

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL

ON MONDAY, 2 JUNE 2025 AT 7:30PM

Present:

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

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

Anna Blyth (Deputy Clerk)

Cllr Lynne Darrah (TWBC)

1. Apologies for Absence and declarations of interest

Cllrs Tom Mobbs, David Knight and Mark Munday.

Cllr Davis declared an interest in planning application number 25/01045/FULL under item 5. Planning.

2. Public Session (no decisions)

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

3. Minutes of Parish Council Meetings

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 12 May 2025 had been circulated beforehand by the Clerk. They were agreed for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Baxter-Smith, seconded Cllr Larkin 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 1 June 2025 as attached (Appendix 1- See end of document)**

The Clerk showed a copy of the list of payments up to and including 1 June 2025 as a total of £9,178.51. Cllr Baxter-Smith proposed approval of the schedule of payments; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

b. **Bank Reconciliations as at 31 May 2025**

The bank balance at 31 May 2025 was displayed with a total at £80,448.83.

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

c. **Consider reinvestment of funds from United Trust Bond which matures 12 July 2025**

The Clerk reminded Cllrs that a year ago the PC made the decision to avoid bonds over one year in length as these are treated as long term assets by the auditing regime and this then complicates the PCs Asset register.

As the current bond with United Trust is due to mature on 12 July, the Clerk had explored various options for the reinvestment of funds and these were detailed as follows:

- One year bond again with United Trust bank - **4.25% Gross AER (guaranteed rate)**
- Add funds to the PCs 40 day notice account– current rate **3.95% Gross AER (can fluctuate)**
- 100 day notice account with UT – **4.10% Gross AER (can fluctuate)**
- 200 day notice account with UT - **4.3% Gross AER (can fluctuate)**
- One year bond Hampshire trust bank -**4.22% Gross AER (can fluctuate)**

After discussion between Cllrs, it was agreed by all that a guaranteed rate of 4.25% with United Trust Bank seemed a reasonable investment of PC funds and therefore Cllr Russell proposed that the PC reinvest funds for a further year with United Trust; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

d. Consider renewal of banking mandate with Unity Trust Bank and addition of Cllr Boon

Cllr Jenkinson proposed that the banking mandate with Unity Trust Bank be renewed, with Cllr Boon added as a signatory; seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.

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

The Clerk had circulated a quotation from Drain Boss to Cllrs prior to the meeting. Retrospective approval was sought, as the works to remove the blockage from the ladies toilet were carried out concurrently with the planned descaling of the gents urinal. The blockage was resolved during the same visit and completed within the two hour call out period.

Cllr Jenkinson proposed acceptance of the costs totalling £290 plus VAT; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

f. Consider quotations for security gate at rear of public conveniences and potential grant application for gate and CCTV cameras

The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken with TWBC and received positive feedback regarding a grant under the UK Prosperity Fund for this project however, a formal application will need to be submitted. Although efforts had been made to obtain three quotes for the security gate, only one response had been received in time for the meeting. This quote was from a reputable local company who recently completed a similar installation in the village and the estimated cost quoted was £1,090 plus VAT.

Cllr Larkin proposed acceptance of the estimate provided by Barrett Fencing (£1,090 plus VAT); seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith.

The Clerk will submit a formal grant application to TWBC and report back at the next meeting.

g. Agree provision of £675 to cover costs of Youth provision at HoVEC event Sunday 8 June

Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of the £675 to cover youth provision at the HoVEC event on the 8th June; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

h. Consider first aid training

The Clerk asked Cllrs to consider whether they wish to book some refresher first aid training, noting that it has been almost 3 years since the last session. The Clerk reminded Cllrs that there is

no formal obligation for the PC to undertake first aid training however, everyone who attended the last session gave positive feedback.

The Clerk had approached three companies for a quotation and these were shared with Cllrs for their review. Cllrs discussed whether this training should be opened up to the local community again and it was agreed that the Clerks would contact local groups to gauge the level of interest. This will be brought back to a future meeting for discussion.

i. **Consider request for grant/donation from charity Air Ambulance**

The Clerk had circulated a grant application form from the Air Ambulance to Cllrs prior to the meeting. It was agreed by all that the Air Ambulance do excellent work and are a very worthy cause.

Cllr Davis proposed that the PC offer a grant of £200 to the Air Ambulance; seconded Cllr Jenkinson. Unanimous.

j. **Consider request for a grant/donation from charity Citizen Advice North and West Kent**

The Clerk had circulated a donation request letter from Citizen Advice North and West Kent to Cllrs prior to the meeting. It was noted that the charity has offered support to a number of families in Horsmonden.

