

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF HORSMONDEN
PARISH COUNCIL**

HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL

TUESDAY 12 AUGUST 2025 AT 7.30 PM

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Present:

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

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

Anna Blyth (Assistant Clerk)

Cllr Lynne Darrah (TWBC)

4 members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Mobbs, Knight and Larkin.

The reasons for absence were proposed for acceptance by Cllr Sheppard, seconded Cllr Davis and voted for unanimously.

Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct were invited. None were declared.

2. PUBLIC SESSION

A member of the public addressed the committee in relation to their objection to application 25/01753/FULL High View, Grovehurst Lane. The speaker was given three minutes to outline their concerns.

The speaker noted that the property currently benefits from two existing garages and expressed the view that the addition of a further three garages would be unnecessary. Reference was made to the proposed ridge height of the building, with the speaker indicating that they considered this to be excessive in scale for the location.

It was further highlighted that, in the speaker's opinion, the overall design and layout of the proposed building could facilitate a relatively straightforward conversion into a separate residential dwelling in the future.

The Chair thanked the speaker for their comments.

The Chair proposed that item 8. Planning be brought forward, with application 25/01753/FULL to be discussed first. This proposal was unanimously agreed by all Cllrs.

8. PLANNING

a) Applications/Submissions:

Planning Application:	25/01753/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Construction of a two-storey detached annex</u>
Location:	High View, Grovehurst Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8BG
Recommendation	Refusal
Proposal	Cllr Boon; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.
Comments	<p>Recommend refusal based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- This is a large enough build to easily become a separate dwelling in its own right.- Five garages is excessive.- The increase in hard standing presents an increased flood risk if materials used are non-porous.- Outside Limits to Build Development.- Over development of the site with three large buildings.- Not in keeping with surrounding properties.- Ridge height impacts surrounding properties.- Does not satisfy the criteria of an annexe as listed. <p>If TWBC are minded to grant permission for an annexe at this location the PC request that it remains ancillary to the main dwelling and that it be single storey only.</p>

Planning Application:	25/01657/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Ground floor rear extension</u>
Location:	Beecholme, Maidstone Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8NE
Recommendation	Approval
Proposal	Cllr Davis; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Carried.
Comments	<p>Recommend approval. Reasonable development of the site. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy</p>

Planning Application:	25/01644/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Installation of 4No. conservation rooflights, installation of heat pump</u>
Location:	Penhall Cottage, Lamberhurst Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8LP
Recommendation	Approval
Proposal	Cllr Boon; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous
Comments	Recommend approval. The Parish Council are pleased to see an old building being brought back to life. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy

Planning Application:	25/01645/LBC
Proposal:	<u>Listed Building Consent - Minor alterations to internal layout, installation of 4No. conservation rooflights, installation of heat pump, joinery improvements & alterations to finishes/insulation.</u>
Location:	Penhall Cottage, Lamberhurst Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8LP
Recommendation	Approval
Proposal	Cllr Russell; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.
Comments	Recommend approval. Reasonable works to a listed property subject to the Conservation Officers comments. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

b) Update regarding ongoing planning enforcement issues

The Clerk reported that there were several ongoing Planning Enforcement matters, and each case was discussed individually:

Land at Gafford's Bridge, Maidstone Road

The Clerk reported that TWBC officers are actively progressing this case and whilst enforcement action has not yet been taken to remove the static home, officers have assured the Clerk that the matter is being addressed.

It was reported to the meeting that there is now a new sign on the gate, pig huts have now been installed, and the grass appears to have been turned over; as well as the addition of the new static home. This is a cause for concern as this known flood zone is not suitable for keeping livestock due to the potential of effluent ending up in the river Teise as well as the risk to the livestock themselves. It was also queried why

the caravan had been able to connect to the water main without planning consent. It was agreed that the Clerk would make TWBC aware of this latest information.

New footway on Goudhurst Road

The Clerk reported that there was an ongoing dispute between the owners of Old Station Garage and Persimmon Homes regarding land ownership in the area where the footpath was being constructed. There were also some concerns that the remains of the old railway bridge had been uncovered and potentially damaged by digging into the bank. This is a heritage site and is protected under EN22 of the Local Plan. The clerk had informed Borough Cllrs, the case officer and the liaison team for Persimmon Homes and discussions were ongoing.

Lockie Cottage, Gun Back Lane – New fence

At this stage there has been no update regarding this potential planning breach but TWBC are in contact with the landowners.

Land adjacent to 2 Spring Cottages

At this stage there has been no update regarding this potential planning breach but TWBC are investigating.

Manor House, Maidstone Road

It was reported that works appear to have commenced at this property despite permission not yet being granted. Concerns were also raised regarding access to the nearby public footpath, which appears to be blocked by the ongoing works. Cllrs to investigate further and update the Clerks, who will report the matter to the footpath officers if required.

