

# MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

## HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL

### ON MONDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 7:30PM

#### **Present:**

Cllrs March, Davis, Jenkinson, Russell, Richards, Sheppard and Currie

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

Anna Blyth (Assistant Clerk)

92 members of the public

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

Cllr Larkin – Cllr Russell proposed acceptance of the reason for absence; seconded Cllr Jenkinson. Unanimous.

Cllr Davis declared an interest in item 4. g and did not take part in any discussions or decisions relating to this item.

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

Ten members of the public had requested to speak in the public session regarding their objections to application 23/00044/HYBRID. The speakers provided a detailed summary of reasons why they felt that this application should be refused by the Parish Council with the main points being:

- The proposed site does not include any provision for sheltered housing or warden care bungalows for elderly people who have lived in the area for many years and wish to stay in the village.
- The medical centre is an area of concern as Persimmon have stated that they will only provide the land and there is no guarantee that there will be funds in place to build and staff the facility. The existing GP surgery is not taking on any new patients at present and they have only been made aware of the plans for a new medical centre very recently. Whilst they are open to discussion with the developer, there are many other factors to consider before moving forward. The proposed medical centre only has 11 car parking spaces which is not enough considering this facility is intended to be for the wider community, not just Horsmonden.
- The dentist surgery is also not taking on any new patients at the moment.
- The style and design of the proposed houses are not considered to respond positively to the heritage and distinctive character of Horsmonden.

- The housing mix is considered unsuitable with too many 4/ 5 bedroom houses and not enough 1/ 2 bedroom.
- The overall impact of the proposed development with 401 parking spaces means that over 400 cars will be heading down one exit road via a T junction onto Goudhurst Road. Also, cars approaching the village on Goudhurst road around a blind corner will have a very limited period of time to react to stationary traffic waiting for vehicles to turn right, across the highway, into the new development
- The primary school cannot cope with a large increase in numbers as it does not have the capacity. There are concerns about where children living on the development will go to school during the early stages of the build, when the land proposed for the school expansion may not have yet been developed.
- The traffic statement is considered to be incorrect in several areas; for example it does not mention the school buses stopping at the end of Lamberts Place / Old Station Garages. It is also based upon a much smaller development and needs to be reconsidered in view of the proposed 163 houses.
- The proposed new footpath on Goudhurst Road is insufficient in width for most wheelchair users and parents with a double pushchair. There is also a query over ownership of the land required for the footpath.
- There is no crossing point proposed on the Goudhurst Road. This causes concern for school children from the existing houses at Bassetts Farm and the new proposed development who will need to get to the school bus pick up point on the south side of Goudhurst Road.
- There are 3 protected views listed in the Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan that will be adversely affected by this development (views 6, 7 and 13). The Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment which has been written by James Blake on behalf of Persimmon does not mention view 7 or view 13 at all.
- The existing water supply and sewerage system is inadequate for a development of this size.
- The site access is unsuitable for construction traffic.

The Chair thanked the speakers for their very detailed comments and asked Councillors to consider whether they would like to bring forward item 5a. Planning for discussion.

Cllr Jenkinson proposed bringing forward item 5a. Planning application 23/00044/HYBRID; seconded Cllr Richards. Unanimous.

