

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL

ON MONDAY, 12 MAY 2025 AT 7:30PM

Present:

Cllrs Richards, Davis, Russell, Sheppard, Jenkinson, Larkin, Baxter-Smith, Baylis and Boon

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)
Anna Blyth (Deputy Clerk)
Cllr Lynne Darrah (TWBC)
Cllr Mark Munday (KCC)

1. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

None

2. Declarations of Acceptance of Office & Election of Chairman & Vice Chairman

Cllr Sheppard nominated Cllr Richards for the role of Chairman; seconded Cllr Davis. Carried.
Cllr Richards confirmed that he was willing to stand. There were no other nominations.

Cllr Boon nominated herself as Vice Chairman; seconded Cllr Jenkinson. Unanimous. There were no other nominations. Cllr Boon was elected as Vice Chairman.

3. Election of Officers and Committees

After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Boon and seconded by Cllr Sheppard that the following committee /group structure be adopted by the Council. Unanimous:

Business/Retail Liaison– Cllrs Richards

Finance/Risk Assessment Committee – Cllrs Davis, Richards, Sheppard, Russell and Boon

Personnel Committee – Cllrs Richards, Boon, Davis, Jenkinson, Russell and Larkin

Footpaths (Lost & Forgotten Footpaths) Liaison Group - Cllrs Sheppard, Larkin and Baylis

Horsefair & Police Liaison Group – Cllrs Richards, Boon, Larkin and Baxter-Smith

Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) Representatives Liaison Group – Cllr Richards (with Cllr Baxter-Smith as reserve)

Planning Committee – all Councillors

Horsmonden Village Events Committee Liaison (HoVEC) – Cllr Boon (Cllr Richards reserve)

Highways & Lighting Group – Cllrs Davis, Russell, Sheppard and Larkin

Parish Council Open Spaces Working Group – Cllrs Jenkinson, Larkin, Russell and Baxter-Smith

Village Hall Trustees – Cllrs Jenkinson and Russell

Sports Ground Liaison – Cllrs Davis, Richards and Baxter-Smith

Institute Building Liaison Group – Cllrs Davis, Richards, Sheppard and Russell

Emergency Planning Group – Cllrs Davis, Jenkinson, Larkin, Russell, Sheppard, Baxter-Smith and Bayliss

Climate Change Working Group – all Councillors

New Village Hall Working Group – Cllrs Richards, Davis, Jenkinson, Russell and Larkin

School Liaison – Cllr Baxter-Smith (reserve Cllr Davis)

Horsmonden Development Advisory Group – Cllrs Richards, Boon, Davis, Russell, Baxter-Smith and Baylis

4. Public Session

No speakers.

The Chair invited Cllrs Darrah and Munday to provide any updates at Borough/County level.

Cllr Darrah advised that there was little to report at present, with an update on the local government reform still awaited.

Cllr Munday introduced himself as the newly elected County Councillor.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7 April 2025 had been circulated beforehand by the Clerk. They were agreed for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded Cllr Sheppard and voted for unanimously by those present at that meeting and signed by the Chair.

6. Parish Council Accounts and Finance

a. Parish Council accounts 11 May 2025 (See Appendix 1 on final page.)

The Clerk showed a copy of the list of expected payments up to and including 11 May totalling £11,821.59. This was proposed for acceptance by Cllr Jenkinson; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

b. Bank Reconciliation 30 April 2025

The bank balance at 30 April 2024 was displayed with a total at £76,171.10. The Clerk confirmed that this amount includes the first half of the 2025-26 precept and the VAT reclaim for 2024-25. This was confirmed as correct against the current bank statement and signed by the Chair.

Cllrs Jenkinson and Davis agreed to authorise payments for this month.

c. Internal Auditor end of year report for 2024-2025

The Clerk had circulated the internal auditors report to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Russell gave a brief overview of the report and confirmed that the auditor was satisfied that the Council had been carrying out all of its obligations and requirements as outlined by the Audit Commission and set out in the Practitioners Guide.

Cllr Russell proposed that the PC had received, considered and noted the internal auditor's report for 2024/25; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

d. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 (AGAR)

i. Review and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025 (Section 1 page 4 of Annual Return 31 March 2025)

The Council reviewed the questions in the Annual Governance statement one at a time.

