

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL

ON MONDAY, 1 JUNE 2026 AT 7:30PM

Present:

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

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

Anna Blyth (Deputy Clerk)

Cllr David Knight (part of the meeting)

Cllr Mark Munday (part of the meeting)

Mr Andrew Winsor (Chair of HDAG)

The meeting started at 7.26pm.

1. Apologies for Absence and declarations of interest

Cllr Russell.

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

Cllrs Darrah and Mobbs also gave their apologies prior to the meeting.

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 Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 11 May 2026 had been circulated beforehand by the Clerk. They were agreed for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Jenkinson; seconded Cllr Boon 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 May 2026 as attached (Appendix 1- See end of document)

The Clerk showed a copy of the list of payments up to and including 31 May 2026 as a total of £11,757.35. Cllr Baxter-Smith proposed approval of the schedule of payments; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

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

b. **Bank Reconciliations for bank accounts at 31 May 2026**

The bank balance for the Council’s Unity Trust Bank (current account) at 31 May 2026 was displayed with a total at £111,242.59.

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

c. **Consider maturity and reinvestment of United Trust Bond for £40,000**

Cllrs were asked to consider options for the reinvestment of £40,000 currently held in a one-year bond due to mature in July. The Clerk explained the need to invest with an alternative banking group to ensure funds remain protected under Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) limits.

Current investments were noted as:

- £40,000 held in a one-year bond with United Trust Bank, maturing in July
- approximately £39,800 held in a 40-day notice account with United Trust Bank

The following options were presented for consideration:

- United Trust Bank – 1-year bond at 4.40% Gross AER
- Hampshire Trust Bank – 1-year fixed bond at 4.46% Gross AER
- Coutts – 1-year fixed rate at 4.36% Gross AER (subject to eligibility)
- HSBC – 1-year savings account at 3.80% Gross AER (noted that business account availability may be limited)

Following discussion, Cllr Davis proposed that the PC reinvest the £40,000 with United Trust Bank for a further one-year term: seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.

5. Planning

a.

Planning Application:	26/00988/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Installation of a 2m close-board fence with 300mm high trellis</u>
Location:	2 Oakleigh Cottages, The Heath, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8JA
Recommendation	Approval
Proposal	Cllr Larkin; seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.
Comments	The PC recommend approval. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

Planning Application:	26/00314/LBC
Proposal:	<u>Listed Building Consent - (Works Commenced) Installation of panels to cover internal walls; re-paint exterior window frames black</u>
Location:	The Heath Stores, The Heath, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8HT
Recommendation	Refusal

Proposal	Cllr Boon; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend refusal on the grounds that this has a detrimental effect on the street scene and conservation area. The inside is visible from the outside and is not aesthetically pleasing however, the PC will be guided by advice from the Conservation Architect.

b. Feedback on planning application [24/00078/HYBRID Bassetts Farm](#)

Cllr Boon provided an update following the TWBC Planning Committee meeting held on 27 May, where she spoke on behalf of the PC regarding the Bassetts Farm application for 120 dwellings. It was noted that prior to the meeting, officers had reviewed and amended the proposed village hall Section 106 contribution to reflect the correct bedspace calculation methodology. During her speech, Cllr Boon thanked officers for revisiting the matter and noted the importance of future training on Section 106 processes for Parish Councillors.

It was also noted that the PC’s request for more flexible Section 106 wording to allow wider village hall provision options was considered; however, TWBC advised that the adopted Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies specify provision of a new village hall and, as outline consent and Section 106 arrangements are already in place, changes would not be possible at this stage.

Cllr Boon advised that the replacement orchard planting had been addressed following the removal of trees in error but commented that the PC should monitor this to ensure the agreed number, size and specification of trees are provided.

The affordable housing amendment was also approved, and the overall application was approved unanimously in line with the officer recommendation.

c. TW/25/02758/REM – Land South of Brenchley Road, Brenchley Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge. Feedback on the application and discussion about possible meeting with Fernham Homes

Chair of HDAG, Mr Andrew Winser presented a summary document setting out the current position regarding the Village Hall project and associated Section 106 obligations with regards to the Brenchley Road development.

