

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL  
ON MONDAY, 8 APRIL 2024 AT 7:30PM**

**Present:**

Cllrs March, Davis, Russell, Richards, Sheppard, Larkin, Jenkinson, Currie and Baxter-Smith

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

Anna Blyth (Assistant Clerk)

6 members of the public

**1. Apologies for Absence and declarations of interest**

Cllr McMillan.

**2. Public Session (no decisions)**

Two members had requested to speak in the public session.

The first speaker spoke about planned internal works to The Institute Building (Social Club) and asked the PC to approve these works, as owner of the building. The speaker had provided a proposed schedule of the works to the Clerk prior to the meeting and these had been circulated to Cllrs via email for their consideration. The main works include:

- Removal of the suspended ceiling and mechanical fittings from bar, small bar area, lobby and from main room (internal scaffold may be required).
- Removal of existing wall cladding to all walls in main bar, small bar area and bar area.
- Insulation, new plasterboard and plastering of existing ceilings in bar area and main room.
- Insulation, new plasterboard and plastering of all external walls in bar, small bar area and main room.
- Cut out 3 apertures in bar and wall facing the main room, for long taps to pass through from cellar and fit 3 barrel-ends in wall.
- Removal and replacement of the existing bar tops.
- Removal of entrance lobby to corner of main room.
- Removal and replacement of existing vinyl floors throughout.
- New storage cupboard to snooker room with concertina doors to front.
- General painting and decoration.

The second speaker asked the Parish Council to reconsider registering The Gun and Spitroast as an Asset of Community Value as it is the only pub left in the village.

The Speaker explained that once an asset is listed, if it then comes up for sale, the community have an opportunity to make a bid to purchase the asset. This is followed by a period of up to 6 months during which communities can prepare their bid. The owner is unable to sell the asset during this time however, they are under no obligation to accept the bid and the provisions do not restrict who the owner can sell their property to or at what price.

The Speaker confirmed that she has 21 parishioners already willing to support this in writing, which would form part of the application process, but would like the PC to consider supporting as the local authority.

*Cllr Baxter-Smith arrived at the meeting at 7.40pm*

The Chair thanked the speakers for their time and proposed that item 6.c be brought forward to discuss first; seconded Cllr Currie. Unanimous.

**6c. Consider / agree Horsmonden Social Clubs plans for redecoration/renovation to ceilings inside the Institute Building**

The Clerk had circulated the schedule of works as provided by the Social Club to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their consideration. The Chair gave Cllrs the opportunity to ask the speaker any questions they may have regarding the project.

The Chair asked what type of backing is required from the PC for these works. The speaker confirmed that the Social Club are able to fund the refurbishment works entirely and would not be seeking any financial contribution from the PC however, they will require approval of the works from the PC as the owner of the building. It was confirmed that the Social Club are making preliminary enquires with the TWBC Rural Projects Community Fund, where some grant monies towards the project may be available.

The Clerk referred to the schedule of works and asked what the scaffolding is for. It was confirmed that this relates to the internal ceiling works and may not be required but was added in as precaution.

Cllr Davis asked whether there is a budget in place for the works. It was confirmed that members of the AGM are happy to proceed with the works as detailed however, there is not a confirmed budget yet as contractors' quotations are still awaited. However, the works are expected to cost in the region of £70k - £80k.

Cllr Currie commented that he was pleased to see mention of sustainability with improved insulation and he would hope that LED lighting would be used as well. It was confirmed that all lighting will be replaced with LEDs. It was suggested that the Clerk forward on a copy of the PC's Sustainability policy to the Social Club for their reference as this will also be an important factor for the TWBC grant.

Cllr Larkin asked if all furniture will be replaced. It was confirmed that most furniture will be replaced including the bucket style chairs as these take up a lot of space. The Social Club have enlisted the help of a local Interior Designer.

Cllrs Davis asked how long the works are expected to take. It was confirmed that the Social Club will have to close for a short period of time however it is hoped that only one weekend will be affected.

After further discussion between Cllrs, Cllr Richards proposed that the PC approve the plans as provided; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

The Chair proposed that item 5.h be brought forward to next; seconded Cllr Currie. Unanimous.

