

**MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL at 7.30 P.M. ON MONDAY 11TH JUNE 2012**

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

**In attendance:** Lucy Noakes (Clerk)  
2 members of the public

**Declarations of Interest:**

Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct were invited. Cllr Parker declared an interest in item 6.2 Public Conveniences, as she knows Andrew Bell as a professional contact. She did not therefore take part in this matter.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr King (KCC)  
Cllr McDermott (TWBC)  
Cllr Russell

**8.3. Community First Responders– request from Claire Reed for £150 donation towards a further kit bag.**

Cllr March proposed from the Chair that item 8.3 be brought forward for discussion so that Mrs Reed did not have to wait for this item as it was quite near to the end of the agenda. Unanimous  
Mrs Reed explained that although the Community First responders had three active members available, the members did not yet all have their own kit bag, which would contain vital lifesaving equipment. The kit bags are £150 each and once purchased the ambulance service will provide the equipment to go inside these. It was proposed from the Chair that the Council donate £300 from General Reserves to provide two further kit bags for the Community First Responders.

**2. PUBLIC SESSION**

The Parish Council had received a request prior to the meeting, from Mr Browning asking if he could be allowed to speak about his Planning application TW/12/01342/FULMJ, at August Pitts Farm, Churn Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge.

Mr Browning explained that currently his fruit packing business operates from two sites in the area, one at Tibbs Court in Brenchley and one at August Pitts Farm in Horsmonden. He said that there was increasing pressure from the supermarkets, to raise standards and to increase the amount of English fruit packed. At present, approximately 60% of the fruit which he packs is English, but the supermarkets wish to increase this as they now favour English fruit. Local fruit packing houses have diminished over the past few years leaving only 3 sites operational in Kent, 2 of which he owns.

Mr Browning explained that he currently leases the site at Tibbs Court and that this site did not lend itself to be easily expanded, and so from a business point of view it would be more viable to expand the August Pitts site, as he owns this. He estimates that by closing the Tibbs Court site, and amalgamating the production on to one site, he would reduce the overall number of HGV trips in and out by 37%, although this will mean an increase in site visits to August Pitts itself.

Mr Browning explained that he has 16 local suppliers, 8 of whom are within 5 miles from this site and 8 within 13 miles. He went on to say that if the expansion of this site did not proceed, then it could be likely that his sites may shut within 2 years. This would leave local fruit growers with few local places to take their fruit for packing and could have a large impact on local fruit farmers in the area.

The Councillors questioned Mr Browning about the makeup of his workforce and he explained that of approximately 100 staff who work for him, currently 23% are UK residents, with the balance being EU workforce, 70% of whom have worked for him for over 2 years and live mainly in Brenchley.

Mr Browning explained that the new site would allow a 17% reduction in electricity usage as solar panels would be incorporated. There would be a new water filtration system which would save 7300 cubic metres of water a year. The new cold storage system would be highly efficient and would include rainwater harvesting. The new buildings have been designed to include clear roof panels to let in more daylight, hence reducing energy bills and the carbon footprint.

The Council asked how much control Mr Browning had over the size of the lorries coming into and out of his sites and Mr Browning explained that he had no control over this matter, as these decisions were dominated by the supermarkets for whom he packs.

The Council asked Mr Browning about the impact of more large vehicles on the small roads in the area, as it is likely that most of the increased traffic would go through the village. He said that the Highways department will be looking into this matter to see whether the increase is likely to have a material effect on the local roads. There is one very narrow point on Churn lane and his company have agreed to consider a contribution towards widening this if thought necessary.

Cllr March proposed that the Parish Council should bring forward the application TW/12/01342/FULMJ for discussion at this point, so that Mr Browning could be available to answer further questions from the council if required. Unanimous.

**5. TW/12/01342/FULMJ - August Pitts Farm, Churn Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge**

The Council's discussion on this matter went on for approximately 80 minutes.

Cllr Jones made the point that Horsmonden Village had traditionally housed haulage companies like Louis Reece, who had been located right at the centre of the village and that companies like Osmond's and Noakes Cold stores already meant that lorries were a frequent sight through the village, so this was not something new to the village.

Councillors were concerned that as Horsmonden is still very much a farming community with many orchards surrounding the village centre, a diminished ability to pack their fruit locally, could lead to farmers being unable to economically continue growing fruit. This could have an impact on the focus and character of the village.

