

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL

ON MONDAY, 2 MARCH 2026 AT 7:30PM

Present:

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

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

Anna Blyth (Deputy Clerk)

Cllr Lynne Darrah (part of the meeting)

Cllr Mark Munday (part of the meeting)

1. Apologies for Absence and declarations of interest

Cllrs Boon, Jenkinson and Baxter-Smith.

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

2. Public Session (no decisions)

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

3. Minutes of Parish Council Meetings

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2 February 2026 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.

4. Parish Council Finance

a. Agree payments listing up to and including 1 March 2026 as attached (Appendix 1- See end of document)

The Clerk showed a copy of the list of payments up to and including 1 March 2026 as a total of £7,360.91. Cllr Davis proposed approval of the schedule of payments; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

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

b. Bank Reconciliations as at 28 February 2026

The bank balance for the Council's Unity Trust Bank (current account) at 28 February 2026 was displayed with a total at £68,640.34.

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

- c. **Note reduction of interest to 3.75% on United Trust Bank 40 day notice account**
The Clerk advised Cllrs that the interest rate on the United Trust Bank 40-day notice account has reduced from 3.80% to 3.75%. Cllrs noted the information.
- d. **Discuss/agree recommendation from Finance Committee meeting (24 February)**
Cllr Russell, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported that the Finance Committee had reviewed the 2025-26 budget and identified a modest underspend, mainly due to delays in relocating the parish office. He noted that the planned HIPs project, due to be funded by a £25,000 grant from TWBC, is now expected to exceed the grant amount. Consequently, the recommendation of the Finance Committee was that the PC approve a virement to transfer £5,500 to EMR to cover the HIPs project shortfall, and £1,500 to EMR for parish office relocation expenses, including removals and new furniture.
- Cllr Davis proposed acceptance of the Finance Committees' recommendation as detailed; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.
- e. **Discuss price increase/renewal of contract for cleaning of parish toilets and shelter**
The Clerk reported receipt of the renewal contract for cleaning the parish toilets and shelter from the PCs contractors, P&F Cleaning. It was noted that the monthly fee will increase with effect from 1st April 2026 from £500 to £550 per month (£6,600 per year), which is the first increase in a couple of years.
- Cllrs agreed that P&F Cleaning do a great job for the PC and therefore Cllr Larkin proposed acceptance of the increased monthly cost as detailed above; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.
- f. **Renew SLCC membership for Clerk**
The Clerk confirmed the renewal cost for the Clerk's SLCC membership has been invited at £313.
- It was agreed that the SLCC membership continues to be beneficial to the PC and therefore Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of the cost as detailed; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.
- g. **Discuss request for donation from Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS)**
The Clerk had circulated a donation request letter from the Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS) prior to the meeting. Cllr Russell, as Chair of the Finance Committee, confirmed that there are adequate funds available to consider this request.
- Cllr Sheppard proposed that the PC offer a grant of £250 to DAVSS; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.
- h. **Discuss request from Hi Kent for grant of £480**
The Clerk had circulated a grant application from Hi Kent prior to the meeting. It was noted that the request was for £480. Cllrs recognised that this is a valuable service, visiting the village monthly and holding a clinic from which 230 residents currently benefit.
- Cllr Sheppard proposed that the PC offer a grant of £480 to Hi Kent; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

i. **Discuss/agree contribution for Parish News article**

Cllrs considered whether to continue contributing to the monthly Parish News at the current annual cost of £300 or explore other options, including producing their own newsletter. It was noted that reviewing how other parishes manage newsletters could be useful for the future. After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish News remains a valuable source of information for residents and the PC will continue to contribute a monthly article for now.

Cllrs Sheppard proposed acceptance of the annual cost (£300) for contribution to the Parish News; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

5. Planning

a.