## 5. Planning

### a. Planning applications

<b>Planning Application:</b>	23/00044/HYBRID
<b>Proposal:</b>	<u>Hybrid planning application comprising: Full application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of 163No. dwellings (Use Class C3), including affordable housing, landscaping, public open space, allotments, ecological enhancements, SUDs and access. Outline application (with all matters reserved) for 0.22 hectares of land for a new Medical Centre (Use Class E(e)) with associated access, parking and landscaping.</u>
<b>Location:</b>	Bassetts Farm, Goudhurst Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8AS
<b>Recommendation</b>	Refusal.
<b>Proposal</b>	Cllr Davis; seconded Cllr Currie. Unanimous.
<b>Comments</b>	<p>The Parish Council recommends refusal on the following basis:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The excessive number of houses in the development which is opposed by almost all residents in the village (almost 100 residents attended the PCs public meeting on 06/02/2023).</li> <li>2) The choice of housing types – too many 4/5 bed houses and not enough 1/ 2 bed houses or retirement options.</li> <li>3) Infrastructure – the medical centre is not assured and hence not something that we can rely on, the existing doctor's surgery and dentists are closed to new patients and the school has no places. The infrastructure will not be in place in the early stages of development.</li> <li>4) Traffic - 30% increase in traffic flow which will have an impact on safety at the new junction.</li> <li>5) Pedestrian access to site is unconvincing with inadequate width for pushchairs / wheelchair users. The new design of footpath has already been refused by the Parish Council under 22/02917/SUB, on a number of grounds</li> <li>6) Parking – more spaces are required particularly for the 5-bedroom houses and the medical centre should have more than 16 spaces.</li> </ol> <p>The Parish Council recommends that TWBC planning department looks at all comments from residents on the planning portal.</p>

The Chair asked Councillors to consider whether they would like to bring forward item 6d and 6f for discussion as several members of the public were interested in hearing the PCs discussions regarding these topics.

Cllr Currie proposed bringing forward items 6d and 6f; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

**6d. Update on the proposed changes at Kipping's Cross / A21 roundabout and junction**

The Chair advised the she, along with the Clerk and Cllr Davis, had attended a Zoom meeting with Kent Highways regarding the proposed changes at the Kipping's cross roundabout.

The Clerk detailed the two scenarios proposed by Highways England, following a report produced by SWECO on this matter- one is a traffic light system which holds traffic back from the A21 junction and the other is to try and 'persuade' traffic to go on a different route by narrowing the approach road from Matfield to one lane. Highways England and KCC have discussed the possibilities and their chosen methodology at present appears to be the latter. The Chair suggested that a strong letter should be written regarding this subject, in support of the letter already issued to the Local Plan Inspector by Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council. Cllr Currie proposed that the PC writes two letters, one to the Secretary of State for The Department of Transport and one to the Chief Executive of Highways England; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Currie will draft a letter between them.

**6f. Village Hall survey – responses and next steps?**

Cllr Jenkinson talked through the summary of responses received from the village hall survey. 61 responses were received and the overall feedback was that parishioners like the location of the current hall as it is in the centre of the village but the lack of parking was flagged as a downside. It was also highlighted that the booking process could be improved with a dedicated website and also some maintenance issues were raised e.g. the floor in the hall, which some felt needed some attention.

Cllr Russell commented that the hire charges for the hall are extremely competitive within the area. The majority of bookings are now for children's parties as well as the regular weekly hirers such as cheeky monkeys, art club and Pilates. It was noted that the VH committee and PC are very grateful for the dedication and hard work of the Caretaker, John Couchman however, Cllr Russell advised that when he retires the hire charges may need to be reviewed. It was also noted that re-conditioning of the flooring is already in hand by the village hall committee.

Cllr Davis suggested that a working party is set up to discuss the results of the survey and to decide on the next steps. The Chair commented that as 57.8% of residents who took part in the survey wanted the existing site to be refurbished this is something that the PC would need to seriously look into and compare with what is being offered at the proposed Brenchley Road site. The Clerk advised that there may be some restrictions on what can be achieved at the existing site but the PC could arrange for an architect to do some drawings.

Cllr Russell mentioned that if the new Sports Pavilion goes ahead he feels that bookings at the village hall might suffer, so this point will need to be considered as well.

The Clerk asked if the results of the survey could be shared with parishioners via the website / Facebook pages. The PC agreed that the results should be shared.

All members of the public left the meeting.

### 3. Minutes of Parish Council Meetings

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11 January 2023 had been circulated beforehand by the Clerk. They were agreed for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded Cllr Davis and voted for unanimously by those present at that meeting and signed by the Chair.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 17 January 2023 had been circulated beforehand by the Clerk. They were agreed for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Russell, seconded Cllr Shepard and voted for unanimously by those present at that meeting and signed by the Chair.