It was pointed out that an agricultural village, like Horsmonden, is not always a quiet and calm place to live as machinery and heavy vehicles have traditionally been associated with farming.

Cllr Jones said that a balance must be found between maintaining businesses and farming, whilst not adversely affecting people's quality of life.

Cllr Stevens made the point that he felt the new entrance into the site would allow better visibility splays for the lorries going in and out.

Cllr Parker explained that since the closing of Hazel Street Farm as a packing centre there were a lot less lorries in Spelmonden Road, but obviously this has had an impact on diverting the produce of those farmers to a different site and hence a potential increase in lorries in a different part of the village.

The Councillors were generally in agreement that the main issue for those living in and around the area would be extra lorries, with the potential of extra noise and pollution and leading to the breakdown of the small local roads. Some of this is currently exasperated by lorries which speed through the village and by noisy and ill maintained road surfaces which do not help the situation.

It was considered that a section 106 agreement could be imposed upon the applicant if the application went ahead, which might lead to some monies coming back to the parish to try and mitigate those problems associated with the application.

Councillors considered that whilst there would be some increase in the heavy traffic in and out of the site if the application was allowed to go ahead, the consequences for disallowing the application could lead to a decline in fruit production and a complete change in character of the village, as fruit farming is still a major activity within the area.

This led to the Council's decision as follows:

Planning Application No:	TW/12/01342/FULMJ
Proposal:	Extension of fruit packing facilities to include packing area, cold stores, offices and staff facilities, plus new access and landscaping.
Location:	August Pitts Farm, Churn Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge
Recommendation:	Approval
Proposed:	Cllr Parker, seconded Cllr Stevens, unanimous.
Comments:	This is part of a valuable agricultural operation within the Parish. The Borough Council may feel it is appropriate to propose a section 106 agreement for the Parish. The Parish Council would like to see restrictions and conditions on the following: noise and light pollution, operating hours for inward and outward movements of HGV's being 8am to 6.30pm and other vehicles until 10pm.

It was proposed by Cllr March that in order to facilitate the meeting, the remainder of the planning should be dealt with at this point. Unanimous.

Planning Application No:	TW/12/01282/HOUSE
Proposal:	Revised application: Replacement of garden store with garage/store
Location:	1 Baiden Cottages School House Lane, Horsmonden
Recommendation:	Approval
Proposed:	Cllr Jones, seconded, Cllr Davis. Unanimous.
Comments:	Acceptance subject to a restriction for non –residential usage

Planning Application No:	TW/12/01469/HOUSE
Proposal:	Single storey extension and front porch
Location:	Baiden Acres, School House Lane, Horsmonden
Recommendation:	Approval
Proposed:	Cllr Stevens, seconded Cllr Davis, unanimous.
Comments:	Suitable extension

Planning Application No:	TW/12/01468/LBC
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent: Alteration to previously approved listed building consent to include partially rebuilding the cat slide roof, altering the number of dormer windows from 3 to 2, retention of existing porch and staircase, and less internal works (TW/11/01094/LBC refers).
Location:	School House Farm, School House Lane, Horsmonden
Recommendation:	Approval
Proposed:	Cllr Parker, seconded Cllr Stevens. Unanimous.
Comments:	Suitable modification of the existing Listed Building Consent.

## 5.2 **Report of Permissions Granted and Refused/Appeals lodged.**

The Clerk read out the following applications Approved:

TW/12/01239/HOUSE – 31 Oast View, Horsmonden, Tonbridge

TW/12/00949/HOUSE – 1 Rosebank, Maidstone Road, Horsmonden

TW/12/00917/HOUSE – The Barn, Hayman’s Hill, Horsmonden.

TW/12/00918/LBC - The Barn, Hayman’s Hill, Horsmonden.

The Clerk was still awaiting an explanation from the case officer at TWBC regarding the wording of the refusal of permission for TW/12/00373 – Land West of Kirkins Close, which related to the removal of a condition placed on the original planning permission.

## 3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> May 2012 were presented to the meeting and taken as read. They were proposed for acceptance from the Chair. Unanimous.

The minutes of the Planning Meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> April 2012 were presented to the meeting by the Clerk. The Clerk explained that she had sought procedural clarification from KALC regarding the signing of these minutes as there was no longer a quorum of council members who were present at this meeting, upon the Council. KALC’s advice was that the Council should accept the minutes as an accurate account based on the fact that the Clerk generally produced accurate minutes. It was proposed by Cllr March that the minutes be accepted based on the fact that they are a true and correct record subject to the memory of Cllr March and the accuracy of the Clerks minute taking at the meeting. Carried.

