

Signed

Chairman

**Horam Parish Council
The Horam Centre
3 Bank Buildings
Horam
TN21 0EH**

01435 812151

JACKIE COTTRELL

Jackie Cottrell –Clerk

Email: clerk@horamparishcouncil.gov.uk

**Minutes of Horam Parish Council's Planning and Highways Committee
held in the Horam Centre on TUESDAY 8TH JULY from 6.30 pm to 7.25 pm**

In Attendance: Councillors Andy Billings, Graham Knight, Sue Lane, Virginia Roberts, Ann Sadler (arrived 6.40 pm), Daniel Johnston (arrived 6.35 pm) and David Marlow (non-voting) member

Also in Attendance: 1 member of the public
The Clerk
Admin Assistant

PUBLIC SESSION - none

385/07/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

386/07/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

387/07/25 MINUTES

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HORAM – explore, discover, enjoy

RESOLVED the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd JUNE 2025 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

388/07/25 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

WD/2025/1379/LDP

HORAM CLUBHOUSE, CONSTANCE SCOTT RECREATION GROUND, HORAM ROAD, HORAM TN21 OJE

Proposed internal alterations with existing external storage altered

The Parish Council noted that the decision had been made on the lawful development certificate but the section that required planning permission, Horam Parish Council had no objections to.

WD/2025/1458/MFA

LAND EAST OF ROSEMEAD, HOREBEECH LANE, HORAM, TN21 9EA - Variation of condition 12 of WD/2022/1694/MAO (Appeal ref. APP/C1435/W/23/3334439) (outline planning permission for the erection of up to 46 residential dwellings including 35% affordable housing. all matters are reserved except for access.) to amend the trigger for approval of details for foul drainage from 'prior to commencement' to 'before preparation of ground levels'.

The Parish Council are of the view that it would be in the best interest of all parties, including residents, to reach agreement on the required drainage works prior to proceeding further. Therefore, the trigger for approving foul drainage details should remain 'prior to commencement' and not be changed to 'before preparation of ground levels'.

Condition 12

No development shall take place until details of the implementation, maintenance and management of the foul drainage system have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The foul drainage system shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details, and prior to occupation of the development hereby permitted confirmation that there is capacity within the associated drainage network will be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Thereafter the system will be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Omitting this reference appears to take away the specific – and significant – requirement to provide evidence of sufficient capacity in the wider drainage network that would serve the development – which we all know is currently inadequate.

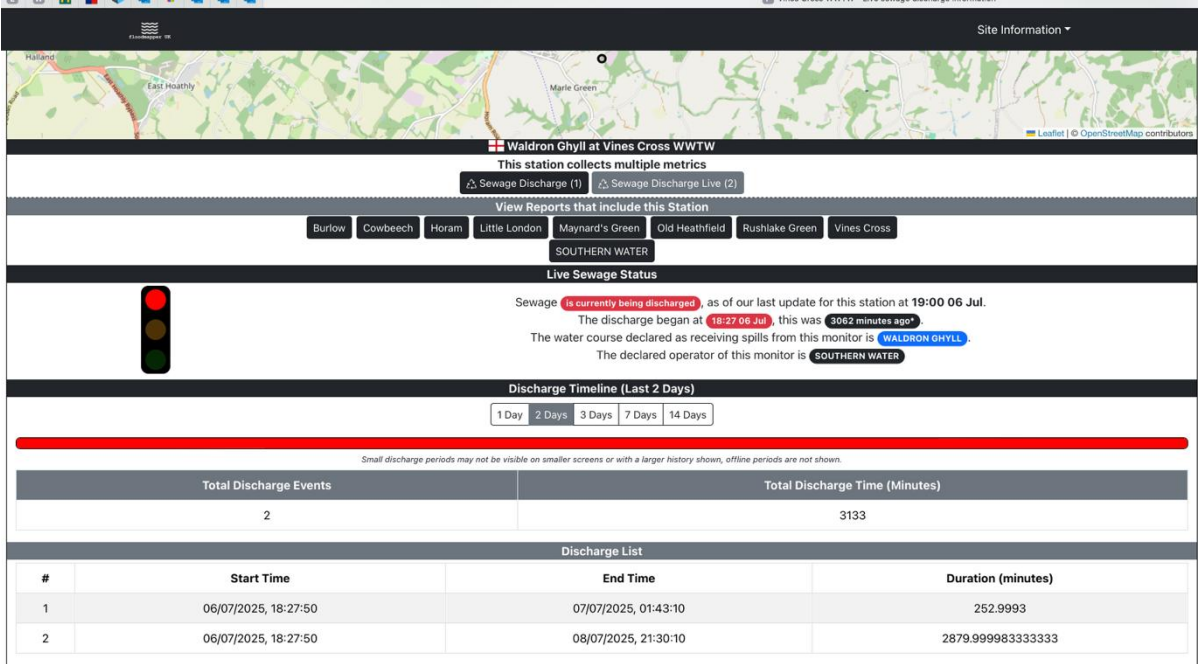
Sewage from this development will be conveyed via the Rosemead Estate to the Horebeech Lane Pumping Station, where it will subsequently be routed to the Vines Cross Wastewater Treatment Works, a facility that is presently operating over its designed capacity.