A resolution was made by Cllr Davis to accept the answers as provided by the Council on the Annual Governance Statement and to allow Cllr Richards to sign the statement on the Council's behalf. This was seconded by Cllr Boon and voted for unanimously. The Clerk and the Chair signed and dated the form in the appropriate way.

The Clerk confirmed that she would make the public announcement of the AGAR on 2nd June and that it would then be available for public viewing from 3rd June to 14 July 2025.

ii. **Consideration, approval and signing of the Annual Accounting Statements 2024/25 (Section 2 page 5 of the Annual Return 31 March 2025).**

The Clerk displayed the Annual Accounting Statement as prepared and signed by her previously and checked by the Internal auditor. Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of the accounting statement; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous. The Chair then signed the Annual Accounting Statement on behalf of the Council.

The Clerk explained that the auditors had asked the PC to consider which option to take should the external auditor find an error when auditing the PCs AGAR. The two options were detailed as follows:

- (a) Asking the auditor to return the AGAR for the clerk / RFO to correct, initial the amendment and return so the final, published return is materially correct and the auditor is able to consider an unqualified opinion in the report given at AGAR Section 3. If this option is taken the auditor will comment on the amended error as an '*other matter*' and recommend the Authority ensures it is not repeated in future years. There will be a small charge for this option
- (b) Accepting a qualification of the auditor's opinion at AGAR section 3. This will avoid the costs and delays associated with correction but will mean that the final published return is materially incorrect, and care will be needed in 2025/26 to ensure that the 2024/25 figures are restated to avoid the error carrying over.

After discussion, Cllr Russell proposed that the PC accept option b; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

e. **Agree to adoption of General Power of Competence. (Location Act 2011 and Si 965 The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012).**

It was noted that the PC no longer qualify for the GPC and S137 will apply to some expenditure. The limit for s137 expenditure for 25-26 was noted as £11.10 per elector.

f. **Confirmation of the following policies/procedures/terms of reference:**

i. **Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference for Committees and Officers Under s101 (1), 5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1972**

The scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference for Committees and Officers was reconsidered. The scheme sets out the delegation of power to committees and officers in the Council and provides for emergency powers in the event of any urgent matter where the Clerk can consult with the Chair and Vice Chair for decisions. Continuation of the scheme of delegation with no changes required was proposed for acceptance by Cllr Sheppard; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

ii. Terms of reference for Finance and Risk Assessment committee

The Clerk had circulated the terms of reference for the Finance and Risk Assessment Committee to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

Cllr Russell proposed acceptance with no changes required; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

iii. Terms of reference for Planning Committee

The Clerk had circulated the terms of reference for the Planning Committee to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

Cllr Davis proposed acceptance with no changes required; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

iv. Terms of reference for the Personnel Committee

The Clerk had circulated the terms of reference for the Personnel Committee to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

Cllr Russell proposed acceptance with no changes required; seconded Cllr Jenkinson. Unanimous.

v. Asset Register 24-25

The Clerk had updated and circulated the Asset Register to Cllrs prior to the meeting and explained the minor changes reflecting assets which had been dispensed with and those which were new items during 24-25.

Cllr Davis asked whether the new solar panels at the public conveniences had been included on the asset register. The Clerk confirmed that these would be added on for the 25-6 period. Cllr Davis proposed acceptance of the Asset Register up until 31/03/2025; seconded Cllr Boon; Unanimous.

vi. Parish Council Risk Assessment

The Clerk had circulated the PCs Risk Assessment to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

The Clerk explained she had made a couple of changes to the document as follows:

1. Remove the Village Hall as an asset as this is not owned by the PC.
2. Change any reference to "Assistant Clerk" to "Deputy Clerk"

Cllr Russell proposed acceptance with changes as detailed; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

vii. Standing Orders

The Clerk had circulated the PCs Standing Orders to Cllrs prior to the meeting, which had been updated to reflect the new model issued by NALC.

Cllr Davis proposed acceptance with changes as recommended by NALC; seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.

viii. Financial Regulations

The Clerk had circulated the PCs Financial Regulations to Cllrs prior to the meeting which had been updated to reflect the new model issued by NALC. It was noted and agreed that for contracts estimated to exceed £25,000 including VAT, the Clerk will seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers.

