
Meeting of High Ongar Parish Council

WEDNESDAY 12th November 2025 – at 7:30pm
at the High Ongar Village Hall

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Acton (Chairman), Cllr Catlin, Cllr Bosworth, Cllr Funnell, Cllr Gray and Cllr Smith

Bonnie Jones (Clerk)

2025/26.88 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from District Councillor Mary Dadd, Cllr Gallichio and Cllr Arthur.

2025/26.89 Other Absences

None

2025/26.90 Declarations of Interest

None

2025/26.91 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was unanimously resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th of October 2025 were a true record and were signed accordingly.

2025/26.92 Public Participation Session

There were no members of the public present.

2025/26.93 Reports and Members Reports

- a) Chairman's Report – Cllr Acton advised that he laid a wreath on behalf of High Ongar Parish Council at the village memorial service. Cllr Funnell also attended the memorial church service.
- b) Vice Chairman's Report – None
- c) District & County Councillor Reports – There were no District or County Councillors in attendance, however the Clerk had been in contact with Cllr Mary Dadd who provided an update on the new Persimmon Homes plans at the four way roundabout. The Clerk thought this update would be something that all Councillors would be interested to hear about.

Update below from District Councillor Mary Dadd:

The persimmon plans are available on EFDC planning search under EPF/2787/23. This includes all the conditions of the application approval. I understand that Persimmon has started some works including removing some hedging. The new homes are being advertised by Charles Church and called De Lucy Place for off plan sales.

As you know ONPCG and RAGON4 worked hard to get plans amended and then our groups, OTC and me as ward Cllr-with some success such as part time traffic lights but not everything we wanted! I have now been invited by Persimmon for a site visit in the spring (as Cllr)--so they are presumably expecting work to start in earnest shortly.

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Chris Ray is Chair of the residents Group RAGON4 and has a register of people wanting to be kept informed. Chris is also now an Ongar Town Council Cllr. Chris is the best person to answer specific questions.

The Clerk has received an email address for Cllr Ray, which will be circulated to Councillors.

d) Parish Councillors

Paslow Common – None

High Ongar – Cllr Catlin confirmed that the missing manhole cover that was reported to Highways on Tuesday has now been fixed. He also advised that he had been in contact with Lee Scott who will endeavour to look into the speeding issues in High Ongar.

Norton Mandeville – None

e) Highways Report – None

f) High Ongar Village Hall – Cllr Funnell confirmed that he was no longer a member of the High Ongar Village Hall management committee. The Clerk confirmed that various matters relating to the village hall would be discussed later on in the agenda.

g) Police Reports- Cllr Smith raised that the Council had not received any police reports from PC Warren Shepherd recently. Some months back it was requested that traffic as well as crime statistics were given. The Clerk will get in contact with PC Shepherd and ask for an updated crime and traffic report.

2025/26.94

Clerk's Report

The Clerk provided a verbal report which included the following matters:

- The Clerk had contacted RCCE to request some information regarding the High Ongar Village Hall. Unfortunately, the subscription this Council has does not include information surrounding Village Halls, this is a separate subscription. The Clerk suggested that the High Ongar Village Hall management committee consider getting their own RCCE subscription.
- At the previous meeting it was requested that the Clerk investigate if there were any ongoing maintenance costs for the VAS signs that this Council is hoping to install. The Clerk contacted Elan City who advised that the only maintenance cost is replacing the battery every 3-4 years. If this Council purchases two signs, then that will include 4 batteries. Making the total maintenance cost £256.84 every 3-4 years.
- The Clerk advised that the cost of a new sign at Paslow Common would be £94.80. Councillors felt that the current sign is not in a very visible place and they would prefer to move the sign to the entrance of the common. The Clerk will investigate the cost of a new sign with new posts also.
- The Clerk has not yet received an update from Cllr Jaymey McIvor regarding the Speed sign grant application.