### 4. Parish Council Finance

#### a. Agree payments listing up to and including 5 February 2023 as attached (Appendix 1)

The Clerk showed a copy of the list of payments up to and including 5 February 2023 as a total of £7,553.44. Cllr Richards proposed approval of the schedule of payments; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

Cllrs Davis and Sheppard agreed to release and authorise payments from the bank this month.

#### APPENDIX 1

Date: 08/02/2023					
Horsmonden Parish Council Current Year					
Page 1					
Time: 11:00					
Current Bank A/c					
List of Payments made between 11/01/2023 and 05/02/2023					
Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Authorized Ref	Transaction Detail
13/01/2023	B&K Electrical contractors	BACS	312.00		Carry out electrical works
13/01/2023	Steelway Fencecare	BACS	84.00		Gate springs play area
13/01/2023	Capel Groundcare	BACS	232.42		fill head entrapment play area
13/01/2023	PSR Lighting & Signs Ltd	BACS	106.80		Jan street light Maintenance
17/01/2023	EE - BT	DD	54.44		Mobile phone charges Jan
18/01/2023	Clearview Windows	BACS	330.00		gutter clearance to buildings
20/01/2023	HMRC	BACS	314.06		Tax & NI January
23/01/2023	B&CE Holdings	DD	107.52		Staff pensions January
25/01/2023	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	1,350.32		Staff salary Jan 23
25/01/2023	Anna Blyth	BACS	996.08		Staff Salary Jan
30/01/2023	Castle Water	DD	5.78		Water supply Toilets
30/01/2023	Steelway Fencecare	BACS	84.00		Gate springs play area
31/01/2023	Mr J Couchman	BACS	83.09		Jan Clock and play area
31/01/2023	Lloyds Bank PLC	DD	40.55		Credit card payments Jan
31/01/2023	NPower Business solutions	BACS	118.96		Christmas light supply
31/01/2023	Kent Association of Local Coun	BACS	44.40		Training - social media
31/01/2023	Dataloft	BACS	288.00		NHP Mapping
31/01/2023	Horsmonden Parish News	BACS	300.00		Annual contribution to HP News
31/01/2023	P&F Cleaning services LTD	SO	476.66		Toilet cleaning Jan
01/02/2023	Mr J Boot	BACS	300.00		NH Plan ammendment
01/02/2023	Capel Groundcare	BACS	81.60		Replace gate springs
01/02/2023	PSR Lighting & Signs Ltd	BACS	106.80		Feb street light maintenance
01/02/2023	Capel Groundcare	SO	651.90		Feb Ground work and SIDS
01/02/2023	Microshade VSM	SO	184.06		Feb data store and email
05/02/2023	Horsmonden Village Hall	BACS	900.00		Annual rent for office
Total Payments			7,553.44		

b. **Confirm bank balances and Bank Reconciliation as at 31 January 2023**

The bank balance at 31 January 2023 was displayed with a total at £39,725.30. This was confirmed as correct against the current bank balance and signed by the Chair.

c. **Updating of Unity Trust Banking mandate for Parish Council signatories**

The Clerk advised that she has been able to successfully remove Cllr Stevens from the Unity Trust Banking mandate following his resignation but requires two bank signatories to approve this.

Cllr Russell proposed that two signatories sign the updated documents to remove Cllr Stevens from the mandate; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

d. **Updated quote for internal light sensors at public toilets**

The Clerk had circulated a revised quotation to Councillors from B&K Electrical prior to the meeting. The Clerk explained that following acceptance of the previous quotation at the January meeting, the Assistant Clerk had realised that it only included light sensors in the men's and ladies' toilets and not the disabled. There was a brief discussion between Cllrs comparing the cost of the work to install sensors versus how long it will take for the PC to benefit from the savings but overall it was agreed that it was not sustainable to keep the lights on all day.

Cllr Richards proposed that the PC accept the quotation from B&K for conversion of all interior lights, totalling £583.50 plus VAT; seconded Cllr Currie. Carried.

e. **Quotes for play area equipment (gate springs, swings, rocker, post, surfacing)**

The Clerk had circulated an email to Cllrs prior to the meeting following the response received from Playdale regarding problems with the wet pour surface in the play area. Playdale have advised that as this surface was laid in 2009 it is now out of warranty but they have suggested that the PC contact their supplier directly to obtain an opinion as to whether the spongy areas could be repaired. It was agreed that the Clerk will contact RTC Safety Services Ltd to see if they will carry out an inspection of the surface.

