



## HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL - ARTICLE FOR PARISH NEWS FOR DECEMBER 2022 / JANUARY 2023 EDITION

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### NEW COUNCILLOR

We are delighted to welcome our new Councillor, Ian Currie, who was co-opted on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The Parish Council look forward to working with Ian on all future aspects of Council business.

### HORSMONDEN PUBLIC TOILETS

Further to our message in last month's edition, unfortunately we are continuing to experience vandalism in the public toilets including blocked toilets, blocked sinks, a broken door, a broken window lock, soap dispensers smashed and continuous emptying of liquid soap all over the floor leaving a slippery mess. This is now happening at least every week, if not twice a week and the Council can't keep pace with the increasing costs of putting it right each time.

The current toilet cleaning contract costs are £433.33 per month and this does not cover costs for water, electricity supply or repairs for any vandalism or any extra works being carried out.

All of these costs come from the Parish precept which is raised from money collected from parishioners through the TWBC council tax bill. Any increase in the Parish precept to cover these costs will result in an increase to next year's council tax bill.

If you see anyone causing damage to our public toilet facilities please do not hesitate to phone 101 (999 if you witness a crime in progress) and report to Kent Police. We have also made a request for our local PCSO to patrol these facilities as often as their local shifts allow.

Any maintenance issues with the public toilets, please contact the Parish Clerk ([clerk@horsmonden-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@horsmonden-pc.gov.uk)).

### DRAINAGE ISSUES IN THE VILLAGE

Unfortunately, the recent prolonged periods of heavy rainfall have meant there has been some problems with flooding in the village. We are currently having some discussions with the Highways Drainage Engineers at Kent County Council and together we are looking at ways of improving drainage in the village to try and prevent flooding incidents which sadly appear to be happening more and more frequently.

One important way we can help to minimise flooding is to report any drainage problems to Kent Highways on their online system as soon as we notice them on <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>

as blocked drains and gullies can easily overflow in times of heavy rain.

Highways no longer routinely come to clear drains, but instead act on a more reactionary basis to clear drains when they are blocked so this is another reason why reporting all drainage issues is important.

Keeping bushes and hedges cut back and away from drains also helps as they can easily become over grown and impede water flow when rain starts.

We would also like to remind land owners that they are responsible for clearing ditches on their own land and keeping them free flowing. Land owners may not always be aware of it, but if a ditch runs over your land or between what you consider to be your land boundary and the Highway, it is most likely that its owned by you and will therefore be your responsibility to keep dug out and free flowing. Unfortunately many ditches have been neglected over the last few decades and this is exacerbating a lot of the rural flood problems we are witnessing .

Kent Highways only owns about 2% of all the rural ditches in the area, so please don't assume it belongs to them and that they will clear it !

KCC have some useful tips to help protect your home in times of flooding:

- Sign up for warnings at [gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings](https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings)
- Create a flood plan [gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding](https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding)
- Find out how to protect your property here [nationalfloodforum.org.uk](https://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk)
- Check your insurance to see if you are covered
- Have a flood kit of essential items at home
- For help and advice call **Flood line free on 0345 988 1188**.

You can check if you're at risk of flooding at: [gov.uk/check-flooding](https://www.gov.uk/check-flooding)

### THE MAYOR OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHRISTMAS TOY APPEAL 2022

The Mayor's Toy Appeal helps to bring joy to children and teenagers in the Borough of Tunbridge Wells, who are in need or whose families find Christmas an especially difficult time of year.

The toy appeal will run between **Saturday 19th November and Saturday 10th December.**

For further details on how to donate please visit:

<https://www.twmta.co.uk/>



### **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS 2022**

By the time you read this, the Village Green will be lit up with our Christmas lights once again. We hope that you enjoy them!

### **2023 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES**

Keep a look out on the Parish Council noticeboard or the website for the new Council meeting dates for 2023. These will be agreed and published shortly.

**WISHING YOU ALL A VERY MERRY  
CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

The Clerk is also available to help either by email and phone:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

Clerk to Horsmonden Parish Council

Telephone: 01892 724989 (to leave a message)

Mobile: 07484 904765

E-mail: [clerk@horsmonden-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@horsmonden-pc.gov.uk)

### **SOME USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS:**

NHS: 111

Kent Highways Service: 03000 418181

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council: 01892 526121

Environment Agency 24-hour Flood line:

08459 881188

Emergencies only: 999

Non-emergency Police Line: 101

UK Power Networks – Power cut: 0800 31 63 105 on a landline or 0333 32 32 105 (if calling from a mobile)