Mr Winser had provided Cllrs with a transcript of the relevant part to the TWBC Planning Meeting referred to in item 5 b. above prior to the PC meeting. He drew Cllrs attention to Mr Hone’s comments to the Planning Committee which included:

“I [Mr Hone] think there is clear sense from the adopted policies [the Local Plan and the HNP] that there should be a new village hall but those are the adopted policies of our Development Plan.”

And

“.. what I [Mr Hone] would say to members is we have an allocated site, both here and one that sets out where a village hall will be going”

Mr Winser drew Cllrs attention to the actual wording of the Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan which includes:

“135. ... TWBC proposes in its SLP that a new village hall should be built on the Brenchley Road site (AL/HO2). While this is closer to the village centre (Heath Stores crossroads), it is unclear whether adequate and safe pedestrian access can be secured from the village centre along the Brenchley Road (see Access and Movement chapter). It is therefore proposed that if a suitable site cannot be found on any of the proposed development sites, contributions will be sought from developers for a new community centre and sports facility on another site in the village.

Policy 4.4: New village hall Development proposals for a new village hall will be supported provided it is a walkable distance from the village centre and has adequate safe pedestrian access”

It was noted that this HNP policy appears to include more flexibility in deciding the type of village hall facility and its location than was suggested at the Planning Committee, and this should be taken into account as plans for the village hall are developed.

The Clerk confirmed that a meeting had been arranged with Fernham Homes for the 17th June at 11:00am. Attendees will be Cllrs Richards, Russell, Davis, Jenkinson, and Larkin as well as Mr Winser (as chair of HDAG) and the Clerk. It was agreed that Borough Councillors should also be copied into the correspondence in case they are able to attend.

d. Feedback and updates on planning and enforcement matters. Updates on village shops and amenities (Manchester House, new vets)

The Clerk advised that there was limited feedback to report regarding ongoing enforcement matters. It was noted that there was a recent incident at the entrance to the Gafford's Bridge site and that the ongoing enforcement case remains active.

The Clerk advised that the planning application relating to Manchester House, seeking change of use from commercial to residential, had been refused on the basis that insufficient evidence had been provided to demonstrate that continued commercial use would not be viable. No further information was available regarding next steps.

An update was provided that the new veterinary practice on Maidstone Road is expected to open in August.

It was noted that The Gun and Spitroast pub, which has been closed for some time, is expected to reopen in June/July. There have been some delays to the refurbishment works due to unexpected structural issues being identified and subsequently addressed.

6. Updates from Borough/County Councillors

Cllr Mark Munday provided a brief update regarding bus stop arrangements within the village. Following investigation into the suitability of the current school bus stop on Goudhurst Road, no suitable alternative location has been identified at this stage.

Cllr Munday advised that discussions are now taking place with the developers of Bassetts Farm to explore whether provision for a bus stop could be incorporated within the development. A response is awaited.

Cllr David Knight provided a brief update regarding the appointment of Cllr Bev Palmer as the new Mayor of Tunbridge Wells.

7. Parish Council Decisions/Administration

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

The Clerk advised that Cllrs Sheppard and Russell had identified a number of holes on the village green, with badger activity considered the most likely cause. The holes have been filled; however, some have reappeared shortly afterwards. Cllrs were asked to remain observant, particularly ahead of the Summer Festival weekend. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Clerks would arrange for four advisory signs to be placed around the green to encourage members of the public to take care.

Cllr Boon provided a brief update regarding Fromandez Drive and confirmed she remains committed to exploring opportunities to enhance the area. Initial advice received indicates there may be challenges in establishing a successful wildflower meadow due to existing site conditions, including tree canopy coverage. The Clerk reminded Cllrs that any future changes to the area would need to consider current permissions and licensing arrangements. Cllr Boon advised she is continuing to gather further information and will provide a more detailed update at the next meeting on the 6 July.

b. HIPS (Highways Improvement Plan) [HIPS](#)

The Clerk provided an update regarding Green Road and advised that the Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) has now been confirmed to be in place for one week, effective from 12 June.