2025/26.95

Defibrillator Batteries

The Clerk advised that the cost of four new batteries is £1200 inc VAT via St Johns Ambulance.

Councillors advised that they would prefer to go with a different company as they have not yet had the best experience with St Johns ambulance previously.

The Clerk confirmed she would look into some further costings and provide these to Councillors via email. It was noted that there is currently £1077.77 in the budget ear marked for defibrillator.

2025/26.96

Budget and Precept 2026/2027

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It was noted that the January 2026 Parish Council meeting will be mainly to address and agree the budget and precept for 2026/2027. Councillors were asked to advise the Clerk of any specific items they would like to be considered for budget, along with details and costings. These should be with the Clerk before the 3rd of December.

2025/26.97

Village Hall

At the previous meeting the Clerk was made aware that Cllr Funnell was no longer a member of the High Ongar Village Hall management committee. It was the Clerks understanding that the Parish Council must have one representative on the HOVH management committee. In order to confirm this information, the Clerk looked at the governing document, as well as some historical documentation and found the below information:

In 1925 the old village hall was located on a small piece of land elsewhere in the Parish.

In 1971 the Charity Commission became involved and formalised the running of that Village Hall by creating a governing document (known as the scheme), which sets out how the village hall should be run. In this governing document it mentions that the Village Hall should be run by a management committee.

At some time around the year 2000, the land of which the old village hall was situated was sold for development. There is no clear document which sets out that a new village hall would be rebuilt elsewhere for the charity however as part of the development of the old Braces Site (where the current Village Hall is located) there was an agreement that Braces would sell part of the land to the Parish Council for £1 with the agreement it would be used for new Village Hall for the community of High Ongar. Also as part of that agreement, the Braces would give £100,000 to EFDC who would intern give that money to the Parish Council to build a village hall. The cost of the VH was thought to be around half a million pounds, and it is not clear where the other money came from.

According to the land registry the Parish Council is legally the freehold owners of the hall and the land.

The Parish Council has part of a document dated 21st of February 2008 which is a legal agreement instigated by ECC and includes four parties (High Ongar Village Hall, ECC, High Ongar Parish Council, and Haynes and Smith Ltd). This is the only documentary evidence that the PC has which suggests that the VH was intended to still be run by the committee.

The High Ongar Village Hall management committee should consist of seven members:

- 4 elected/appointed members at the AGM
- 1 representative from the Parish Council
- 1 representative from the High Ongar Parochial Church Council
- 1 co-opted member appointed at a duly constituted meeting.

Committee members are not permitted to act as a member of the committee unless they have signed a declaration of acceptance and willingness to act in the trusts of the Scheme.

The committee must hold at least 2 meetings per year, one of which should be the AGM held in May. In order for a meeting to be quorate, there must be a minimum of 3 committee member at any meeting.

The information provided above was discussed in great detail, It was Proposed by Cllr Catlin and Seconded by Cllr Acton that Cllr Smith be the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall management committee.

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The Clerk advised she would contact Trustees of the HOVH management committee to inform them of the findings detailed above, and the appointment of Cllr Smith as this Council's representative on the committee.

2025/26.98 Over 65's Christmas Lunch

Cllr Catlin provided an update on the organisation of the Christmas lunch and advised that he often holds spaces for those who have previously attended.

Councillors felt this should not be the case moving forward and it should be on a first come first serve basis.

As it was such a well-attended event last year it was agreed that the Parish Council would put an extra £250 towards the event which would then allow a further 10 guests to attend.

Cllr Catlin will be placing posters advertising the lunch in the Pub, Post office, Church, School notice board and at the Village Hall.

2025/26.99 Speed sign application licence

1. Update on Highways License application. - The Clerk had contacted Cllr Tom Cunningham who had chased up the progress of this Council's current Highways licence application for 2 new VAS speed signs. Cllr Cunningham advised that the Highways team were unable to pinpoint the exact location of the speed signs. The Clerk has responded with further information on this. The Clerk will provide a further update once available.

