

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL  
ON MONDAY, 3 MARCH 2025 AT 7:30PM**

**Present:**

Cllrs Richards, Davis, Russell, Sheppard, Larkin, Jenkinson and Baylis

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

Anna Blyth (Deputy Clerk)

Cllr Lynne Darrah

Cllr Sarah Hamilton (part of the meeting)

Mr Andrew Winser (Chair of HDAG)

1 member of the public

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

Cllr Baxter-Smith. Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of reasons for absence; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

Cllrs Mobbs and Knight also gave their apologies prior to the meeting.

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

No members of the public had requested to speak at the meeting.

**3. Co-option of new Parish Councillor to fill vacancy**

The Parish Council entered a closed session to discuss item 3.

Following the recommendation of the interview panel, Cllrs resolved to co-opt the proposed candidate. It was agreed that new Cllr would be formally co-opted at the PC's next meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> April.

**4. Minutes of Parish Council Meetings**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 3 February 2025 had been circulated beforehand by the Clerk. They were agreed for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded Cllr Russell and voted for unanimously by those present at that meeting and signed by the Chair.

**5. Parish Council Finance**

**a. Agree payments listing up to and including 2 March 2025 as attached (Appendix 1- See end of document)**

The Clerk showed a copy of the list of payments up to and including 2 March 2025 as a total of £22,785.72. Cllr Davis proposed approval of the schedule of payments; seconded Cllr Jenkinson. Unanimous.

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

b. **Bank Reconciliation as at 28 February 2025**

The bank balance at 28 February 2025 was displayed with a total at £35,789.05.

This was confirmed as correct against the respective bank statement and signed by the Chair.

c. **Consider Parish Grounds work contract 2025-26 (devolved maintenance) with quotations**

The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken to Paul Woodhatch (Landscape Manager at KCC) in detail regarding the devolved maintenance for the triangle of land at the Spelmonden Road junction and the perimeter of Fromandez Drive, which are both owned by KCC but historically have been maintained by the PC.

As suggested at the last meeting, the Clerk had asked KCC whether they would consider gifting this land to the PC but due to legal complexities this option was declined by KCC. As an alternative, the Clerk advised that the PC are able to hand these areas back to KCC for them to maintain under their soft landscapes program, which would save the PC maintenance and administration costs. The Clerk explained that on the Land Registry map of Fromandez Drive there is a marked roadway across the central area, which was never built and does not exist. KCC own this section but if the PC apply for a Cultivation Licence this would enable them to continue to maintain the middle section of Fromandez Drive as a wild flower meadow.

After discussion, Cllr Jenkinson proposed that the PC hand back the maintenance of the land at Spelmonden Road and Fromandez Drive (perimeter only) to KCC for them to add to their soft landscapes program; seconded Cllr Baylis. Unanimous.

Following the tender process for the PCs ground maintenance contract (excluding the Village Green), the Clerk had circulated three quotations to Cllrs for their consideration prior to the meeting.

Company	Price PA including perimeter of Fromandez Drive and Spelmonden Triangle	Price PA excluding Perimeter of FD and Spelmonden Triangle
Company 1 Commercial Service Trading Ltd T/A Landscape Services	£5,134.50	£2,347.20 net
Company 2 Capel Groundcare	Did not quote for this	£1,440 net
Company 3 Living Forest	£2,406.75 (excluding Spelmonden)	£1,781.75 net

After discussion, Cllr Larkin proposed that the PC accept the quotation provided by Capel Groundcare (£1,440 net) as it was the lowest price and Capel Groundcare have proven to be highly reliable with a strong knowledge of the works required; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

d. **Consider costs for tree work on Horsmonden Village Green (VG) and Fromandez Drive (FD)**

The Clerk had circulated the full tree survey report from The Living Forest plus two further quotations for tree works to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their consideration. The quotations were detailed as follows:

