

Horsmonden Village Vision



'A plan for an even better village'

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The Report

This Report has been prepared by the Horsmonden Village Vision Steering Group and is endorsed by Horsmonden Parish Council (HPC) through its membership of the Steering Group.

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Horsmonden Village Vision

1. Summary

This report details the activities, conclusions and recommendations of the Horsmonden Village Vision project from its inception in June 2010 to the present day.

The aim of the project is to develop a plan to bring about improvements to life in Horsmonden in direct consultation with residents, organisations and businesses based in the village. The plan will then help the Parish Council, Borough and County authorities better understand the needs of the community and prioritise support.

Ideas collected through a series of open days attended by a significant proportion of the village population were confirmed through questionnaires addressed to every householder in the village, to older people and to the young.

Results of this survey highlighted some key areas for improvement in the areas of Amenities, Communication and Business, Environment, Highways, Housing and Social and Welfare.

These results were presented to an open meeting in the village to establish areas of interest in which people would be willing to commit their time to develop an action plan for improvement and see the plan through.

The report details the main developments to be covered by each of these groups and any actions already taken to date, particularly for Highways and Business and Communication where active groups are already established.

The appendix includes a section for each of the groups and the developments to be covered by that group with a note of any outside bodies to be involved and any known timescales.

This report is to be delivered to each

household in the Village and it will be followed up with meetings to identify people who have an interest in and are willing to take forward the developments that have been identified.

Progress reports on each group's activities will be published on a regular basis.

2. Introduction

Horsmonden Village Vision is a Community Led or Parish Plan started by a small group of residents with the support of Horsmonden Parish Council in 2010. The aim is for the community to produce a plan which it 'owns', which reflects its views on what it values most, what improvements it would like to see and how it wishes to see the village develop in the future.

Having such a plan helps the Parish Council to better understand the needs of the community and focus on priorities. It also helps to obtain support for the needs of the Parish from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council.

We are indebted to Horsmonden Parish Council, Kent County Council and Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) who provided finance and advice on the project, Action with Communities in Rural Sussex and Brighton University for their help in enabling us to put the questionnaires on-line and for analysing the results. We are also grateful to the many volunteers who gave their time to delivering and collecting questionnaires to every house in the village and for entering data for analysis.

3. Horsmonden – a brief history

The original Horsmonden community was probably sited around a church in the early 12th century on the site of the current church 1.5 miles from the village we know today. A

popular theory is that this original community was struck by plague and the inhabitants moved to its current site on the Heath to avoid the pestilence. A more likely reason is the growth of the gun-founding industry in the early 1600's when Horsmonden became



the most important gun-making site in England. At its peak, John Brown's furnace (in Furnace Lane) employed more than 200 men and supplied cannon to both sides in the English Civil War.

Horsmonden was heavily involved in two other important industries – weaving and hop-growing. Weavers came to the village during the Huguenot exodus from Europe. The leading family in the trade were the Austens, who left a considerable legacy in the form of fine and distinctive buildings, most still standing and lived in today. Of the three trades only one has lasted in the village into the 21st century - hop growing, and that is in sad decline. For a time hops were the most important crop giving employment to villagers and hundreds of migrant hop pickers alike – many from south London on their annual 'holiday'.

During the last two centuries, agriculture and industries associated with it have been the main employer. Top fruit, including apples, pears, cherries and plums have continued to be important crops in the area although the number of people employed on farms has dropped substantially due to increased mechanisation.

4. The Village today

Horsmonden is a thriving community with

approx. 2,400 inhabitants in 850 households. The community is now made up of a healthy mixture of people still locally employed and those who commute either to nearby towns or to London from Paddock Wood station 4 miles away.

It has a general store/newsagent, a chemist, a hairdresser, a public house, now including a restaurant, and an active Social Club (also with a bar). A Farmers' Market takes place every other week (since ceased to operate).

There is a Primary School (230 children) and a Kindergarten (64 2-4 year-olds), a Church of England church (St. Margaret's), and a Methodist Chapel. There are a number of meeting places - the Village Hall, the Village Institute (the Social Club), the Methodist Hall, the newly revamped Sports Club and the Church Hall. It is well served by societies and clubs with a thriving Sports Club (cricket and men's and women's football), a Tennis Club, Bowls Club, a Social Club, Gardening and Historical Societies, an amateur dramatics group (the Horsmonden Players) and two WI groups.



Older residents have an Over-60's Club and an active voluntary service, 'Ready Call', to help them to and from appointments, shopping etc. Healthcare is provided by a strong medical practice and physiotherapy services. The village has a PCSO, which it shares with four neighbouring parishes and an active Neighbourhood Watch.

Communication within the Village is provided by a monthly Parish News, a Village Website (www.horsmonden.co.uk) and various notice boards and websites maintained by specific organisations.

Close to 40 small businesses operate from Horsmonden either from rented offices or from home.

Horsmonden lies on a cross roads between the B2160 and an unclassified road running between Brenchley and Goudhurst. Both roads carry a good deal of both local and through traffic – the B2160 acting as a conduit between Maidstone and the A/M20 and the A21 and the Brenchley/Goudhurst road as an alternative to the often congested A21 between Tonbridge, Ashford and the coast.

5. The Process to date

A kick off meeting held in June 2010 and attended by representatives of most of the village organisations gave support to the project. A small Steering Group was set up including Joint Chairmen, a Treasurer, two representatives from the Parish Council, a youth representative and a business and



communications specialist with advice from the area representative of ACRK.

The Steering Group organised a series of 'Open Days' in the autumn of 2010 to give everyone in the village from schoolchildren to the elderly the chance to give their views on a series of topics which affect their daily lives and suggest improvements they wished to see, including amenities, social and welfare, traffic and highways, housing, business and communication, and the environment.

