

MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL at 7.30 P.M. ON MONDAY 7TH OCTOBER 2019
(Meeting commenced at 7.35pm)

Present: Cllr March (Chair)
Councillors Russell, Sheppard, Jenkinson, Stevens and Richards.

In attendance: Lucy Noakes (Clerk and RFO) & Jackie Stanton (Assistant Clerk)
KCC Councillor Hamilton for part of the meeting
No members of the public.

Declarations of Interest:

Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct were invited. Cllr March declared an interest in item 6.1 TWBC Draft Local Plan as she had put a site forward in the call for sites for the plan.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Davis. Cllr Davis' reasons for absence were proposed for acceptance by Cllr Russell and seconded Cllr Stevens. Unanimous.

Cllr Larkin. Cllr Larkin's reasons for absence were proposed for acceptance by Cllr Stevens and seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous

2. PUBLIC SESSION (no decisions): Members of the public have the right to speak for up to three minutes at the Chairpersons discretion on issues concerning the Parish providing the Clerk has prior notification.

No one had requested to speak in the public session.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Agree the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 2nd September 2019, Planning Committee Meetings of 17th September 2019.

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting 2nd September 2019 were presented and checked for accuracy. Cllr Richards proposed acceptance of the minutes, seconded Cllr Jenkinson, unanimous.

The minutes of the Planning committee meeting 17th September 2019 were presented and checked for accuracy. They were proposed for acceptance by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded by Cllr Russell and voted for unanimously.

4. MATTERS ARISING (the Council looks at matters ongoing from the last meeting - no decisions)

Data Protection and GDPR – ongoing.

Risk Assessment of Parish owned buildings – ongoing.

Emergency Planning –The assistant clerk to circulate the list of volunteers to PC members only. Cllrs should mark all those they know and are willing to contact, prior to the next meeting.

Dog Poo Bags – on going.

VE Day May 2020 – The PC would not be pursuing this event.

Councillor Vacancy – The Clerk was still corresponding with potential applicants.

Parish Council Projector – Old Barn Audio are looking at possible solutions for this.

5. PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE/QUOTATIONS

5.1 Agree Parish Council accounts and invoices for September - See Appendix 1

It was proposed by Cllr Sheppard that the list of invoices for September to be paid by the Council (Appendix 1) was acceptable. This was seconded by Cllr Russell, unanimous. Cllrs Sheppard and Russell offered to release the BACs payments and sign the cheques for this period.

Appendix 1

Date: 07/10/2019		Horsmonden Parish Council		Page 1	
Time: 12:41		Current Bank A/c			
List of Payments made between 02/09/2019 and 06/10/2019					
<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
02/09/2019	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	300014	52.00		Payment for VH Bin
06/09/2019	EDF Energy	DD	66.93		Electricity supply VG
10/09/2019	EDF Energy	DD	52.00		Electricity Public toilets
13/09/2019	Interdirect Ltd	BACS	180.00		Domain and email hosting
13/09/2019	Specialist Hygiene Services Lt	BACS	281.47		August cleaning
13/09/2019	PSR Lighting & Signs Ltd	BACS	178.00		July & Aug Maintenance
13/09/2019	Clearview Windows	BACS	60.00		Cleaning furniture Vill Green
13/09/2019	Grovehurst Plumbing	BACS	70.00		Repairs public toilets
13/09/2019	P & P Signs	BACS	126.00		Sign for play area
16/09/2019	Castle Water	DD	14.83		Supply for toilets
18/09/2019	Horsmonden Social Club	300015	25.00		Payment for RBL wreath
19/09/2019	British Telecom	DD	231.70		Telephone and Broadband
25/09/2019	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	1,150.71		September salary
25/09/2019	Ms J Stanton	BACS	683.67		September salary JMS
27/09/2019	Mr J Couchman	300016	83.08		Sept Clock and play area
27/09/2019	PSR Lighting & Signs Ltd	BACS	89.00		Sept Maintenance
27/09/2019	Viking	BACS	85.02		Stationery
27/09/2019	ChoiceleaderLtd (TMS)	BACS	138.20		Prints for Local Plan/NHPlan
27/09/2019	ChoiceleaderLtd (TMS)	BACS	30.00		Map for Planning VG Box
27/09/2019	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	21.60		Reimbursement for keys cut
27/09/2019	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	34.11		Travel costs
27/09/2019	HMRC	BACS	203.89		Tax & NI for September
30/09/2019	Capel Groundcare	BACS	149.50		September SID maintenance
30/09/2019	Old Barn Audio Ltd	BACS	2,086.03		Second half of Sound system
30/09/2019	Playdale Playgrounds Ltd	BACS	4,033.20		Deposit for new equipment
30/09/2019	Kent County Council	BACS	5,115.82		Purchase of new SID
30/09/2019	PSR Lighting & Signs Ltd	BACS	2,066.40		Street lighting repaint
30/09/2019	We Hang Christmas Lights UK Lt	BACS	2,558.83		Deposit for Christmas Lighting
30/09/2019	Unity Trust Bank	BACS	18.00		quarterly bank charges
04/10/2019	Hummel Electrical Ltd	BACS	78.00		Replace earth connection
04/10/2019	Specialist Hygiene Services Lt	BACS	281.47		September cleaning toilets
04/10/2019	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	99.92		Reimbursement for bulbs
04/10/2019	Mr J Boot	BACS	1,041.20		NH plan Aug/Sept
04/10/2019	PSR Lighting & Signs Ltd	BACS	190.80		Remaining street light paint
04/10/2019	Ms J Stanton	BACS	11.49		Reimbursement of extension
04/10/2019	Ms J Stanton	BACS	100.00		Reimburse vacuum cleaner
Total Payments			21,687.87		