#### **5.h. Consider listing Assets of Community Value**

The Chair confirmed that the PC have looked into listing The Gun and Spitroast as an Asset of Community Value in the past, however after the initial investigations it was agreed that the PC did not wish to pursue further at that time.

After discussion between Cllrs it was agreed that, as the last remaining public house in the village, there would be no harm in the PC seeking to list The Gun and Spitroast as an Asset of Community Value.

Cllr Larkin proposed that the PC apply to list The Gun and Spitroast pub as an Asset of Community Value; seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.

### **3. Minutes of Parish Council Meetings**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11 March 2024 had been circulated beforehand by the Clerk. They were agreed for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded Cllr Davis and voted for unanimously by those present at that meeting and signed by the Chair.

### **4. Parish Council Finance**

#### **a. Agree payments listing up to 31 March 2024 as attached (Appendix 1)**

The Clerk showed a copy of the list of payments up to and including 31 March 2024 as a total of £18,673.58. Cllr Richards proposed approval of the schedule of payments; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

Cllrs Davis and Richards (with Cllr Jenkinson as a reserve) agreed to release and authorise payments from the bank this month.

## APPENDIX 1

### List of Payments made between 11/03/2024 and 31/03/2024

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
11/03/2024	Microshade VSM	SO	195.14		March emails and data
13/03/2024	British Gas Lite	DD	13.67		Electricity VG boxes
13/03/2024	British Gas Lite	DD	105.74		Electricity Public toilets Feb
18/03/2024	Society Of Local Council Clerk	BACS	183.00		Membership 2024 AB
18/03/2024	Society Of Local Council Clerk	BACS	284.00		Membership 2024 LN
18/03/2024	HMRC	BACS	546.33		Tax & NI March
18/03/2024	EE - BT	DD	60.38		PC phones March
19/03/2024	British Telecom	DD	148.48		Broadband quarterly (Mar- May)
19/03/2024	Castle Water	DD	17.00		March water supply- toilets
20/03/2024	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	BACS	36.89		Rates for parish office 24-25
21/03/2024	Business Stream	DD	65.33		Waste water( Dec-March)
21/03/2024	Peoples partnership	DD	230.47		Staff Pensions March
25/03/2024	P&F Cleaning services LTD	SO	476.66		March cleaning
25/03/2024	Anna Blyth	BACS	1,057.09		March Salary
25/03/2024	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	1,671.23		March salary & overtime
25/03/2024	HM Land Registry	CHEQUE	7.00		title register application
26/03/2024	Saxum stone Mason	BACS	3,324.71		Half of brickworks-clock tower
26/03/2024	southern scaffolding Ltd	BACS	3,408.00		Scaffolding for clock tower
26/03/2024	southern scaffolding ltd	BACS	-3,408.00		Scaffolding Clock tower
26/03/2024	Southern Scaffolding Ltd	BACS	3,408.00		scaffolding clock tower
26/03/2024	Gillet & Johnston	BACS	1,680.00		Remove clock from tower
27/03/2024	Alison Eardley	BACS	3,642.00		Planning consultancy
27/03/2024	Mr J Couchman	BACS	103.87		Clock and play area March
28/03/2024	Capel Groundcare	BACS	690.59		March groundcare & SIDS
28/03/2024	Horsmonden Village Hall	BACS	696.00		Hall hire 23-24
31/03/2024	Unity Trust Bank	DD	30.00		service charge
<b>Total Payments</b>			<b>18,673.58</b>		



b. **Bank Reconciliation as at 31 March 2024**

The bank balance at 31 March 2024 was displayed with a total at £23,430.97.

This was confirmed as correct against the respective bank statement and signed by the Chair.

c. **Consider further costs for essential works to the Clock Tower and assess works and costs so far**

Cllr Russell had prepared a schedule of costs already incurred at the Clock Tower and a list of outstanding works and their expected costs. These were detailed as follows:

Costs already incurred - £8,600

(costs met using an Earmarked Reserve, Budget Heads and General Reserve)

Estimated costs for outstanding works - £11,560

(this includes the final invoice for completed brickwork, a cost for full replacement of the pitched roof and the reinstallation of the clock)

Overall budget - £20,000

It was noted that the estimated costs for outstanding works does not include repairs to the timber structure, any additional structural engineer fees, adjustments or additional hire charges for the scaffolding or any costs relating to replacement external lighting.