More than 500 suggestions provided on Post-it notes were distilled into three questionnaires – for the Householder, the Older Person and Young Person – which were delivered to and collected by volunteers to every household in the village in September 2011. Questionnaires were also available to be completed on line through "Community 21" – a project set up through East Sussex County Council and Brighton University to develop an on-line system for producing and managing Community Plans. More than 55% of households responded – an excellent result for this type of survey.

After a lengthy and detailed analysis of the results, with the assistance of "Community 21", they were presented to an Open Meeting in May 2012 – broken down into the Top Twenty Projects which people most wanted to see happen. Volunteers agreed to help with the implementation phase through a series of Action Groups – some of which were subsequently set up successfully (Highways and Business/Communication). It is anticipated that further Action Groups will be formed to develop and implement actions proposed in this document.

6. Next steps

This Report proposes actions to be considered or taken by various groups of people. The Action Table at the back of the Report lists these groups and the people responsible for them (as far as they are known at the time of writing) as well as contact detail.

Where there is no person or group of persons currently responsible the Steering Group will be happy to assist as required to bring people together by arranging meetings with interested parties to help progress outstanding actions.

Progress reports will appear from time to time on the Village Website (www.horsmonden.co.uk) and in the Parish News.

7. Results of the Survey

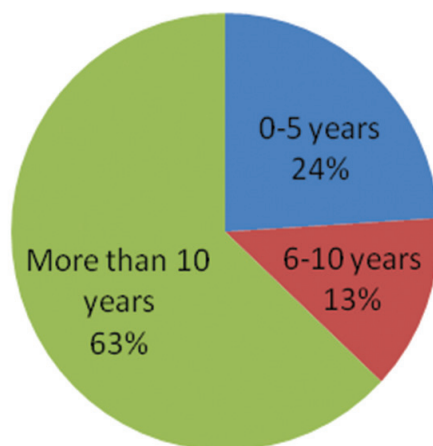
The results of the survey came from analysis of questionnaires completed by 470 households (55% of the total 850 in the Parish), 250 older persons (defined as more than 55 years of age) some of whom will have also completed Household questionnaires, and 105 young people (less than 18 years of age).

The results in section 8 include responses relating mainly to the “Top Twenty” projects people would like to see implemented.

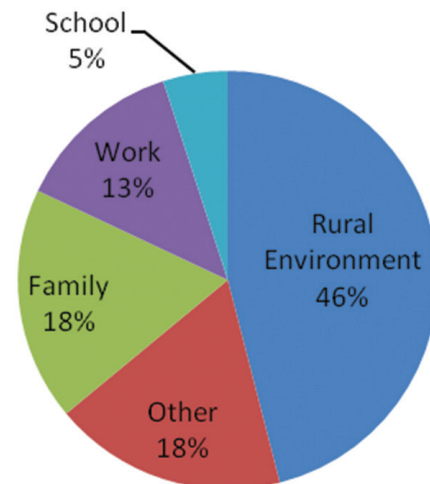
7.1 General information

Period of residence: 63% have lived in Horsmonden for more than 10 years but nearly a quarter of families have been here for less than 5 years.

Period of Residence



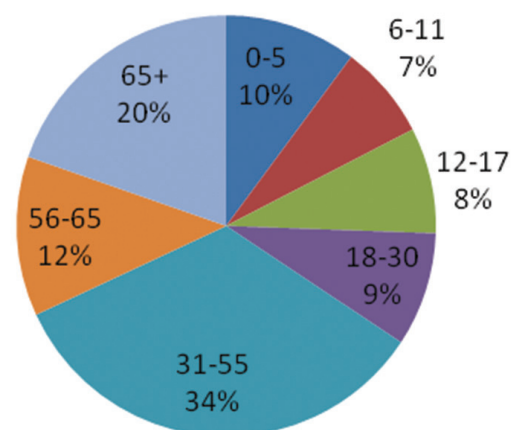
Reasons to Live Here



Why did people come here to live?

Nearly half come to enjoy the rural environment (46%) but family is an important factor (18%), work (13%), school (5%) together with ease of commuting to London and nearby towns and house prices.

Age Distribution

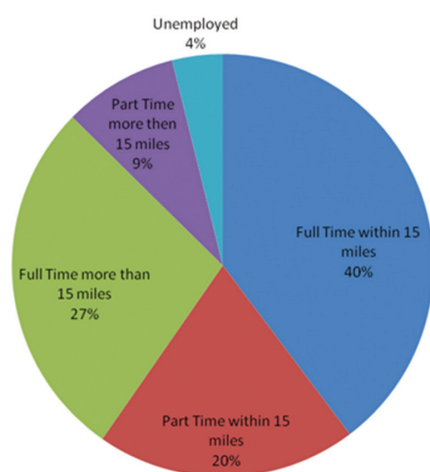


Age distribution: Although 34% of the population is under 30 there are few people (8%) in the 18-30 age range. Close to a third (32%) of the population is over 55 years and 20% is over 65. The high number of 0-5 year olds indicates a potential increase in the number of primary school pupils needing school places in the next 5-10 year period – in line with the trend both Nationally and in the South East.

Local schooling: Of households in the survey with children of the right age, 95% send them to Horsmonden Primary School. However, there were 11 households unable to send their children to the school although they wished to do so.

Disability: there are 7% of households with one or more disabled residents.

Employment



Employment:

- 40% of households have 1 or more people working full time and a further 20% part time within 15 miles of home.
- 36% of households have 1 or more people who commute to work either part or full time more than 15 miles from home.
- At the time of the survey, unemployment was lower than the national average with 4% of households having one or more occupants without work.
- 12% of households are used by one or more occupants as a home office on a regular basis. These are included in the numbers above under either Part or Full Time employment.

8. Amenities

8.1 Transport

Unsurprisingly, 65% of households depend on the motor car (or get lifts with others) to get to work, study or school. But 22% of households had occupants dependent on public transport while 23% walked or cycled.