Recommended works following tree survey (VG & FD): £2,418 plus VAT

Reduction to Elder tree (FD): two options £110 plus VAT or £295 plus VAT

Urgent works to rotting lime tree (VG): £184.50 plus VAT

It was noted that, as the elder tree at FD is located on KCC land and the PC have decided to return the land to KCC, the PC will no longer be responsible for its maintenance. Cllr Jenkinson proposed that the PC refer to KCCs soft landscaping team and request that they add this tree to their maintenance schedule; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of the quotation for works following the tree survey (£2,418 plus VAT) and the works to the lime tree on the VG (£184.50 plus VAT); seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

e. **Consider quotation for installing a Tommy Statue next to the memorial**

The Clerk advised Cllrs that, following the purchase of the Tommy Statue, it has come to light that an additional statue has been donated to the Institute Building for installation at the war memorial. Capel Groundcare have assessed the site and recommended that the statues are installed in the flower beds rather than in the concrete. Their quote to install both statues totalled £121.60 (£100 labour plus £21.60 for materials).

Cllr Russell noted that, as the war memorial is located with the conservation area, approval from the Conservation Officer would be required before proceeding.

Cllr Russell proposed acceptance of Capel Groundcare's quotation for the installation of two Tommy's (£121.60), subject to the Conservation Officers approval; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

f. **Agree costs for Institute Building: Retrospective drain clearance, 5-year EICR testing and quotation for resolution of minor electrical problems**

The Clerk had circulated quotations relating to works at the Institute Building to Cllrs prior to the meeting. These works were detailed as follows:

- **Retrospective Drain Clearance**

The Clerk explained that these works had to be carried out urgently due to Drain Detectives already being on site investigating a leak. Total cost £725 plus VAT

- **Electrical Works carried out by Tesseract Ltd**

- 5 Year Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) - £260 plus VAT

- Minor repairs to existing electrics prior to 5-year testing - £486.90 plus VAT (estimate)

Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of the costs as detailed; seconded Cllr Baylis. Unanimous.

- g. **Consider annual contract costs for winding clock at The Institute and play area daily inspections**  
The Clerk asked Cllrs to consider an increase for the contractor responsible for winding the clock at the Institute building and conducting daily play area inspections, as his weekly rate had remained unchanged for many years but he had recently reported that more hours were required each week to carry out these tasks. It was agreed by all that the contractor provides an excellent service and should be compensated accordingly.

Cllr Jenkinson proposed that the PC offer an increased rate of £40 per week for these tasks; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

## 6. Planning

### a. Planning applications

<b>Planning Application:</b>	TW/25/00349/TPO
<b>Proposal:</b>	<a href="#"><u>Trees in a Conservation Area Notification: TULIP TREE (T1) Reduction of height by 4 metres &amp; reduction of spread by 2.5 metres.</u></a>
<b>Location:</b>	Poplar Cottages Green Road Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent TN12 8JS
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approval
<b>Proposal</b>	Cllr Sheppard; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.
<b>Comments</b>	Recommend approval of works detailed. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability Policy.

<b>Planning Application:</b>	TW/25/00297/LBC
<b>Proposal:</b>	<a href="#"><u>Listed Building Consent - Replacement of peg tiles with 12 in-roof solar panels.</u></a>
<b>Location:</b>	Swigs Hall Maidstone Road Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent TN12 8DG
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approval
<b>Proposal</b>	Cllr Russell; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Carried.
<b>Comments</b>	Recommend approval as a reasonable energy saving provision subject to the views of the Conservation Architect. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

<b>Planning Application:</b>	TW/25/00385/LBC
<b>Proposal:</b>	<a href="#"><u>Listed Building Consent - Erection of timber &amp; glass link between house &amp; barn.</u></a>
<b>Location:</b>	Spring Farm Goudhurst Road Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent TN12 8AY
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approval
<b>Proposal</b>	Cllr Davis; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

<b>Comments</b>	Recommend approval as a reasonable improvement to the property subject to the Conservation Architects opinion. All works should be in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.
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<b>Planning Application:</b>	TW/25/00356/LBC
<b>Proposal:</b>	<a href="#"><u>Listed Building Consent - Installation of internal door</u></a>
<b>Location:</b>	The Heath Stores the Heath Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent TN12 8HT
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approval
<b>Proposal</b>	Cllr Russell; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.
<b>Comments</b>	Recommend approval as a necessary change to satisfy H&S requirements. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

- b. **Consider and agree any further updates/comments on TW/24/00078/HYBRID Bassetts Farm. Delegate authority to Cllrs / HDAG members to make any necessary adjustments to speeches prepared for the TWBC Committee meeting**

The Chair permitted Mr Winsor (as Chair of the Horsmonden Development Advisory Group - HDAG –a working group of the Council) to contribute to the discussion under this item.