The Clerk confirmed that three companies had been approached to quote for the roof works and the repairs to the wooden structure but as there are still quotations outstanding it was suggested that this item be brought back to the next meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> April.

Cllr Russell proposed that the meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> April is changed from Planning to an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, which would enable this item to be added to the agenda; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

d. **Consider new water heater in old kitchen at Village Hall**

Following a recent visit from Envirocure, it was noted that the water heater in the old kitchen is no longer working. The Clerk had obtained a quotation from a Grovehurst Plumbing for replacement of the water heater and also an option for complete removal of the water heater.

Cllr Russell reported that neither the cleaners nor the caretaker use this sink for access to hot water as they use the sink in the main kitchen. The Chair commented that she felt that the cleaners should not be using the kitchen sink to fill buckets for floor washing, as this could be seen as unhygienic.

Cllr Currie proposed that the PC accept the quotation from Grovehurst Plumbing totalling £280 including VAT and advise the cleaners not to use the sink in the main kitchen; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

Cllr Russell confirmed that he will contact the cleaners and the caretaker to advise them not to use the main kitchen sink in future.

e. **Christmas Lighting. Consider options and quotations for Christmas 2024**

The Clerk had circulated a quotation from an independent electricians, Langcorn Electrical Ltd, who are responsible for installation and maintenance of Christmas lighting for other local Parishes. The quotation was based on new pea sized lights being installed to the trees at the front of the village green and left up all year round with an annual maintenance check carried out just before switch on each year. As well as quoting to dress the three trees, the electrician had also provided a quotation to dress the street lights surrounding the village green.

The full quotation was shown to Cllrs as follows:

1. To supply and install 150m of 24v warm white twinkle pea lights to each of the 2 smaller trees will be £2808.64 + vat
2. To supply and install 200m of 24v warm white twinkle pea lights to the larger tree and install a catenary from the lamp column through the 3 trees, will be £1948.61 + vat
3. To supply and install a timer and socket to 1 no. column will be £285.34 + vat
4. To supply the pea lights for 1 no. 10m column wrap will be £66.35 + vat
5. To install and remove the above column wraps will be £131.42 + vat per column
6. To supply and install a timer to control the 3 trees will be £183.66 + vat.

It was noted that although the initial set up fee would exceed the amount budgeted for the 2024 Christmas lights, the future costs each year would be considerably less. There would also be far less admin involved for the Clerks who have spent a lot of time organising the installation and removal of Christmas lights in previous years.

The Chair commented that wrapping the street lights may not be possible due to weight limitations on the columns. It was also agreed that the installation of a timer would not be required as the lights would work in line with the timer already on the street lights.

After discussion, Cllr Richards proposed that the PC accept the quotation from Langcorn Electrical Ltd for dressing the three trees at the front of the village green at a total cost of £4,757.25 plus VAT (item 1 and 2 of the quotation). This was seconded by Cllr Currie and the vote was carried.

The Clerk asked Cllrs to consider what to do with the old Christmas lights currently held in storage with Blachere Illuminations. The Chair suggested that the Clerk contact Blachere to see if there would be an option for Blachere to buy back the lights.

The Chair proposed that item 5b. be brought forward for discussion; seconded Cllr Currie. Unanimous.

b. **Update regarding Bassetts Farm application TW/24/00078/HYBRID**

Mr Winser, Chair of HDAG, gave an update to Cllrs regarding the Bassetts Farm application with the main points as follows:

- To date there are 176 comments on the portal from residents, Cllrs and the PC with the majority being objections.
- All statutory consultees have now submitted their comments however, there are some points that have been raised that are still to be addressed.
- The portal remains open for comments despite the deadline being passed. There is no end date and any comments added will still be considered by TWBC.
- The next TWBC Planning Committee meetings are 17<sup>th</sup> April and the 15<sup>th</sup> May however it is felt unlikely that Bassett's will be discussed at either of these meetings.