In 2024 the Horebeech Lane Pumping Station discharged water for a total of 566 hours, which is approximately 23 days or 6.44% of the year.

The Parish Council's concerns stem not only from the historical performance of the system but also from its capacity to accommodate future challenges. With rainfall continuing to strain the infrastructure, the proposed developments risk exacerbating existing problems until Southern Water upgrades the Vines Cross Wastewater Treatment Works.

In 2024 the Vines Cross Wastewater Treatment Works reported 78 sewage discharge events, with a cumulative duration of 1,124 hours. This equates to approximately 46 days, or 12.79% of the year.

After only 2 days of rain this month VCWWTW has been discharging for 51 hours.



Rainfall-induced inflows already jeopardize operational stability, and further development risks intensifying the frequency and severity of overflows. Moreover, the existing operational data highlights that the current network cannot absorb additional demand without significant repercussions. These risks are compounded by the lack of substantive upgrades to the Vines Cross Wastewater Treatment Works. Addressing these challenges prior to further development is imperative to mitigate future ecological and public health risks.

The appeal to approve Condition 13, regarding the management of wastewater from the Old Orchard application (WD/2021/2356/MAO) involving 38 dwellings opposite Rosemead on Horebeech Lane—which proposed directing wastewater through the Horebeech Lane pumping station to the Vines Cross Wastewater Treatment Works—was not upheld by the Inspector.

The Inspector emphasised the critical need for timely infrastructure enhancements to support sustainable development and environmental protection. The combined effects of ongoing development and the existing strain on the wastewater system will exacerbate the situation. Failure to implement significant improvements to the treatment facilities and sewer network will lead to continued non-compliance with environmental regulations, thereby increasing risks to both ecological integrity and public health.

It is currently unclear what measures are needed to ensure sufficient wastewater drainage capacity in the treatment facilities and sewer network. Given the Old Orchard appeal inspector's support of Wealden's concerns, allowing any works now may be premature.

The Parish Council wishes to clarify that the focus is not on opposing the principle of development, but rather on ensuring that the development proceeds efficiently and does not significantly lengthen the construction period, which could result in a prolonged period of disruption for local residents.

As there have been no upgrades to the Vines Cross Wastewater Treatment Works, the Inspector's conclusion and subsequent refusal remain relevant to this development and should be considered binding.

The appeal Inspectors reason for refusing the discharge of condition 13 were:

SW emphasises that discharges at the WWTW and WPS are attributed to rainwater, not growth, and the answer is to prevent rainwater getting into the sewer network.

While this proposal would result in proportionally limited increases in inputs into the system, it seems illogical that additional inputs would have no consequence to outflows of foul water when the system is overwhelmed by rainfall. SW's clarifying correspondence does not dispute there are outflows above those permitted and does not dispel the Council's concerns that the additional dwellings would worsen the situation. Therefore, I give SW's explanation on this matter limited weight.

The Baseline Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (BRAVA) in the SW Vines Cross Wastewater System Plan (2021) (the SP) indicates concerns. Planning Objectives for

Pollution Risk, Sewer Collapse Risk and Good Ecological Status/Potential were graded as 'very significant' in 2020. Internal sewer flooding, storm overflows and flood risk due to hydraulic overload were assessed as 'moderately significant'

WD/2025/1563/CD

OLD ORCHARD HOUSE, HOREBEECH LANE, HORAM, TN21 9DZ

Application for approval of details reserved by condition 13 attached to WD/2021/2356/MAO (APP/C1435/W/22/3297371)

Condition 13

Before preparation of ground levels of the development approved by this permission a scheme for foul drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved before any of the dwellings served are occupied.

The application for approval of details reserved by condition 13 is recommended for refusal by Horam Parish Council Planning & Highways Committee.

As no upgrades have been implemented at the Vines Cross Wastewater Treatment Works, the Inspector's expert and independent findings for refusal remain valid and should continue to be observed.

