

HORAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Jackie Cottrell - Clerk

Horam Parish Council Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Wednesday 15th January 2025 from 7.30pm until 8.58pm

In Attendance: Councillors Michael Cousins, Gary Brockhurst, Jennifer Howells, Graham Knight, Sue Lane, Virginia Roberts, Jane Trott, Jonathan Webb and Ann Sadler

Also in Attendance: ESCC Cllr Bob Bowdler
WDC Cllr Greg Collins
2 members of the public (one on zoom)
The Clerk

The Vice-Chairman Cllr Virginia Roberts stated she would be chairing the meeting in the Chairman's absence.

The Chairman of the meeting read out a short speech regarding the conduct of councillors during meetings referring to the Civility & Respect Pledge and encouraging all members to behave in an appropriate manner at all times.

PUBLIC SESSION

A member of the public spoke regarding Item 15 The A267 Safety Group site visit - and voiced concerns regarding the parish council spending money on improvements to the A267 as a result of their support of the A267 Road Safety Group. She stated that the volume of traffic was increasing all the time and 99.9% of road crashes were due to bad driving. In her opinion it was the bad driving that should be addressed.

422/01/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Andy Billings – Personal matters
Cllr Andrew Lee – Personal matters

Cllr Lee and Cllr Billings apologies were **RESOLVED**.

423/01/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Lane – Personal Interest – Item 16 – Website Admin Authority

424/01/25 MINUTES

Of the meeting held on 18th DECEMBER 2024 to be confirmed and signed as a true record.

Several items in the minutes were discussed. One councillor stated that they had made a complaint regarding the minutes. Another councillor disagreed with one item on the minutes. A vote was taken. There were two abstentions, and one Cllr voted against the adoption of the minutes.

RESOLVED the minutes of the council meeting held on the 18th December 2024.

425/01/25 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS GREG COLLINS AND CORNELIE USBORNE

Noted.

WDC Cllr Greg Collins had no information regarding the possibility of WDC extending the crematorium.

426/01/25 REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BOB BOWDLER (Circulated separately)

Noted.

ESCC Cllr Bob Bowdler added to his report by stating that ESCC's bid to support central government's Devolution plan which included their support of cancelling local elections, if required, had been submitted. They would hear the result by the end of January. News of whether the local elections would take place would then be confirmed. Mayor elections would likely take place in May 2026 and it was expected that a new Mayor (the phrase "light touch" Mayor was used) would come into power in May 2027. Brighton would remain independent and bi-elections would not be affected. ESCC were considering reducing the speed limit past the crematorium. Cllr Trott strongly supported this idea and added that a pavement was needed too. Cllr Bowdler suggested that a pavement would be part of a long-term ESCC plan – he suggested the council could approach ESCC with this idea. Cllr Sadler to email details of the overgrown hedge and lack of verge at the bus stop opposite the May Garland Inn where school children crossed the road.

427/01/25 REPORT FROM PCSO

None received.

428/01/25 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

The NALC Standards Sector Survey

Letter sent to the Chairman of the Trustees for the Horam Village Hall regarding the Skate Park/ Play Park and 3rd Age equipment
 A267 Road Safety Group Update
 WDALC Agenda 15.1.2025
 WDALC Minutes 18.9.2024

Noted.

429/01/25 REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

None.

430/01/25 REPORT FROM PARISH CLERK

The Clerk added to her report by stating that Balfour Beatty had put themselves on an improvement plan and the meeting which was due to be arranged between them and local parish councils had been postponed until any improvements had been monitored. The office computer had been removed. Options for improved zoom access would be considered at the February Full Council meeting. Bespoke GDPR training was in the process of being arranged at a cost of £295 plus VAT. Playdale had completed an inspection of all the play equipment. The zebra crossing had still not been re-painted. The council had received an official thank you from the Citizens Advice Bureau for their grant award.

431/01/25 REPORT FROM THE ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

Noted.

432/01/25 PLANNING - Report from Councillor Graham Knight, Chairman of the Committee.