Cllr Russell proposed acceptance with changes as recommended by NALC; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

ix. Internal Financial Controls

The Clerk had circulated the PCs Internal Financial Controls to Cllrs prior to the meeting. Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance with no changes required; seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.

x. HPC Training and Development Policy

The Clerk had circulated the PCs Training and Development policy to Cllrs prior to the meeting. Cllr Boon raised the importance of all Cllrs to carrying out regular training and proposed that the PC's Training and Development Policy is updated to include a requirement for each Cllr to complete at least one training session per year. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

The Clerks will update the wording and bring back to the next meeting for approval.

g. Consider quotation for the Council's Data Protection Officer and appoint DPO for 2025-26

The Clerk had circulated a copy of the renewal quotation received from GDPR-info Ltd, who have provided this service for the PC for the last few years. It was noted that the annual cost remains the same as it was for the 2024-25 period.

Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of the quotation provided (£420 no VAT); seconded Cllr Jenkinson. Unanimous.

h. Consider quotations for Parish Council insurance contract (annual or 3-year LTA)

The Clerk had circulated quotations from three insurance providers to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their consideration.

The quotes received had been put into a table for further discussion:

Insurance provider	Broker	Annual premium breakdown	Annual Premium LTA (3Years)	Notes
Ecclesiastical	Clear Councils	£2155.31 Including IPT & Broker Fee at £50.	Fixed Rate Agreement £2047.08 including IPT& Broker Fee at £50.	Volunteers are not included in cover in below 16 or over 80. This includes councillors. This cannot be extended
Hiscox Insurance Company Limited	Gallagher's	£2,532.48. including IPT and Broker fee £50	LTA premium of £2,532.48 including IPT and fees.	No discount for LTA-just rates the same for 3 years. No minimum or maximum age for volunteers. But age restriction applies under Personal Accident section with an exclusion for - temporary partial disablement or temporary total disablement if the insured person is over 85 years of age at inception. This cannot be extended.
Ansvar	Community Action Suffolk	£3,347.07 including IPT and commission	£3,182.18.including IPT and commission	Personal accident cover is restricted to age 80 maximum and this cannot be extended.

Councillors discussed the quotations received and in particular the restrictions relating to the Personal Accident section of the policies (as shown in the “notes” section above). It was noted that PC rarely have volunteers under the age of 16 apart from the occasional litter pick where under 16s are required to be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Cllr Boon proposed that the PC renew their insurance policy with the existing provider, Clear Councils, including a 3 year LTA (£2,047.08 including IPT & broker fee £50) as the most competitive option; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

i. **Consider additional security measures for the Public Conveniences including quotations for new CCTV**

The Clerk had circulated three quotations from CCTV providers to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their consideration. Each quotation was based on 4 cameras being installed with a 4G Router with SIM card connection.

The quotes received had been put into a table for further discussion:

	Cost (excl VAT)	Annual Maintenance?
Company 1	£1,497.41	£160 plus VAT per annum
Company 2	£1,973	Not provided
Company 3	£1,495.90 plus £150 for additional electrical socket	£120 plus VAT per annum

Cllrs discussed the quotations received in detail and considered whether there might be grants available to help with the cost. Cllr Mark Munday (KCC) suggested that the PC contact Hilary Smith at TWBC to see what might be available.

Cllr Sheppard proposed that the PC accept the quotation from Company 3 (Mote security) noting that it came recommended by a local contact, offered competitive pricing, and included comprehensive information on the legal implications of CCTV installation; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

It was agreed that the Clerks will investigate any grants available prior to instructing Company 3.

The Clerk reported that a resident had requested the reinstatement of the gate at the public toilets to prevent young people from accessing the rear of the facility and engaging in antisocial behaviour. Cllrs discussed the matter and suggested that, as the previous wooden gate had deteriorated due to rot, a metal anti-climb gate may be a more suitable replacement. The Clerks will seek quotations for this and bring back to the next meeting.

j. **Consider quotation to remove mould from ceiling at the Public Conveniences**

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had circulated a quotation from Gordon’s Home Improvements totalling £260 to prep and paint with mould resistant paint the ceilings of the ladies and disabled toilets. The Clerk explained that it is believed the mould growth has been caused by youths throwing and sticking wet toilet paper to the ceiling.

Cllr Davis proposed acceptance of the quotation provided (£260); seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

k. **Consider quotations for de-scaling pipes to urinal at the Public Conveniences**

The Clerk had circulated quotations from three different companies to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their consideration.

