

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL

ON MONDAY, 7 JULY 2025 AT 7:30PM

Present:

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

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

Anna Blyth (Deputy Clerk)

Cllr Mark Munday (KCC)

2 members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence and declarations of interest

Cllrs Jenkinson, Baxter-Smith, Mobbs and Darrah.

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

Cllr Russell declared an interest under item 5h and did not take part in any discussions or decisions relating to this item.

2. Presentation of KALC award to Jane March

The Chair presented the KALC Community Award to Jane March in recognition of her outstanding dedication and service to the community of Horsmonden.

Cllr Richards delivered a short speech, highlighting Jane's extensive service to the community having served on Horsmonden Parish Council for a total of 20 years, including 14 years as Chairman, and also representing the community as a Borough Councillor for 13 years. Throughout her tenure, Jane demonstrated exceptional leadership and commitment, overseeing numerous projects that have greatly enriched the village and its community.

In receiving the award, Jane expressed her heartfelt thanks, saying how delighted and honoured she was to be recognised. She warmly thanked Cllrs for the nomination and shared how much of a privilege it had been to serve the community over the years. She also praised the positive working environment of Horsmonden Parish Council, noting that it should be proud of its setup, where mutual respect, consideration, and cooperation are clearly valued.

3. Public Session (no decisions)

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

4. Minutes of Parish Council Meetings

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2 June 2025 had been circulated beforehand by the Clerk. They were agreed for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Boon, seconded Cllr Davis and voted for unanimously by those present at that meeting and signed by the Chair.

The Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 17 June 2025 had been circulated beforehand by the Clerk. They were agreed for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Russell, seconded Cllr Larkin 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 7 July 2025 as attached (Appendix 1- See end of document)**

The Clerk showed a copy of the list of payments up to and including 7 July 2025 as a total of £8,091.95. Cllr Davis proposed approval of the schedule of payments; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

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

b. **Bank Reconciliations as at 30 June 2025**

The bank balance for the Council's Unity Trust Bank (current account) at 30 June 2025 was displayed with a total at £72,579.51.

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

c. **Consider first aid training**

Since the last meeting, the Clerk confirmed that several local groups have expressed an interest in first aid training if a session was organised by the Parish Council. Therefore, it is not anticipated that there would be any difficulty in filling the 12 available spaces.

The Clerk had re-circulated the three quotations discussed at the last meeting. Cllr Larkin proposed that the PC accept the quotation provided by On Site First Aid (£749 plus VAT for up to 12 attendees), noting that the company delivered the training for the Council three years ago and received positive feedback at the time; seconded Cllr Sheppard, Unanimous.

Cllrs Larkin and Boon expressed an interest in the training, subject to availability, as well as the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

d. **Parish Office – quotation to purchase additional office furniture, office lease, other considerations**

The Clerk had circulated a quotation for additional office furniture, totalling £690.30 plus VAT, to Cllrs prior to the meeting. It was confirmed that the furniture chosen has been matched as closely as possible to the existing items and the price includes full installation.

Cllr Larkin proposed acceptance of the cost to purchase additional furniture as detailed; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

The Clerk explained that the new lease for the Parish Office had not yet been received but is expected within the next few days. She asked whether a few councillors would be willing to read through the lease and provide their agreement, as waiting until the next meeting would cause considerable delay to the process. It is not believed that a solicitor is required at this stage, although this will depend on the content of the lease once received.

Cllr Larkin proposed that Cllrs Richards, Boon, Russell and Baxter-Smith be given delegated authority to agree and sign the lease on the PCs behalf, unless it is felt that a solicitor is required; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

e. **Quotation for annual membership of Chat GPT**

The costs for setting up a business ChatGPT account (£25 a month, billed annually) had been circulated prior to the meeting, and the benefits were explained to councillors. It was agreed that the Clerks still need to learn more about the platform, but it is expected to assist them in their day-to-day duties. This was noted as a step that other parishes are also beginning to take.