We wanted to obtain more information on the demand and suitability of bus services connecting Horsmonden with nearby towns and villages. Currently the services are as follows:-



Route 295/297: Ashford – Tenterden – Cranbrook – Horsmonden – Brenchley – Tunbridge Wells and return.
Buses run 7 times a day Monday to Saturday.

Route 296 : Paddock Wood – Pearsons Green – Rams Hill – Horsmonden – Brenchley – Pembury – Tunbridge Wells Station and Sainsbury's and return.
Buses run 5 times a day Monday, Thursday and Saturday.

Route 266: Kilndown – Lamberhurst – Hazel Street – Horsmonden – Brenchley – Castle Hill – Pearsons Green – Claygate – Laddingford – Yalding – Nettlested – Watlington – Teston – Barming – Maidstone and return.
Buses run once per day on Tuesday.

Asked where people wanted to go from Horsmonden, responses were:-

Destination	No of people wanting to travel
Tunbridge Wells	436
Paddock Wood	425
Cranbrook	306
Maidstone	237

There was specific demand for buses to link with rail services at Paddock wood to London, Ashford and Tonbridge. Other destinations which were popular included Tonbridge, Longfield Road Industrial Estate and Wadhurst. Another request was for the existing timetables to be available in a news sheet or on the village website.

Proposed Action

Additional information is required to determine people's desired destination/frequency of travel. A small working group needs to be set up to collect data, discuss with the KCC Joint Transport Working Group and bus companies as appropriate.

Timetables need to be linked to the village website.

8.2 Retail shops

At the time of the survey there was considerable concern about the future of the village shops – particularly Heath Stores, the Post office and Crowhursts Newsagents as all three were either for sale or the existing proprietors wished to retire. The survey asked how frequently people used the shops and the Farmers' Market, how they rated the service provided and what improvements they would like to see. Results, including comments made by respondents, were given to the retail outlets concerned.

Since that time, Crowhursts has closed following the retirement of the proprietor. Heath Stores has been taken over and turned into a thriving business providing a wide range of foods, vegetables, newspapers and journals, tobacco and drink. There is also a small café area. The quality of service, wider range of goods, longer opening hours and increased services have satisfied many of the requests which came out of the

questionnaire.

The high level of demand for a village butcher (70% want one) has also been partly met by a fresh meat section at Heath Stores, as has the demand for pizza and fish and chips available from visiting vans on a weekly basis.



The Farmers' Market closed in December 2013 although there is interest at the time of going to print in trying to restart it.

Heath Pharmacy received high levels of praise for its excellent service and range of products.

The Post Office closed following the retirement of the current postmaster at the end of August 2013. Most Post Office services (including pensions and cash withdrawal) will be provided from Heath Stores three afternoons per week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) for as long as the service remains viable.

Proposed Action:

Request the HPC (Horsmonden Parish Council/TWBC Ward Councillor) to consider plans to ensure ongoing Post Office services are available in the village.

8.3 Library

A mobile library currently visits the village for one hour every other week on a Friday (Back Lane).

In the survey, 56% of respondents said they would like to see more permanent library

facilities in Horsmonden. Half of them were willing to pay a small charge and 28% were willing to volunteer staff it.

Proposed Action:

Form a small group willing to take on this project, investigate the options and make proposals to the HPC.

8.4 Bus shelter

There is demand for a bus shelter from 56% of respondents at one of the two main bus stops by the shops in the centre of the village. Further investigation by a small group set up within the Highways Action Group has established that the safest and preferred site is outside Haircraft and Heath Stores. Main issues which need to be resolved are:-

- Establish an acceptable design
- Obtain permission of the retail premises involved
- Get planning consent for an appropriate design which does not restrict wheelchair pavement access
- Establish cost and seek funds (a grant of up to 50% of the cost is available from KCC up to a max. of £2,000)

Proposed Action:

Approach the new owners of the Post Office building and Haircraft.

The Highways Action Group will need to work closely with HPC to bring this project to fruition

8.5 Additional sports and pastimes Outdoors

Despite the wide range of sports and pastimes on offer, there is a desire for more with particular interest in order of popularity in:-

- Fresh water fishing
- Junior football
- basketball, netball and volleyball
- Junior rugby
- Running club, athletics
- Archery

- BMX track
- Skate Park

Others included stoolball and rounders, cycling, and hockey. Some of these activities could be held on the Green although there was some demand for an Astroturf pitch which would be an ideal, although expensive facility for the village.

Indoors

- Gym for fitness training and yoga
- Swimming pool or swimming club
- Badminton
- Squash

Proposed Action

Discuss the demand for these activities with the Sports Club to establish interest in pursuing them.

Make people aware of availability of existing facilities both in and within reach of Horsmonden via the village website, the Parish News and the Welcome Packs.

9. Communications and Business

9.1 Broadband

Existing broadband speeds in Horsmonden are considered to be well below required levels according to 88% of businesses and 78% of householders. Faster speeds would allow more than three quarters of the working population to work from home more often.

Action in progress

A Business and Communications Action Group has been set up and volunteers have canvassed hard to get residents to sign up to the Kent County Council "Make Kent Quicker" campaign. They have worked together with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to apply for Government (Defra) and European grants to bring Superfast Broadband (> 25mbps) to Horsmonden. A combination of public and private investment originally promised to bring Superfast Broadband to 95% of rural Kent by the end of 2015.

A partnership agreement has been reached between KCC and BT and a roll-out timetable for the county published October 2013 plans to bring either Fibre based (>2mbps) or Superfast Broadband to 97% of properties in TN128 areas between July and December 2014. Clearly some properties will miss out – but we don't know at this stage which ones!

Further Action

Monitor progress and make further representation through TWBC as appropriate.

