

HORAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Jackie Cottrell - Clerk

Horam Parish Council Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Wednesday 9th April 2025 from 7.30pm to 9.14pm

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

Also in Attendance: 2 members of the public, 1 on zoom
WDC Cllr Collins
ESCC Cllr Bob Bowdler
The Clerk

PUBLIC SESSION:

The Chairman of the Horam Club Rooms trustees enquired as to what information had been requested for the recent FOI request regarding the Horam Club Rooms accounting information. She expressed disappointment that further enquiries had been made when all the accounting information had been previously supplied.

Another Horam Club Room trustee enquired if the FOI request related to comments made at the recent APA.

494/04/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Lee – Personal Reasons

RESOLVED Cllr Lee's apologies.

495/04/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Brockhurst – Personal Interest - Trustee of the Horam Club Rooms

Cllr Roberts – Personal Interest - Trustee of the Horam Club Rooms

496/04/25 MINUTES

MINUTES of the Council meeting held on the 12th March 2025 to be confirmed and signed as a true record

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

497/04/25 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS GREG COLLINS AND CORNELIE USBORNE

WDC Cllr Collins verbally updated the meeting. Regarding the appeal outcome for Land at Old Orchard House he stated that there was still time for a judicial review or a 2nd appeal on the grounds the developer wanted the Grampian Condition removed but WDC felt this was an unlikely outcome. Regarding the WDC Refusal decision for the May Garland car wash the enforcement team could not act until the time window for an appeal was closed.

Tree protection orders might be placed on some trees on the Two Oaks site in Chiddingly Road.

He clarified that a Section 106 Agreement only applied when the building work had commenced. However, any developer would still need to comply with the Forestry Act and any Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations. The same applied to Outline conditions. Illegal felling would be classed as a rural crime, but evidence would need to be provided.

Lastly, he confirmed WDC's Stacey Robins had reinforced to all WDC Planning Officers that applications must comply as far as possible to the Horam Neighbourhood Plan, from the time it was adopted, unless sound reasoning could be applied.

One councillor expressed disappointment that the licence variation for the petrol station had been approved stating she felt the parish council and district council could have done more to oppose the 24-hour vending and alcohol licence which had now been passed. The Clerk confirmed that the parish council had not consulted on the application. The process for consulting on licences had now been clarified to the Clerk and a procedure was in place for any future licence applications. The Licencing Department had confirmed that comments from residents who lived close to the property held much more weight than those of a local parish council. However, the licence could be reviewed by anyone at any time if strong evidence had been provided to the Licencing Department. The licence could be appealed by the residents who had objected to it.

498/04/25 REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BOB BOWDLER

ESCC Cllr Bob Bowdler added to his written report by stating there had been lots of rural crimes reported in the local area as well as an increase in fly tipping which included the dumping of manure. He reported that the Nettlesworth Farm Open Evening, which the parish council Chairman had attended, had been a great success and another Open Evening was being arranged.

Lastly, he stated the new ambassador for Wealden Works was Joe Marler.

499/04/25 REPORT FROM PCSO

None.

500/05/25 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Freedom of Information Request requesting information regarding clarification of the Horam Club Rooms Charity accounts

Letter to ex councillor Cousins thanking him for his 23 years of service to the community

Email from a resident requesting support regarding a proposed premise licence change (2697) for Horam Service Station, Reads Garage, Little London Rd

Email from local resident regarding dog poisoning in the village and dog poo signs for Chiddingly Road

Copy of a letter from the Citizens advice Bureau to local MP's regarding challenges their clients face in relation to job centre travel and Universal Credit

WDC changes to bus services commencing from April 2025

Email from the Chairman of the Village Hall Trustees regarding the Annual Parish Assembly

Two emails from separate members of the public regarding the rise in the precept for 2025-26

Chairmans statement providing an explanation for the rise in the precept

Email complaint from local resident regarding toxic bonfire smoke in the village

Presentation by Becky Shaw, Chief Executive ESCC on Devolution

Email from local resident regarding the overgrown footway from Chiddingly Road towards the village

WDALC agenda 2.4.2025

WDALC minutes 15.1.2025

A267 Road Safety Group – Vision and Strategy

Noted.

Members also noted that the Clerk would seek permission from any members of the public who had written to the Clerk to circulate their correspondence to all members.

501/04/25 REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

The Chairman reported that he had attended the Nettlesworth Farm invitation which had been a great success for all those who had attended. It could provide great opportunities for lots of diverse groups within the community. He urged councillors to contact the Clerk by Easter if they wished to attend the next Open Evening.

The Chairman also reported that himself and several other councillors had spent a considerable amount of time measuring trees for listing on the Woodland Trust website. He had also accompanied the consultants to the Coxlow site where work was beginning on the Landscape Sensitivity Study. A site-specific report had been ordered from the Sussex Biodiversity which was free of charge. It would be ready in less than a months' time.