Cllr Sheppard proposed that the PC go ahead and set up a ChatGPT business account for £25 per month; seconded Cllr Boon.

f. **Quotation for street light repairs**

Following a recent street lighting survey, the Clerk confirmed that the following quotations had been received for repairs:

Column No.	Repairs	Total Cost (NET)
6	Day burning issue	£317 (£275 site visit, £42 photocell)
4, 13, 15	Leaning / bent – not dangerous	£275 per column (based on a minimum of 3)

Councillors discussed the quotations received and agreed that, as the leaning / bent columns are not considered dangerous, this work could be deferred and potentially budgeted for in the next financial year if deemed necessary at the time.

Cllr Sheppard proposed that the PC accept the quotation to fix column 6 only (£317 plus VAT); seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

g. **Quotation for external painting at parish toilets**

The Clerk had circulated a quotation from Gordon's Home Improvements totalling £660 (no VAT) to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their consideration. The quotation included the painting of the gables, fascia's, soffits, and the cleaner's door.

It was noted that the company approached are regularly used by the Parish Council and as it was felt that this work needed to be carried out as soon as possible whilst the period of good weather remained and preferably prior to installation of the new CCTV system and security gate; it was not felt that the work should be delayed in order to seek alternative quotations.

Cllr Davis proposed acceptance of the quotation totalling £660 (no VAT); seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

Cllr Russell left the meeting at this point.

h. **Consider grant application from Horsmonden Village Hall committee**

The Clerk had received a grant application form from the Village Hall Committee requesting a grant of £1,500 to help towards costs relating to the day-to day running of the Village Hall including insurance, monthly water testing with Envirocure and recent repairs to the emergency lighting.

The Clerk reminded councillors that the PC had allocated funds within the budget to support the Village Hall Committee, following the change in responsibility for upkeep of the building to the Village Hall committee. This change in responsibility followed on from close examination of the title documents relating to the Village Hall and consequential reinterpretation of these documents by Surrey Hills solicitors during 2024. It was hence noted that the Village Hall Committee had not previously been responsible for these costs and had therefore been unable to budget for them for the coming year.

Cllr Larkin proposed that the PC grant £1,500 to the Village Hall Committee; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

Cllr Russell returned to the meeting.

KCC Councillor Mark Munday provided a brief update on county-wide matters. He advised that the Head of KCC Highways and Transportation has recently resigned and been replaced, but at this stage it is uncertain how this change will affect ongoing matters.

The Clerk reported ongoing drainage issues on Lamberhurst Road, which have been repeatedly raised by both residents and the PC. Despite this, KCC have advised that the drains will not be cleared until October, as that is when the work is scheduled. Cllr Munday was asked if he would support the PC in pressing for the issue to be addressed sooner, as the road floods during heavy rain, which is unacceptable.

6. Planning

a. **Planning applications**

Planning Application:	25/00672/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Barn conversion into live/work unit with associated garden land, parking, landscaping & biodiversity enhancements (Self-build)</u>
Location:	Barn North Of Boundary Farm, Marle Place Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 7HS
Recommendation	Refusal
Proposal	Cllr Boon; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend refusal. Development does not meet new parking standards.

b. **Feedback and updates on planning matters**

The Clerk advised that she is continuing to follow up with TWBC Planning Enforcement regarding a potential planning breach on the land adjacent to 2 Spring Cottages, Goudhurst Road, Horsmonden. Officers have requested further evidence and photographs to support the case; however, it was noted that this is difficult for Cllrs to obtain, as the land is not easily accessible from the road. It was requested that the Clerk continue to press TWBC to

investigate the matter further. Other enforcement matters on the PCs radar were the fence change at Lockie Cottage in Gun Back Lane , and various issues at Pullen's Farm, Lamberhurst Road .

The Clerk reminded Cllrs that there is a site visit scheduled to Bockingfold Solar Farm on the 9th July starting at 10.30am. Also on the 9th July, Persimmon Homes have booked the Village Hall between 4pm and 7pm for their regular residents liaison meeting. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would contact Persimmon Homes to confirm what time they expect the meeting to start and circulate accordingly.

