

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL**  
**ON MONDAY, 13 APRIL 2026 AT 7:30PM**

**Present:**

Cllrs Boon (acting Chair), Davis, Russell, Jenkinson, Sheppard, Larkin, Baxter-Smith and Baylis

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

Anna Blyth (Deputy Clerk)

Cllr David Knight (part of the meeting)

Cllr Lynne Darrah (part of the meeting)

Cllr Mark Munday (part of the meeting)

Mr Andrew Winser (Chair of HDAG)

The meeting started at 7.31pm.

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

Cllr Richards & Cllr Mobbs.

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

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

No members of the public had requested to speak in the public session.

**3. Minutes of Parish Council Meetings**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2 March 2026 had been circulated beforehand by the Clerk. They were agreed for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Russell; seconded Cllr Davis 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 31 March 2026 as attached (Appendix 1- See end of document)**

The Clerk showed a copy of the list of payments up to and including 31 March 2026 as a total of £11,286.66. Cllr Baxter-Smith proposed approval of the schedule of payments; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

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

**b. Bank Reconciliations for all bank accounts at 31 March 2026**

Statements and reconciliations confirming the Council's bank accounts were shown as follows:

- Unity Trust bank balance at 31 March 2026 as £57,353.68.
- The United Trust (40-day notice account) bank balance at 31 March 2025 as £39,812.24.

- The United Trust (1-year business bond) bank balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 as £40,000. The Clerk confirmed that the interest from The United Trust Bond had already been paid over to the PCs Unity Trust bank current account . Total reconciliation of all bank accounts - £137,165.92.

Cllr Jenkinson proposed approval of the bank reconciliations for all bank accounts; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

c. **Consider Street Lighting contract for 26-27**

The Clerk reported that the annual street lighting contract for 2026–27 from PSR Lighting had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllrs were reminded that the PC currently operate a reactive maintenance contract, whereby charges are incurred only when call-outs are required, at a rate of £275 per visit. It was agreed that this arrangement has proved more cost-effective over the past couple of years compared to a fixed monthly contract. It was noted that there has been no change in price for 2026-27 since the previous year.

Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of the new contract from PSR Lighting; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

d. **Consider quotation to replace rope ladder at parish play area**

The Clerk had circulated a quotation for the replacement of the rope ladder/scramble net at the parish play area, which has been being monitored through the quarterly play area inspections. Whilst the equipment is not currently considered dangerous, it is showing signs of wear.

A quote had been obtained from Playdale for the supply of the rope ladder at a cost of £534.01 plus VAT, along with a quotation from Capel Groundcare for installation at a cost of £127.50. It was noted that it would be more cost-effective to purchase the ladder directly from Playdale and arrange for Capel Groundcare to carry out the installation. No other quotations had been obtained as these suppliers were the Councils preferred contractors.

Cllrs discussed the quotations, and the Chair of Finance, Cllr Russell, reminded Cllrs that there is £10,000 allocated within the current budget for play area repairs. It had originally been anticipated that a portion of this funding might be set aside towards future play area improvements; however, it was noted that the Section 106 funding available for play areas remains in a healthy position.

Cllr Jenkinson proposed acceptance of the two quotations totalling £661.21 plus VAT, with the cost to be met from the budgeted play area repairs fund; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

e. **Consider fee for annual membership of KALC April 26-27**

The Clerk advised that the PC's annual membership with KALC is due for renewal at a cost of £1,033.35 plus VAT. The Clerk confirmed that this membership provides good value for money, offering reduced rates for training sessions and access to expert advice, which has been utilised previously.

Cllr Larkin proposed acceptance of the renewal quotation from KALC (£1,033.35 plus VAT); seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

f. **Consider quotation for cleaning village gateways**

The Clerk advised that the village gateways have not been cleaned since 2024 and are now looking dirty again. A quotation of £340 plus VAT had been received from Capel Groundcare to clean all four gateways. It was noted that this represents an increase compared to 2024; however, the Clerk reminded Cllrs that the contractor had to clean the gateways twice on the previous occasion due to their condition, as they were particularly difficult to clean.