5.2 Chair to reconcile accounts with bank statement for period up to and including 30th September 2019

The Chair was able to reconcile the accounts with the bank statement for the period up to and including 30th September and this was signed appropriately.

5.3 Quotations for replacement of Parish Council noticeboards

The Assistant Clerk had obtained several quotes for a new noticeboard ant the Village Hall and a new boticeboard on the Village Green. It was proposed by Cllr Jenkinson and seconded by Cllr Stevens, unanimous, that the quote provided by Fitzpatrick Woolmer for a wall mounted recycled

plastic board should be accepted for the Village Hall at a cost of £1394 plus VAT including headboard, delivery and installation.

Cllr Jenkinson then proposed that the quotation from The Parish Noticeboard Company for a powder coated aluminium noticeboard should be accepted for the Village Green board, at a cost of £1275 plus VAT including delivery and installation. Seconded Cllr Stevens, unanimous.

5.4 Quote for new street lighting column to replace existing column 21 which is beyond repair.

The Clerk quoted the cost of £433.84 plus VAT to remove and replace the broken street light column 21 which is located on the Maidstone Road opposite the tennis courts. It was proposed by Cllr Russell and seconded by Cllr Jenkinson, unanimous that this work should be carried out as quoted. It was noted that this quote did not include any provision for works to be carried out by UK Power Networks in association with transferring the power from the old light to the new one. It was estimated that the costs of this work would be approximately £664 plus VAT.

5.5 Quote for fertilizer and weed killer – Village Green and Fromandez Drive.

Bournes had quoted a price of £540 plus VAT (£390 for the VG and £150 for Fromandez Drive). As Bournes had always carried out good work for a competitive price previously and had the necessary equipment to carry out the works safely, it was proposed by Cllr Stevens and seconded by Cllr Richards that the Council ask Bournes to carry out this work at the price quoted, unanimous.

5.6 Quotation for play area surface repair following installation of planned new equipment

The Clerk had now received two quotations for repair to the play area surfacing following the planned installation of the new item of play equipment. A third company had been approached but had not responded.

It was proposed by Cllr Richards and seconded by Cllr Jenkinson, unanimous that the Council accept the quotation from Abacus for £1825 plus VAT as the cheaper of two quotations received. Clerk to inform Abacus.

6. TWBC'S DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION (Comments by 1st November 2019)

6.1 The Parish Council's initial points to raise for further discussion.

It was proposed by Cllr March from the Chair and voted for unanimously that item 6.1 should be discussed and decided upon at the end of the meeting when all other business had been carried out in order to allow the council item to focus on this matter.

7 HIGHWAYS AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

7.1 Highways issues – footpaths, trees, roads, signs, verges, and markings

A resident had asked about the possibility of sign posting Lewes Heath as some traffic, including emergency vehicles, were unable to find the location. Cllrs thought that the road up to Lewes Heath from the Spelmonden Road was privately owned and therefore any signage on this land would have to be privately paid for and need the landowner's permission. It was however considered that the other end of the road where the road splits from the Goudhurst Road, near to Lamberts Place, might be part of the Highway network and KHS could be asked if they would provide signage in this location.

