

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL

ON MONDAY, 7 APRIL 2025 AT 7:30PM

Present:

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

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

Anna Blyth (Deputy Clerk)

Cllr Lynne Darrah

Cllr Tom Mobbs (part of the meeting)

Cllr Sarah Hamilton (part of the meeting)

Mr Andrew Winser (part of the meeting)

1 member of the public

The Parish Council observed a one-minute silence in memory of Ralph Stevens, who recently passed away, in recognition of his 40 years of dedicated service to the Council.

1. Apologies for Absence and declarations of interest

Cllrs Davis and Baxter-Smith.

Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of the reasons for absence; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

2. Public Session (no decisions)

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

The Chair invited the Ward Councillors to share any updates or developments from Borough Level.

Cllr Mobbs gave a brief update to Cllrs regarding the proposed Devolution programme for Kent. He reported that TWBC are pushing for a three-unitary model, likely involving partnerships with Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and possibly Maidstone. However, the final model – three or four unitary councils – remains undecided as discussions continue.

Cllr Darrah expressed disappointment at the outcome of planning application 24/00078/HYBRID Bassetts Farm, which was been approved by the TWBC Planning Committee on the 2nd April, despite concerns raised. Whilst the decision was disheartening for many, Cllr Darrah encouraged Cllrs and parishioners to focus on the potential positives that the development may bring. She stressed the importance of ensuring that all planning conditions are met and properly implemented to minimise any negative impact on the community.

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

Following the recommendation of the interview panel, Cllr Larkin proposed that the Council co-opt Ms Alison Boon to fill the current vacancy; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

Ms Boon signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was countersigned by the Clerk and joined the meeting as a Councillor.

4. Minutes of Parish Council Meetings

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 3 March 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 31 March 2025 as attached (Appendix 1- See end of document)

The Clerk showed a copy of the list of payments up to and including 31 March 2025 as a total of £11,522.04. Cllr Sheppard proposed approval of the schedule of payments; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

It was agreed that Cllrs Jenkinson and Davis would sign off the remaining invoices prior to year-end. Cllrs Richards and Larkin agreed to release and authorise payments from the bank this month.

b. Bank Reconciliations as at 31 March 2025

Statements and reconciliations confirming the Councils bank accounts were shown as follows: Unity Trust bank balance at 31 March 2025 as £24,276.81.

The United Trust (40-day notice account) bank balance at 31 March 2025 as £38,299.72.

The United Trust (1-year business bond) bank balance at 31st March 2025 as £40,0000.

These were confirmed as correct against the respective bank statements and signed by the Chair.

c. Consider insurance quotations for contract commencing 1 June 2025

The Clerk advised that further quotations are awaited and therefore this matter will be considered at the next meeting on the 12 May 2025.

d. Agree quotation from Drain Boss to remove blockage from Public Conveniences (retrospective)

The Clerk reported that urgent works had been required at the Public Conveniences on the 19th March due to a blockage that was causing the facilities to back up. At the time, Cllrs Russell and Sheppard agreed that immediate action should be taken however, retrospective approval from full council was now required.

Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of the invoice from Drain Boss totalling £220 plus VAT; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

e. Consider additional quotation for de-scaling pipes to urinal at the Public Conveniences

At the time of the drain clearance, the Deputy Clerk was advised by Drain Boss that the pipes to the urinal were very built up with limescale. As this was not considered urgent works at the time, Drain Boss provided a quotation to clear the limescale totalling £450 plus VAT. This quotation had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

It was agreed by all Cllrs, that in view of the cost, the Clerks should obtain two further quotations for comparison purposes and bring back to the next meeting.

f. **Consider annual membership fee for KALC (2025-26)**

The Clerk advised that she had received renewal terms from KALC totalling £942.19 plus VAT for the 2025-26 period. It was noted by Cllr Russell that the membership cost has increased by almost £100 since last year however, it was agreed by all that the KALC membership is useful to have as it enables the PC to attend discounted training sessions and also seek expert advice from the Local Councils Advisers.

Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of the renewal at £942.19 plus VAT; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

g. **Consider new street lighting reactive maintenance contract**

The Clerk had circulated a new reactive maintenance contract from PSR Lighting for Councillors consideration. It was explained that a similar contract was adopted last year and had proven to be significantly more cost effective than the previous arrangement, under which the PC paid a fixed monthly fee. It was noted, however, that the call-out and site visit charges have increased slightly since last year:

Site Visit Charge - £275

Emergency Call Out Charge - £475

In spite of these increases, the Clerk confirmed that she still considers the reactive contract to be the most cost-effective approach for managing street light maintenance.

Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of the new street lighting reactive maintenance contract with PSR Lighting; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

h. **Consider request for a grant/donation from charity West Kent Mediation**

The Clerk had circulated a letter from West Kent Mediation to Cllrs prior to the meeting and asked them to consider whether they would like to offer a donation to the charity.

After a brief discussion, Cllr Jenkinson proposed that the PC offer a grant of £150 to West Kent Mediation; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

6. Planning

a. **Planning applications**

Planning Application:	25/00150/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Agricultural barn & associated access track, south of the main farmhouse.</u>
Location:	Bassetts, Maidstone Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8HQ
Recommendation	Refusal
Proposal	Cllr Boon; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend refusal based on comments from the Environment Agency.

Planning Application:	25/00510/FULL
Proposal:	<u>(Retrospective) - creation of hard standing with bunding to perimeter of the site for use as open storage.</u>
Location:	Land North of Horsmonden Storage, Goudhurst Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8AY
Recommendation	Approval
Proposal	Cllr Russell; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend approval as a reasonable use of this piece of land with an added condition to ensure that lighting complies with the ecological report. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

Planning Application:	25/00535/LBC
Proposal:	<u>Listed Building Consent - 6no replacement windows</u>
Location:	Mableford Cottage, Green Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8JS
Recommendation	Approval
Proposal	Cllr Jenkinson; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend approval subject to the Conservation Officers report. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

Planning Application:	25/00539/LBC
Proposal:	<u>Listed Building Consent - Replacement roof with added insulation using existing tiles and reclaimed ones; repairs to guttering and eaves.</u>
Location:	Old All Saints Church, Maidstone Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8DG
Recommendation	Refusal
Proposal	Cllr Boon; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend refusal on the grounds that the right information has not been provided.

Planning Application:	25/00659/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Erection of 2-storey side & rear extension, including a new front entrance porch & first floor balcony to side elevation.</u>
Location:	Orchard House Farm, Maidstone Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge Kent TN12 8HG
Recommendation	Refusal
Proposal	Cllr Larkin; Seconded Cllr Jenkinson. Carried.
Comments	Recommend refusal. Over development of the site.

Planning Application:	25/00697/FULL
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Proposal:	<u>Alteration to site entrance & erection of replacement gates, brick piers & wall.</u>
Location:	Orchard House Farm, Maidstone Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8HG
Recommendation	Refusal
Proposal	Cllr Larkin; seconded Cllr Jenkinson. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend refusal. Inappropriate installation in a rural area. The PC also have concerns about sight lines and removal of hedgerow.

Planning Application:	25/00686/TPO
Proposal:	<u>TREES: WALNUT - Reduce by 30% with proportional width reduction removing 1.5-2m growth cutting back to appropriate branch axils. Raise crown by approx 4m. Halo prune to approx 1m clearance around overhead lines. Installation of prop on large lower limb</u>
Location:	St Margaret's Church, Brick Kiln Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8EJ
Recommendation	Approval
Proposal	Cllr Sheppard; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend approval. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

Planning Application:	25/00693/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Erection of cart lodge</u>
Location:	Ruck Farm, Marle Place Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8DT
Recommendation	Approval
Proposal	Cllr Russell; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend approval as a reasonable facility in a traditional design. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

b. Feedback and outcomes from recent HDAG meeting 1 April 2025

Mr Winsor, Chair of HDAG, provided an extensive update to Cllrs and thoroughly covered all the details outlined in the [minutes](#), which had been circulated to Cllrs for their review prior to the meeting.