Meanwhile some residents have been able to take advantage of faster broadband speeds offered now by a local company, Call Flow Solutions (<http://www.callflowsolutions.com/home-broadband/wireless-broadband/>), which has a system installed in Yalding and Goudhurst churches.

The Business and Communications Group should discuss with Call Flow Solutions the possibility of improving cover in Horsmonden. When the extent of the BT coverage is known.

9.2 Village Website, Parish News and other media

Close to three quarters of residents say they do not use the Village Website. Main reason for lack of use appears to be lack of regular updating. Many requested better links to clubs and societies in the village as well as other sites which impact on the village (eg TWBC and the Parish Council site), more information on local retailers and businesses, village events, local services, classified ads, part-time jobs on offer etc.

Even with all these sources of information available, more information on local events, club and society meeting, programmes etc is also requested in answers given by Older Persons in their questionnaire in the form of a regular Newssheet, particularly for those who do not have on-line access.

The Parish News has a new organiser and content has been improved and updated.

Action in progress

A small working group has been set up and is already working on improvements to the website and there are now links to some sports clubs and societies, local schools, entertainment and attractions, local government and local business websites. Further improvements are to be made in 2014.

Further action

Those wishing to place information or additional links on the village website should make contact with the Editor through www.horsmonden.co.uk

An up-to-date monthly calendar/diary should be printed and posted on Parish Council notice boards on the Green and in the Village Hall.

9.3 Footpath map

There is significant demand for a new footpath map for the parish and its surrounds.

Proposed Action

Steering Group needs to discuss with the Village Amblers to request their help to produce a new map.

10. Environment

10.1 Waste management and recycling

Questions around waste management received a high level of response. More than 70% of households use the Sunday rubbish lorry to dispose of refuse – 16% use it weekly, 13% fortnightly and a further 43% use it monthly.

While paper, card and plastics are collected fortnightly from households residents have to travel to Goudhurst, Brenchley, Matfield or Paddock Wood to recycle bottles and other materials. More than 74% of households would like to see a recycling area in the village. Three quarters of respondents would prefer a bottle collection from the doorstep alongside their plastic and papers.

10.2 Dog fouling and litter

Dog fouling is seen as a problem by 38% of people – with particular hot-spots close to popular walking areas such as pavements and paths leading to the sports field, paths and orchards off Lamberhurst Road and Goudhurst Road, around the Green, and roads around the Primary School.

Similarly, litter is a problem in specific areas with litter thrown from cars on main roads leading into the village and around the Green near the shops.

10.3 Street lighting

More than 70% of residents believe the village street lighting to be adequate. Clearly, from the responses there are some “dark spots” where people believe there is room for improvement. Those mentioned most frequently were:-

- Around the Green (comments that this would also deter vandalism)
- Goudhurst Road from Back Lane down to the Old Station area.
- Maidstone Road : further out of the village centre
- Back Lane

- Gibbett and Furnace Lanes
- Lamberhurst Road further from village centre
- Brenchley Road where there is no pavement

Proposed Action

HPC should consider appointing a Parish Councillor responsible for all environmental matters as a matter of urgency.

The Councillor should form a working group which should consider the following proposals for action:-

- Seek to maintain rubbish lorry collections at their current fortnightly interval
- Promote doorstep bottle collection
- Seek a suitable site for a local recycling centre (to include a bottle bank).
- Use local forums to publicise the need for dog owners to act with consideration and collect their own dog mess.
- Ensure owners are aware that, once collected they can dispose of the mess in public waste/litter bins.
- Provision of plastic bag ‘stations’ and position bins close to ‘hot spots’.
- Organise volunteer litter collection days once or twice a year.
- Improvement of street lighting in ‘black spots’.

The survey did not consider attitudes to other important environmental issues such as renewable energy (wind farms, solar power etc), preservation of local environmental sites, ponds etc. These are issues which such a working group could develop.

11. Highways

Highways and traffic attracted more interest in the survey than any other issue. The following lists the projects and issues which came out of the questionnaire:-

Project	No. of votes	% who would like something done
Crossing near the shops	358	78
Crossing near the school	382	84
Too many heavy lorries	367	78
Traffic too fast through the village	387	82
- 20 mph in village centre	351	75
- More police speed checks	291	64
Complete pavement on Maidstone Road	339	75
Shortage of parking space	296	63

A Highways Action Group has been set up and has had a number of discussions with Kent Highways. Progress on these items at the time of writing is as follows:-

11.1 Crossings

A crossing near the shops has been rejected by Kent Highways given the proximity to bus stops and road junctions.

Discussion on a possible crossing near the school was discussed with the school Head and the Parents Association. There was little support from the school authorities for such a crossing but they did express concern about dangers to children from traffic in roads close to the school during dropping off and picking up.

Proposed Action:

Encourage the school authorities to discuss with parents.

11.2 Heavy lorries

Heavy vehicle traffic through Horsmonden stems from a number of sources including the proximity to industrial areas in surrounding

towns and villages, use of the B2160 to cut through between the A/M20 and the A21, the conversion of farm buildings, many of which were originally designed for fruit, to frozen food storage and to distribution and storage depots. Economics have also lead to development of existing fruit storage and packing stations into much larger businesses serving a wider area.

Comments by respondents to the survey indicate that the lorries cause damage to verges and surfaces on our lanes and roads, make walking and cycling a potentially dangerous occupation, cause damage to parked vehicles and congestion in the village centre.



Following several years lobbying by Yalding Parish Council, Kent Highways Department has introduced a six month trial restriction (to be assessed end- September 2013) on heavy lorries on a number of roads around Yalding. The impact on surrounding villages, including Horsmonden, is being monitored.

Proposed Action

The HPC should be mindful of the impact on the community and the wishes of residents in supporting developments locally which are likely to make the heavy traffic problem worse. It is recognised that HPC needs also to balance this against the benefits which further development of local industry could bring to local employment.