Cllr Davis proposed acceptance of the quotation from Capel Groundcare totalling £340 plus VAT; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

g. **Consider quotation for various groundwork maintenance (Aeration, scarifying, fertiliser, weed the VG). Removing soil from Goudhurst Road pavement (already agreed by the Clerk)**

The Clerk had circulated a quotation from Capel Groundcare, the PC's ground maintenance contractors, for various maintenance works on the village green (including aeration, scarifying, fertilising, and weeding) totalling £2,074.50 plus VAT.

Cllr discussed the quotation and it was noted that, although this represents a large expenditure, there was general agreement that the maintenance works should be carried out to keep the village green in the best possible condition for its frequent use and upcoming summer events.

Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of the quotation from Capel Groundcare totalling £2,074.50 plus VAT; seconded Cllr Russell. Carried.

Cllr Larkin raised a couple of minor concerns regarding recent work by Capel Groundcare, including clumps of grass clippings left on the green after mowing and the condition of the recently planted planters, which may need some further attention. The Clerk confirmed that she will raise these points with Capel Groundcare but noted that grass collection is not included within the current contract and would incur additional cost.

The Clerk also reminded Cllrs that the planters require regular watering and asked for volunteers. Cllr Boon suggested that a post be created on Facebook requesting volunteers to assist.

h. **Consider support for ACRE (Actions for communities in Rural Kent)**

The Clerk had circulated a request from ACRE for support; however, no specific amount had been indicated. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask ACRE to submit a grant application through the usual process for the PC to consider further.

## 5. Planning

a.

<b>Planning Application:</b>	25/02758/REM
<b>Proposal:</b>	<u>Approval of Reserved Matters (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout &amp; Scale) following Outline Permission for Village hall and a residential development of up to 68 dwellings and associated infrastructure (22/00296/OUT). Village hall is excluded.</u>
<b>Location:</b>	Land South Of Brenchley Road, Brenchley Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent
<b>Recommendation</b>	See comments
<b>Proposal</b>	Cllr Boon. Carried.

<b>Comments</b>	<p>Based on the new information provided, the Parish Council would question if any of the queries raised in the TWBC Planning Policy Officers comments of the 19th December 2025 have been addressed.</p> <p>The Parish Council also continue to have concerns regarding the proposed emergency access crossing an internal and potentially busy footpath.</p>
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**b. Feedback on S106 agreement for planning application 24/00078/HYBRID Bassetts Farm and recent issues regarding the developments**

The Clerk advised that she had initially not received a response from the Head of TWBC Planning, Carlos Hone, following her email dated 4th March; however, a reply has since been received confirming that the matter is still under consideration.

It was noted that the new footway on Goudhurst Road is now open for pedestrians; however, issues with the spring continue. It is understood that there are ongoing discussions between the developer and the landowner regarding this matter.

It was also noted that various planning enforcement issues remain under investigation by TWBC. The PC raised concerns regarding the very large advertising flags at the front of the development, however it has been confirmed that these are considered permitted development. Discussions are ongoing regarding the number of containers on site and the quantity of soil that remains, despite assurances that this material is being moved to another site.

**c. Agree attendees for meeting with Renvolt regarding information boards at Bockingfold Solar Farm**

The Clerk advised that the PC need to arrange a meeting with Renvolt to discuss the information boards that have been agreed in principal for installation on the public footpaths surrounding the site.

The Deputy Clerk had carried out research into similar boards and had spoken with the Kent High Weald Partnership for advice. All information gathered had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

It was agreed that an initial meeting should take place to confirm the budget and outline responsibilities before progressing to design discussions. Those who expressed an interest in being involved were the Deputy Clerk, Cllr Russell and Cllr Davis.

Cllr Mark Munday noted that Paddock Wood TC had previously installed similar boards using Fitzpatrick Woolmer for both the boards and content. It was suggested that the Clerks should contact Paddock Wood TC to see if they could offer any advice.

**d. Feedback and updates on planning and enforcement matters**

The Clerk had circulated the quarterly planning enforcement update spreadsheet to councillors prior to the meeting. It was noted that the information contained within the spreadsheet has improved and is more detailed than the previous version.

The Clerk advised that the PC had met with Southern Water regarding the Bassetts Farm development and raised a number of questions about the existing sewerage system, particularly whether it has been properly assessed to ensure it has sufficient capacity to accommodate all the new houses proposed for the site. Southern Water subsequently reviewed the matter and confirmed that there is capacity.