While the applicant has incorporated a storage tank into the development, this measure does not resolve the underlying concern that sewage will continue to be directed though the Horebeech Lane pumping station to the Vines Cross Wastewater Treatment Works, which is currently operating beyond its capacity.

Monson's report utilises discharge data from 2023; however, in 2024, Horebeech Lane Pumping Station—which receives foul drainage from this site—discharged for 566 hours (approximately 23 days or 6.44% of the year), representing more than twice the discharge duration recorded in 2023.

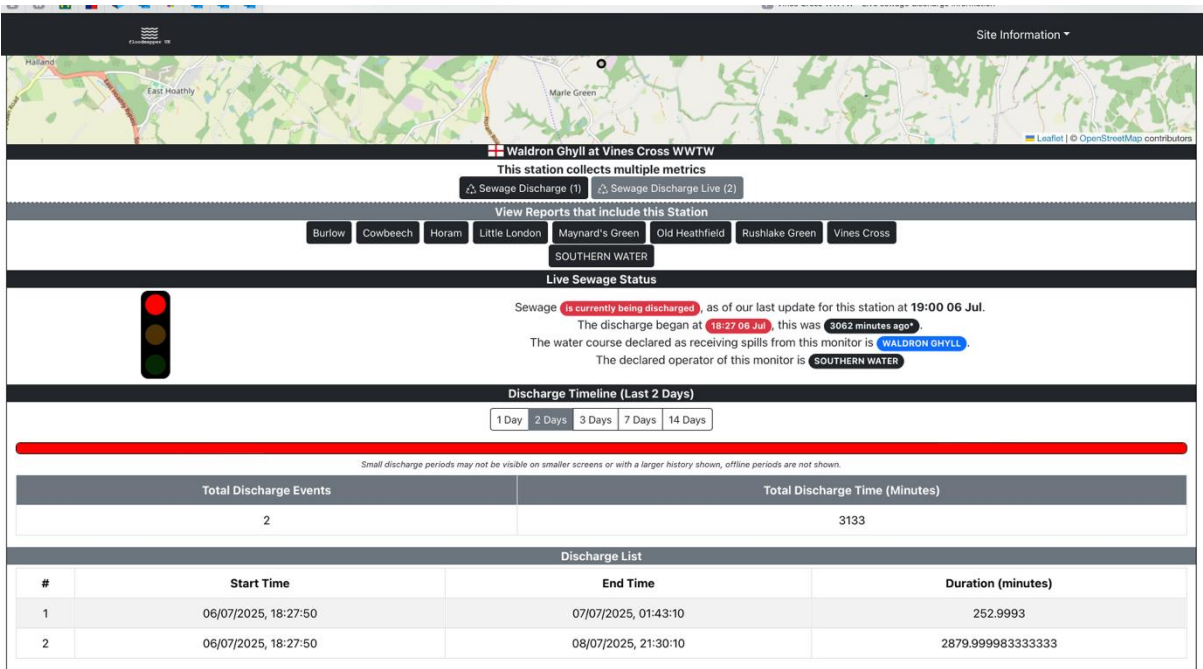
Furthermore, the proposed 42-hour storage capacity only addresses average discharge levels, which is inadequate given the ongoing issues already present.

In 2024 the Vines Cross Wastewater Treatment Works (VCWWTW) reported 78 sewage discharge events, with a cumulative duration of 1,124 hours. This equates to approximately 46 days, or 12.79% of the year.

Rainfall-induced inflows already jeopardize operational stability, and further development risks intensifying the frequency and severity of overflows.

Moreover, the existing operational data highlights that the current network cannot absorb additional demand without significant repercussions. These risks are compounded by the lack of substantive upgrades to the Vines Cross Wastewater Treatment Works. Addressing these challenges prior to further development is imperative to mitigate future ecological and public health risks.

After only 2 days of rainfall, following an extended period of no precipitation, VCWWTW experienced a discharge event lasting 51 hours.



What is the basis of Southern Water's assessment that the development would mean that *"the spill volume at Horebeech Lane WPS overflow will increase by 3 cubic metres, which is below the threshold for detrimental spill volumes."* Shouldn't a meaningful threshold reflect current conditions, given that Southern Water has acknowledged the system is already overwhelmed?

The Parish Council query Southern Water's assertions that:
"The increased flow from this proposed development will not cause an adverse risk of flooding within the network or an increased risk of property-level flooding" and that
"The increased flow from this development is unlikely to affect the frequency of spills." when there is already flooding in the network.