Please note that the Minutes of meetings are published independently

Update on letter sent to Trevor Scott regarding WDC's lack of support for the Horam parish

Cllr Knight reported that there had been one application – Land at Chiddingly Road to consider which the committee had refused. Positive changes had been made by the developer but there had still been concerns. The Clerk to “call in” the application to WDC.

The Clerk to arrange a site visit of a location which a developer intended to clear despite there being no live planning application. Wealden District Council were aware of the situation. Cllr Webb to initially view the site.

Members noted that there had not yet been a response to the council's letter to Trevor Scott.

433/01/25 FINANCE

(1) RECOMMENDED

(a) To note the precept request form for the 2025/26 financial year has been received by WDC from Horam Parish Council

Noted.

- (b) **To note** the signed legal deed between Wealden District Council and Horam Parish Council for the stair climber has been received by WDC

Noted.

- (c) **To note** WDC have confirmed receipt and have updated their records with the amended CIL Monitoring Report for 2023/24

Noted.

- (d) **To note** the resolved changes to EMR 397 – S106 have been made

Noted.

- (e) **To note** the resolved virement from General Reserves to EMR 360 Community Projects has been completed

Noted.

- (f) **To note** budgetary observations as at 31st December – the third quarter of the financial year: Verbal update by the Clerk

The Clerk stated the following:

- Staff costs would be within budget at the end of the financial year.
- HMRC costs would be approximately £500 over budget at the end of the financial year.
- Staff pension would be approximately £50 over budget.
- Hire of Club Rooms would be approximately £1,400 over budget. This had been accounted in the 2025-26 budget which was resolved at December FC. An expected £700 would be spent on additional meetings above the 30 per annum which was included in the rental agreement.
- Office consumables would be slightly over budget.
- Computer support and equipment would be over budget by approximately £400. This was due to the move to a new provider. However, £842 of that spend was for the move to gov.uk emails which had been debited from an EMR. A more robust figure was in the budget for the new financial year
- Any spend for budget lines: Skate park-playpark-3rd Age, play area litter costs, memorial garden costs, CIL expenditure and recreational activities was taken from EMRs.
- All other figures were in line with the budget.
- Although the transfer to General Reserves looked large. There was still expenditure for the final quarter of the financial year to be taken from this.

- (2) **To Resolve** the payments listed below:

Payee Name	Account Debited	Invoice Number	Amount £
Staff & payroll costs	Current Account	Jan salaries & HMRC	3765.67
Horam Club Rooms	Current Account	Inv 152 – rental for December	500.00
Clerk – Zoom payment	Current Account	Inv 286250302 25.12.24 – 24.1.25	15.59

Signed

Chairman

Horam Village Hall	Current Account	Inv 1094 – Monthly Waste collection service dated 6.1.25	35.91
Ultralite	Current Account	Inv 2505 – 10 sets of lights for big tree, install and remove lights for big tree	948.00
Clerk	Current Account	Postage costs for legal deed	9.35
Clerk – 2Oi	Current Account	Inv 7569453 Cloud micro server – monthly payment	11.99
Clerk- 2Oi	Current Account	Inv 7586461– storage upgrade	1.80
Playdale	Current Account	Plastic dome washers	31.92
Uniserve	Current Account	Inv 35866 – monthly costs	74.64
Nest	Current Account	Pension January	281.83
James Todd & Co	Current Account	Inv 77173 Dec payroll	34.80
The Finishing Touch	Current Account	Play park and Skate park maintenance for December	91.00
Europlants –	Community Account	Plant maintenance Jan 25 – 32034	103.80

RESOLVED the payments listed above.

434/01/25 THE SKATE PARK / PLAY PARK AND 3rd AGE EQUIPMENT UPDATE

To note the update report

Noted.

Cllr Cousins requested Members note that after the last Playdale inspection a meeting was held with the maintenance contractor to ensure any concerns highlighted were addressed.

To resolve a maintenance plan for the 3rd Age Equipment – Resolution required

RESOLVED the bronze maintenance plan at a cost of £450 plus VAT.

It was **AGREED** the council would complete the response to the NALC standards sector survey as the last item on the agenda.