Suggested action point for the PC:

Mr Winsor reported that the group had raised concerns regarding the future management of the large open community space at the Bassetts Farm development. Whilst it is understood that the PC will be offered the allotment land to own and manage, it is thought that the rest of the community land would be handed to a Management company for maintenance, which would be paid for by those residents living on the development. It was felt that this could lead to a conflict situation where the land is not open for everyone to use freely as intended.

It was therefore suggested by the group that PC follow this up and try to safeguard the land for use by all by contacting the Landscape & Biodiversity Officer at TWBC and requesting a meeting to discuss the future management of the community orchard, public open space and wild flower meadow under the landscape and ecological management plan (LEMP) for this site.

Cllr Boon proposed that the Clerk approaches the Landscape & Biodiversity Officer at TWBC (David Scully) as detailed above; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

c. **Consider the Public Consultation on the proposed Main Modifications to the Tunbridge Wells Pre-Submission Submission Local Plan**

Mr Winsor, Chair of HDAG, had prepared a summary setting out the main modifications to the Local Plan with relevance to Horsmonden. This document had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

Mr Winsor had highlighted six points as suggested actions for the PC and/or points which could be included in a short response by the PC to this consultation:

1. **MM143 Policy AL/HO 2 Land south of Brenchley Road and west of Fromandez Drive**
Amend Policy AL/HO 2 to include DESIGN reference to nearby buildings etc
2. **MM144 Section 5: Land to the east of Horsmonden**
Paragraph 5.604
The following statement is flagged as important and should be added to the Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan in the future: The northern, higher parts of the site to be used for community uses and not built form, would reduce the impact of development upon the wider rural area, including views from the areas of higher land to the south of the site outside of the developed area of the village, including distant views from Goudhurst.
3. **MM144 Section 5: Land to the east of Horsmonden**
Paragraph 5.609
The site capacity should be shown as 140 and not 115-165 dwellings.
4. **MM183 Section 6: Historic Environment and Heritage Assets**
Are there any more local non-designated assets that should be added into the Neighbourhood Plan in the future?
5. **MM221 Policy H 9 Gypsies and Travellers**
Reference to Bassetts Farm, Horsmonden. It should be made clear that this relates to Bassetts Farm, Churn Lane, Maidstone Road and NOT Bassetts Farm, Goudhurst Road.
6. **MM255 Appendix 2: Schedule of designated Local Green Space sites within Tunbridge Wells borough**
Bassetts Farm Northern Community Open Space should be added to the map in the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was agreed that the most important points for the PC to raise in this consultation are points 3 and 5.

It was agreed that this consultation should be brought back to the planning meeting on the 22nd April for the PC to agree their comments.

6. Parish Council Decisions/Administration

a. **Parish Highways/footpath/street lighting/landscaping and tree issues – update on road closure at Hawkhurst crossroads (31 March - 28 June)**

The Clerk reported the following updates:

- KCC will cut back the grass verges encroaching on to the pavements around the Village Green, where necessary. This work is expected to be completed mid-April.
- Tree works on the village green and at Fromandez Drive are now complete.
- The road closure is now in place in Hawkhurst and so far, no issues have been reported to the PC however, it was noted that as it is currently school holidays there will be less traffic on the roads at peak times.

Cllr Larkin reported that she had noticed an increase in signage around the village advertising sheds/outdoor buildings. These signs have been attached to the village gateways in Horsmonden and should be removed. The Clerk advised that she will contact the company responsible to request that no further signs are put up. In the meantime, Cllrs are free to remove the signs if they come across them and they are able to do so safely .

b. **HIPs (Highways Improvement Plan) HIPS – updates on crossroads? Narrow pavements?**

Cllr Russell confirmed that himself and Cllr Davis will walk around the village centre and identify any narrow footpaths that could be included in the PC's Highways Improvement Plan (HIP). They will report back at the next meeting on the 12th May.