Cllr Larkin proposed that the PC offer a grant of £150 to Citizen Advice North and West Kent; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

5. Planning

a. **Planning applications**

Planning Application:	25/00672/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Barn conversion into part residential, part commercial office 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	Approval
Proposal	Cllr Baxter-Smith; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend approval. Reasonable development for the setting. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

Cllr Davis left the meeting at 8.05pm

Planning Application:	25/01045/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Conversion of agricultural building to dwelling (alternative to 23/03463/PNQCLA) (self build)</u>
Location:	OS Plot 3710 Lewes Heath Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent
Recommendation	Refusal

Proposal	Cllr Baxter-Smith; seconded Cllr Larkin. Carried.
Comments	The Parish Council propose refusal on the grounds that this is an undesirable development in an agricultural setting (dark skies area) and will impact further on the limited vehicular access particularly during the construction period. It will also impact on the intensively used public footpath.

Cllr Davis returned to the meeting at 8.15pm

Planning Application:	25/01154/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Proposed single storey extension linking the dwelling to the garage, & proposed orangery.</u>
Location:	2 East View Cottage Back Lane Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent TN12 8NJ
Recommendation	Approval
Proposal	Cllr Davis; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Carried.
Comments	Recommend approval. Reasonable development subject to reassurance from the designer that the current capacity for off road parking is not diminished. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Council's Sustainability policy.

Planning Application:	25/00982/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Change of use of former seasonal workers' accommodation building to Class E (c) & Class E (g) along with associated internal alterations & parking arrangements</u>
Location:	Former Farm Workers' Accommodation Spelmonden Farm Spelmonden Road Goudhurst Cranbrook Kent
Recommendation	Approval
Proposal	Cllr Baxter-Smith; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend approval. Reasonable conversion. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

Planning Application:	25/01103/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Removal of existing building & construction of new annexe</u>
Location:	Lambkins Lodge School House Lane Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent TN12 8BJ
Recommendation	Approval
Proposal	Cllr Russell; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend approval as a reasonable development subject to the annexe being used only in ancillary capacity to the main dwelling. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

b. Feedback and updates on planning matters

It was noted that a concern had been raised with TWBC Planning Enforcement regarding a recently installed fence at the new build property in Gun Back Lane, as it may not be in line with the approved planning permission. TWBC response awaited.

Cllr Larkin asked for an update regarding the land at 2 Spring Cottages which had also recently been reported to Planning Enforcement. The Clerks will investigate as no response received as yet.

Cllr Russell reported that Persimmon Homes South East have booked the village hall for their next residents liaison meeting on the 9th July 5pm – 7pm.

6. Parish Council Decisions/Administration

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

The Clerk advised Cllrs that the memorial bench at Fromandez Drive is likely to go ahead, following the launch of a fundraiser by local residents.

Cllr Russell reported the presence of several markings on Back Lane surrounding potholes, noting that they do not appear to be the standard markings typically used by KCC. The Clerks will investigate and report back.

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

The Clerk reported that no update had been received from KCC prior to the meeting.

c. Consider street lighting survey report

The Clerk had circulated the survey report from PSR Lighting to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their review.

The Clerk provided a detailed overview of the report. During the review, she raised several queries concerning certain works that she believed had already been completed in the past. This included items listed in the report that appear to duplicate previous maintenance. One issue highlighted was the presence of lighting columns obstructed by overgrown vegetation. It was suggested that the PC write to the relevant residents, requesting that they cut back the vegetation to ensure access and visibility of the lighting columns.

In light of the outstanding questions and potential inconsistencies, it was agreed that the Clerk would contact PSR Lighting to see clarification on the report's contents and bring back to the next meeting.

d. Consider quarterly play area inspection report

The Clerk had circulated the latest quarterly play area inspection report to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their review. It was noted that the rope ladder on the main climbing frame has started to fray in four places so this is now being monitored but is considered low risk. The Clerk reminded Cllrs the annual RoSPA play area inspection will be carried out soon.

Cllr Russell proposed that the PC agree and note the contents of the latest play area inspection report; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

e. Consider ideas and costs for storage or email addresses

Following the collection of several email addresses at the What Goes on Here event and the APM, the PC discussed how best to integrate these into a platform for future newsletters and potential surveys. The Clerk had researched various options and shared her findings with Cllrs. It was agreed that Mailchimp appears to be the most suitable platform, though further investigation is required before a final decision is made.

The Clerk confirmed that all email addresses collected so far are securely stored on paper in a locked drawer. These will be transferred to a password-protected spreadsheet to improve data management and security.

Cllrs also discussed the idea of using a QR code linked to an online sign-up form, which could be promoted at community events such as the upcoming local fete. The Clerk will look into this option as a priority.

f. Clock Tower repairs – consider recent advice from surveyor

The Clerk explained that, following the extensive works carried out at the clock tower, the social club committee had contacted the PC to enquire about repairing the holes made in the entrance hall ceiling to allow the structural engineer to inspect the clock tower steels.

