

HORAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Jackie Cottrell - Clerk

Horam Parish Council Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Wednesday 12th March 2025 from 7.30pm 9.46pm

In Attendance: Councillors Andy Billings, Jennifer Howells, Graham Knight, Virginia Roberts, Jane Trott, Jonathan Webb and Sue Lane

Also in Attendance: WDC Cllr Collins
ESCC Cllr Bob Bowdler
2 members of the public
The Clerk

PUBLIC SESSION:

One member of the public asked for clarification regarding the ESCC Public Rights of Way consultation.

Another member of the public who was a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group spoke in support of the council resolving the Landscape Sensitivity Study. He stated that the Coxlow development would turn the village into a town and the study would provide a good opportunity for the parish council to have some influence on how WDC tackle this development.

470/03/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Brockhurst – work commitments
Cllr Sadler – health reasons
Cllr Lee - absent

RESOLVED Cllr Brockhurst and Cllr Sadler's apologies.

The Clerk clarified that Cllr Webb had sent his apologies for the February Full Council meeting, but she had not received them in time to note them in the minutes.

471/03/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

472/03/25 **MINUTES** of the Council meeting held on the 12th February 2025 to be confirmed and signed as a true record

RESOLVED the minutes of the meeting on the 12th February 2025.

473/03/25 **REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS GREG COLLINS AND CORNELIE USBORNE**
Cllr Collins verbally updated Members. He advised that there would be further public consultation for Regulation 18 of the WDC Draft Local Plan after changes to the NPPF. He thanked Horam Parish Councillors for attending the planning appeal for Land at Old Orchard House. The appeal had been dismissed due to Grampian Conditions.
A vote would be imminent regarding Devolution.
He thanked Horam Parish Councillors again for their work protecting some lighting posts on the Cuckoo Trail which had been in danger of being destroyed but saved just in time.

474/03/25 **REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BOB BOWDLER**
Noted.
ESCC Cllr Bowdler reiterated there was much work to be done regarding Devolution. He did not have any information on how Devolution may affect parish councils.
The decision regarding booking appointments for the Heathfield waste site would be considered at a scrutiny meeting.

475/03/25 **REPORT FROM PCSO**
None received.

One member of the public left the meeting at 7.58pm.

476/03/25 **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED**
Parish Council / Village Hall Liaison meeting agenda 4.2.2025
Parish Council / Village Hall Liaison meeting draft minutes 30.5.2024
SLR Agenda 19.2.2025
SLR draft minutes 6.9.2024
WDC council tax rise information
Notes from Eastbourne Area Bus User Group 12.2.2025
Transport Strategy Refresh – response to the Draft Transport Strategy
ESCC notification Rosemead Place (formally Rose Mead Farm) has been adopted as a public highway
Email from a member of the public regarding a resolution on the February Full Council agenda
Letter to the Horam Village Hall regarding the GAP pathway grant
Resignation of Cllr Cousins from the council

Noted.

Members noted that there had been two SLR meetings, one with contractor and one with ESCC. Both meetings had been useful.

477/03/25 REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

The Chairman reported that Cllr Cousins had resigned from the council after 23 years hardly missing a meeting during his tenure.

The council officially minuted a vote of thanks for his service to the community.

WDC Cllr Collins left the meeting at 8.02pm.

He briefed members that he had attended the recent village hall / parish council liaison meeting. There had been some confusion from the trustees of the village hall regarding the play park agreement wording and further clarification was required by the parish council regarding the GAP Pathway grant payment and how those funds were used.

He reported that successful councillor intervention had saved two lighting columns on the Cuckoo Trail platform.

Finally, he would be making a presentation at the upcoming APA explaining the precept increase.

478/03/25 REPORT FROM PARISH CLERK

Noted.

The Clerk added that the parish council had lost their General Power of Competence as a result of the resignation of Cllr Cousins.

The Barclays Savings account interest rate had dropped from 1.35% to 1.25%.

479/03/25 REPORT FROM THE ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

Noted.

480/03/25 PLANNING - Report from Councillor Graham Knight, Chairman of the Committee.

Cllr Knight reported that himself and Cllr Sadler would be arranging a site visit to the footpath leading to Chiddingly Road to investigate the footpath siding, flooding issues and the village hall hedge which often obstructs the footpath. He stated that the hedge would be an agenda item at the next village hall / parish council liaison meeting.

Standing Orders were suspended whilst a member of the public added to the discussion on litter.

481/03/25 FINANCE**(1) RECOMMENDED**

(a) To **note** the grant claim and post-works monitoring form for the stair climber has been submitted to WDC

Noted.

(b) To **note** the next Finance meeting will be held on Wednesday 28th May at 9.30am in the Horam Centre

Noted.

(c) To **note** the internal audit will take place on the 8th May in the Horam Centre

Noted.