435/01/25 TO RESOLVE TWO COUNCILLORS TO ATTEND THE A267 SAFETY GROUP SITE VISIT

Cllr Ann Sadler and Cllr Graham Knight with Cllr Sue Lane as a reserve were **RESOLVED** to represent the council at the A267 Road Safety Group site visit.

436/01/25 TO RESOLVE CLLR LANE TO HAVE WEBSITE ADMIN AUTHORITY FOR THE NEW HPC WEBSITE

RESOLVED Cllr Sue Lane to be added as an admin for the new parish council website.

**437/01/25 PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE
To resolve the updated Business Plan**

Members noted that the only changes made to the Business Plan had been resolved already at the December 2025 Full Council meeting. These changes were **AGREED**.

To note progress on the business plan objectives

Noted.

The Clerk updated members further:

- Cllr Brockhurst would be oiling all the French oak benches once the moisture content allowed
- The Clerk to send a picture of the broken bench opposite Vines Cross Road to Cllr Brockhurst
- The Clerk to send details of the locations of the two culverts still unmonitored to Cllr Brockhurst.

To note how the Business Plan has been promoted to the parish

Noted.

438/01/25 CUCKOO TRAIL UPDATE

Cllr Cousins reported that the WDC planning application for the kiosk had been approved. There were concerns regarding the responsibility for the toilets – who would be locking and unlocking them and stocking them when required. He stated that the plans for the kiosk had caused some public upset although there could be some benefits which could improve the Cuckoo Trail experience.

The kiosk would be opened in daylight hours.

**439/01/25 TO ADOPT A SEXUAL HARRASSMENT POLICY – Resolution required
ADOPTED**

RESOLVED to adopt the Sexual Harassment Policy.

To note the comments made by a Councillor at the December 2024 HPC Full Council meeting

The Clerk clarified that she had taken advice from ACAS who had confirmed that the comments were inappropriate, and the council should take steps to ensure that the same situation did not arise again.

To note HPC Standing Orders Item 2 –disorderly Conduct at Meetings
Noted.

440/01/25 TO CONSIDER A COURSE OF ACTION REGARDING THE COMMENTS AND ACTIONS OF WDC COUNCILLOR USBORNE

Members discussed the item at some length. It was suggested that a letter should be sent directly from the council to WDC Cllr Usborne asking for a retraction of her comments (referring to the parish council as lower level, her being targeted as a woman and a foreigner) at the next WDC Full Council meeting. Also, confirmation that the correct information would appear in her next village diary article.

Not all members were in agreement. Two councillors felt WDC Cllr Usborne's treatment by one councillor had not been fair regarding language used in an email. A vote was taken. One councillor abstained and one councillor voted against the motion.

RESOLVED that the council write directly to WDC Cllr Usborne.

441/01/25 TO DISCUSS ITEMS THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL COULD PUBLICISE

The new parish council website, any other business plan updates, the APA, the efforts of the council to continually chase ESCC to action outstanding items.

442/01/25 INFORMATION FOR/FROM COUNCILLORS (for noting or inclusion on future agendas).

Cuckoo Trail enhancements, Business Plan, the letter addressed to Trevor Scott and a meeting with Highways.

443/01/25 TO RESOLVE THE PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE NALC STANDARDS SECTOR SURVEY

The council submitted their response at the meeting itself. All questions were displayed on the projector screen.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

PLANNING & HIGHWAYS on Monday 27th January 2025 at 6.30pm

PLANNING & HIGHWAYS on Wednesday 12th February 2025 at 6.30pm

FULL COUNCIL on Wednesday 12th February 2025 at 7.30pm

To: All Members of the Parish Council: Councillors: A. Billings, Michael Cousins, Jennifer Howells, Graham Knight, Sue Lane, Virginia Roberts, Ann Sadler, Jane Trott, Jonathan Webb, Gary Brockhurst and Andrew Lee

Copy to: Councillors Greg Collins and Cornelia Usborne, District Council Ward Members for Horam and Punnetts Town and Councillor Bob Bowdler, East Sussex County Councillor & Police Community Support

Signed

Chairman