While it is understood that the discharges at both Horebeech Lane WPS and Vines Cross WWTW are mainly caused by rainwater entering the sewer network, the appeal Inspector

understood that it is illogical to still argue that new developments connecting foul water into the sewerage network won't exacerbate matters.

If the system is saturated with groundwater, reducing wastewater capacity, wouldn't new development cause groundwater levels to increase further?

The Parish Council's concerns stem not only from the historical performance of the system but also from its capacity to accommodate future challenges. With rainfall continuing to strain the infrastructure, the proposed developments risk exacerbating existing problems until Southern Water upgrades the Vines Cross Wastewater Treatment Works.

The Parish Council wishes to clarify that the focus is not on opposing the principle of development, but rather on ensuring that the development proceeds efficiently and does not significantly lengthen the construction period, which could result in a prolonged period of disruption for local residents.

The Appeal Inspector emphasized the critical need for timely infrastructure enhancements to support sustainable development and environmental protection. The combined effects of ongoing development and the existing strain on the wastewater system will exacerbate the situation. Failure to implement significant improvements to the treatment facilities and sewer network will lead to continued non-compliance with environmental regulations, thereby increasing risks to both ecological integrity and public health.

The appeal Inspectors' reason for refusing the discharge of condition 13 were:

SW emphasises that discharges at the WWTW and WPS are attributed to rainwater, not growth, and the answer is to prevent rainwater getting into the sewer network. While this proposal would result in proportionally limited increases in inputs into the system, it seems illogical that additional inputs would have no consequence to outflows of foul water when the system is overwhelmed by rainfall. SW's clarifying correspondence does not dispute there are outflows above those permitted and does not dispel the Council's concerns that the additional dwellings would worsen the situation. Therefore, I give SW's explanation on this matter limited weight. The Baseline Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (BRAVA) in the SW Vines Cross Wastewater System Plan (2021) (the SP) indicates concerns. Planning Objectives for Pollution Risk, Sewer Collapse Risk and Good Ecological Status/Potential were graded as 'very significant' in 2020. Internal sewer flooding, storm overflows and flood risk due to hydraulic overload were assessed as 'moderately significant'

389/07/25 PLANNING APPLICATIONS CONSIDERED BY THE WDC MAJORS PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR NOTING - NONE

390/07/25 TPO APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT - NONE

391/07/25 PLANNING APPEAL NOTIFICATIONS / UPDATES - NONE

392/07/25 PLANNING APPLICATIONS APPROVED BY WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

WD/2024/2006/MRM - LAND OFF HOREBEECH LANE, HORAM, TN21 9DF- Reserved matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) pursuant to outline permission WD/2022/1694/MAO (outline planning permission for the erection of up to 46 residential dwellings including 35% affordable housing. all matters are reserved except for access).

WD/2025/1049/F – NORTH END COTTAGE, MARLE GREEN, NORTH CORNER, HORAM, TN21 9HJ
Single storey side extension

393/07/25 PLANNING APPLICATIONS REFUSED OR WITHDRAWN BY WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

WD/2025/0851/MRM - LAND OFF HOREBEECH LANE, HORAM, TN21 9DF - Reserved matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) pursuant to outline permission WD/2022/1694/MAO (outline planning permission for the erection of up to 46 residential dwellings including 35% affordable housing. all matters are reserved except for access). – **WITHDRAWN**

394/07/25 TO NOTE THE LETTER SENT TO WDC FROM THE PC EXPRESSING DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WAS NOT GIVEN WEIGHT WHEN APPROVING WD/2024/2006/MRM LAND OFF HOREBEECH LANE

Horam Parish Council had received a reply from WDC regarding WD/2024/2006/MRM. it was felt that the main point of HPC's letter had not been considered and this was that judgements on layout and design were being made without proper reference to the Horam Neighbourhood Plan (HNP). The Committee agreed to send a further letter highlighting that the HNP should be a starting point for planning determinations.

Cllr Lane left the meeting at 7.20 pm.

395/07/25 TO RESOLVE THE PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON: REFORM OF PLANNING COMMITTEES: TECHNICAL CONSULTATION

The responses were discussed at the meeting, and these were then emailed to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government with copies being sent to ESALC and NALC.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Planning Committee – Monday 28th July at 7.30 pm

TO: MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE: Councillors Billings, Knight, Roberts, Sadler, Lane, Johnston and David Marlow (non-voting member)

REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (for information): Councillors Brockhurst, Howells, Webb, Trott and Poole

DISTRICT WARD MEMBERS: COLLINS and GOULD