6. Parish Council Decisions/Administration

a. Parish Highways/footpath/street lighting/landscaping and tree issues – update on narrow pavements

The following points were raised and discussed:

- The Clerk updated Cllrs regarding narrow footpaths in the village and areas where overgrown hedges have been reported. It was agreed that the hedge on Maidstone Road next to South View remains a safety concern and this has been reported again to Highways who will be issuing another letter to the owner.
- Cllr Russell advised that he had noticed some low hanging branches on the edge of the village green (Goudhurst Road) and confirmed that he would trim these back himself.
- Cllr Sheppard confirmed that he would be happy to install the new sign regarding the wildflower garden at Fromandez Drive and will liaise with Cllr Larkin regarding the required location.

b. HIPs (Highways Improvement Plan) HIPS – updates on crossroads? Discuss ideas for Parish Road Safety Grant

The Clerks had circulated the PC's latest Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) document to Cllrs prior to the meeting. This document had recently been updated by KCC to reflect the PC's current concerns.

It was unanimously agreed that the crossroads remain the Parish Council's most significant concern, particularly in light of two recent accidents—one of which was quite serious.

Cllr Boon commented on the most recent incident, noting that the police response time was very poor. It was agreed that this issue should be raised at the PC's next meeting with Kent Police.

Cllrs then reviewed each item on the HIP individually, as follows:

HIP 1 – Crossroads

Councillors discussed the ongoing safety issues at the crossroads and while the suggestion by KCC to install an additional Speed Indicator Device (SID) was considered, the general consensus was that this measure alone would not sufficiently emphasise the need for drivers to stop at the junction.

It was agreed that the Clerks would contact KCC to request advice on alternative or additional safety measures that might more effectively address the risks at the crossroads.

Councillors also expressed interest in the Parish Road Safety Grant scheme and asked the Clerk to seek clarification regarding measures that might be eligible for support under the scheme and those likely to have the greatest impact on road safety at the crossroads.

HIP 2 – Narrow Footpaths

Following discussion, it was agreed that Lamberhurst Road should be added to HIP 2, alongside Goudhurst Road.

Cllrs noted that Lamberhurst Road is extremely narrow and contains several pinch points, making it particularly difficult—and at times unsafe—for users of pushchairs, mobility scooters, and similar aids. The road also serves as a key pedestrian route to Spriver's and is regularly used by walkers.

HIP 3 – Speed Limit on Maidstone Road

Following feedback from KCC, it was noted that telematics data for Maidstone Road indicates that vehicle speeds are currently below the 40mph speed limit, demonstrating good compliance. As a result, KCC do not believe that undertaking additional traffic surveys in this location would produce significantly different findings. However, they are willing to investigate improving the signage/visibility of the existing signage and perhaps look to install additional measures such as roundels on the road, to ensure drivers are aware of the current 40mph speed limit especially on the approach to the junction with Hayman's Hill.

Cllrs agreed that the PC should ask KCC to investigate these additional measures further.

HIP 4 – One Way system on Green Lane

It was agreed that the PC should contact KCC once the new chemist is operational on Green Road. At that point, a traffic survey will be requested to assess any increase in traffic volume resulting from the opening of the new facility. These results may help support a case for a one way system.

c. Agreement to organise discussion between PC and Sports Club to discuss future Village Hall / Sports Pavilion

Cllr Richards confirmed that the Sports Club had requested a meeting with the PC to begin discussions about the possibility of locating a new Village Hall at the sports ground, as part of the proposed new sports pavilion development.

After discussion between Cllrs, it was agreed that Cllrs Richards, Baxter-Smith and Russell would be happy to form a working party with members of the Sports Club Committee to begin initial discussions. It was suggested that a meeting should be scheduled for September.

d. Review and agree Safeguarding Policy and actions from this

The Clerk had circulated the PC's Safeguarding Policy to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

Cllr Boon proposed acceptance of the policy with no changes required; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

e. Review and agree Lone Worker Policy and actions from this

The Clerk had circulated the PC's Lone Worker Policy to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

Cllr Russell proposed acceptance of the policy with no changes required; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

f. Feedback from new play area group meeting

The Clerk advised that the new play area group meeting scheduled for July could not go ahead due to three members of the working party being unavailable. It was agreed that the meeting should be rescheduled for September, as the holiday season is approaching.