There is currently no date confirmed for the annual HIP review; however, the Clerk asked Councillors to consider any new items they may wish to add to the HIP list ahead of the next meeting.

The Clerk also reported that Martin Drinkwater is retiring and will therefore be stepping down from his role as Speedwatch Coordinator for Horsmonden. Cllrs expressed their thanks to Martin for his time, commitment, and support in carrying out the role.

It was agreed that the vacancy for Speedwatch Coordinator will now be advertised through Parish News, the parish website, and social media channels.

c. Consider request for permission to use Horsmonden Sports Ground for Firework Display on 7 November 2026

The Clerk reported that a request had been received from FoHPS (Friends of Horsmonden Primary School) seeking permission to hold the annual fireworks display at the Sports Ground on 7 November 2026, as the PC are part landowners.

Cllr Baxter-Smith proposed that permission be granted for the event, subject to receipt of the relevant documentation; seconded Cllr Jenkinson. Unanimous.

It was noted that the Clerk will request that FoHPS ensure a thorough clear-up is carried out following the event and that no firework debris is left on site.

d. **Updates on parish office lease and move**

The Clerk advised that there was no further update available at this time, other than that she had requested that the PCs solicitor receive and review the statutory declaration on the PCs behalf.

e. **Consider quarterly play area inspection report from Capel Groundcare**

The Clerk had circulated the quarterly play area inspection report to Cllrs prior to the meeting and confirmed that Capel Groundcare have now fitted the new scramble net, adjusted the gate spring, and carried out weed treatment.

Cllr Boon proposed that the PC note and accept the contents of the quarterly play area inspection report; seconded by Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.

f. **Initial feedback on New Village Hall survey and discussion of other village projects/venues (sports pavilion, St Margarets church project)**

The Clerk had circulated the responses received from the consultants approached to Cllrs prior to the meeting. It was noted that the submissions vary in terms of indicative costs, proposed timescales, and relevant experience, including examples of previous work undertaken across a range of project scales.

An initial discussion took place regarding the information received and how this may align with the requirements and aspirations of the village projects. As the process remains at an early stage and further consideration is required to assess both the quotations and the overall suitability of the companies, no decisions were made at this stage. It was agreed that further information gathering and review would continue, possibility with the assistance of the Horsmonden Development Advisory Group (HDAG), and the matter would be brought back to the next meeting on 6 July for further discussion.

g. **Discuss/agree final arrangements for the PCs stall at FoHPS summer fete on 6th June**

The Clerk asked Cllrs to confirm their availability to assist with the PC stall at the summer fete on Saturday 6th June.

Cllrs Davis and Baxter-Smith confirmed that they would meet the Clerk at the Parish Office on Saturday morning to help transport items to the Village Green. Cllrs Larkin and Jenkinson confirmed their availability to attend the stall between 1:00pm and 2:00pm. The Chair also confirmed that he would likely be available to assist.

It was agreed that the Clerks would prepare a list of 100 names for the “Name the Fox” competition and produce posters incorporating a QR code to enable members of the public to sign up for Parish Council news. Display boards introducing the Parish Councillors and explaining the role of the Council will also be displayed. The purpose of the stall is to raise awareness of the Parish Council and its activities within the community.

h. **Update regarding 2026 Horse Fair**

The Deputy Clerk advised that all paperwork has now been re-sent to the organiser, who has recently changed address and telephone number. Contact has now been successfully re-established and discussions will now begin regarding this year’s event. Further updates will follow.

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

The Clerk advised that a brief meeting had taken place with the Kindergarten regarding the play area project. It was confirmed that the trustees are supportive in principle of the proposed extension of land to be leased to the PC; however, they are currently consulting with the Charity Commission to ensure there is no objection to extending the existing lease to include additional land at Locket Green and will report back once a response has been received.