At the time of inspection in 2024, the structural engineer observed a uniform layer of rust on the steels, but there was no evidence of delamination or significant section loss. The structural engineer had advised that, while not all of the steel was visible, it would be prudent to inspect the areas where the steels bear onto the front wall if those sections were to be exposed during the course of the works. As work ultimately did not take place in that area, the Deputy Clerk sought further advice from the engineer regarding whether retrospective inspection was still necessary. The structural engineer responded that he did not see a strong justification for doing so, given that only moderate corrosion was observed and the overall condition had been improved by the repointing work. However, he did recommend that the clock tower be monitored for any signs of cracking in the brickwork.

Councillors discussed and agreed that the holes in the entrance hall could now be filled in and suggested that the Clerks carry out annual monitoring of the clock tower brickwork, including taking photographs, which will be saved and retained for future reference.

g. Revise and agree Training Policy for HPC

The Clerk had circulated the revised training policy to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their agreement following minor changes made to the wording.

Cllr Boon proposed acceptance of the Training Policy as drafted; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

h. Consider implications and implementation of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law) for the PC and village wide events / premises

The Clerk informed Cllrs about the new legislation known as Martyn's Law, which will have implications on the organisation of public events. It was agreed that Cllrs and Clerks should remain alert to training opportunities and undertake relevant training as it becomes available.

i. Consider VG Booking Social Club Beer Festival 19 July 2025

The Clerk had circulated a booking form, proof of insurance and risk assessment provided by the social club for this event. It was noted that the social club do not have a cheque book so providing a deposit is difficult.

After a brief discussion, Cllr Jenkinson proposed that the PC accept the booking and waive the deposit as it is very unlikely that any damage will occur to the village green during this small event; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

j. Discuss ideas for permanent signage at the wildflower garden at Fromandez Drive

Cllr Larkin gave a brief update regarding the progress of the wildflower garden at Fromandez Drive and advised that temporary signage has been put up to inform residents about the ongoing work and its purpose. Cllr Larkin also reported that she had spoken to a contact who could produce some more permanent wooden signs. It was agreed that she would obtain a quote for these signs and report back.

The Deputy Clerk had also approached a local print shop and obtained a quotation for an A3 metal sign - £50 plus VAT. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would circulate the draft template for this sign to Councillors for their approval.

k. Initiate ongoing discussion on Government reorganisation and consider the implications for HPC

Cllr Darrah advised that at this stage there is not much of an update regarding the Government reorganisation. The Clerk advised that she is keeping an eye out for relevant training events on this subject.

l. Consider HPC assets and assets belonging to TWBC/KCC which are in Horsmonden

The Clerk advised that she is currently trying to gather a list of assets owned by TWBC and KCC in Horsmonden and she is aware that Cllr Mobbs is also working on this.

The Clerk suggested that the PC could approach TWBC to see if the restrictive covenant for the public conveniences could be removed. This would build some flexibility into the PCs ownership of the building, which could be a positive for the future.

This item will be brought back to a future meeting once a list of assets has been received from TWBC/KCC..

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.50pm

APPENDIX 1

List of Payments made between 12/05/2025 and 01/06/2025

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
12/05/2025	British Gas Lite	DD	34.36		Electricity Toilets April
12/05/2025	British Gas Lite	DD	14.10		Electricity VG boxes April
12/05/2025	Clearview Windows	BACS	60.00		Washing down play equipment
12/05/2025	Clearview Windows	BACS	50.00		wash noticeboards, benches
12/05/2025	Mulberry & Co	BACS	175.50		Internal audit 24-25
12/05/2025	Arron Services Ltd	BACS	84.00		Supply and install norton x 2
12/05/2025	Kent Association of Local Coun	BACS	42.00		Planning s 106 AB
12/05/2025	PSR Lighting & Signs Ltd	BACS	810.00		Survey & report Lights
12/05/2025	Microshade VSM	BACS	209.62		Email and ddaa provision May
12/05/2025	HMRC	BACS	634.85		Tax & NI May
13/05/2025	Viking	BACS	107.64		stationery
13/05/2025	Knockout Print services	BACS	54.00		APM posters
13/05/2025	Capel Groundcare	BACS	732.92		Groundcare, SIDS, Play area Apr
19/05/2025	EE - BT	DD	69.29		Telephones and broadband May
20/05/2025	Peoples partnership	DD	227.30		Staff pensions May
21/05/2025	Castle Water	DD	17.93		Water charges April
23/05/2025	Anna Blyth	BACS	1,143.76		May Salary
23/05/2025	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	1,585.82		Staff Salary May
23/05/2025	P&F Cleaning services LTD	SO	500.00		Cleaning May
27/05/2025	PJ Electrical Ltd	BACS	124.80		Electrical Testing of VG boxes
27/05/2025	Clear Councils	BACS	2,047.08		PC annual insurance contract
27/05/2025	Mr J Couchman	BACS	200.00		Clock and Play area inspection
29/05/2025	SSE	DD	243.19		Apr electricity Street lights
31/05/2025	Unity Trust Bank	DD	10.35		bank charges April

Total Payments	9,178.51
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