(d) To **note** the Village Hall grant application has been deferred until the May finance meeting

- Noted.
- (e) To **note** the parish council credit card application has been submitted to Barclays
Noted.
- (f) To **note** the Heathfield & Horam Football Club will not be re-submitting their grant application
Noted.
- (g) To **note** the bank reconciliations and management accounts as at 28.2.2025
Noted.
The Clerk reported that the Finance Committee had reviewed the accounts up to 31.1.2025 in detail.
Nothing unexpected had happened in any budget line.
There would be a surplus of funds at the end of the financial year which would credit the General Reserves primarily due to 3 reasons:
- An additional £4,500 had been received from bank interest
 - A surplus of £4,000 from the staff budget
 - Last year the council budgeted £2,340 to increase the General Reserves
- Even with approximately £12,000 likely to credit General Reserves and the £25,000 budgeted for General Reserves for next year's budget – General Reserves would still be at the lower end of the desired levels.
- (h) To **Resolve** a councillor volunteer for the inspection of financial records
It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would keep a record of cllrs who could complete internal financial audits in the future.
- Resolved** Cllr Andrew Lee would complete the next internal audit. Cllr Jonathan Webb would be the standby councillor.
- (i) To **Resolve** the Finance Committee recommendation for a virement to move the £1,000 budgeted for legal advice to EMR 325 Legal Advice
- Resolved** the above virement.
- (j) To **Resolve** the Finance Committee recommendation for a virement to move the £1,875 budgeted for the Election to the EMR 345 Election funds
- Resolved** the above virement.
- (k) To **Resolve** the Finance Committee recommendation for a virement to move £6,000 from EMR 393 CIL 2020/21 to EMR 356 Business Plan for possible repair work to stiles subject to consultation with ESCC Rights of Way and the landowners.
- Resolved** the above virement.
- (l) To **Resolve** the Finance Committee recommendation for a virement to move £1,000 from EMR 393 CIL 2020/21 to EMR 356 Business Plan for funds in case of a grant request from the A267 Road Safety Group; by request only

Resolved the above virement.

- (m) To **Resolve** the Finance Committee recommendation for a virement of £14,000 from EMR 393 CIL 2020/21 to EMR 360 Community Projects which would ensure 5 years of maintenance costs for the Memorial Garden and High Street planters starting from 2026 onwards.

Resolved the above virement.

- (n) To **Resolve** a quotation for two new bins at the playpark
Members considered several bin quotations.

Resolved to purchase two Calzolari litter bins for £366 plus VAT each plus two lids for £264 plus VAT.

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

Payee Name	Account Debited	Invoice Number	Amount £
Tourle Engraving – retrospective approval	Current Account	Memorial plaque – Ken Brown	85.00
Staff & payroll costs	Current Account	March salaries & HMRC	3738.64
Horam Club Rooms	Current Account	Inv 154 – rental for February plus additional meetings over the allocated 30 stated in the lease	625.00
Clerk – Zoom payment	Current Account	Inv 294391576 25.2.2025-24.3.2025	15.59
Image Matters	Current Account	Inv 2767 Banners X 3 Annual Parish Assembly	216.00
Image Matters	Current Account	Inv 2768 New sign for the Memorial Garden	72.00
Admin Assistant	Current Account	Refreshments for the SLR	3.95
Admin Assistant	Current Account	Inv QL206715-1 GDPR – Hilary Pyle	30.00
Horam Village Hall	Current Account	Inv 1129 Monthly Waste collection service dated 1.3.2025	35.91
SLCC	Current Account	Inv QL206734-1 GDPR – Ann Sadler	30.00
SLCC	Current Account	Inv QL206729-1	30.00

Signed

Chairman

		GDPR – Andrew Billings	
SLCC	Current Account	Inv QL206649-1 GDPR – Sue Lane	30.00
Wealden District Council	Current Account	Dog bin emptying charges 1.1.2025 – 31.3.2025	429.00
Parish Council Websites	Current Account	Inv 3409 – New website	943.20
Wilhar Publications Ltd	Current Account	1 additional parish council and 1 additional page advertising APA - Village Diary	150.00
Clerk	Current Account	2 Ink cartridges	34.54
Clerk – 2Oi	Current Account	Inv 776346 Cloud micro server – monthly payment	11.99
Clerk- 2Oi	Current Account	Inv 7784447– storage upgrade	1.80
Clerk	Current Account	Lever arch labels	6.99
Uniserve	Current Account	Inv 36082 – editing councillor links on the website	22.20
Uniserve	Current Account	Inv 36321 Monthly charges	74.64
Nest	Current Account	Pension March	273.68
James Todd & Co	Current Account	Inv 79106 March payroll	34.80
The Finishing Touch	Current Account	Play park and Skate park maintenance for February plus erection of new memorial sign	120.00
Cllr Cousins	Current Account	Flowers for late Clerks memorial	6.00
Malcolm Curtis	Current Account	Repair work to Maynards Green wooden bus shelter	692.00
Europlants –	Community Account	Plant maintenance March 25– 32306	103.80

The Clerk clarified that the council has used their free 30 meetings a year quota. Each meeting until July would now be charged at £25 a meeting.

The above payments were **RESOLVED**.