502/04/25 REPORT FROM PARISH CLERK

The Clerk verbally updated members. She thanked councillors Billings, Lane and Sadler for all their hard work recording trees and saving the trees on the Two Oaks site from being felled. Cllr Lane had recorded six trees on the Woodland Trust website. A finger post had been damaged on the junction of Laundry Lane and Horebeech Lane which Cllr Brockhurst would be collecting for repair.

An additional planning meeting had been arranged for the following Wednesday due to WDC being unable to provide a extension for parish council consultation comments.

503/04/25 REPORT FROM THE ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

Noted.

504/04/25 PLANNING - Report from Councillor Graham Knight, Chairman of the Committee.

Please note that the Minutes of meetings are published independently

Cllr Knight reported that there had not been a planning meeting. The major application for Land at Horebeech Lane would be discussed at the additional meeting to be held the following week. Lastly he reported the Administration Assistant was working hard chasing up the SLR items.

ESCC Cllr Bowdler left the meeting at 8.07pm.

505/04/25 FINANCE**(1) RECOMMENDED**

(a) To **note** the parish council has been selected by PKF, the external auditor, for an intermediate review for the 2024/25 reporting year as part of the required 5% sample of those who would otherwise be subject to a basic review
Noted.

(b) To **note** the rise in the Section 137 expenditure limit for the 2025/26 financial year. The new limit is £11.10 per elector, up from £10.81 in 2024/25. Section 137 of the Act allows parish and town councils to incur expenditures for purposes that benefit their communities when no specific statutory power is available
Noted.

(c) To **note** WDC dog and litter bin charges will be increasing from the 1.4.2025 from £286 per bin to £300 per bin per year
Noted.

(d) To **note** the interest rate on the Nationwide account will be reduced from 1.97% to 1.76% from 16th April 2025
Noted.

- (e) To **note** the parish council credit card application process is ongoing
Noted.
- (f) To **note** the year end process has begun
Noted.
- (g) To **note** all the virements resolved at the March Full Council meeting have been completed
Noted.
- (h) To **note** the bank reconciliations and management account reports for 31.3.2025 will not be circulated until the accounts for the 2024-25 financial year are recommended for resolution
Noted.

A councillor highlighted to Members that it appeared that a councillor had shared financial information which had not been made publicly available to 3rd parties. This had been brought to light at the Annual Parish Assembly. The Chairman clarified that this should not happen again.

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

Payee Name	Account Debited	Invoice Number	Amount £
Staff & payroll costs	Current Account	April salaries & HMRC	3834.18
Horam Club Rooms	Current Account	Inv 155 – rental for March	600.00
Clerk – Zoom payment	Current Account	Inv 298493593 25.3.2025- 24.4.2025	15.59
Image Matters	Current Account	Inv 2794 Banners X 3 Skate Jam	216.00
ESALC	Current Account	Inv 2026 ESALC and NALC Membership 1.4.2025- 31.3.2026	998.64
Horam WI	Current Account	Refreshments for the Annual Parish Assembly	38.00
Horam Village Hall	Current Account	Inv 1147 Monthly Waste collection service dated 1.4.2025	35.91

Wilhar Publications Ltd	Current Account	Inv 7803 - 1 additional parish council and 1 additional page advertising Skate Jam Village Diary	150.00
Clerk – 2Oi	Current Account	Inv 7862334 Cloud micro server – monthly payment	11.99
Clerk- 2Oi	Current Account	Inv 7883143– storage upgrade	1.80
Clerk	Current Account	22 nd Feb – Black cable ties	5.99
Clerk	Current Account	21 st March – card for names APA	6.23
Clerk	Current Account	18 th March – A4 paper	18.49
Clerk	Current Account	21 st March – Black cable ties	5.99
Clerk	Current Account	21 st March – Extra large 2 X Tri colour ink cartridges	35.68
Clerk	Current Account	21 st March – Extra large 2 X black ink cartridges	39.16
Uniserve	Current Account	Inv 36417 – monthly charges, closing down dropbox and Cllr Trott email support	133.20
Uniserve	Current Account	ESET Security for 1 year for 3 devices	44.99
Nest	Current Account	Pension April	267.57
James Todd & Co	Current Account	Inv 79892 April payroll	34.80
Horam Community Pre-school	Current Account	Community grant – Resolved at FC Dec 2024 – to be paid from CIL	240.00
The Finishing Touch	Current Account	Play park and Skate park maintenance for March	139.75
Malcolm Curtis	Current Account	Inv 77 – cut grass playgrounds	60.00

Europlants –	Community Account	Plant maintenance April 25– 32559	103.80
Malcolm Curtis	Community Account	Inv 78 – cut and tidy memorial garden	30.00

RESOLVED the payments above with one amendment to the staff and payroll costs. The amended figure was stated above.