It was reported that there had been another accident at the crossroads where a vehicle travelling from Lamberhurst Rd to Maidstone Rd hit an oncoming vehicle on Goudhurst Rd. This has been reported to KCC and an update requested regarding the PCs requested for improved signage at the crossroads.

c. **Consider additional security measures at the Public Conveniences**

Following ongoing incidents of vandalism at the public toilets the Clerk asked Cllrs to consider additional security measures, including the installation of a suitable CCTV system.

The Clerk reported that she had consulted with B&K Electrical, who advised that a four-camera system would cost approximately £2,000, excluding the additional cost of installing Wi-Fi at the premises.

Cllrs agreed that, given the estimated expense, two further quotations should be sought as well as a formal quote from B&K Electrical. These will be considered at the next meeting on the 12th May.

The Clerk mentioned that she had noticed some patches on the ceiling of the ladies toilet which look like black mould. It was agreed that the Clerks would investigate this further and seek quotations for removal if required.

d. Consider booking form for VE Day Event at the Social Club and on the Village Green 10.05.2025 (Deposit)

The Deputy Clerk had circulated a booking form, risk assessment and proof of insurance to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their consideration. It was noted that this is a well organised event which will mainly be held at the social club with the village green being used if the weather is good. However, as the social club do not have a cheque book, they have asked whether the PC would consider waiving the deposit on this occasion.

Cllr Russell proposed acceptance of this event, with no deposit required; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

The Clerk asked for a volunteer to put up poppies on the street lights in the centre of the village. Cllr Richards confirmed that he would be happy to do this.

e. Consider VG Booking for May day event held by Leigh Academy Horsmonden (Deposit)

Cllr Boon proposed acceptance of this event, with no deposit required as it is a v small event, subject to receiving the necessary paperwork from Leigh Academy Horsmonden; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

f. Consider date for first meeting of the Play Area working group

It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would contact the parent representatives from Kindergarten and Leigh Academy Horsmonden to check their availability for an initial meeting.

g. Consider Annual Parish Meeting (guests, refreshments, advertising, agenda items)

The Clerk confirmed that the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) had been set for the 19th May 2025 and asked Cllrs to consider who they might wish to invite to speak. The Clerk advised that PC Lauren Latter has already been invited to speak but no response has been received yet. Cllr Boon suggested that the PC could approach Davenports and ask them to talk about the local vineyard and plans for the future. Cllr Boon will contact and ask.

In respect of refreshments, it was agreed that the Clerk would purchase:

- 3 x bottles of red wine
- 3 x bottles of white wine
- Tea, coffee, milk and sugar
- Elderflower cordial
- Cheese straws, sausage rolls and biscuits

The APM will be advertised by large posters at the village gateways and on the PC noticeboards, website and Facebook pages.

h. What Goes on Here? 26th April 2025 - Consider collecting a data bank of Parishioners email addresses. Uses and Implications.

It was agreed that for the upcoming "What Goes on Here?" event, the Parish Council would focus on gathering parishioners views on the preferred location for a new village hall. The Clerks will obtain a large map of the village, on which the three potential sites will be clearly marked:

1. A new village hall on Brenchley Rd

2. A refurbishment of the existing village hall on Back Lane
3. A new hall adjoining the proposed sports pavilion at the sports ground.

The aim is to get an initial sense of public preference for the location without providing further detail at this stage. It was further agreed that the Parish Council would also take the opportunity to ask parishioners if they would be willing to share their email addresses, in order to receive updates on village news and future surveys relating to key decision for the community.