482/03/25

TO RESOLVE THE UPDATED ASSET REGISTER

The Clerk explained what items featured on the asset register and Members noted the previously circulated document.

RESOLVED the updated Asset Register.

483/03/25

TO RESOLVE THE AMENDED RISK REGISTER

Members noted the previously circulated Risk Register and that a few amendments would be made for the April Full Council meeting for noting.

RESOLVED to adopt the amended Risk Register. The Clerk to update the document and remove Dropbox, state that the councillor responsible for internal audits is **not** a member of the Finance Committee and a register is kept keeping a record of the councillors resolved to perform the audits. Lastly the Chairman of the Council can sign the financial documents of the council in the absence of the Finance Chairman.

484/03/25

SKATE JAM UPDATE

The Clerk confirmed that all the local schools would be advertising the event and that the parish council contractor would be cleaning the site the day before and the day after.

Cllr Billings would be present from 9am.

Cllr Billings and Cllr Knight would cover the morning shift.

Cllr Trott would be attending as a representative.

The Clerk to ensure the Skate Jam would be an agenda item for the April Full Council meeting which would include an update on the cllr volunteers for the day.

The event would be advertised in the next Village Diary article.

485/03/25

PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE

To note the updated Business Plan

Noted.

To note progress on the business plan objectives

Members noted that steady progress was being made on the Business Plan.

The Clerk confirmed that once the new website was live which was imminent the Emergency Plan would be next on the priority list.

Members noted that a new photo would be needed for the Home page for the website.

The Business Plan would be publicized at the APA which would include a presentation on the new website.

486/03/25

TO DISCUSS ITEMS THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL COULD PUBLICISE

Ex Cllr Cousin's resignation and the Skate Jam.

487/03/25

TO RESOLVE A RESPONSE TO THE ESCC PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY CONSULTATION

All Members considered a council response to the consultation. All questions were displayed using the overhead projector. The council response was submitted.

488/03/25

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

Skate Jam, feedback from the APA, feedback from the Village Hall / Parish Council Liaison meeting, ownership of the play area update if required, cllr vacancy update and new committee members and Clerk of Works for the play area resurfacing.

- 489/03/25** **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING on Thursday 27th March 2025 at 6.45pm
PLANNING & HIGHWAYS on Monday 31st March 2025 at 6.30pm
PLANNING & HIGHWAYS on Wednesday 9th April 2025 at 6.30pm
FULL COUNCIL on Wednesday 9th April 2025 at 7.30pm
- 490/03/25** **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC BY RESOLUTION**
To consider whether to exclude the Press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted
RESOLVED to exclude the press and public at 9.15pm.
- 491/03/25** **TO CONSIDER AND RESOLVE A QUOTATION FOR THE REPAIR WORK TO THE SURFACE OF THE PLAY PARK**
Members considered the three quotes presented to them. Four companies were approached in total.

It was noted that the chosen contractor would need to use considerable care with any heavy machinery on the grass areas, in order not to damage any of the underground pipes which had been laid for the drainage works already completed.

It was agreed that works should start before the end of May. The Clerk to ensure the works were publicized. Cllr Knight to confirm his availability to be the Clerk of Works at the April Full Council meeting. The Clerk to provide a general update and to inform the village hall.
RESOLVED to proceed with the quotation from DCM Surfaces.
- 492/03/25** **TO CONSIDER AND RESOLVE A QUOTATION FOR A LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY**
Members considered the two quotations presented to them. Three companies were approached in total.

Taking into account that approximately 750 new homes would be built on the Coxlow site (an allocated site in the WDC Draft Local Plan) it was agreed that action needed to be taken to protect the Cuckoo Trail and push future development back away from it as much as possible.

The work already completed by WDC was on a piece meal basis and the importance of an integrated independent study was noted. The parish council study would be completed before more detailed work would be carried out by WDC and the results could then be used positively.

Concerns were raised regarding whether the study would hold weight with WDC but these concerns were overridden by the importance of the parish council taking some action to protect the Cuckoo Trail for the local community.

The Clerk to contact the Sussex Bio-Diversity Office for details of the site which would remain confidential but would be a small additional cost.

The importance of acting quickly was noted.

It was **AGREED** Cllr Lane would liaise directly with Huskisson Brown Associates.

RESOLVED the quotation from Huskisson Brown Associates for £3,500 plus additional costs associated with the Sussex Bio-Diversity Office, expected to be several hundred pounds. The parish council resolution was on the understanding additional funds may be required up to a total cost of £14,000. Any additional costs over the above would be at the agreement of Full Council via email and retrospectively approved at the following Full Council meeting. This was due to time constraints involved.

493/03/25 TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF LAND IN THE PARISH

Members **AGREED** the APA would be a good opportunity to enquire with the public if there was any local knowledge regarding land for sale or donation to be used for community use.

The above was **RESOLVED**.

To: All Members of the Parish Council: Councillors: A. Billings, 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 Osborne, District Council Ward Members for Horam and Punnetts Town and Councillor Bob Bowdler, East Sussex County Councillor & Police Community Support