506/04/25 TO RESOLVE THE AMENDED PUBLICATION SCHEME

Members noted the previously circulated document.

RESOLVED to adopt the Publication Scheme.

507/04/25 TO NOTE THE AMENDED RISK REGISTER RESOLVED AT MARCH 2025 FULL COUNCIL

Noted.

508/04/25 TO NOTE THE CO-OPTION PROCESS HAS BEGUN

Noted. The Clerk confirmed that she had not had any applications so far.

509/04/25 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY REVIEW

16.1.To note the minutes of the APA to be resolved at the 2026 APA

Members noted amendments were required. The minutes would be on the May Full Council agenda for noting.

16.2.To note public comments / suggestions

Noted.

16.3.To review the success of the evening and consider councillor/staff feedback

Members **AGREED** that the speakers section on the agenda should be shortened for the following year. Councillors should be given the opportunity to mingle at the beginning of the meeting to give the public a chance to speak to them personally. The council would also consider the possibility of the teas and coffees being offered halfway through the meeting for the following year.

It was noted that the Sussex Express had stated that it was the most interesting Annual Parish Meeting that they had attended.

510/04/25 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY UPDATE

Work on the study had begun and a site visit had been completed which had been a success.

The site visit had highlighted a number of large oak trees that needed to be measured. It was noted that Hornbeams should also be considered. It was **AGREED** that more volunteers were needed to help with the process. The photos taken were useful for reporting purposes.

The Initial report was likely to be ready for the end of April and the fuller report for the end of May.

Standing Orders were suspended while a member of the public highlighted several methods of how to identify the individual trees using different types of maps.

511/04/25 SKATE JAM UPDATE

Members noted the report.

Cllr Sadler would visit the site regularly over the course of the event and would bring some refreshments.

Members noted that a local company had a weekly pitch in the Village Hall car park selling hot drinks and cakes which would enhance the experience for the local community.

Cllr Howell's would be helping with the site clean on the morning of the event.

512/04/25 PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE

19.1. To note the Business Plan

Noted.

19.2. To note progress on the business plan objectives

Noted. The Clerk clarified culvert information.

513/04/25 TO DISCUSS ITEMS THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL COULD PUBLICISE

The pc Skate Jam event, co-option vacancy, date for the play area resurfacing works, highlight the pc stopped trees being felled on the Two Oaks site, request to members of the public to help with measuring trees, first stage of the Landscape Sensitivity Study was underway, extracts from the pc letter to all District Councillors and planning officers regarding removing Discovery Way from the WDC Draft Local Plan, Cllr Knight was arranging a site visit with a Highways Steward regarding possible improvements to the footpath leading from the Village Hall to Chiddingly Road, highlight dog poisoning and dog fouling in the village,

514/04/25 INFORMATION FOR/FROM COUNCILLORS (for noting or inclusion on future agendas).

Skate Jam, Landscape Sensitivity Study, Business Plan

515/04/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

PLANNING & HIGHWAYS on Monday 28th April 2025 at 7.30pm

FULL COUNCIL on Wednesday 14th May 2025 at 7.30pm

PLANNING & HIGHWAYS on Wednesday 14th May 2025 at 8.45pm

516/04/25 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 at 20.37pm to exclude the press and public from the meeting.

517/04/25

**VILLAGE HALL & RECREATION GROUND
TO DISCUSS A COURSE OF ACTION REGARDING THE GRANT PAYMENT TO
THE VILLAGE HALL FOR THE GAP PATHWAY IN 2023.**

A long discussion took place. Members noted their disappointment with the response from the village hall regarding the letter sent to them on the 5.3.2025 requesting clarification on all grant payments received for the GAP pathway.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that a final request letter should be sent to the Chairman of the Trustees of the Horam Village Hall & Recreation Ground Charity urging him to arrange a meeting with the parish council.

The Parish Council's terms were that within 48 hours of the letter being sent the recipient should contact the Clerk to arrange an urgent meeting as previously requested; the meeting should be held within one week, i.e. before Easter.

Failure to do so would result in an invoice being issued to the Horam Village Hall & Recreation Ground Charity for the balance of funds owed to the total of £16,657.90. The terms of payment for the invoice would be 14 days. The Parish Council would also be making a complaint to the Charity Commission.

**TO RESOLVE THAT NO FURTHER GRANT PAYMENTS WILL BE MADE TO THE
VILLAGE HALL UNTIL OUTSTANDING FINANCIAL MATTERS HAVE BEEN
CONCLUDED**

Members noted that the village hall still needed to provide additional information for their existing grant application for a pump track before it could be considered by the parish council.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that no further grant payments would be paid to the Village Hall until the outstanding financial matters had been concluded. This did not prevent grant applications being considered.

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 Usborne, District Council Ward Members for Horam and Punnetts Town and Councillor Bob Bowdler, East Sussex County Councillor & Police Community Support