Mr Winsor had suggested a few minor amendments to the PCs speeches, which had been circulated to Cllrs for their consideration prior to the meeting. He explained that a parishioner had raised concerns via email regarding the narrow footpaths in the village which pose challenges for individuals using mobility scooters to access local amenities. This is an important point which should be mentioned in the PCs speech and should also be discussed further under Item 6b. HIPs.

It was noted that this application is now expected to be considered at the next TWBC Planning Committee meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April and further revisions to the speeches may be required following receipt of the Case Officer's report.

As the next PC meeting is not scheduled until the 7<sup>th</sup> April, it was proposed by Cllr Jenkinson that authority be granted to the Chair and Cllr Baxter-Smith to make any necessary amendments to the speeches , in collaboration with Mr Winsor as Chair of HDAG . This proposal was seconded by Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

The Clerk will issue and circulate the agenda for the next HDAG meeting during WC 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

The Clerk had also distributed a draft press release to Cllrs ahead of the meeting in anticipation of potential enquires from local journalists regarding application 24/00078/HYBRID. Cllr Davis proposed acceptance of the press release as drafted; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

- c. **Agree attendees for Persimmon Homes Community Liaison Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March relating to Bassetts Farm application 15/505340/OUT (erection of 20 dwellings)**

Cllrs Davis and Russell agreed to check their diaries and confirm whether they are able to attend this meeting.

**Cllr Sarah Hamilton (KCC) arrived at 8.25pm.**

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

### **a. Parish Highways/footpath/street lighting/landscaping and tree issues**

The Clerk gave the following updates to Cllrs:

- Cllr Darrah recently met with Andy Swanson (KCC Highways) and identified 4 separate locations in the centre of the village where pavement width is being reduced due to overgrown hedges. Whilst it is clear that these hedges are being maintained, they could do with being cut back further. Due to bird nesting season, it was agreed that Andy Swanson would write to the residents asking that the next time the hedges are cut they extend to the back of the footway.
- It has been reported that the footway around the VG is being reduced in width by soil encroachment and whilst there is nothing in the legislation relating to the maintenance of grass verges, as owners of the VG the PC should arrange for these verges to be cut back.
- Cllr Larkin reported that there are some large potholes on Maidstone Road (near the junction with Yew Tree Green Rd) which should be reported to KCC. The Clerk confirmed that she would do this.
- Street light no.8 in Gibbet Lane has now been assessed by PSR Lighting and they have confirmed that the fault is a UKPN supply issue. The Clerk has reported to UKPN and notified the parishioners concerned.

### **b. HIPs (Highways Improvement Plan) HIPs**

The Clerk reported that there have been two crashes at the crossroads this year which have been caused by vehicles not stopping at the Maidstone Rd junction. On both occasions, drivers have been following a sat nav which does not clearly show that the junction is a crossroad. This has been raised with the HIPs team at KCC and added to the PCs HIP requesting that they consider improved signage on Maidstone Road. This will be discussed further at the PCs annual HIP review meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> March, which will be attended by Cllr Davis, Cllr Russell and the Deputy Clerk.

Cllrs also discussed the issue of narrow pavements in the centre of the village. It was suggested that this is also discussed at the annual HIP review to see if this is something that could be added to the PCs HIP.

### **c. Consider Clerks' application to carry over any unused holiday remaining for 24-25**

It was noted that the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk both have holiday left to take before the end of March 2025. The Clerk had calculated that she has 39.5 hours holiday left to take and the Deputy Clerk has 11.5 hours, however as the Clerk has holiday already booked during March this will be reduced to 19 hours. It was also noted that the Deputy Clerk will be taking holiday in early April. The Clerk asked for the PCs consideration to allow this remaining holiday to be carried over into next year's holiday entitlement.

Cllr Russell proposed that the PC allow the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk to carry over up to 1 week' holiday; seconded Cllr Jenkinson. Unanimous.