The following problems were raised for the Clerk to report to KHS:

- The finger sign is still pointing the wrong way at the junction of Churn Lane and the Maidstone Road.
- Drain still blocked in Gibbet Lane, just prior to Willard's Place.
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7.2 Street lighting - updates on new street light heads and repainting of columns.

The Clerk reported that the painting of the street lighting had now all been completed as far as possible. The contractors had cut back over-grown vegetation at one location and had been forced to leave the painting of one light where the owner refused for vegetation to be cut back to allow access.

8. ADMINISTRATION

8.1 Traffic Solutions and HIPS (any updates)

The Clerk had sent the HIPS off to KHS and was now awaiting to hear from them as to when a meeting could be arranged with the Parish Councillors to discuss the items mentioned.

8.2 Neighbourhood Planning.

Cllr March proposed from the Chair that NH Planning be dealt with just prior to item 6.1 at the end of the meeting. Unanimous.

8.3 Confirmation of the Parish Council's use of Face book.

The Clerks had attended a Conference where the use of Facebook and other social media, by Parish Councils was discussed. It had been recommended by KALC at the Conference that comments from parishioners should be allowed on the Facebook pages, and that the Council's Social Media Policy should indicate what response should be expected from the council to any comments made, if any. Arron Services were coming in to the office to set up a Facebook page for the Council to use on 14th October. It was proposed by Cllr Richards and seconded by Cllr Sheppard, unanimous, that the Facebook page be set up to receive comments, as recommended by KALC.

8.4 Horsmonden Parish Council Social Media Policy

As mentioned above, it was suggested by KALC that all Council's adopt a suitable Social Media Policy. The Clerks had circulated a draft policy and it was proposed by Cllr Richards, seconded by Cllr Russell and voted for unanimously that the Social Media Policy as amended by the Councillors, should be adopted and used by the Council.

8.5 Horsmonden Village Hall - Discuss survey results produced by Bracketts for roof cavity/lighting box and consider how to proceed. Consider new fire exit door adjacent to Parish Office and fitting of snib lock to fire exit from kitchen

Bracketts had provided a comprehensive survey on the area above the kitchen and toilets at the Village Hall to evaluate its suitability for boarding down and storage. The outcome of the survey was that although the area could be boarded down and used for storage, there should be a weight restriction on anything being put in this area and on the number of persons permitted into the lighting box area at once. This was because of limitations to the load bearing ability of the joists in this area.

It was proposed therefore by Cllr Stevens and seconded by Cllr Sheppard, unanimous, that the following actions and restrictions should apply:

- A safety guard rail should be installed around the hatch at the top of the step ladder to prevent users of this area from falling back down the hatch when open.
- The hatch to the area above the toilets should be opened up in to a doorway for normal access. The door way to the other side of the attic should no longer be used.
- The area above the toilets should be boarded down to allow use for storage as below and to allow safe access to the water heater located in this area.
- A light should be fitted in the storage area for health and safety of those accessing this area.
- Only three persons at once should be permitted to the attic area/lighting box area.

- Only restricted items (which are light in weight) should be permitted to be stored in the area above the toilets. This would be expected to include spare light bulbs for the stage lighting and not heavy equipment of any kind.
- Nothing should be stored in the lighting box, in order to prevent trip hazards, as this is a small area.
- A notice should be provided and placed in the lighting box, confirming the weight restriction and restriction to a maximum of three persons at any one time.

Cllr Jenkinson asked the Council to consider a new fire exit door to the right-hand side of the Hall (looking to the rear) as this was also used for access to the Parish Office and was now badly fitting and beyond repair, making it difficult to open and shut. She also pointed out that the risk assessment of the Hall had indicated that a snib lock should be fitted on the fire exit door from the kitchen, to allow quick and easy exit if necessary. It was proposed by Cllr Russell and seconded by Cllr Jenkinson that the Clerks contact Southwood Windows who fitted the new front door at the Hall, to obtain a quotation, as this company had provided a good service at a competitive rate previously. Unanimous.