The Clerk also raised similar concerns in relation to the proposed houses on Brenchley Road, and a response from Southern Water is still awaited.

The Clerk provided a brief update regarding the main outstanding planning enforcement matters in the Parish, noting that updates from TWBC are limited while cases are ongoing.

## **6. Updates from Borough/County Councillors**

Cllr David Knight reported that local elections are forthcoming. He also highlighted a Government consultation on planning committee reform, which proposes changes to how planning applications are determined. He explained that the proposals aim to standardise the planning decision-making process and introduce a more structured, rules-based system for determining applications.

Cllr Darrah added that the proposals could reduce or remove Borough Councillors' ability to "call in" planning applications, with more decisions potentially being made by planning officers only, depending on set categories and delegated arrangements. The consultation also refers to "gateway tests" and different application schedules that would determine how applications are dealt with and whether they go to committee.

She also noted that there may be changes to the structure and size of planning committees, including the number of Cllrs sitting on them, alongside strengthened requirements for all committee members to undertake mandatory planning training to ensure decisions are made consistently and in line with planning policy and legislation.

*The Clerk confirmed that this consultation would be added to the agenda of the PCs next planning meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> April. Deadline for comments is 23<sup>rd</sup> April.*

Cllr Mark Munday spoke about the new voting hubs being introduced by TWBC. He advised that Tunbridge Wells is one of five areas trialling these hubs, which are designated locations where residents can attend to cast their vote in person during the early voting period, rather than only at their assigned polling station on election day. The aim is to improve accessibility and convenience for voters.

Cllr Mark Munday also advised that a meeting has been arranged on the 27<sup>th</sup> April with KCC officers regarding the ongoing concerns relating to the bus stop on Goudhurst Road. He will provide an update following this meeting.

An update was given on the HIPS process in relation to the TWBC community grant, with KCC currently contracting the works through their approved contractor. It was confirmed that once invoices are issued, the Borough Council will reimburse the agreed grant funding amount promptly. Cllr Munday mentioned that some member grant funding is being held in reserve and may be available for local projects if required.

## 7. Parish Council Decisions/Administration

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

The Clerk presented the “Dog Poo Fairy” initiative, a campaign by Keep Britain Tidy, which includes the option to purchase packs of posters and related materials. Cllrs expressed reservations regarding the design and agreed to explore alternative options.

The presence of Spanish bluebells on the village green was noted. Cllrs Larkin and Jenkinson agreed that they will make arrangements to address this.

Concerns were raised regarding the two lime trees located outside Poplars, particularly in relation to potential side root growth and whether any remedial action may be required. It was agreed that the lime trees will be reviewed as part of the next scheduled tree survey.

### b. **Request from Brenchley and Matfield PC to consider requesting an additional gritting route for winter 2026 onwards**

The Clerk reported that Brenchley and Matfield PC had been in contact regarding the current KCC gritting routes and had shared a map showing the roads currently covered. B&M PC have noted that Crook Road leading into Yew Tree Green Road is not included within the existing route. They have therefore approached Horsmonden PC to ask whether they would be interested in exploring the possibility of extending the gritting coverage to include this stretch, noting that Crook Road falls within Brenchley and Yew Tree Green Road within Horsmonden. They recognise that, should KCC be agreeable, they may request a financial contribution towards the additional work.

It was noted that this is at a very early stage and has not been budgeted for, so at this point the intention is simply to gauge whether Cllrs would be interested in exploring the option further.

Cllr Baxter-Smith proposed that the PC agree in principle to explore whether KCC would be able to add the additional gritting link between Brenchley and Horsmonden, consisting of Crook Road and Yew Tree Green Road, to the existing gritting route; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

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

The Clerk advised that she is still chasing clarification on the procedure for the HIPs grant relating to the agreed works on Maidstone Road.

The Deputy Clerk is also continuing to seek an update on HIP No. 4, where an automatic traffic count (ATC) has been requested for Green Road. Due to current workloads, it has been difficult to obtain a response from the HIPs team.

### d. **Review and agree draft lease for new Parish Office**

The Clerk had circulated the draft lease for the new parish office to Cllrs prior to the meeting, noting that there are still a couple of minor points outstanding. Following review, Cllrs confirmed they were happy with the content.