**d. Consider quarterly play area inspection report**

The Clerk had circulated the quarterly play area inspection report to Cllrs prior to the meeting and confirmed that there are no further actions required on this occasion.

Cllr Russell proposed that the PC note and accept the contents of the quarterly play area report; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

**e. Consider Crosses on the Green event on Horsmonden Village Green 17-20 April 2025**

Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of this event subject to receiving the necessary paperwork from St Margaret's Church; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

**f. Consider Parish Council stall and details for What Goes on Here event on 26 April 2025**

The Clerk reminded Cllrs Larkin, Jenkinson, Russell and Richards that they all confirmed that they would be available to attend this event and help manage the PCs stall.

The Clerk invited Cllrs to contribute ideas for their stall, highlighting that this event presents an excellent opportunity to promote the PC's initiatives for the year ahead. It was agreed that the stall should showcase the initial plans for the new play area at Locket Green and could also serve as a platform to gather residents contact details, such as emails addresses, to establish a mailing list. This would be particularly beneficial for any future public consultations and possible newsletter distribution as despite the PC advertising on its website and Facebook pages, engagement remains low.

**g. Consider Parish Council Litter Pick 22 March 2025**

Cllrs Richards, Larkin and Jenkinson confirmed that they would be available to help at the Litter Pick on the 22 March. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would communicate with the school to confirm timings whilst also liaising with the WI, who will be in charge of the refreshments. The Clerks will register the event with the Great British Spring Clean 2025 and advertise accordingly.

**h. Consider collecting a data bank of Parishioners email addresses. Uses and Implications.**

This item was discussed under item 6f.

## **7. Consultations**

**a. Consider Transport for the South East Draft Transport Strategy Consultation-ends 7 March 2025 <https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/our-vision/transport-strategy/>**

Cllr Davis confirmed that he already completed this consultation on behalf of the PC.

**b. Considering supporting the Lithium Ion batteries safety Campaign?**

<https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/battery-breakdown/battery-safety-campaign/>

Cllr Jenkinson proposed that the PC support this campaign; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.05pm**

## APPENDIX 1

Date: 03/03/2025

Horsmonden Parish Council Current Year

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Time: 12:48

Current A/c- Unity Trust Bank

List of Payments made between 03/02/2025 and 02/03/2025

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
10/02/2025	Surey Hills Solicitors	BACS	913.00		Deed of surrender VH
10/02/2025	Society Of Local Council Clerk	BACS	190.00		SLCC membership AB
10/02/2025	Microshade VSM	BACS	194.44		Emails & Data hosting Feb
10/02/2025	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	BACS	459.94		Uncontested Election- costs
10/02/2025	Arron Services Ltd	BACS	780.00		Maintenance contract computers
10/02/2025	Horsmonden Social Club	BACS	7,665.00		Grant for refurbishment works
10/02/2025	Society Of Local Council Clerk	BACS	295.00		SLCC membership LN
10/02/2025	Capel Groundcare	BACS	695.63		January Maintenance and SIDS
10/02/2025	Unipar Services	BACS	105.00		Repair latch for SW case
11/02/2025	British Gas Lite	DD	36.29		Jan Electricity Toilets
11/02/2025	British Gas Lite	DD	8.61		Jan electricity VG Boxes
17/02/2025	EE - BT	DD	65.14		PC Mobiles for February
17/02/2025	Drain Detectives(Rexaus Group)	BACS	870.00		Drain clearance Institute Bdg
17/02/2025	EV Connect SE Ltd	BACS	7,001.00		Supply & fit Solar panels
20/02/2025	Castle Water	DD	18.16		Water supply Toilets-Jan
24/02/2025	P&F Cleaning services LTD	SO	500.00		Feb Cleaning
25/02/2025	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	1,557.11		Feb salary
25/02/2025	Anna Blyth	BACS	1,120.53		Feb Salary
27/02/2025	People pension	DD	218.92		staff pensions February
28/02/2025	Mr C J Couchman	BACS	83.10		Clock & Play area Feb
28/02/2025	Unity Trust Bank	DD	8.85		Bank Charges Jan
Total Payments			22,785.72		