8.6 Assets of Community Value

It was understood that some residents had made an application to TWBC to list an asset of community value in the village. The process allows the owners of such a property to appeal to the application, however once the property is listed if the owner puts the property up for sale, then the community have the option to purchase the property and run it as a community asset, within six months of it going on sale.

8.7 HoVEC Christmas event - 7th December 2019

It was noted that the HoVEC Christmas event was to be on 7th December 2019.

The event would include a procession from the Kindergarten to the Village Green where a Nativity scene would be re-enacted in the shelter. Weather permitting it was hoped that stalls could be located around the Village Green, as well as in the Social Club and Village Hall.

It was suggested that the Clerk look into the possibility of adding a star above the shelter to the Christmas lighting contract.

It was proposed by Cllr Sheppard and seconded by Cllr Russell that the Council pay for Laser Tag to be provided on the Green as youth provision for this event, at a cost of £650 plus VAT. This was agreed unanimously by members of the Council.

8.8 Power supply around the Village Green

It had been requested that the PC look into the possibility of providing another electricity supply box on the Green opposite the Parish toilets. Clerk to contact Roger Hummel who supplied the last box, to see if this was possible and if so, provide a quotation.

8.9 Legacy – New Parish Footpaths map on Village Green

The Clerk was still pursuing this with KCC.

8.2 Neighbourhood Planning.

Cllr Jenkinson had provided the Council with updates of the progress made so far by the NHP steering group, this including steering group meetings, public events and progress made with AECOM who were assisting with the Master planning. A public meeting had been held on 5th October at the Primary School where AECOM had presented their Master Planning ideas and received feedback from the public. Jim Boot was assessing the feedback and providing some analysis from this.

The Steering Group were able to include the Councils Sustainability Policy in the NH Plan; hence the Clerk was asked to forward a copy of this to Cllr Jenkinson.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had suggested that they would require assistance in drafting the Plan from planning consultants Jim Boot and Lindsay Frost. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Russell that the Parish Council commission Jim Boot to write the Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan (and Lindsay Frost to review it) on behalf of the Parish Council. Seconded Cllr Sheppard, unanimous.

At this point in the meeting Cllr March invited Cllr Hamilton (KCC) to update the Council on any points of interest she wanted to raise.

Cllr Hamilton reminded the Council that in planning law, individuals do not have the right to protect their views individually. However, provision is made to protect 'an outlook' en masse, so that a whole community could protect any change to its outlook. This should be remembered when reviewing the Draft Local Plan.

It was also mentioned by Cllr Hamilton that the 'net gain in biodiversity' should not be forgotten when considering comments for the Draft Local Plan, as the intention was to make applicants responsible for proving that their application not only protected existing biodiversity but actually improved biodiversity through water courses, planting and other actions.

The Council were reminded that they should send a copy of their NH Plan to the County Council for comment and review once drafted, as a lot of parishes forgot to include them for comments.

Cllr Hamilton mentioned that she had received information about lorries on Tong Lane causing a potential problem with a gill which runs under the road. It was feared that too much weight could cause the road here to collapse. She would pass details on to the Clerk to look into.

Cllr Hamilton was also looking into the inconsistency of speed limits across the county and would report further information on this when available.

6. TWBC'S DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION (Comments by 1st November 2019)

6.1 The Parish Council's initial points to raise for further discussion.

The following matters were raised for inclusion in the response to the Draft Local Plan:

The Strategy (Section 4, P37 onwards).

The PC looked firstly at the overall development strategy as TWBC have chosen to pursue dispersal options 3) 'Dispersed Growth' and 5) New Settlement Growth.

Horsmonden PC disagree with this strategy (as commented when they responded to the Local Plan Issues and options consultation in June 2017).

HPC would prefer to see option 2) Semi Dispersed Growth and Option 4) Growth Corridor Led Approach, as they believe the larger settlements should be taking the majority of the development as they have more of the infrastructure and facilities required for this type of growth, with limited development being shared among the remaining villages and rural areas.

HPC chose option 4) Growth Led Corridor Approach, as they felt that the land put forward along the A21 corridor was in a suitable position for large growth, having major links already to road networks and infrastructure already close by.

It is also noticed that in the Issues and Options statement in 2017 Horsmonden was categorised as a Group 'C' settlement in the suggested Settlement Groupings. (Page 13 - The Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document). This put the village in a grouping with the smaller settlements like

Speldhurst, Sandhurst, Benenden, Langton Green and Sissinghurst, however despite this Horsmonden has ended up with far more housing than most of the settlements listed in group B, which were considered larger settlements. This does not make sense and HPC would like to challenge this approach to development in the village, bearing in mind TWBC have already categorised it as a small settlement, group C.