The Clerk advised that other options have been investigated to replace the rocker unit but due to the space available in the play area the options are limited. Cllr Currie proposed that the PC continue to monitor the rocker unit to make sure that the crack in the welding does not deteriorate; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

The Clerk reminded Cllrs that there are funds available under section 106 "children's play space contribution" that will need to be claimed by 2028 so the PC may wish to consider planning a new play area in the next few years.

The Clerk had circulated two quotations to Cllrs prior to the meeting for the replacement of the flat swing seats. The cheaper option was to purchase via Peter from Capel Groundcare.

Cllr Jenkinson proposed acceptance of the quotation from Capel Groundcare totalling £247 plus VAT; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

The Clerk advised that Capel Groundcare have been instructed to replace the post that has gone missing in the play area (this prevents the gate opening too far) and asked to fix it securely in place so that it cannot be removed again.

f. **Quotation for redrafting of Play area lease with Horsmonden Kindergarten Trust**

The Clerk advised that she is still awaiting a quotation from solicitors for the redrafting of the play area lease. This will be chased. The Clerk stressed to Cllrs that it is in the interest of the PC to get a new lease redrafted.

Cllr Davis left the meeting at this point.

g. **Quotation and considerations for street light 21 on Maidstone Road**

Following a complaint received from a resident living near to street light 21, the clerk advised that the cost for PSR Lighting to supply a part-night photocell is £67.50 plus £225 for fitting. These work by turning the street light off at approximately midnight and then turning it back on from 05.30am.

Cllrs discussed this option but concerns were raised as no other PC owned street lights have a part night photocell fitted and if PC agree to have one fitted it could lead to many more requests being received and potentially a considerable cost to the PC.

Cllr Richards proposed that the PC should not pay for a part-night photocell to be fitted to street light 21 however, if the resident wishes to pay for this to be done themselves, it can then be arranged, seconded Cllr Currie. Unanimous.

Cllr Davis returned to the meeting.

h. **Consideration of Rialtas End of Year close down costs**

The Clerk advised that the cost for Rialtas to complete the year end close down is £495 plus VAT. The Clerk commented that she would feel happier with someone from RBS checking through the year end procedures and doing the shut down for the PC as it is quite a complicated procedure and takes several hours.

Cllr Jenkinson proposed acceptance of the quotation from Rialtas totalling £495 plus VAT; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

i. **Renewal of memberships to SLCC for clerk and assistant clerk**

The Clerk has circulated the renewal costs for the SLCC memberships to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

**Clerk** – Annual subscription - £187 for full membership plus £55 for “Principal Membership” – total £242

**Assistant Clerk** – Annual subscription £177 for full membership

These memberships enable the Clerk to retain her CiLCA qualification, which is fundamental to the Council being able to qualify for using the General Power of Competence. They also enable the clerks to record their training progress and attainments throughout the year.

Cllr Davis proposed acceptance of the costs as detailed; seconded Cllr Currie. Unanimous.

## **6.Parish Council Decisions/Administration**

a. **Consideration of change of date for Annual Parish Council Meeting**

The Clerk advised that the date of the Annual Parish Council Meeting needs to be changed due to Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May being a bank holiday following the Kings Coronation. The Clerk recommended that the date be changed to Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May.