They should also take note of the impact of the Kent Highways trial restricting heavy vehicles at Yalding. A benchmark for the number of heavy lorries going through

the village was established in November 2012; a new measure was being taken in September 2013 (while the Yalding project is under way) to assess the impact specifically on Horsmonden. The result was little or no impact on Horsmonden.

11.3 Speeding traffic

A traffic survey of all four roads leading into the village commissioned by the Highways Action Group (supported by Kent County Council) at the end of 2012 showed that 80-90% of all vehicles were exceeding the speed limit and 40-60% exceeding it to a level which would normally result in prosecution. The District Commander for Tunbridge Wells Area Police has been made aware of the situation.

Proposed and ongoing Action

The Highways Group is convinced that the most effective way to slow traffic is through physical means such as speed bumps, platforms or pinch-points. The problem to date has been to convince Kent Highways to install them at a time when budgets are stretched and where accidents to date have been relatively minor in terms of physical injury. Discussions will continue with pressure to be exerted by HPC, Borough and KCC representatives.

Kent Highways has carried out a safety audit of the cross roads which concluded that although road markings were showing signs of wear the main danger was posed by "inconsiderate parking". Clearly there is an inherent problem with parking in the village centre but it is the view of the Action Group that a longer term plan incorporating 'hard structures' needs to be developed to slow traffic as it approaches the crossroads. Meanwhile, as a shorter term measure, the Group is urging Kent Highways to improve both road markings and warning signs on the approaches to the crossroads from North and South.

HPC is discussing with Kent Police Restorative Justice Campaign the use of Speedwatch traps (i.e. with police and fire

service attendance) in Horsmonden.

There will also be further discussion with Kent Highways once the results of a 20 mph speed limit trial in the Maidstone area (completed in 2013) have been considered.

11.4 Parking space in the Village Centre

This is a worsening problem, with the increasing size of the village. Parking restrictions would have to be enforced to be successful and would have a substantial impact on activities on and around the Green as well as on the village shops.

Proposed Action

A working group should be set up to examine alternatives and make proposals to HPC.

11.5 Completion of the pavement on Maidstone Road

Little or no progress has been made on this issue.

Actions proposed

- HPC to establish limits of ownership of the verge alongside the road
- If feasible, HPC to seek funding for pavement completion similar to that on Lamberhurst Road

12. Housing

12.1 General development

Only 14% of householders believe housing development should take place within the existing village envelope without expanding existing infrastructure (such as schools, medical facilities etc). The majority (48%) would be in favour of development if the infrastructure was expanded and 38% don't want any further development even if the infrastructure were increased.

Proposed action

HPC should continue to take note of these views in considering further housing development in the village.

12.2 Affordable housing

The majority (64%) are satisfied that there is sufficient affordable housing offered by the 15 homes completed this year in Gibbet Lane. However there is a significant minority (36%) which feels that more affordable homes should be built. There were 54 households in the survey who claimed to have residents wishing to move into such a property in the next five years.



Proposed Action

HPC to consider further demand for affordable housing when responding to the next TWBC Housing Needs Survey in 2017.

12.3 Housing for older people

From the 'Older Persons Survey' it was clear that the large majority of people wish to stay

in Horsmonden for the foreseeable future – and not many of them plan to downsize. However, of the 14% who do expect to leave the village in the next five years, the majority would stay if suitable accommodation was available for them.

Close to 90% of householders believe the Parish Council should support specialist housing for the elderly, and 14% have someone in their household (that's 64 people) who would take up such accommodation were it to be made available within 5 years. Most of these would like to see on-site support, such as a warden.

Proposed Action

HPC has already given support to specialist housing for the elderly by identifying, together with TWBC, potential sites for such development in the village. They are now awaiting negotiations between the landowners and developers. If any planning application were to be submitted it would come before a public forum.

13. Social and Welfare

13.1 Safety and Security

Asked what they consider to be the greatest threat to their personal safety and security people are most anxious about unsocial behaviour (37%) and burglary (34%). Vandalism is also of concern (mentioned by 16%) and car crime lower at only 13%. Happily, 35% feel no threat whatsoever. Many comments made were around antisocial behaviour and lack of respect for others – but threat posed by speeding traffic attracted more comments than anything else.

Unsurprisingly, 70% of respondents felt there should be a greater police presence in the village.

Proposed Action

Pass comments to Kent Police and our village PCSO.

HPC to lobby our Police and Crime Commissioner to ensure PCSO services are not withdrawn or diluted further.

13.2 Social and Pleasure

13.2.1 Events

There is big support (87% of households) for more events to be held on the Village Green with specific demand for the following:-

Activity	Level of support/ votes
Christmas Market	364
Village Day	322
Music Event	199
Open Air Films	175
Pet Show	167
Cricket Matches	122

Other suggestions included and Antiques Fair or Market, more open air church services, open air dances and a Theatre Festival.



Since the survey a number of successful events have been held on the Green including the Jubilee Celebrations, Nativity and Easter Pageants, a Music Festival and a Summer Party.

There is also good demand for indoor film shows with the majority wanting to attend shows in the evenings on any day of the week (170 people), or at weekends in the afternoon (108) and morning (62).

Proposed Action

HPC should continue to support events on the Green.

The Village Hall Committee has acquired a new film projector and screen and wishes to encourage a Film Group to be set up to use it on a regular basis.

13.2.2 Cost of sporting activities

Most people feel costs are acceptable but there is a small minority which feels that some activities (e.g. tennis) restrict them from taking part. Many clubs (including the Tennis Club) do have arrangements to handle specific situations

13.4 Meeting place for young people

More than 90% of residents believe that a meeting place for young people is either “very important” or “quite important”. This was again reflected in the Young Peoples’ Survey where an after-school meeting place or café was high on the list of desirable facilities.

Proposed Action

See Young People section.