It had previously been agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair would be authorised to sign the lease, on behalf of the PC, outside of a meeting once the final draft was received, in order to avoid any further delays waiting for the next meeting. The Clerk asked Cllrs to confirm that this arrangement remained acceptable.

Cllr Baxter-Smith proposed that this arrangement be confirmed as acceptable; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

e. **Consider updated scope of works for New Village Hall survey**

The Clerk had circulated an updated draft of the scope of works for a new village hall survey to Councillors prior to the meeting for their review. She also presented the document at the meeting and went through it section by section. A couple of minor amendments were made.

Cllr Boon proposed acceptance of the scope of works as drafted including the minor amendments made; seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith.

f. **Consider establishing a working party to review and update the Emergency Plan, including proposed timelines and members willing to join the group**

The Clerk asked Cllrs who would like to be involved in the working party to progress the redrafting of the Emergency Plan, noting that the current group structure needs to be streamlined. Cllrs Jenkinson and Larkin agreed to step down from the working party. Cllrs Davis, Russell, Sheppard, Baxter-Smith and Baylis agreed to remain on the group. It was also noted that two parishioners with relevant expertise have agreed in principle to join the working party.

In terms of timings, it was agreed that the Clerk would first contact the two parishioners to confirm their availability and then arrange and confirm a suitable meeting date for the working party.

g. **Consider new Travel and Subsistence Policy**

The Clerk had circulated a newly drafted Travel and Subsistence policy to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their review. It was noted that the PC do not currently have such a policy in place and that it is considered good practice to adopt one.

Cllr Russell proposed acceptance of the policy as drafted; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

h. **Update from Chair about Local Government Reorganisation and liaising with other local parishes about clustering**

As the Chair was not able to attend the meeting he was unable to give an update but the Clerk explained that, in relation to local government reorganisation, consideration is being given to what services are best delivered at Parish level rather than by a future unitary authority. This includes how parishes might work together in groups or clusters to deliver them effectively. It was noted that local parishes are already starting to discuss how they can work together.

Cllr Boon commented that there are various areas that could be considered, such as shared grounds maintenance, toilet cleaning, and IT services. It was noted that, at this stage, it is important to maintain open communication with other parishes, but not to make any firm decisions as the situation is still uncertain.

i. **Discuss next steps for the parish play area project**

Following his meeting with the Kindergarten representatives, Cllr Baxter Smith provided the feedback to the PC regarding the proposed play area development plans.

He reported that the Kindergarten team had been shown the current draft designs prepared by Playdale for the new play area project. They confirmed that they are, in principle, open to the idea of extending the play area however as they are the landowners, they will need to carry out further internal discussions. At this stage they do not foresee any objections to the PC leasing additional land for this purpose.

They did, however, indicate a clear preference regarding the layout of the proposed extension. Their preferred option is for the play area to be extended straight back into the current basketball area, rather than forming an L-shaped configuration. This preference is based on concerns that an L-shaped design could overlook the Kindergarten's outdoor space and impact their privacy.

The Kindergarten representatives have confirmed that they will revert to the PC following their internal meeting once they have had the opportunity to consider the proposal in more detail.

**j. Consider VG booking for the HoVEC Summer Festival**

Cllr Boon gave a brief update regarding the Summer Festival, as the HOVEC representative. It was noted that HoVEC are now members of the Purple Guide, which is a comprehensive set of health and safety guidance for outdoor events and festivals.

It was confirmed that HoVEC are currently working on the paperwork for this event and this will be received shortly.

**k. Consider VG booking for May day event held by Leigh Academy Horsmondon**

Cllr Jenkinson proposed acceptance of the May Day event on the village green subject to receipt of the necessary paperwork; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

**l. Agree VG booking for short video – change of date to 27-31 July 2026**

Cllr Boon proposed acceptance of the change of date to 27-31 July 2026 subject to receipt of the necessary paperwork; seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.

**m. Consider request for scattering of ashes on Horsmondon Village Green**

The Clerk had circulated a request from a parishioner seeking permission to scatter ashes on the village green. Cllrs considered the request and, whilst appreciating the sensitivity of the matter, felt that the village green, as a busy public space, was not considered an appropriate location.

