

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HORSMONDEN DEVELOPMENT

ADVISORY GROUP (*ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF HPC*)

HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL

ON TUESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2025 AT 6.30 PM

Present:

Mr Winsor, Mrs Newton, Cllrs Richards, Davis, Russell, Baylis and Baxter-Smith.

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Boon. Cllr Baxter- Smith arrived at 6.45pm with apologies

2. PUBLIC SESSION (no decisions):

No speakers.

3. AGREE MINUTES OF HDAG MEETING 1 APRIL 2025

Mr Winsor recapped the minutes which had previously been circulated by the Clerk. Cllr Davis proposed acceptance of the minutes, seconded Mrs Newton. Unanimous

4. DISCUSS THE POSSIBLE WAYS THAT THE PC COULD BE INVOLVED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE AT BASSETTS FARM INCLUDING PROS.AND CONS.

The group clarified their meaning of the 'community space' to mean the space intended for the community orchard and the large open space at the top of the site intended to be the community open space. There would be other small verges and hedgerows between parts of the development and it was not intended that PC should be any way involved in the maintenance of these smaller areas of land.

It was also clarified that this was in addition to the land identified for allotments, as the group felt it was already expected that this land would be handed over to the PC to maintain (although the **ownership** of the allotment land was also a question mark which needed clarification) .

Following the last HDAG meeting the PC had agreed for the Clerk to contact TWBC and PH to see if a meeting could be organised to speak about the LEMP (Land Ecological Management Plan) however TWBC had said that the S106 which this forms part of, was still being drafted and as the PC was not a party to that, we could not be involved in discussions at this stage. Jennifer Begeman, the case officer, at TWBC had sent through a copy of the DRAFT CONDITION 24 which she and David Scully, Environmental Officer, for TWBC had drafted and which forms part of the planning application governing the drafting of the LEMP. **(See Appendix 1 attached - Condition 24)**

PH Land and Planning Director, Kerri Bland, had also come back to the PC in April to say that they were not yet drafting the LEMP, but would happily discuss this with the PC, once they reached that stage.

It was clarified by Mr Winsor that there would be two levels of management set out by the LEMP:

- A steering Group, set up to oversee the Management Committee. This would consist of one member from the PC, Borough Council, site owners and Kent Wildlife Trust.
- A Management Body or Bodies, who will be responsible for the implementation of the Plan set out by the LEMP.

The group discussed the reasons for the PC wanting to be involved in the management of this land: to ensure the land is upkept in a way which the whole village would want and not mismanaged by an external company; to make sure that all parishioners feel welcome to use the space and that it is not felt to be exclusively for the use of those living on the site; to potentially have a larger site for use for large, open air, village events; to have another potential landing site for the air ambulance; to preserve these areas of open space for the enjoyment of the community for the long term.

The group felt that these were good reasons for the PC to put themselves forward as the potential management body for the community open space to the North and the community orchard to the South. **See the areas shaded orange on the attached Landscape Strategy Plan taken from the TWBC planning portal.**

It was therefore recommended that the PC explore with PH the operating management for these areas, with the possibility of the PC putting themselves forward to be the Management Body responsible for these community spaces only, assuming the terms were acceptable.

Questions would need to be asked before any firm decisions could be made about the PC taking on the management. These include: budget and costings; ownership of the land (could it be passed over to the PC's ownership?); how is the land to be upkept (as defined in the LEMP); as it is a **"multifunctional" landscape and ecological** plan to include bat walks and reptile surveys, a wildlife pond, as well as public open space, orchards and wildflower meadows (See attached Landscape Strategy Plan) this will need to be clearly defined in the LEMP ; how is it all paid for?; We understand that money is to be collected from those living on site but will this be enough? Would the PC be able to add to this from precepted funds if they chose to?; Under what circumstances would the PC wish to add money? (e.g. if the land is for everyone to use and if this is seen as a long term plan for the land?) This was not considered to be an exhaustive list.

5. FEEDBACK ON THE ALTERNATIVES FOR A FUTURE VILLAGE HALL AND IDEAS FROM THE HDAG.

Since the last meeting there had been a survey completed at What Goes On Here - held on 26 April 2025 on the Village Green. The survey had asked parishioners to choose which site they liked best for the new/refurbished VH. The results of the mini survey were that an equal number of residents who preferred a new VH on the sports ground compared to those wishing it to remain where it was. There were no votes for the VH being built on the Brenchley Road site. However, as the number of people who took part in the survey was less than 30 residents, it was pointed out that this could not be considered to be a representative view of all residents.