Cllr Jenkinson proposed acceptance of the above as detailed; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

i. Consider switching on lights on the village green for the HoVEC Summer Festival

It was agreed by all that it would be a nice idea to use the Christmas lights for the Summer Festival weekend. Cllr Boon agreed to raise with HoVEC and report back any concerns.

7. Consultations

a. KALC survey to gather information for NHS 10 Year Plan

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PY82TNZ>

It was agreed that this survey should be passed on to the GP surgery.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.15pm

APPENDIX 1

Date: 02/04/2025		Horsmonden Parish Council Current Year			Page 1
Time: 12:33		Current A/c- Unity Trust Bank			
List of Payments made between 03/03/2025 and 31/03/2025					
Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Authorized Ref	Transaction Detail
03/03/2025	SSE	DD	251.29		Jan street lighting energy
03/03/2025	Lloyds Bank PLC	DD	92.54		Credit card February
10/03/2025	The Living Forest	BACS	474.00		Tree surveys
10/03/2025	Alison Eardley	BACS	2,142.00		specialist planning support
10/03/2025	Capel Groundcare	BACS	758.03		G/C, SIDs & play area insp Feb
10/03/2025	PSR Lighting & Signs Ltd	BACS	270.00		SL Site visit Gibbett lane
10/03/2025	Viking	BACS	53.63		Stationery
10/03/2025	P&F Cleaning services LTD	BACS	50.00		Call out charges toilets
11/03/2025	Business Stream	DD	85.27		Waste water Toilets Nov-Feb
13/03/2025	Peoples partnership	DD	218.92		Staff pensions March
13/03/2025	Clearview Windows	BACS	50.00		Clean VG noticeboards& benches
13/03/2025	Kent Association of Local Coun	BACS	84.00		Allotment training AB
13/03/2025	Clearview Windows	BACS	250.00		Gutter clearance
13/03/2025	Clearview Windows	BACS	60.00		Wash play equipment
13/03/2025	HMRC	BACS	481.84		Tax & NI March
13/03/2025	Microshade VSM	BACS	201.97		March emails and data
14/03/2025	British Gas Lite	DD	60.25		Feb electricity toilets
14/03/2025	British Gas Lite	DD	14.51		Feb electricity VG boxes
19/03/2025	EE - BT	DD	65.14		March mobiles
19/03/2025	Castle Water	DD	12.79		Water supply toilets March
19/03/2025	British Telecom	DD	136.08		Landline & internet connection
24/03/2025	P&F Cleaning services LTD	STD ORD	500.00		Toilet/shelter Cleaning March
25/03/2025	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	1,556.91		March salary
25/03/2025	Anna Blyth	BACS	1,120.53		Staff Salary March
26/03/2025	Drain Boss plumbing	BACS	264.00		Removal of blockage toilets
26/03/2025	Horsmonden Village Hall	BACS	720.00		Hire charges 24-25
26/03/2025	Capel Groundcare	BACS	732.92		March SIDs/Play area/Grounds
26/03/2025	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	BACS	46.11		Parish Office rates
26/03/2025	Kent Pat testing	BACS	124.50		Annual Pat testing office
26/03/2025	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	BACS	-46.11		Rates parish office
26/03/2025	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	BACS	46.11		Prish Office rates
26/03/2025	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	BACS	46.11		Parish office rates
26/03/2025	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	BACS	-46.11		Parish office rates
28/03/2025	Caroline Davis	BACS	24.42		refreshments ofr litter pick
28/03/2025	Mr J Couchman	BACS	160.00		clock & play area inspections
31/03/2025	SSE	DD	227.01		Feb Street lights energy
31/03/2025	Lloyds Bank PLC	DD	224.68		credit card Feb-March
31/03/2025	caroline Davis	BACS	1.00		litter pick shortfall payment
31/03/2025	Caroline Davis	BACS	-1.00		refrehments litter pick
31/03/2025	Unity Trust Bank	DD	8.70		Bank charges Feb
Total Payments			11,522.04		