Planning Application:	26/00298/MOD106
Proposal:	<u>DoM to modify the affordable housing clause of the S106 attached to 15/505340/OUT in relation to tenure.</u>
Location:	Bassetts Farm, Goudhurst Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8AS
Recommendation	Refusal
Proposal	Cllr Larkin; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend refusal. The Parish Council support affordable housing provisions with a mixed tenure as set out in their Neighbourhood Plan (chapter 6, point 159).

Planning Application:	26/00370/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Construction of ancillary residential accommodation (alternative to permission 25/01753/FULL)</u>
Location:	High View, Grovehurst Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8BG
Recommendation	Refusal
Proposal	Cllr Russell; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.
Comments	<p>Whilst the Parish Council note the references to Section 106 preventing the sale of the development as a separate dwelling, they still recommend refusal as per TWBCs refusal notice issued on 12th November 2024 which states:</p> <p>"The proposed development would not be modest, would not be of an appropriate scale with the existing dwelling and would detract from the character and setting of the site with encroachment of built form into the countryside, causing significant harm to its character. The proposal would also lend itself to future subdivision as a separate dwelling, therefore, creating a new dwelling in an unsustainable location outside of the Limits to Build Development."</p>

b. Feedback on S106 agreement for planning application 24/00078/HYBRID Bassetts Farm and recent issues regarding the developments

The Clerk had circulated a response received from TWBC regarding the lack of S106 contributions for the Parish in relation to application 24/00078/HYBRID. Cllrs noted that the response was largely generic and did not address several of the specific points previously raised. The Clerk therefore asked whether Cllrs wished to submit a further response to TWBC.

The Clerk outlined several points she felt had not been adequately addressed, including the inconsistency between the Furnace Lane/Gibbet Lane development (49 homes), which was considered relevant for Village Hall S106 contributions, and the Bassetts Farm development (120 homes), which TWBC advised was not. The Clerk also queried how S106 agreements could not be modified as stated by TWBC, when application 26/00298/MOD106 seeks to modify the S106 relating to the social housing mix.

Cllrs agreed that these points should be raised again with TWBC, keeping the response brief and to the point, and to reiterate that the PC's priority for any S106 funding is towards a new or refurbished Village Hall. It was also agreed that the PC would welcome training on submitting S106 requests. The Clerk advised that Mr Winser, Chair of HDAG, had kindly offered to assist in drafting a further response.

Cllr Larkin proposed that the PC ask Mr Winser for assistance in drafting a final response to TWBC; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

c. Discuss adding a further comment regarding the proposed housing mix in response to agents comments on 25/02758/REM Land South of Brenchley Road, Brenchley Road, Horsmonden

The Clerk reported that, following a discussion with the Case Officer, it is anticipated that this application will be revised in respect of the housing mix and that the PC will be re-consulted. It was therefore agreed that the PC would not submit further comments at this stage and would await re-consultation.

d. Feedback and updates on planning and enforcement matters

The Clerk reported that updates continue to be received on several ongoing planning and enforcement matters. Officers are monitoring progress, awaiting compliance with notices in one case, and expecting further planning submissions in others. It was highlighted that enforcement matters are highly confidential, and although it may appear that no action is taking place, progress is being made. Further updates will be provided as matters progress.

6. Updates from Borough/County Councillors

Update from Cllr Lynne Darrah (TWBC):

- The budget was agreed at full council with a 2.8% increase.

- The Overview & Scrutiny Committee continue investigations into South East Water, with focus on ensuring the company can deliver necessary infrastructure following recent issues.
- The Local Government Reorganisation consultation is open until 26th March. TWBC are proposing a three-unitary model comprising Maidstone, Sevenoaks, and Tonbridge & Malling. Engagement opportunities include online demos on the 4th March and an in-person exhibition at Royal Victoria Place on the 7th March.
- There are also additional exhibitions throughout March regarding the redevelopment of Royal Victoria Place in Tunbridge Wells.

Update from Cllr Mark Munday (KCC):

- The budget was approved at 3.98% increase, including £1.6 million allocated to mitigate climate change.
- School bus stop issues in Horsmonden are being addressed. Cllr Munday confirmed he will speak with the relevant KCC officer on Thursday 5th March.