The quotes received had been put into a table for discussion:

	Hourly Call Out Rate (excluding VAT)	Additional Costs	Extra Notes
Company 1	£450.00	N/A	Minimum charge for 3 hours
Company 2	£145.00	N/A	1-2 hours expected
Company 3	£150.00	£69.00 per 30 mins (for use of specialist equipment)	£150.00 for the first hour. £75 per 30 mins thereafter.

After discussion between Cllrs, Cllr Sheppard proposed that the PC go ahead with the quotation offered by Company 2 (Drain Detectives) as the most competitive; seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.

7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Cllr Sheppard left the meeting.

Planning Application:	25/00713/FULL
Proposal:	(Retrospective) Replacement balcony
Location:	3 Wharf Cottages, Goudhurst Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8AP
Recommendation:	Approval
Proposal:	Cllr Davis; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.
Comments:	Recommend acceptance of development.

Cllr Sheppard returned to the meeting.

Planning Application:	25/00817/LBC
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent - Works carried out - Removal of gable cladding, timber stud work, battens, rafters & windows with replacements with new materials. Removal of roof tiles with reinstatement. Installation of insulation in the roof. Proposed works - Installation of rigid insulation to existing ground floor, removal & replacement floorboards on first floor, insulation installed within interior face of external walls & removal & replacement of garage doors

Location:	Spring Farm, Goudhurst Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8AY
Recommendation:	Approval
Proposal:	Cllr Russell; seconded Cllr Davis. Carried.
Comments:	Recommend approval subject to the Conservation Officers views and requirements. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

c. **Discussion regarding community open space at Bassetts Farm TW/24/00078/HYBRID**

The Clerk confirmed that following the last meeting, a formal email had been sent to Persimmon Homes South East requesting a meeting to discuss the community open space at Bassetts Farm. No reply has been received as yet.

The Clerks will find out the date of the next residents liaison meeting.

d. **Discussion regarding s106 for TW/22/00296/OUT – Land South of Brenchley Road, Brenchley Road, Horsmonden**

Cllr Boon confirmed she had begun initial investigations regarding the S106 agreement for the Brenchley Road development. The question was raised as to whether the PC wishes to seek legal advice. It was agreed that the Clerk will approach TWBC Solicitors and ask for a translation of the agreement into more straightforward wording so that the PC can consider the matter further.

8. Parish Council Decisions/Administration

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

The Clerk confirmed the following:

- KCC have agreed to cut the tree at Fromandez Drive which has been causing concern to a resident.
- A complaint has been received from a resident expressing concern that the wildflower garden at Fromandez Drive looks untidy. Cllr Larkin gave an overview of the project, highlighting that the establishment of a wildflower area is a gradual process and will take time to fully develop. It was agreed that increased communication and clearer explanation of the project's aims and progress may help improve residents understanding and support.
- The street lighting annual survey report has been received from PSR Lighting and will be brought to the next meeting on the 2nd June.

Cllr Larkin asked the Clerks to check KCC are scheduled to repair the large potholes at the Yew Tree Green Road junction on Maidstone Road as this work has been outstanding for some time.

Cllr Lynne Darrah confirmed that she would chase KCC regarding the reduction of grass verges at Orchard Way and around the village green.

b. **HIPs (Highways Improvement Plan) HIPs – updates on crossroads? Narrow pavements? Consider one-way system on Green Road?**

Cllrs Russell and Davis provided an update on the narrow footpaths in the village following an informal survey of the four main roads leading into the village centre and their associated pavement access. The results of this highlighted areas where hedges need to be cut back and it was noted that most of the areas discussed had already been contacted directly by KCC regarding this.

Cllrs discussed whether they wish to add any narrow footpaths to their HIP and it was agreed that the section of pavement along the back of the Oast View on Goudhurst Rd is a concern particularly as the footfall along this stretch will increase substantially when the Bassetts Farm development is built. This should be added to the PCs HIP.

The Clerk reported that she had received correspondence from a parishioner living on Maidstone Road requesting that the speed limit on Maidstone Road, opposite Hayman's Hill junction is reduced from 40 to 30mph. This stretch of road contains a blind corner and is regularly used by freight and skip lorries and it is felt that the 40mph limit that is currently in place is not appropriate. It was noted that the PC have looked at the speed limit on Maidstone Road before and some additional measures have been put in place but not at this location. Cllrs agreed that a valid point had been raised in this case and it should be added to the PCs HIP.

