

**MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**HELD IN HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 21<sup>st</sup> MAY 2012**

**REFRESHMENTS FROM 7.30PM MEETING STARTING AT 8.00 P.M.**

**Present:** Cllr March (Chair)  
Councillors Parker, Stevens, Davis, Russell, Kerrigan, and Jones.

**In attendance:** Lucy Noakes (Clerk)  
24 members of the public  
Cllr McDermott (TWBC)

**Declarations of Interest:** Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct were invited. None were received.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr King (KCC) on business  
Cllr McKenzie( Brenchley & Matfield PC)

2. **PUBLIC SESSION.**

Thanks were given by the Chair to the Women's Institute for supplying and serving the refreshments at the meeting.

The Clerk read aloud a report sent by Alex King, (KCC) saying that he was pleased that the footpath extension on the Lamberhurst Road was completed and felt this showed that small amounts of member's money could make a real difference. He said he had asked KHS to look into the re-siting of the flashing speed sign on the Lamberhurst Road.

Cllr King said that KCC had almost finished its restructuring and would save approximately £350 million by 2014. So far this has not had any real impact on services, but he asked the village to let him know if there had been any impact of the village or on individuals.

**Presentation by PC Lees, on current Policing in the area.**

PC Lees had been given a report from PCSO Laura Carey as she and PC Moody were unable to make the meeting for reasons to do with their shift changes.

PC Lees reported that most of the crimes committed in this area were in the following categories: theft by finding, criminal damage to property and vehicles, burglary other than dwelling, common assault (including domestic).Reported burglaries themselves had in fact gone down since last year's report.

The police had arranged a Restorative Justice Speed check last year which caught 19 vehicles speeding between 36mph and 55mph. Each of these people were stopped and actions taken under the scheme. The Police hope to hold a further session this year. It was asked how many of the people caught speeding were residents of the village.

With regards to antisocial behaviour, there had not been any increase in calls over the past year. PCSO Carey had asked PC Lees to report that she tries to get to the Youth Club in the village whenever she can to give assistance and advice there.

PC Lees reported that as well as PC Moody and PCSO Carey, who are allocated to the village in addition to their other villages; there were 5 officers based at Cranbrook and 5 officers based at Paddock wood, who all cover this area if needed, although they are only on duty 2 at a time.

Mr Kerrigan asked if the increase in crime, of around 40%, reported this year flagged up a problem which needed to be looked at. PC Lees said that CI Bumpus was aware of the rise in crime levels and will be trying to do something to solve the problems. Mr Kerrigan asked if PC Lees could confirm that the police were overstretched at this time. PC Lees could not comment on this.

Cllr Jones raised the issue of the parked cars on the Brenchley Road, which cause an obstruction to the vision of those at the crossroads as well as making it dangerous for vehicle coming into the village from Brenchley, who come across the parked vehicles just around the sharp bend. It was also noted that this causes a problem for the Mascall's School bus which drops off there every week day. There was some discussion as to why the school bus does not stop the other side to the cross roads but this was explained by the fact that the bus has to continue on down the Lamberhurst Road to drop off more children.

Cllr March explained that the Council have been looking at ways of solving the issue but it was a complicated one as there did not seem to be one solution at present. The Council had however arranged for KHS to put a 'no stopping' sign at the location which asks people not to park there during certain times, and to mark out a bus stop, which it hoped would dissuade parishioners from parking where the bus needs to let children off. She also explained that this was something which a group from Village Vision would now be dealing with, to try and decide upon the best way forward for the village as a whole.

Leonie Harrington from KCC said that if a time line of photographs could be taken showing the parking over 24 hours, 7 days a week then this may help with a solution, and she might be able to forward this to KHS for the parish. PC Lees explained that the police can only issue a ticket to vehicles if they are obstruct the highway or pavement, not for dangerous parking or parking in the wrong place. It was noted that when a disabled parishioner next gets stuck because of a vehicle obstructing the dropped kerb, the police could be telephoned to move the vehicle, as this would count as an obstruction of the pavement and highway.

Thanks were given to PC Lees for his time.

Cllr Parker explained that the PC was giving out Jubilee mugs for those in the village under 12 years of age. She explained the procedure for receiving these and that there would be more for sale at the Jubilee fete at a cost of £4.00 each. Thanks were given to Cllr Parker for organising all of this.