7. Parish Council Decisions/Administration

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

The following matters were raised:

- A parishioner had raised a concern regarding access to the footpath between Oast View and Goudhurst Road and asked for the PC to issue a statement confirming that the land is privately owned and not for public use. Whilst the land registry indicates that it is privately owned land, the PC have not verified ownership and therefore cannot make a legal determination. The parishioner's request for support was noted, however Cllrs agreed that any further action should be at the landowner's discretion.
- The Clerk reported receiving an email from a parishioner regarding dogs being off the lead on and around the Village Green. The parishioner had highlighted a recent unpleasant experience and requested that the PC consider installing signs requiring dogs to be kept on a lead. Cllrs discussed the matter and noted that the PC do not have enforcement powers in this regard. It was agreed that, whilst the concern is acknowledged, the PC are unable to take further action.
- Cllrs discussed concerns regarding dog fouling on the Village Green. It was noted that signage is in place on the bins, although additional reminders may be helpful.
- Cllr Larkin confirmed that she would carry out the monthly check of the Village Green for March. Bald patches had been noted previously and advice had been sought from Capel Groundcare, who recommended waiting for drier conditions to assess any improvement. The Clerk mentioned that it may be appropriate to carry out aeration and scarification and confirmed that she would obtain a quote for this work.

b. HIPs (Highways Improvement Plan) HIPS.

The Clerk had circulated an updated scheme drawing from KCC Highways in respect of the PC's HIP project on Maidstone Road. The drawing showed the extension of double yellow lines onto Brenchley Road and Goudhurst Road to improve visibility at the crossroads. KCC also clarified that the arrangements for the advance warning signage where the existing sign at 100 yards will remain but will be updated to indicate a STOP junction instead of a GIVE WAY and no repeater sign will be installed at the 50-yard point to avoid "sign clutter" or "sign blindness," which can

reduce driver compliance. It was confirmed that the SLOW markings on the carriageway at this location will be refreshed to reinforce driver awareness ahead of the junction.

Cllrs acknowledged the comments regarding signage and, while they welcomed the extension of the double yellow lines at the junction, it was noted that there would be no one to enforce these lines.

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that she was continuing to chase KCC regarding an automatic traffic count on Green Road following the relocation of the chemist.

c. Further update/decision following meeting with Openreach regarding telecoms boxes on village green

The Clerk had circulated a diagram from Openreach to Cllrs prior to the meeting, showing the proposed positioning of two bollards intended to protect the telecoms box, which will remain on the village green. The bollards are available in black or green and feature a reflective strip at the top.

Cllr Davis asked whether Openreach had consulted the Conservation Officer, given that the site is within a conservation area. The Clerk confirmed that she had provided Openreach with the email address of the Conservation Officer.

Following discussion, Cllrs agreed that they were generally happy with the proposed placement of the bollards, recognising that they would enhance the safety of the telecoms box and provide protection for anyone working at the box.

Cllr Russell proposed acceptance of the installation of two bollards to protect the telecoms box on the village green, preferably in green; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

d. Review and agree draft lease for new Parish Office

The draft lease was unavailable at the time of the meeting.

e. Consider scope of work for new Village Hall survey

The Clerk had circulated a draft Scope of Works document, which is intended to be sent to selected consultants for a quotation to assist with the new village hall survey. Cllrs discussed the document and agreed the following:

- It would be helpful for Mr Winsor and Mrs Newton (as members of HDAG) to provide detailed background information about the village to the chosen consultant, which will save time and reduce costs. This information will include the Village Vision, the Neighbourhood Plan, any issues or updates related to these documents, an inventory of current meeting places in the village, details of social clubs, and relevant websites. The consultants will be informed that this background information will be provided at the start of the process and will be included in the Scope of Works as background material.
- After the consultation results are received and the consultant has made recommendations, these should be communicated to the parish to invite any final comments. This will ensure transparency and allow the community to be involved before the PC makes its final decision. It was agreed that this final stage could be managed directly by the PC, and therefore it was not necessary to include this in the consultant's scope for quoting purposes.