The Clerk reported that she had also received a request from a parishioner for a one way system to be put in place on Green Road as this is a single track with virtually no places for two vehicles to pass each other. As a consequence, on the rare occasions where two vehicles meet each other, it is necessary for one of them to undertake a difficult and potentially hazardous reversing manoeuvre and sometimes with the need to reverse blindly on to one of the two main roads at each end. After discussion, it was agreed by Cllrs that this should be added to the PCs HIP.

The Clerk asked Cllrs to put HIP items into an order of priority. The following was agreed:

- No.1 – Improved signage at the crossroads
- No.2 – Narrow pavements
- No.3 – Speed limit on Maidstone Road
- No.4 – One way system on Green Road

c. **Agree to waive minimal electricity charge following HoVEC "What Goes on Here?" event in the village green on 26th April 2025. Consider minimum charge for future events?**

The Clerk asked Cllrs to consider waiving the electricity charge to HoVEC following the recent WGOH event, noting that the total cost incurred was only £5.60.

It was noted that HoVEC run events for the enjoyment and pleasure of the village and therefore Cllr Sheppard proposed that the PC waive the electricity charge of £5.60; seconded Cllr Jenkinson. Unanimous.

The Clerk asked whether the PC should consider a minimum charge for future events. After discussion, it was agreed that the PC should enforce a minimum standing charge of £10 and only charge for electricity if it falls over this amount.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.55pm.

APPENDIX 1

Date: 12/05/2025		Horsmonden Parish Council Current Year		Page 1	
Time: 12:18		Current A/c- Unity Trust Bank			
List of Payments made between 01/04/2025 and 11/05/2025					
<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
01/04/2025	Dr SG and Mrs Davis	BACS	1.00		correction ofr litter pick ref
09/04/2025	Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd	BACS	243.60		Accountancy software 25-26
09/04/2025	St Margaret's PCC Horsmonden	BACS	300.00		Parish news articles x12
09/04/2025	The Living Forest	BACS	2,901.60		Tree surgery
09/04/2025	The Living Forest	BACS	221.40		Tree works
09/04/2025	Kent Association of Local Coun	BACS	1,130.63		Annual membership fee 25-26
10/04/2025	Peoples partnership	DD	227.30		Staff pensions April
11/04/2025	British Gas Lite	DD	39.56		Electricity Toilets March
11/04/2025	British Gas Lite	DD	13.12		Electricity VG boxes March
11/04/2025	Capel Groundcare	BACS	145.92		Installtaion of 2 Tommys
17/04/2025	EE - BT	DD	69.29		Phones and internet April
17/04/2025	Kent Association of Local Coun	BACS	48.00		Training Clerk
17/04/2025	Kent Association of Local Coun	BACS	24.00		Training clerk
17/04/2025	Kent Association of Local Coun	BACS	48.00		Training clerk
17/04/2025	Mr Lewis Done	BACS	260.00		EICR The Institute
17/04/2025	West kent Mediation	BACS	150.00		Donation to charity
17/04/2025	Microshade VSM	BACS	201.97		Emails and Data April
17/04/2025	Mr Lewis Done	BACS	760.00		Electrical repairs Institute
22/04/2025	Castle Water	DD	18.16		Water supply toilets March
23/04/2025	P&F Cleaning services LTD	SO	500.00		Cleaning Toilets & shelter Apr
24/04/2025	Mr Lewis Done	BACS	760.00		Electrical repairs Institute
24/04/2025	Mr lewis Done	BACS	-760.00		Electrical repair Insitute
25/04/2025	HMRC	BACS	634.65		Tax & NI April
25/04/2025	Anna Blyth	BACS	1,143.96		Staff salary April
25/04/2025	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	1,585.82		Staff Salary April
28/04/2025	Kent Association of Local Coun	BACS	60.00		Training for dlr
28/04/2025	Lewis Done (Tesseract)	BACS	486.90		Rectify electrical faults
29/04/2025	Mulberry & Co	BACS	133.44		Year end shut down RBSaccounts
30/04/2025	Mr J Couchman	BACS	160.00		Clock & Play area inspec April
30/04/2025	SSE	DD	251.29		Electricity March SL
30/04/2025	Unity Trust Bank	DD	11.10		Bank Charges April
01/05/2025	Lloyds Bank PLC	DD	50.88		Credit card April
Total Payments			11,821.59		