Cllr March commented that after the elections on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May the TWBC Planning Committee will change and a new Chair and Vice Chair will be elected. The new committee will then need to have training so this could delay any decisions being made on large developments. Mr Winsor confirmed that he has it writing from TWBC that the Planning Committee will visit the site prior to the meeting however, it would be beneficial if the PC could raise this point as well.

Mr Winsor highlighted the latest comment on the portal from the TWBC Conservation Officer and pointed out several concerns relating to failure to follow the guidelines as set out in the High Weald Design Guide and the Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan. Mr Winsor suggested Cllrs peruse this comment and consider making another comment on the application. It was agreed that the Assistant Clerk will email the comments from the TWBC Conservation Officer to Cllrs and add this as an item for discussion at the next meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> April.

It was also agreed that the Clerk would contact the TWBC Case Officer and ask when the Bassetts Farm application is expected to be discussed by the Planning Committee.

Cllr Currie asked Mr Winsor if there had been any update regarding the footway on Goudhurst Road. Mr Winsor confirmed that there is no update to date however, there was a visit scheduled between Old Station Garage and Persimmon Homes which, for unknown reasons, did not end up going ahead.

The Clerk confirmed that she is now in receipt of the Land Registry title plans for Old Back Lane and there is a reference to the Parish Council and the Sports Ground having a right of way over the footpath leading to the Sports Ground from Back Lane. The Clerk has added this to the S106 document requesting that this footpath is gifted to the PC plus an amount for improvement of the surfacing.

Mr Winsor reminded Cllrs of the ownership of the proposed emergency access. Persimmon Homes will need to be able to prove that they have a right of way through the unadopted section of Back Lane (from the primary school up to the old railway bridge).

The Clerk confirmed that the application relating to the temporary car park for construction vehicles at Bassetts Farm (24/00350/FULL) has been approved. This relates to the development of 20 houses only.

**c. Update on Brenchley Road site**

The Clerk had circulated an email to Cllrs received from Gary Mickelborough at Bloomfields, who is acting on behalf of the developer, regarding the Brenchley Road site. The email related to the Section 106 agreement which is almost finalised and asked the PC to confirm that they are happy with the proposals.

After further investigation, the Clerk had established that only the Local Authority (TWBC) can take part in these negotiations with the developer and the PC should not negotiate directly. It was therefore agreed that the Clerk would copy in Gary Mickelborough when sending through the PCs final Section 106 request to the TWBC Case Officer.

**d. Public Consultation on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Response to the Inspector's Initial Findings Letter on the Examination of the New Local Plan – consultation ends 12<sup>th</sup> April – does the PC wish to add any further comment**

The Chair reminded Cllrs of the comments from the Inspector regarding the positioning of the medical centre. The Chair felt that the PC should emphasize the point again that the medical centre should be within the residential area.

Cllr Baxter-Smith proposed the following additional comment be submitted prior to the consultation end date of the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024:

*“Horsmonden Parish Council wish to emphasise in the strongest possible terms the previous reference to the siting of the medical centre as stated by the Inspector in his findings for the SLP; stating that the medical centre must be kept within the area designated for residential use and not within the area for community space as outlined in the current planning application. (The inspectors findings form part of the public hearing dated 5 July 2022 found at point 2 hours 48 minutes 30 seconds in the recording)”*

This comment was seconded by Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

**e. Consider the estimated costs provided for VH refurbishment and next steps if any in ascertaining future Village Hall plans**

The Clerk had circulated to Cllrs the estimated costs for the existing Village Hall refurbishment totalling £287,815.14, as prepared by Spider Projects.

It was noted that there will be S106 contributions available from the developer of the Brenchley Road site in the region of £174,000 for a new village hall and it has already been requested that the wording is amended to include refurbishment of the existing hall if it is decided that this is the best option. The Chair commented that it is important to ensure that the land for a new village hall at the Brenchley Road site is protected if it is not used for this purpose.

It was agreed that the PC now need to focus on obtaining costs for a new village hall and decide on the most suitable location for this. It was suggested that the New Village Hall Working Group meet up to discuss this in more detail and bring back to the next full Council meeting.