More recently members of the Parish Council had met with members of the Sports Club Committee to share information and talk about future plans. The Sports Club members had confirmed their plans for the new club house/pavilion and willingness to share the site with a new Village Hall which could sit next to the club house. They confirmed that at present they are researching funding opportunities for the new facility. There would be about 50 car parking spaces. Sport changing facilities downstairs and a

function/social area, kitchen, bar and toilets upstairs. The addition of a Village Hall could along site this and how it would all be integrated and managed is open for discussion.

It was suggested by the Clerk that in order to move forward and get to an agreed plan on what village hall facilities would be appropriate for the future as the village expands, the PC may wish to consider contracting a consultancy company to carry out a village wide survey to ascertain which site and what facilities parishioners would like to see in a village hall to serve future needs. As part of this, the PC would also need to ascertain what facilities future inhabitants might wish to see.

It was recommended that consultancy approach would be a good idea and felt that this should be combined with discussion on point 6 below, which seems to indicate that a wider village consultation might be necessary.

6. DISCUSS DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR VILLAGE AMENITIES, INCLUDING A ROADMAP FOR IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY NEEDS AND EXPLORING POTENTIAL EXTERNAL CONSULTANCY SUPPORT.

Members of the group felt that discovering where parishioners wanted a new VH to be located and what facilities it might include, was only part of the jig saw, and that to form a forward plan/roadmap which would address the needs and requirements of the village over the next five to ten years, it would be necessary to carry out a wider consultancy project which would ask questions about any and all village amenities such as: public transport, taxis, pavements, use of open spaces and play areas, schools and educational facilities, shops, housing, clubs and leisure facilities within the village.

This wider approach to a forward 5 year village plan was compared to the Village Vision exercise which was carried out in 2012, and it was noted that such an exercise would provide a good basis and starting point for any future revision on the Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan, which would normally take place around 5 years after the plan was made – so around July 2028 onwards.

It was felt that there should be some cost efficiencies in carrying out a wider survey on all village amenities at the same time as carrying out a survey on the VH, especially if a consultancy was to be involved.

In order to make sure a clear result was reached for the future of the VH, it was considered that a consultancy could be asked to firstly deliver a report and recommendation on the VH, and then a second report on other village amenities. The approach that the consultant takes would need to be discussed and defined with the consultant. Mrs Newton suggested that time and costs could be saved by carrying out some of the initial investigations about the village's halls, prior to contracting the consultants. For instance, what facilities and their usage each of the village halls/churches and other public buildings currently offer could be collected as a first step as an input into understanding the village as it is and ascertaining what parishioners want from a Village Hall. Finding out what may be required for a new VH would help a consultant consider which site/s could be most suitable for providing these facilities.

The following approach was summarised as a framework for a Village Forward Plan:
What do we have now? What do we want? Where do we want it? What is the design?

It was therefore recommended by the committee that the PC consider contracting a consultancy company to support the PC and a project team in the development of a Village Forward Plan. The scope of the consultancy will need to be defined with the Consultant, but it would include:

- Carrying out a village wide consultation on both a) the VH to ascertain what facilities are required and the pros and cons of each site, and b) village wide amenities that we have today and what would be most beneficial for the future expanding village
- A first deliverable of a survey and fact-based recommendation for a future Village Hall
- A second deliverable of a survey and fact-based Village Forward Plan to support the village community as the village population increases by over 40%.

In considering this recommendation the PC will need sufficient information on the cost of developing a Village Forward Plan with a consultant so that a budget could be set. Mr Winsor offered to support the Clerk in establishing indicative costs.

It was also recommended that as first step to gathering information, the PC allow members of HDAG to assist in gathering information from village halls and those offering similar facilities to halls (Mrs Newton and Mr Winsor had kindly offered their service to assist with this starting point).

The Clerk will take these recommendations to the next PC meeting to allow members to discuss and make any formal proposals.

7. ANY OTHER VILLAGE DEVELOPEMENTS GROUP MEMBERS WOULD LIKE TO RAISE.

None.

MEETING CLOSED AT 8.23PM