It was mentioned that increasing the size of the play area should be explored, as it is currently very limited and this is likely to be raised at the upcoming meeting. It was agreed that, prior to the first meeting in September, the Clerk would approach the land owners to enquire whether they would consider leasing additional land to allow the play area to be extended.

g. Booking for the horse fair 2025

The Clerk advised that, although some paperwork had been received from the organiser regarding the Horse Fair on 14th September 2025, the information provided was limited. TWBC now require all large events to be registered on their 'Event App' so details can be shared with relevant agencies however, it was noted this may be difficult for the organiser due to limited access to technology. It was agreed that TWBC should be asked to assist with the initial setup, as this is not a PC event.

Concerns were raised about the local pub potentially opening and serving alcohol, which caused some issues last year. As the organiser has specifically requested that the pub does not serve alcohol at the event, it was agreed that the PC would write to the landlords and ask them to consider remaining closed in line with official recommendations.

Cllr Boon proposed acceptance of the event subject to the relevant paperwork being received; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

h. National Highways and Transport Survey for 2025-26

Cllr Larkin agreed to complete this survey on behalf of the PC.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm

APPENDIX 1

Date: 07/07/2025

Horsmonden Parish Council Current Year

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Time: 11:28

Current A/c- Unity Trust Bank

List of Payments made between 02/06/2025 and 06/07/2025

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
02/06/2025	Lloyds Bank PLC	DD	42.62		credit card May
02/06/2025	GDPR-INFO LTD	BACS	420.00		Annual DPO fee
02/06/2025	Drain Detectives	BACS	348.00		Clear blockage/descale unri
06/06/2025	HMRC	BACS	635.05		June Tax & NI
06/06/2025	citizens Advice N & W Kent	BACS	150.00		donation
06/06/2025	Capel Groundcare	BACS	732.92		Groundcare,SIDS,Play - May
09/06/2025	Business Stream	DD	119.72		waste water service Feb-May
12/06/2025	British Gas Lite	DD	14.41		june electricity VG
12/06/2025	British Gas Lite	DD	57.97		Electricity toilets June
16/06/2025	Peoples partnership	DD	227.30		June staff pensions
17/06/2025	EE - BT	DD	69.29		Phones and BB June
17/06/2025	Castle Water	DD	70.16		May water supply Toilets
19/06/2025	British Telecom	DD	137.54		Phone charges March - May
20/06/2025	Don McKee Creations	BACS	80.00		4 wooden signs for FD
20/06/2025	Knockout print services Ltd	BACS	60.00		Sign for FD
20/06/2025	P&F Cleaning services LTD	BACS	50.00		Extra clean for festival
20/06/2025	Air Ambulance Charity Kent Sur	BACS	200.00		donation to air ambulance
23/06/2025	Flowmotion	BACS	650.00		circus activities for HOVEC
23/06/2025	P&F Cleaning services LTD	SO	500.00		cleaning toilets & shelter June
23/06/2025	hovec	BACS	56.00		Electricity summer fest
23/06/2025	HOvec	BACS	-56.00		Electricity t summer fest
25/06/2025	Anna Blyth	BACS	1,143.76		June Salary
25/06/2025	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	1,585.62		June Salary
26/06/2025	Microshade VSM	BACS	209.62		June emials and data
30/06/2025	SSE	DD	251.29		Electricity street lights May
30/06/2025	C J Couchman	BACS	160.00		clock and play area June
30/06/2025	Unity Trust Bank	DD	10.05		bank charges June
01/07/2025	Lloyds Bank PLC	DD	69.67		credit card June
03/07/2025	Capel Groundcare	BACS	96.96		play ground repairs
Total Payments			8,091.95		