The minutes of the Planning meeting of 21st May 2012 were proposed for acceptance by the Chair, Unanimous.

**4. MATTERS ARISING**

**Computers at the Social Club** – Stuart Hughes is willing to look at alternative funding for this project from the Community Learning Innovation Fund. This type of funding offers between £10,000 and £50,000 funding for projects. Mr Hughes will look at the possibility of providing a more comprehensive project, together with Mr Kellas, Mr Rigby and Mr Larkin.

**Risk Assessment of the Institute** – The Clerk has arranged for PEAT testing for the Institute and Village Hall on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> June.

**First Registration of the Village Green** – Clerk still waiting to hear from Land Registry following the PC’s application for First Registration.

**Conservation Area Map** – Clerk to continue to chase Alan Legg about the possibility of a grant and help with producing the map. PC waiting to hear more from John Naylor.

**War Memorial Names** – Clerk to contact Martin Powell at Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council to see how they found out about those new soldiers added to their war memorial

**Street Lighting Replacement** – See below.

**Projector System** – The Village hall committee have now agreed to a projector system being permanently installed at the Village Hall. Clerk to contact Neil Robins to see if he is still able to help with this.

**6. PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE**

**6.1 Parish Council Accounts to 10<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

The Clerk presented the accounts up to and including 10<sup>th</sup> June 2012, as shown below, to members of the council . The accounts were proposed for acceptance by Cllr Jones seconded by Cllr Kerrigan. Unanimous.

**Horsmonden Parish Council Accounts as at 10th June 2012**

	<b>Balances</b>
Current account b/fwd 14.05.2012	£ 2,685.32
Deposit account b/fwd 14.05.2012	£ 69,613.17
Interest received (Deposit Account)	

Item	Ref	Receipts	Payments
Horsmonden Morning WI - refreshments APM	410057		£ 40.00
Jane March - refund for refreshments for APM	410058		£ 98.76
P stanley - plumbing services - toilets	410060		£ 90.00
LPM Bohemia - the Tent Co Ltd - jubilee	410061		£ 489.00
Zurich Municipal - PC Insurance for 2012/13	410062		£ 2,852.55
Martin Hobbs - Childrens magic show - Jubilee	410063		£ 77.00
Denise Bignell - Chairs and Tressle Tables	410064		£ 504.00
Mrs L Noakes - salary for May 12	S/O		£ 659.39
HM Revenue and Customs - Tax and NI L Noakes	410065		£ 10.69
Symon Jones - scavenging for May 12	410066		£ 61.52
Mr C J Couchman - May Clock and play area	410067		£ 80.48
Mrs L Noakes - Refund for padlocks for VG	410068		£ 17.98
specialist Hygiene Services Ltd - cleaning loos	410069		£ 178.71
EJP Fire Protection Ltd	410070		£ 467.40
Horsmonden Village Hall - refund for boiler repairs	410071		£ 180.00
Post Office Ltd - EDF Energy for VG Box	410072		£ 33.48
Post Office Ltd - EDF Energy for Public toilets	410073		£ 89.23
Sara Foster - refund for events licence for VG	410074		£ 21.00
Denise Bignell - refund for payment for Jubilee Banner	410075		£ 57.40
J Lowe - music for Jubilee	410076		£ 400.00
Medix - provision of emergency cover for jubilee	410077		£ 70.00
TWBC Grant for Festive lighting 2011/12		£ 120.00	

HM Revenue and Customs VAT refund for 10/11-31/3/12	£	5,065.10
Interest on Current account	£	1.38

Current Account as at 10.06.12 £ 6,393.21  
Deposit Account as at 10.06.12 £ 64,613.17

**6.2 Public Conveniences – Quotations for building regulations, tender and management of building project.**

The Clerk had approached three different companies for quotations for dealing with building regulations, tender process and project management for the works to be carried out on the Public conveniences. Unfortunately Mr Honeysett had come back and said that he would be unable to carry out the works which the council had asked him to quote on, because he would be retiring. The other quotations amounted to a total of £2240 from DC Hudson and £2000 from F A Bell. Cllr Stevens proposed that the council use FA Bell to carry out the works as it was the lower quotation, and this was seconded by Cllr Kerrigan. Carried. Cllr Parker had declared an interest in this matter and did not take part in the discussion or voting.