3. CONSIDER / AGREE LEGAL FEES FOR REVIEW OF THE DRAFT LEASE RELATING TO THE POTENTIAL RELOCATION OF THE PARISH OFFICE

The Clerk had circulated quotations from three different solicitors to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their consideration. It was noted that the draft lease had not yet been received from the Landlord; however, the Clerk reported that it was in the process of being prepared and was expected to be received shortly.

The quotations received were as follows:

	Basic review of lease (excl VAT)	Full review of lease (excl VAT)	Property searches (excl VAT)
Company 1	£750 - £900	In the region of £2,200	In the region of £600
Company 2	£450	Fixed fee £1,500	£712.67
Company 3	Hourly rate (estimated 3 hours)	In the region of £4,600	In the region of £1,000

	Hourly rate - £460 plus VAT. Junior colleagues - £235-365 plus VAT.		
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The Clerk advised that, based on the advice received, it appeared appropriate for the PC to undertake a full review of the lease. She sought Cllrs views on whether it was considered necessary to undertake property searches. After discussion, it was agreed that property searches would not be necessary, as the building and its location are well known to the Council and there were no identified causes for concern.

Cllr Jenkinson proposed that the PC accept the quotation provided by Company 2 for a full review of the lease totalling £1,500 plus VAT; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

4. CONSIDER / AGREE REMOVAL FEES FOR POTENTIAL PARISH OFFICE RELOCATION

The Clerk had shared two quotations with Cllrs prior to the meeting for their consideration. These related to removal costs for transferring office furniture, files, and other items from the current Parish Office to the new premises, noting that the items are heavy and the existing office presents limited and awkward access for removal.

The quotations received were as follows:

	Cost (excl VAT)
Company 1	£300
Company 2	£295

Cllrs discussed the quotations received and, noting that the amounts were very similar, requested that the Clerk disclose the identities of the quoting companies to enable an informed decision to be made.

Cllr Boon proposed that the PC accept the quotation provided by Company 1 (Hendley's Removals) as they are a well-known local firm with a very good reputation; seconded Cllr Sheppard. Unanimous.

5. CONSIDER QUOTATION FOR REPLACEMENT COUNCILLOR LAPTOPS

The Clerk reported that a quotation had been received from Arron Services for the provision of replacement laptops for all Cllrs. Arron Services had confirmed that they were able to honour the quotation provided in the previous year, which was £395 per unit. This quotation had originally been obtained for budget-setting purposes and remains valid.

It was noted that an amount of £5,000 had been allocated in the budget for this purpose, and the total cost would fall within this allocation, even when taking into account the Clerk's new laptop, which has recently been ordered at a cost of £1,020.

It was agreed that the laptops should be replaced, as the current devices are small and difficult to use. Cllrs expressed that larger screens would be beneficial and appreciated by all. It was also noted that the new devices would enable Cllrs to access platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom, which is not possible on the current laptops.

Cllr Sheppard proposed acceptance of the quotation from Arron Services, totalling £3,555 for 9 new laptops; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

6. UPDATE / DECISION REGARDING ADDITIONAL SECURITY MEASURES AT THE PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Clerk reported that the PC had unfortunately been unsuccessful in its recent grant application to TWBC for the installation of a security gate and CCTV at the public toilets. The Clerk sought Cllrs views on how they wished to proceed.

Cllrs discussed the matter and agreed that both the security gate and CCTV remained necessary however it was considered that alternative grant funding might be available, particularly for CCTV equipment. As the security gate may be more difficult to secure external funding for, it was agreed that the PC should proceed with this element, and that the Clerks would investigate further grant funding opportunities for the CCTV installation.

Cllr Davis proposed that the PC accept the quotation provided by Barratt Gates & Automation for a new security gate totalling £1,090 plus VAT; seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.

Cllr Russell proposed that the PC defer the decision regarding the purchase of CCTV equipment to allow the Clerks to further investigate any other grant opportunities; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

7. UPDATE / DECISIONS REGARDING HORSE FAIR

The Clerk advised that following a successful meeting between the organiser and TWBC, most of the required paperwork has now been completed. However, the PC are still awaiting the deposit cheque and are in contact with the organiser regarding this.

It was noted that there will be a meeting of the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) 4 weeks prior to the event which the PC will be required to attend along with TWBC and Kent Police. It is expected this meeting will happen within the next week depending on availability.

The Clerk reminded Cllrs that a volunteer will be required to open that gate and the electricity boxes on the morning of the Horse Fair at approximately 7am. Cllr Richards confirmed that he would be happy to do this.

The meeting ended at 8.55pm