Cllr Davis proposed acceptance of the new date; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

**b. Parish Highways/ footpath/ street lighting/ landscaping and tree works/issues**

The Clerk raised the following points:

- The drainage works on Lamberhurst Road have now been completed, however the road will be closed again on the 14<sup>th</sup> February for 11 nights for resurfacing works.
- The Living Forest have been out again to do another survey as they lost the result of our first survey due to data failure. The results of the survey will be circulated to Cllrs once they have been received.
- Pete from Capel Groundcare has been advised that the PC wish to leave the grass to grow at Fromandez Drive in support of the Kent Plan Bee project. Pete will just trim the edges from now on. Cllr Russell advised that a circle will need to be cut around the two commemorative trees in that area. It was agreed that the Clerk will advertise the PCs plans regarding the land at Fromandez Drive so that parishioners are aware of their participation in Kent Plan Bee project.
- A number of complaints have been received regarding the condition of the public right of way (PROW) at Old Back Lane as it is in a terrible state of repair with enormous pot holes taking up a lot of the road surface. KCC will not maintain this as it is unadopted and owned by the private houses up that road. The Assistant Clerk has contacted the KCC PROW Officer, Jonathan Bibby who has agreed to contact residents to remind them of their obligations with regards to this private road and he may also offer materials to help with the repair of the surface.
- There is a huge pot hole just outside the primary school which has been reported to KCC however, they have confirmed that they are not responsible for the area of road out side the school / kindergarten. It was agreed that the Assistant Clerk will contact the school to discuss the Academy arranging for this to be repaired as it could cause damage to vehicles.
- A resident has been in contact regarding an area of land next to 1 Gibbet Lane. This piece of land has a large tree on it which is causing concern to some of the residents in the area and they would like to know who is responsible for the maintenance of the tree. The Assistant Clerk has investigated ownership of the land and discovered that it is owned by TWBC. The Chair suggested contacting the Property / Assets Department at TWBC to see if they can help.

The Clerk had been advised that the public footpath signs at Manor Farm and at Orchard House Farm have gone missing. In both cases, the post is still in place but the public footpath sign itself is missing. The Clerk confirmed that this will be reported to the PROW Officer via the online portal.

**c. HIPS – updates and considerations**

The Chair queried whether the SIDs in the village show the full speed cars are travelling as they pass the camera as sometimes this can encourage drivers to speed and see the highest speed they can get to flash up. Cllr Davis confirmed that the maximum speed that shows on the SIDs is 40mph.

The Clerk advised that Cllrs Davis and Russell have a meeting scheduled with Tim Griggs from KCC Highways to discuss HIPs on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The Chair suggested that all updates received from Tim are discussed at this meeting.

Cllr Sheppard proposed that the PC give delegated authority to Cllrs Davis and Russell to add/remove HIPs from the list if necessary following this meeting; seconded Cllr Currie, Unanimous.



**d. Booking for Horsmonden Village Green – Easter Crosses on the Green 2023**

The Clerk had circulated the booking form and proof of Insurance from St Margaret's Church in respect of booking the village green for the Easter Crosses. The risk assessment and deposit cheque are still awaited.

Cllr Richards proposed acceptance of the Easter Crosses event subject to receipt of an acceptable risk assessment and the deposit cheque; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

**g. SE Water Draft Water Resources Management Plan consultation [dedicated consultation hub](#). Open until 20 February 2023.**

Cllr Davis agreed to complete this consultation on behalf of the PC.

**h. KCC's Home to School and Post-16 Transport for Mainstream and SEND Pupils - Public Consultation [www.kent.gov.uk/schooltransportpolicy](http://www.kent.gov.uk/schooltransportpolicy) up to 21 March 2023**

It was agreed that this consultation will be passed to Cllr Larkin for completion, if she is well enough to do so.

**i. KCC's Community services consultation [www.kent.gov.uk/communityservicesconsultation](http://www.kent.gov.uk/communityservicesconsultation) up to 26 March 2023**

Cllr March agreed to complete this consultation on behalf of the PC.

The Clerk mentioned that a couple of items had been received too late for the agenda and could not therefore be decided upon at this time, however they would need to be added next time for discussion/decision:

- The Council's formal agreement to continue with the annual service contract with Arron Services, who maintain the Council's laptops and computer systems hardware.
- Decorations/activities planned for the King's Coronation in May. The Clerk had received emails from several people in the village asking if anything was organised for this event, but at present nothing concrete had been settled, although various parties were discussing possibilities. The PC would consider decorations for the Village at the next meeting when arrangements were clarified.

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.59pm**