Cllr Larkin proposed acceptance of the Scope of Works document as drafted; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

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

The Chair was unable to provide an update and will report back at the next meeting.

g. Discuss next steps for the parish play area project

The Deputy Clerk reported that Cllr Baxter-Smith had met with Kindergarten to present the proposed extension plans for the new parish play area. The design options were discussed and noted. Kindergarten confirmed that the information would be shared with the full committee and they would revert back to the PC with any further questions or comments.

h. Review and agree quarterly play area inspection report from Capel Groundcare

The Clerk had circulated the quarterly inspection report to Cllrs prior to the meeting and confirmed that no new actions were required.

Cllrs noted that, although the issue is considered low risk, the rope ladder on the large play equipment is beginning to fray and expose metal. It was agreed that a quotation should be obtained to replace it from Playdale and also a comparison quote from Capel Groundcare.

Cllr Russell proposed that the PC note and accept the contents of the quarterly play area report; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

i. Discuss/agree Crosses on the Green event booking for Horsmonden Village Green

Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of this event subject to receiving the necessary paperwork from St Margaret's Church; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

j. Discuss/agree Village Green booking for short video

The Clerk reported that a local drama group had requested to use the Village Green to film a short awareness production on teenage drug involvement and its impact on families and the community. Cllrs were asked if they were happy to grant permission.

Cllr Russell proposed acceptance of the event subject to receiving the necessary paperwork; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

k. Discuss community litter pick

The Clerk suggested the 9th May as a date for a community litter pick, with timings of approximately 10:00am to 12:00pm. Cllrs discussed and agreed that the Clerk should approach the Social Club to seek permission to use the club as a base for the event, given its central location and potential to attract more volunteers. It was confirmed that the WI are happy to provide refreshments, subject to confirmation of the final date.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm

APPENDIX 1

Date: 02/03/2026

Horsmonden Parish Council Current Year

Page 1

Time: 11:10

Current A/c- Unity Trust Bank

List of Payments made between 02/02/2026 and 01/03/2026

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
02/02/2026	Lloyds Bank PLC	DD	3.00		Credit card January
02/02/2026	Microshade VSM	BACS	209.61		January Data & Emails
04/02/2026	Capel Groundcare	BACS	732.92		Playarea, SIDs, Groundswork JAN
04/02/2026	Arron Services Ltd	BACS	810.00		Annual Service contract
04/02/2026	Society Of Local Council Clerk	BACS	200.00		Membership Deputy Clerk
17/02/2026	EDF Energy	DD	57.77		Feb Electricity Toilets
17/02/2026	EDF Energy	DD	20.18		Jan Electricity VG boxes
17/02/2026	Castle Water	DD	55.72		Water supply January
17/02/2026	EE - BT	DD	64.80		Mobile February
18/02/2026	Drax	DD	279.86		Electricity Street lights JAN
18/02/2026	Capel Groundcare	BACS	174.00		Tree removal FD
19/02/2026	Peoples partnership	DD	238.18		Feb Pension
23/02/2026	HMRC	BACS	677.40		Tax& NI Feb
24/02/2026	Microshade VSM	BACS	209.62		February Data & emails
24/02/2026	NALC	BACS	102.00		Annual Conference 26
24/02/2026	Knock Out Print services LTD	BACS	60.00		Banner for APM
25/02/2026	P&F Cleaning services LTD	SO	500.00		Cleaning Toilet& Shelter Feb
25/02/2026	Anna Blyth	BACS	1,170.52		February salary
25/02/2026	Mrs L D Noakes	BACS	1,626.33		February salary
27/02/2026	Mr J Couchman	BACS	160.00		Clock and play area Feb
28/02/2026	Unity Trust Bank	DD	9.00		Bank Charges January
Total Payments			7,360.91		