Mrs Jones asked why there were people living in horse boxes in Spelmonden Road. Cllr March explained that the New Age Travellers had been there since the New Year and that they had a child who was attending the local primary school. It was understood that the travellers now wish to stay until the end of July. The travellers had not caused any problems, however more recently people visiting Sprivers had begun to park in the entrance to Sprivers as the travellers vehicle takes up the majority of the parking space, and this was causing some inconvenience. The Council had received assurances that TWBC would serve an enforcement notice on the travellers in July to ensure they moved on at that point. Mr Kerrigan offered his thanks to the Parish Council as he felt they had dealt with this matter with a sympathetic view.

Mr Kerrigan asked about the allocation of the new social houses being built in Gibbett Lane. It was explained that only those with a link to the village could take part in the bidding for these new

homes and this would be the case forever, if they became vacant again at a future point. Cllr March explained that the two disabled bungalows had already been allocated to villagers with specific needs for these.

It was also explained that the bidding cycles for these happen through the TWBC site on a Friday evening.

A parishioner asked if it was at all likely that a footpath could be built on the Brenchley Road, as it was currently very dangerous for pedestrians along this route. Cllr March explained that she had looked at this option with Mr Dicketts, but space to build a footpath was problematic in this area. This is another project which a village vision group will be working on in the future. Cllr Jones commented that speed calming measures would help if pavements could not be extended.

3. **GUEST SPEAKER - Peter Randall on the Asian Long Horn Beetle.**

Mr Randall projected a picture of the beetle and explained that the beetle had first been found in the industrial area of Paddock wood in 2009, thought to have come across from Asia on a pallet. The pest lives on live trees only and burrows itself under the bark to lay up to 100 eggs. These larvae then work their way through the living material of the tree creating large tunnels until the tree collapses and dies under the strain.

Although it was thought that the beetle had been controlled in 2009, cases of infection were found either side of the Maidstone Road in Paddock wood, this spring.

The Beetle lives on many of the European type deciduous trees and spreads rapidly leaving bore holes up to 12mm in size. Parishioners need to be vigilant to look out for these signs.

The pest unfortunately has no natural predators in Europe.

Trees in the infected area at Paddock wood have been burnt together with those within a 100m radius, but a watchful eye is being kept within a 500m radius of the infected trees.

If anyone suspects a case of this pest they should report it immediately on the telephone number 0844 2840071, or email: [Planthealth.info@fera.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Planthealth.info@fera.gsi.gov.uk)

Thanks were given to Mr Randall for his presentation about this.

**GUEST SPEAKER – Leonie Harrington (KCC) - Make Kent Quicker Campaign for Broadband.**

The second guest speaker of the evening was Leonie Harrington from KCC advising the parish about the current campaign to try and get faster broadband into the village.

KCC is running the campaign to try and establish which villages most require faster broadband as they have limited recourses to put faster broadband in for some areas.

It was stressed that faster broad band was very important for the success of local businesses and those who work at home in the village , as current speeds are quite slow.

If parishioners wish to take part in the campaign to help achieve faster broad band they should register their interest at 'makekentquicker.com' or telephone 08458247247. Parishioners can also register at a local library if they do not have access to the internet at home.

Thanks were given to Leonie Harrington for presenting this to the Parish at the meeting.

4. **MINUTES OF THE 2011 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

The Clerk had informed Cllr March that Mr Kerrigan had requested that his name be recorded instead of ' a parishioner' at page 3 , paragraph 4 of the minutes and so this had been changed accordingly.

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th May 2011 were recommended for approval by Edna Jones, seconded by Queenie Brett, voted for unanimously and duly signed by the Chairman of the Parish Council.

## 5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr March commenced her report by announcing that the Parish Council were saying farewell to four long standing and dedicated members of the Council, Mike Clemson, Neil Robins, Stuart Hughes and Valerie Holloway. Cllr March thanked these parishioners for all their hard work and dedication over the years upon which they had served the council.

Cllr March welcomed four new members on to the Council, Isobel Kerrigan, Paul Jones, Colin Russell and Stuart Davis.

Cllr March went on to say that in the past year the PC have completed many of the things they set out to achieve and hope that by doing so the Parish would feel Horsmonden is a better place to live and work.

