some comments and work is ongoing.

Work for the Hop Pickers Line notice is continuing. A sample of the long-lasting materials to used to make the notice have been given to the organisers for their consideration.

Locality – technical support for site allocations had been mentioned in Cllr Jenkinson's update about neighbourhood planning which had been circulated this evening.

Cllr Larkin mentioned that the two new trees on the village green does not look healthy and may be dead. Clerk will ask Bridglands to look at the tree when they are next on the green.

The memorial tree on Fromandez Drive is being watered by one of the residents.

There had been some queries about a steam engine event on the green. If any such event were to take place, it would have to be organised and run by either HoVEC or another body. The Parish Council would not be able to carry out such work.

The meeting closed at 21:10.