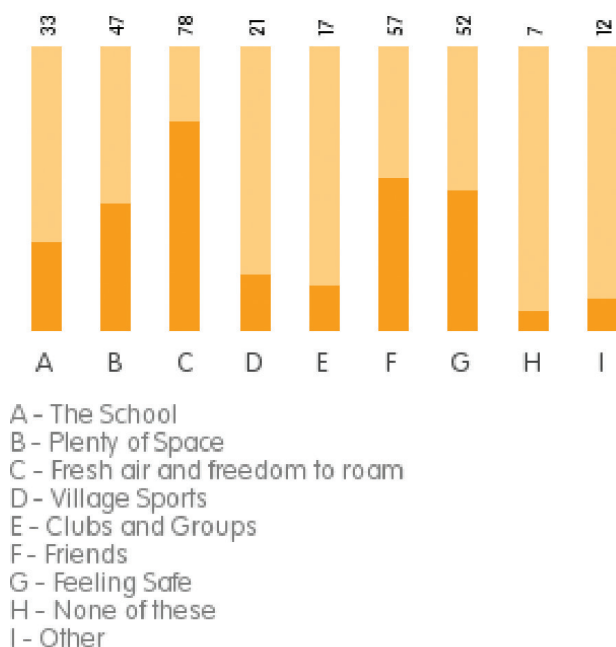
14. Young People

A questionnaire specifically aimed at 9-18 year-olds was completed by 105 young people. Of these, 31% were in the 11-13 year-old bracket and 42% in the 14-16 year-old range. The split between male and female respondents was equal.

14.1 Likes and dislikes about Horsmonden

Top of the list is fresh air, space and the "freedom to roam" offered by living in the countryside. Friends, school and feeling safe come a close second.

What are the good points about living in Horsmonden? (numbers of mentions)



14.2 Concerns

...and what are young people's concerns?

On the downside, many say there is not enough to do (55%), they have difficulty with transport (30%), nowhere to meet (27%) and not enough part-time jobs (27%). A significant number also complain about antisocial behaviour (25%).

(number of mentions)



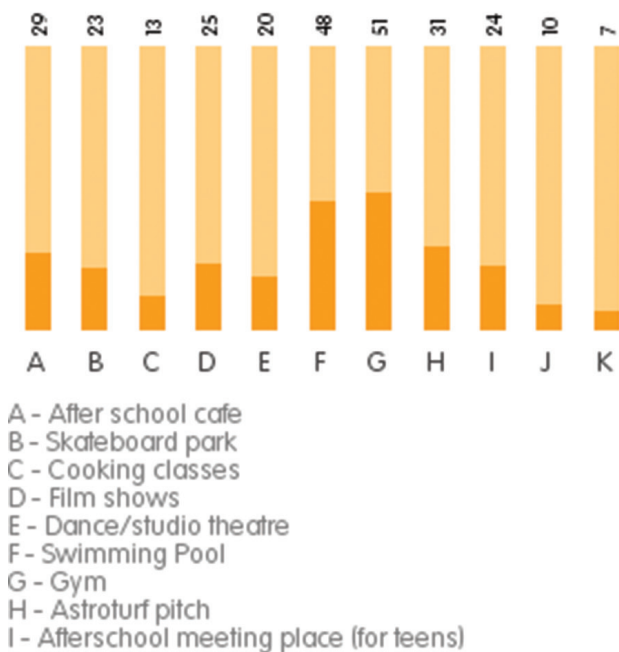
14.3 Clubs and activities

(in or out of Horsmonden)

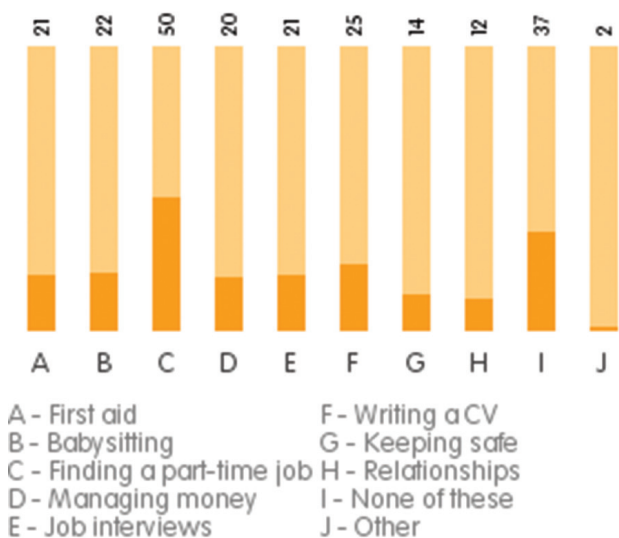
While many take part in activities either in Horsmonden, in surrounding villages and through school, a significant and worrying proportion (38%) do nothing! There appear to be plenty of opportunities - the main ones mentioned being tennis, football, Scouts, rugby, cricket, and the village Youth Club (since closed). Others include drama, dance in various forms, athletics in Paddock Wood, swimming, Guides, Brownies and Beavers, Young Farmers, judo, steel jazz, netball, rounders, sailing and fishing.

So what else do people want?

The following "wish list" came from the open days arranged at the start of the process and these were confirmed in the questionnaire:-



14.4 ...and what sort of advice do they need?



14.5 Helping the Community

In response to a list of options on how best to influence village life many think a village Youth Council could be of interest (43%). Working on environmental projects (35%), helping the elderly (35%) and a section in

the 'Parish News' were also of interest.

Proposed Action

It is proposed that the HPC appoint a Councillor responsible for Youth matters. The Councillor could then form a small group or Youth Council (perhaps a mixture of parents and young people) which might then consider some of the issues raised above.

These might include:-

- Provision of some sort of meeting place for the young
- How they can best contribute to village life through say helping the elderly or environmental projects.
- How best to provide advice on issues such as 'getting a job' (CV writing, job interviews etc), 'managing money', first aid.
- Working with the Sports Club to provide more facilities for young people.