It was proposed by Cllr Davis that the request be declined, and seconded by Cllr Larkin.

**n. Consider booking free AED training with Hopkins Training**

In view of the meeting approaching the three-hour time limit, it was agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

**o. Discuss community litter pick 9 May 2026**

The Clerk confirmed that the community litter pick on 9th May is now being advertised and asked which Cllrs would be available on the day to assist with running the event.

It was agreed that Cllrs Larkin and Jenkinson would be responsible for signing participants in and out and Cllr Davis would allocate areas/roads to volunteers.

Cllrs Sheppard and Boon indicated they may also be available to assist.

## **8. Consultations**

- a. **KCC Consultation Proposed new primary school in Paddock Wood, Tunbridge Wells**  
<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/new-school-paddock-wood> closes 22 April 2026  
Cllr Boon proposed that the PC support the new primary in Paddock Wood and agreed to complete the consultation on behalf of the PC. This proposal was unanimously agreed by those present.
- b. **KCC Consultation: Draft Short Breaks Strategy 2026-2031**  
[www.kent.gov.uk/shortbreaksconsultation](http://www.kent.gov.uk/shortbreaksconsultation) closes 30 April 2026  
Cllr Larkin agreed to complete this consultation on behalf of the PC.

## **9. Feedback Training / Meetings / Events Attended**

Meeting with Southern Water – see item 5d.

Parish Chairmans meetings/Clerks meeting – see item 7h.

Police community engagement events – Cllr Boon advised that she had recently attended an Violence Against Women event hosted by Kent Police and found it very informative.

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.31pm**

## **APPENDIX 1**

## List of Payments made between 02/03/2026 and 31/03/2026

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
02/03/2026	Capel Groundcare	BACS	732.92		Feb Groundcare,Sids,Play area
03/03/2026	Lloyds Bank PLC	DD	82.54		credit card feb
06/03/2026	Hi Kent	BACS	480.00		Community Grant to charity
06/03/2026	DAVSS	BACS	250.00		community grant to charity
06/03/2026	Society Of Local Council Clerk	BACS	313.00		clerks membership SLCC
06/03/2026	Gillet & Johnston	BACS	330.00		Clock repairs
09/03/2026	Business Stream	DD	203.97		quarterly waste water
11/03/2026	Hopkins	BACS	1,167.00		AED cabinet & aftercare
16/03/2026	British Telecom	DD	129.73		telephone and broadband
17/03/2026	EDF Energy	DD	46.17		Feb Electricity toilets
17/03/2026	EDF Energy	DD	18.24		Feb electricity VG boxes
17/03/2026	EE - BT	DD	93.95		mobiles & CCTV SIM
17/03/2026	Castle Water	DD	46.41		Feb Water supply
19/03/2026	Peoples partnership	DD	238.18		staff pension March
19/03/2026	Kent Pat Testing Ltd	BACS	144.60		PAT testing
20/03/2026	Microshade VSM	BACS	209.62		emails & data March
20/03/2026	HMRC	BACS	677.60		March tax & NI
20/03/2026	Capel Groundcare	BACS	777.94		March Groundcare SIDS Playarea
23/03/2026	NPower Business solutions	BACS	48.74		Christmas lights 25-26
23/03/2026	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	BACS	52.60		Rates Parish Office
23/03/2026	Horsmonden Village Hall	BACS	675.00		Parish Office rent
24/03/2026	Horsmonden Village Hall	BACS	720.00		Hall Hire 25-26
24/03/2026	Drax	DD	234.95		Electricity SL Feb
25/03/2026	P&F Cleaning services LTD	SO	500.00		Clean Toilets & shelter March
25/03/2026	Mr J Couchman	BACS	160.00		play area& clock insp March
25/03/2026	Anna Blyth	BACS	1,170.32		Staff salary March
25/03/2026	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	1,626.33		Staff salary March
31/03/2026	Lloyds Bank PLC	DD	3.00		Credit card March
31/03/2026	Mulberry & Co	BACS	144.00		Quarterly payroll charges
31/03/2026	Unity Trust Bank	DD	9.85		Feb bank charges
<b>Total Payments</b>			<b>11,286.66</b>		