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

It was agreed that this item would be brought back for discussion in September/October, as defibrillator training is already being organised by the WI at the end of June.

8. Consultations

a. KCC Consultation: [Review of the Local Validation List closes 12 June 2026](#)

Cllr Richards agreed to complete this consultation on behalf of the PC.

b. KCC Consultation: [Echoes of the Past - Preserving Heritage at Risk in the Kent Downs closes 30 June](#)

Cllr Boon agreed to complete this consultation on behalf of the PC.

c. TWBC Consultation: Aligning Parish and Town Council Elections with a new Unitary Authority

The Clerk advised that the government are seeking views on aligning Parish Council elections with the new unitary council election cycle, due to take place in May 2027.

She reminded Cllrs that the PCs next scheduled election is currently May 2028 and therefore agreement to realignment would bring this forward by one year.

Cllrs discussed and noted the following potential benefits:

- Alignment with future unitary elections, which may reduce future election costs.
- Opportunity to regain the General Power of Competence if at least two-thirds of councillors are elected rather than co-opted. This would require sufficient nominations (ideally nine candidates) at election time.

Potential drawbacks also noted:

- Current Cllrs terms of office would be shortened by one year.
- Some Cllrs may choose not to stand for re-election.
- If nominations exceed available seats, a contested parish election could result, creating additional election costs.

Taking everything into account, the Chair proposed that Horsmonden Parish Council have no objection to bringing their PC election forward a year (from May 2028 to May 2027), to be in alignment with the new Unitary Authority. This proposal was voted for unanimously by all present.

9. Feedback Training / Meetings / Events Attended

Parish Chairmans meetings/Clerks meeting

- The Clerk advised that she will be attending the NALC Annual Conference on the 24th June.

Training / information sessions

- Cllrs Jenkinson and Larkin gave brief feedback following the Kent ACRE meeting they attended on the 27th May. The slides will be shared with all once received.
- It was agreed that the Clerk will take note of all training attended by Cllrs between April 2026 – April 2027.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.50pm

APPENDIX 1

Date: 01/06/2026		Horsmonden Parish Council Current Year		Page 1	
Time: 12:35		Current A/c- Unity Trust Bank			
List of Payments made between 11/05/2026 and 31/05/2026					
Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Authorized Ref	Transaction Detail
15/05/2026	Capel Groundcare	BACS	408.00		Wash down Village Gateways
15/05/2026	Capel Groundcare	BACS	1,679.40		VG scarify/aerate
15/05/2026	HMRC	BACS	860.35		Staff tax & NI
18/05/2026	Clear Councils	BACS	2,090.28		Annual Insurance renewal
18/05/2026	EE - BT	DD	93.48		Mobile phones & CCTV May
19/05/2026	Peoples partnership	DD	287.89		May Pensions
20/05/2026	EDF Energy	DD	19.99		VG Boxes May electricity
20/05/2026	EDF Energy	DD	46.04		May electricity Public toilets
21/05/2026	Drax	DD	188.71		April Electricity SL
22/05/2026	Anna Blyth	BACS	1,316.85		May Salary
22/05/2026	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	1,798.62		May Salary
26/05/2026	Microshade VSM	DD	259.96		Emails,Data, support May
26/05/2026	P&F Cleaning services LTD	SO	550.00		May Toilet & shelter cleaning
27/05/2026	Mrs C Davis	BACS	17.33		Refund Litter pick catering
27/05/2026	PWCAC	BACS	250.00		S137 Donation to PWCAC
27/05/2026	Air Ambulance Charity	BACS	250.00		S137 Donation to air ambulance
27/05/2026	Capel Groundcare	BACS	810.00		Fertilizer & Herbicide VG
29/05/2026	Mr J Couchman	BACS	200.00		Clock & Play area May
29/05/2026	Mrs RJ Laing	BACS	200.00		Mrs RJ Laing
29/05/2026	GDPR Info	BACS	420.00		DPO annual fee
31/05/2026	unity trust bank	DD	10.45		bank charges May
Total Payments			11,757.35		