15. Older Persons

15.1 General Information

There were 264 responses to the special Older Persons (OPs) questionnaire, representing 449 people including partners. Of the people who responded 66% are over 65 years old and a quarter of all respondents live alone.

15.2 Support and mobility

A small proportion (6%) need support from Social Services or paid carers, but many more get help from relatives, friends and neighbours.

Most are mobile but a relatively small proportion (7%) cannot walk unaided. Eighty percent have some form of motorised transport and there are 36 'Blue Badge' holders.

15.3 Social life

Forty percent of OP respondents go to Clubs and Societies in the village – with the 'Over-60s', Social Club, Gardening Society, Historical Society, Church coffee mornings, WI, tennis club and keep-fit all popular. But that still leaves quite a large pool of people who don't do much at all! Most of those seem to be happy but some would feel more comfortable "going with someone I know" or "being made to feel more welcome". Better pavements to allow safe walking to venues is also mentioned.

Knowing "what is on and when" is a frequent comment and it is clear from the Householder Questionnaire there is a high level of demand for a village directory and newssheet.

Proposed Action

HPC to post the 'What's On' Calendar for each month (as published in the Parish News) on the Village Notice Board on the Green and in the Village Hall.

15.4 Housing

While most people want to stay in their present houses for the foreseeable future, close to a fifth want to downsize in the next 5 years and 14% are likely to leave the village.

Most (60%) of these would stay if they could find suitable accommodation. This is supported by the increased demand expressed in the Householder survey for more affordable homes and specialist housing for the elderly.

Proposed Action

See action under Housing Section.

Action Plan

Amenities

Subject Title	Description	Current Status	Next Milestone	Milestone Date	Responsibility	Involvement of others
Public transport	There is demand for a better bus service to:- Paddock Wood Tunbridge Wells, Cranbrook and Maidstone.	The demand needs to be refined with more data and be presented to the TWBC Public Transport Working Group and the Bus Companies.	A small group should be formed to carry out the necessary work	Q1 2014	Village Vision Steering Group (until working group established)	Volunteers from the Village. Horsmonden PC TWBC Bus companies
Retail Shops	There are concerns over future Post Office services	Limited service being provided in Heath Stores	Consider alternative plans to maintain Post Office services	On going	Horsmonden P C	TWBC Ward Councillors MP
Village library	A majority wish to see a more frequent or more permanent village library facility	Mobile library visits one per fortnight	A small group to be formed to look at options	Q1 2014	Village Vision Steering Group (until working group established)	Volunteers from the village Horsmonden PC
Bus Shelter	There is demand for a bus shelter.	The shelter would need to be sited on part of the Post Office Land. This will have to be discussed with new owners.	Await the purchase of the Post Office by a new owner	Uncertain	Highways Group in collaboration with Horsmonden PC.	T/Wells planning KCC funding
Outdoor Activities	There is a desire for additional sports activities in the village	Discuss the possibility of developing each of the sports mentioned in the survey to assess the enthusiasm and practicality of providing each sport.	Initial discussions with the Sports Club	Q1 2014	Village Vision Steering Group Sports Club	
Clubs and Activities	There is a lack of awareness of the clubs and activities which exist in and within reach of the Village.	This information exists in:- Welcome Packs, the Parish News and the Village Website	Check that the current information is complete and correct with new information added in a timely fashion.	Q1 2014	Communication and Business group	All information providers

Communications and Business

Subject Title	Description	Current Status	Next Milestone	Milestone Date	Responsibility	Involvement of others
Broadband	The broadband speed in most of the Village is unacceptably slow, particularly for businesses.	KCC are to roll out superfast broadband to 95% of Kent. Current indication is 97% for Horsmonden to be covered at 2->25 mbps end-2014 Additional funds are being sought from the EC to help those areas not covered A local company, Call Flow Solutions, is supplying some areas of the village with fast broadband transmitted from aerials on Yalding and Goudhurst church	Publicise the coverage map and rollout timetable from KCC Maintain watch on plan progress and lobby for full coverage for Horsmonden	Q1 2014 2014	Comms and Business Group Comms and Business Group	KCC KCC
Village Information	Information is provided to the village in a number of ways but only about 27% of villagers look at the village website and 93% say they would read a village news sheet/directory of clubs.	There is a new Parish Council website and a new Sports Club website. The Village website is being re-written to provide a more efficient 'platform' and links to other sites.	The new Village website to be launched. Up to date calendar/diary to be posted on the Parish Council noticeboard and in the village hall	Autumn 2013 Autumn 2013	Working group headed by Neil Rigby Horsmonden PC	
New footpath map	Produce a new map for the Parish and surrounds		Discuss with the Village Amblers	Q1 2014	Steering Group	Village Amblers

Environment

Subject Title	Description	Current Status	Next Milestone	Milestone Date	Responsibility	Involvement of others
Environmental issues	Responsibility	There is no specific responsibility allocated within Horsmonden PC	Horsmonden PC to appoint a member to be responsible for all environmental issues. That member should form an environmental group of volunteers to tackle the issues below and others of relevance to the community.	Q1 2014	Working Group reporting to the Horsmonden PC	KCC TWBC MP etc
Recycling	Approximately 75% of respondents would like to see more opportunities to recycle in the village.	There is door step recycling of paper, plastic and tins together with a doorstep collection of general rubbish. There is a rubbish lorry for all general rubbish on Sundays. It is important that these services remain and a village recycling center is provided. Consideration should be given to door step collection of glass.	See above	See above	See above	See above
Dog Fouling	38% of people see dog fouling as a problem.	There are some "hot spots" where this problem might be resolved by provision of "bag stations" and better public education	See above	See above	See above	See above
Litter	Seen as a problem in some parts of the village	Litter collection parties should be organised once or twice per year.	See above	See above	See above	See above
Street lighting	There is some street lighting considered adequate by the majority	There are considered to be some "black spots" which could be improved.	See above	See above	See above	See above

The survey did not consider other environmental issues such as renewable energy and environmental sites such as ponds. It is felt that the subject is important enough to warrant the specific attention of a member of the Horsmonden PC and an Environmental Group which might be formed.