Specific items mentioned under the Chair's report were:

**Parish office** - The PC were aware that it would benefit the community to have a more accessible parish office and parish clerk hence the move to the right hand side of the stage in the village hall.

**Website** - some parishioners pointed out the need to update the Horsmonden Parish website and now Shaun Speirs is in the process of working on a new one for the Council

**Public conveniences** - There are usually approximately 10 planning applications per month brought before the PC, one of these was the public conveniences. Planning has been approved for 1 disabled compliant toilet, 2 gentleman's urinals and a new service area plus 2 refurbished ladies toilets. The PC is awaiting quotes for building regulations and costings.

**First registrations** - have been completed on the Village Hall and Institute (social club) and a new lease has been completed for the VH.

**Village Vision** - is well under way with support from 2 parish council members and some funding from the Council.

**The Queen's Diamond Jubilee** - planning started last year with 4 members of the Council joining the planning group. HPC has applied for funding of the set up costs, for 4 days of celebrations. The PC is funding a jubilee mug for each child up to 12yrs old living in the parish.

**The Village Green** - continues to need time and money spent on lime and fertilizer especially now it is being used for so many events and celebrations, as requested by Parishioners in the Village Vision questionnaire. The replacement of the wooden posts and benches with recycled material was completed.

**The youth Club** - made some nesting boxes and the PC put these up around the Green.

**Street lighting** - There are new style lights around the Village which replace the out of date, inefficient old ones giving a saving of approximately 1/3 energy costs as well as lower maintenance.

**Fromandez Drive** - posts and chain were repaired when the new footpath was eventually completed.

**Highways** - The Maidstone Road footpath near the village centre opposite the Chemist was re-laid and the new Lamberhurst Road footpath has been well received. The Village thanks Alex King for funding this and the National Trust for co-operation. After pressure from the PC, KHS repainted the bus stop road markings plus disabled access, dropped kerb markings. This and other highways work is an important part of the two way communication the Council hope to have with Parishioners.

**Speeding** - The Council have taken part in restorative justice campaign with Kent Police and the Speedwatch equipment is regularly serviced, after use by the Speedwatch team lead by Robert Dicketts.

**Horsefair** - Two members of the Council liaise with the police and TWBC as well as Kent Highways Services regarding the Horsefair.

**The Millennium Plaque** - and table were completed by Livingstone Foundry, Matfield and Dukes have put tarmac around it and the parish notice board making them more accessible.

**The Affordable Housing project** - was started in Gibbett Lane. Two of the houses (disabled units) have already been allocated to Horsmonden residents. It was decided to call the development Willard's Place after John Willard from Horsmonden who was a founder of Massachusetts; USA. These houses are likely to be ready in July.

**Awards** - The Village entered the Love Where We Live Awards. Out of six categories, Horsmonden achieved four finalists and three winners.

Thanks were given to John Couchman for his clock winding and daily services checking the play area, as well as to Symon Jones for litter picking around the conservation area, and also to Les Bateup for mowing and caring for Green.

A special thank you was given to the Clerk for her loyal support and efforts over and above the call of duty.

## 6. **PRECEPT AND ACCOUNTS**

The accounts for 2011-2012 (Account Summary attached at Appendix 1) and the Precept for the year 2012-2013 (attached at Appendix 2) were presented to the meeting by the Clerk.

Mr. Kerrigan asked why £2000 had been allocated to Christmas Lights this year in the Precept. It was explained by Cllr March that the current Christmas lighting was estimated to last approximately 4 years after which time it would probably need replacing. Replacement of the lighting would require hiring a cherry picker to put the lights up and take the old ones down. Cllr March also explained that when the lime trees needed pollarding on the Green the lights may have to be taken down temporarily, also requiring a cherry picker and that this was expensive. She said that obviously the Council would try to ensure that the two events coincided where possible to avoid unnecessary expenditure.

It was proposed by John Naylor and seconded by Geoffrey Foster, that the accounts be accepted and this was unanimously agreed by the members of the Council present.

It was proposed by Valerie Holloway and seconded by Ken Mills that the precept for 2012/13 be accepted, and this was voted for unanimously.

The Meeting ended at 10.05pm.