**f. Consider any updates to S106 Listing**

The Clerk had circulated a spreadsheet of S106 requests to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their consideration before sending to TWBC. Cllrs discussed each section and made some minor amendments to the costs detailed.



Cllr Larkin proposed acceptance of the costs as detailed within the S106 spreadsheet, including the amendments; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

**g. Consider next steps for the Horsmonden Development Advisory Group (HDAG)**

The Clerk had asked Mr Winsor, Chair of HDAG and Cllrs to consider the next steps for the group. The following points were discussed as areas for further consideration:

1. The Village Hall project – consider whether there should there be a further public consultation.
2. Infrastructure discussions relating to Bassetts Farm and Brenchley Road developments and how best to progress this with TWBC.
3. The Bockingfold Solar Farm Community Fund and how this could be used to benefit the community.
4. The potential employment of a Strategy Consultant to assist with village development.

## 5. Planning

### a. Planning applications

<b>Planning Application:</b>	24/00732/FULL
<b>Proposal:</b>	<a href="#"><u>Part two &amp; part single-storey side extension, glazed link side extension, alterations to fenestration on rear &amp; side elevations and erection of detached outbuilding and alterations to hard landscaping</u></a>
<b>Location:</b>	Park Lodge Brick Kiln Lane Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent TN12 8ER
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approval
<b>Proposal</b>	Cllr Baxter-Smith; seconded Cllr Currie. Unanimous.
<b>Comments</b>	Recommend approval subject to the outbuilding remaining ancillary to the existing property. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

<b>Planning Application:</b>	24/00733/LBC
<b>Proposal:</b>	<a href="#"><u>Listed Building Consent - Part two and part single-storey side extension, glazed link side extension and associated alterations to fenestration on rear &amp; side elevations, removal of internal partition wall, removal of window &amp; brickwork, section of floor &amp; wall removed above stairwell</u></a>
<b>Location:</b>	Park Lodge Brick Kiln Lane Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent TN12 8ER
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approval
<b>Proposal</b>	Cllr Baxter-Smith; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.
<b>Comments</b>	Recommend acceptance subject to the Conservation Officers approval. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy

<b>Planning Application:</b>	24/00711/FULL
<b>Proposal:</b>	<a href="#"><u>Garage conversion &amp; creation of new garage</u></a>
<b>Location:</b>	Long Barn Maidstone Road Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent TN12 8HH
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approval
<b>Proposal</b>	Cllr Richards; seconded Cllr Currie. Unanimous.
<b>Comments</b>	Recommend approval subject to the condition that the building remains ancillary to the main property. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

## 6. Parish Council Decisions/Administration

### a. Parish Highways/footpath/street lighting/landscaping and tree works

The Clerk confirmed that The Living Forest have been booked for the 21<sup>st</sup> June to carry out the crown reduction works on the large horse chestnut tree at the front of the village green.

### b. HIPS – Feedback from meeting with KCC

Cllr Davis gave the Council an update following the meeting with Emma Tilbury from KCC regarding HIPs. It was noted that the current items on the HIPs list are progressing well and all approved measures are expected to be in place soon.

### d. Consider Village Green Booking for HoVEC Summer Festival 5-9 June 2024

The Clerk had circulated the booking form received from HoVEC regarding the 2024 Summer Festival to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

Cllr Baxter-Smith proposed that the PC accept the booking for the 2024 HoVEC Summer Festival, subject to receiving the necessary documentation; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

### e. Consider Horsmonden Social Club Village Green booking for Beer Festival 6 July 2024

The Clerk had circulated the booking form, proof of insurance and risk assessment for this event to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

Cllr Baxter-Smith proposed that the PC accept the booking for the Social Club Beer Festival, seconded Cllr Currie. Unanimous.

## 7. Consultations

### a. KCC Consultation on Early Years Education in Kent – supporting settings to embed inclusive practice [www.kent.gov.uk/earlyyearsconsultation](http://www.kent.gov.uk/earlyyearsconsultation) ends 5 May 2024

Cllr Larkin agreed to respond to this consultation on behalf of the PC.

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.24pm**