Highways

Subject Title	Description	Current Status	Next Milestone	Milestone Date	Responsibility	Involvement of others
Crossings	Establish whether a crossing should be installed on Maidstone Rd. and/or Goudhurst Rd.	Kent Highways have ruled out Goudhurst Rd because of the proximity to bus stops Little support from the school authorities for Maidstone Rd crossing but concern about traffic danger when dropping off children	School authorities to discuss with parents	Q1 2014	School authorities	KCC Kent Highways Horsmonden PC
Heavy Lorries	Establish the volume of heavy lorry traffic in Horsmonden and compare with any agreed, acceptable national standards	A traffic survey was carried out in November 2012 to establish heavy lorry traffic volumes, on all 4 main roads. We understand that there are no national limits.	Attempting to benchmark against traffic flows elsewhere in Kent and then determine future actions.	Q1 2014	Highways Group	TSS Kent Highways Horsmonden PC
Heavy Lorries Yalding trial	For a trial period heavy lorries were banned in parts of Yalding. We need to assess the impact on Horsmonden.	The Yalding trial finishes in October 2013, we need to repeat the traffic survey to establish the impact on Horsmonden.	Repeat survey to take place in September, results published in October	Q1 2014	Highways Groups	TSS
Speeding Traffic	There is general concern about the speed of traffic through the village	A traffic survey was carried out in November 2012 on all 4 main roads. 80%-90% of traffic was speeding. 40%-60% at a level for prosecution. Kent Police has been made aware	There are ongoing discussions with Kent Highways about the possibility of introducing physical structures to slow traffic. Kent Highways are due to respond to this suggestion.	Q1 2014	Highways Group	Kent Highways Kent Police Speedwatch Horsmonden PC
	20 mph limit in village centre	Safety audit carried out by Kent Highways of crossroads found main problem inconsiderate parking. Road signs considered adequate. Road markings worn. KCC Highways trial completed	Further discussions with Kent Highways Discussion by Highways Group and possible plan proposal	Q1 2014	Highways Group	Kent Highways Horsmonden PC Kent Highways
Parking	There is limited parking in the village	The centre of the village is becoming congested with inconsiderate parking leading to poor sight lines and cars backing into the traffic stream.	The Highways Group will consider alternatives and make a proposal to Horsmonden PC	Q1 2014	Highways Group	Horsmonden PC Kent Highways
Pavement on Maidstone road	The current pavement does not extend beyond the the Sports Club	It is uncertain who owns the land on which the path would be sited This needs to be established before funds for building the path are sought.	Establish limits of ownership relevant sections of land.	Q1 2014	Highways Group	KCC Property Kent Highways Horsmonden PC

Housing

Subject Title	Description	Current Status	Next Milestone	Milestone Date	Responsibility	Involvement of others
General Development	A large majority do not want the village to have any further general housing. There would be less reluctance if the infrastructure were improved to cope with the expansion	There is no project at the moment.	Horsmonden PC to take note of these views when considering future housing plans	On going	Horsmonden PC	TWBC
Affordable Housing	64% of respondents believe there is enough affordable housing in the village	There are 54 households in the survey who might be interested in such properties within 5 years.	These findings should be taken into account when replying to the next TWBC Housing Needs Survey in 2017	2017	Horsmonden PC	TWBC
Housing for Older People	90% of respondents would support additional housing for the elderly. 14% of households have someone who might take up this accommodation within 5 years, or they may have to leave the village	Plans have been put forward by developers but, at the moment they are not obviously pursuing the development. Discussions may be going on between the land owners and developers.	Developers to signify they are willing to take the project further. Subject to sensible planning conditions, Horsmonden PC should support this.	Uncertain	Horsmonden PC	TWBC Developers

Social, Welfare, Pleasure and Young People

Subject Title	Description	Current Status	Next Milestone	Milestone Date	Responsibility	Involvement of others
Safety and Security	70% of respondents felt there should be greater police presence	Our PCSO is responsible for five villages, this level of policing should not be further diluted.	Results of the survey to be passed to Kent police The Police and Crime Commissioner should be lobbied to ensure that the PCSO services are not withdrawn or diluted further.	Q1 2014 Continual	Village Vision Steering Group Hormonden PC	
Social and Pleasure	There is an 87% support for more events on the green	A number of successful events have been held in the past year.	Every opportunity should be taken to promote/support events on the green. With a published plan of events a year in advance Publicise in Parish News. Identify one or two people willing to start arranging film shows	Ongoing	Hormonden PC	
	There is a good demand for indoor film shows	The Village Hall Committee has acquired a new film projector which could be used on a regular basis.		Q1 2014	Film night organiser	
Young People	There were a number of suggestions for help, advice and activities which could be of benefit to the young.	The youth Club has closed so there is no one central focus for the young nor any plan to test the provision of new facilities	A Councillor should be appointed to be responsible for youth matters and consider forming an Working Group to tackle some of the issues raised.	Q1 2014	Working Group reporting to the Hormonden PC	Volunteers
	There was a strong desire for "somewhere to hang out"	There is no shelter/ place for the young to meet.	Examine the possibility of purchasing and siting a "meeting shelter" with funding from the KCC.	Q1/Q2 2014	As above	KCC
	There is a strong wish by young people to give support to the community	A village Youth Council, helping the elderly and the environment are all potential projects to be considered	Consideration by a Youth Working Group		As above	
Young People	Providing help and advice to young people		As above	As above	As above	Volunteers
	Working with the Sports Club to provide more facilities for young people		As above	As above	As above	