2. Community Speed watch –update on TruCam and its use:

TruCAM is a handheld laser speed enforcement device used by police officers to detect speeding and other traffic violations. It is legally operated only by trained law enforcement agencies, not by private individuals. As such, Community Speed watch Group or other local community organisations are not permitted to use it. Only trained officers in law enforcement are authorised in its use.

Cllr Catlin advised that this is not the information that was provided to him by Lee Scott. The Clerk confirmed that she would contact Lee Scott to clarify the use of TruCAM.

2025/26.100 Diversion of footpath 33 High Ongar and 11 Blackmore

It was noted that on the 9th of October 2025 ECC confirmed an order to divert footpath 33 in High Ongar and footpath 11 in Blackmore.

2025/26.101 Planning applications responded to by way of Clerks Delegated Powers:

Reference	Address	Description	Comments
EPF/2033/25	Rose House, Mill Lane, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9RQ	Proposed Detached stable Block	No comments received
EPF/2026/25	Readings Farm, Norton Heath Road Old A414, High Ongar, Ingatestone, CM4 0LP	Prior Approval for change of use of an agricultural building to a commercial business use (Use Class E).	No comments received
EPF/2098/25	251, Maltings, Nine Ashes Road, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0LA	Conversion of garage to attached annexe with internal alterations.	No comments received
EPF/2097/25	251, Maltings, Nine Ashes Road, High	Loft extension.	No comments received

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	Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0LA		
EPF/2161/25	The Orchard, Fingrith Hall Lane, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0JP	Variation of Condition 2 Plan Numbers of EPF/2490/22 (Proposed residential redevelopment consisting of the demolition of all existing buildings and hardstanding and the construction of 6 no. new dwellings and associated development).	No comments (received from Cllr Acton and Cllr Smith)

2025/26.102 Planning applications for consideration

Councillors considered the below planning applications:

Reference	Address	Description	Deadline for comments
EPF/2139/25	Homemead Farm, Woolmongers Lane, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0JX	Demolition of existing outbuildings and erection of two residential properties utilising existing vehicular access with associated hard and soft landscaping. Planning Application: EPF/2139/25	18 th November 2025
No comments			
EPF/2246/25	Little Acre Farm, Norton Lane, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0LN	Resubmission of previously approved three bedroom bungalow. (self-build). Planning Application: EPF/2246/25	25 th November 2025
No comments			

2025/26.103 Planning Updates

The below planning updates were noted:

Reference	Address	Description	Information
EPF/2265/25	Land at Mill Lane, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9RQ	Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions 4 Tree Protection Plan/Arboricultural Method Statement, 5 Construction Management Plan and 7 Surface Water Disposal of EPF/1718/18 ((HONG.R1) - Erection of 7 three bedroom houses including new access from Millfield, provision of parking spaces, amenity space and landscaping).	Council is not able to make a comment on this application

2025/26.104 Finance

104.1 Councillors noted the bank balance as of 31st October 2025 was £47,817.66.

104.2 A bank reconciliation was tabled and signed accordingly by the Chairman.

104.3 The below payments were agreed:

Payee	Description	Method	£ (inc VAT)
Bonnie Jones	Clerks Salary (October)	PAID	£515.25
Skilled Tech	Microsoft 365 and device support	Online	£93.66
TBS Hygiene Ltd	Dog waste bin collection (October & November)	Online	£75.60
Npower	Streetlight electricity (October)	DD	£83.48
Bonnie Jones	Use of home office	Online	£312.00

2025/26.105 Outstanding Matters

None



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2025/26.106 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of High Ongar Parish Council will take place on Wednesday 14th January 2026 at the High Ongar Village Hall.

Apologies in advance received from Cllr Acton.

2025/26.107 Exclusion of the public and the press

Land Adjacent to 202 Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore

The Clerk and the Chairman are in the process of requesting a number of quotes for the correct legal advice on this matter.

Meeting end: 20:55