The Parish Council believes the reasoning behind Horsmonden being allocated such a large number of homes is that a lot of sites in the parish were put forward during the Call for Sites. However, most of the sites put forward were not considered suitable for development. It appears that Horsmonden is now being held accountable for this, with something like a 28% increase in the village size being suggested, despite most of the sited being categorised as unsuitable by TWBC.

Section 5. Place Shaping Policies. P305 -P313 Horsmonden Overview.

The three sites put forward for development in Horsmonden all have major problems with access and development of footpath links to the village centre, which do not exist for any of the sites at present.

The Village has a road layout which is very difficult to change as all main roads lead to the crossroads through the village centre, which is impossible to alter because it is surrounded by conservation area land (village green) and valuable assets such as the village shop and public house etc. There is not space for expansion of the road or the addition of footways to link the three-potential development to the centre safely. It should also be taken into account that the centre crossroads already sees a major flow of traffic during peak times and has been considered as an accident black spot, with a quite a few major accidents in the past few years. (KCC Highways statistics support this.) Further increase in traffic would no doubt exacerbate this problem.

Looking more closely at The Strategy for Horsmonden (P.307), item 4. suggests that those areas **close by** to the AONB 'contribute to the setting of the designated landscape' and that the AONB Management Plan and supporting guidance would need to be a material consideration for development in these areas. Whilst only a portion of Horsmonden is within the AONB, the rest of the village lies adjacent to AONB land and this should therefore be taken into consideration. Horsmonden is also part of the 'fruit belt' protected landscape, with some of the land in proposed developments being fruit orchards themselves. The fruit orchards are very much characteristic of the landscape in this area and by developing them we will be losing this characteristic of our landscape.

The village centre in Horsmonden forms part of a Conservation Area which also protects the characteristics of this area. In order to successfully develop those areas, put forward in the plan, footways and changes would be required in this protected area which would alter its character.

Other points put forward as to why Horsmonden is not suited to taking on so such a high number of developments:

- There are lorry sites and farming areas at all four corners of the village meaning, large (often articulated) lorries moving through the village for fruit picking and other farming related activities.
- Current road infrastructure is already at its limits as seen with track record of accidents at the village centre and is not suitable for development to take more traffic.
- Nowhere to build footpath links for the sites put forward, as roads are too narrow already.
- Broadband is not good in parts of the village and is already at its limit for super-fast broadband.

- HPC considers that other settlements and sites, not in Horsmonden, are better suited to the development of infrastructure to support such growth.

HPC are not opposed to a suitable amount of growth, with corresponding infrastructure and services however, for any growth which does take place, HPC would like to see emphasised in the Plan:

- Green energy provision. Developers often mention the provision of gas as an energy source for new developments. Horsmonden does not have a gas supply and would prefer to see green energy developed.
- More emphasis on sustainability and taking into account HPC's Sustainability policy.
- More emphasis on one and two bedroomed market housing in the village (not necessarily affordable housing), for first time buyers and those downsizing, as this is where HPC believe the need is required (AECOM to deliver a Housing needs survey as part of their work with NH plan group, hopefully). Often consideration is not given to this because it appears that this type of housing does not seem to be selling in the village. This could be because there is little or none of this type available to market.
- More employment space included in any developments as HPC believe strongly in the need to create employment in the village, in order to try and avoid creating a 'commuter dormitory'.
- On P307 TWBC say that in any development on a greenfield windfall site of over 100 residential units, will be expected to provide employment space, however HPC would like to see this figure reduced considerably (to perhaps, over 30) so that developments considerably smaller than this would also fall into this category.
- HPC also considers that at any development site in the village (whatever size) TWBC should require that parking is provided on site for all development vehicles and USED, with enforcement if necessary.
- It would also like to see an arrangement whereby any parishioners who have had existing parking arrangements displaced because of access to or building of a new development, have parking provided within the new site for them, in order to avoid the otherwise enforced usage of road parking, by these residents.

It was proposed by Cllr Richards that these points should be put forward to go into the response together with the NH Plan Steering Group's points. Seconded Cllr Sheppard, unanimous.

Meeting closed 10.35pm