**7. HIGHWAYS AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

**7.1 Highways issues**

Cllr Stevens made the following points:

The wall on Gafford’s Bridge has been dismantled and also the fence on the other side. As the railings are constantly being knocked off, he felt that KHS might want to consider an alternative like ARMCO. Clerk to suggest this to KHS, and also to mention that the same applies to the railings outside Bassett’s Farm, Maidstone Road.

When will the verge cutting be carried out? Clerk to find out from KHS

It was also mentioned that the hedge outside Southview on the Maidstone Road needs cutting as it is overhanging the pavement. Clerk to write standard letter asking residents to cut hedge back.

The parking on the Brenchley Road was also raised again and it was suggested that a courteous letter be drafted to all local residents asking them not to park there. However, Cllr March pointed out that the Clerk had already done this some months ago, but there had been little change. Cllr March said that a Village Vision group had now been appointed to look at Highways and speeding issues and were meeting next week to discuss these and put forward suggestions to the PC.

It was mentioned that a new bus timetable was needed on the post outside Crowhursts as there is no timetable there at present.

**7.2 Street lighting.**

The Clerk had circulated the new draft maintenance contract form SEC. Council members had emailed through several alterations needed and the Clerk was to go back to SEC to ask them to add these changes into the new contract. The Council will hopefully be able to agree the new contract at 9<sup>th</sup> July meeting.

**8. QUOTATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION**

**8. ADMINISTRATION/CORRESPONDENCE/UPDATES**

**8.1 Chairman’s update**

The Chair reported that the Farmers Market organisers were looking for a group to take over the organisation and running of the market. This should be in the next edition of Parish News.

Broadband – Ian McEwen at Brenchley was looking at an expression of interest from DEFRA regarding this. Meanwhile the Make Kent Quicker Campaign is still ongoing at present.

**8.2 Queens Jubilee**

The Queens Jubilee events had gone well and feedback from the community was good. There is to be a follow up meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June at 8pm.

Profits from the Ball would be kept by the school and profits made by stallholders at the Fete would be kept by the individual stall holders at the event.

All other profits would be sent to the Parish Council, who would then work out what was left over as profit once bills were paid and decide upon how any leftover profit should be donated.

**8.3 Community first responders – request from Claire Reed for £150 donation towards a further kit bag.**

Dealt with earlier in the meeting as it was brought forward.

**8.4 Sports club lease**

Cllr March and Cllr Kerrigan were to meet with the Clerk and members of the Sports Club at the Sports Ground and Pavilion on 18<sup>th</sup> June to discuss issues arising from this matter.

**8.5 Projector for Village Hall**

The Village Hall Committee had now discussed this and agreed to a fixed projector system being installed in the Village Hall. Clerk to ask Neil Robins if he could get some up to date quotes for this so that the Council could go ahead with the project.

**8.6 KCC -Consultation on Kent Minerals and Waste.**

Cllr Kerrigan is hoping to attend one of the drop in sessions regarding this matter. Cllr Davis looking at the website and details. Cllrs Davis and Kerrigan to report back to the council on this matter, so that a response can be formulated at the next meeting.

**8.7 KCC – Consultation on the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2012-17**

Cllr Davis had read the document and reported that the document was an attempt to estimate the number of school places needed over the next five years and see how this matched with the supply of school places. It highlighted a shortfall of primary school spaces in the Tunbridge wells area and looked at how it would try to provide for this.

More locally, the document coupled together Horsmonden, Brenchley and Matfield and Paddock wood Primary schools and mentioned a possible decommissioning of one form level at one of these schools during the period, but did not clarify how this would be carried out. The document also mentioned the fact that there was likely to be more housing in this area. It was suggested that this required clarification, and Cllr Davis will submit a statement for the Clerk to forward to KCC asking for further information on this matter.

**8.8 Housing**

Cllr March had received a letter from Mr Wickham suggesting that his land could be considered as a possible site for future social or sheltered housing if the need should arise. Cllr March had responded in her capacity as Borough Councillor, to the effect that the Parish is currently building 15 new homes for social housing which would fulfil the current proven need. She had also mentioned that part of Village Vision would be looking at preferences in the village for any future homes should the need arise, and that the site at Furnace Lane would not necessarily be the most preferential, if any sites were to be considered in the future, because of the narrow road.

The meeting closed at 10.45pm

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