



Hunton

Parish Plan

2011



Foreword



This is our Plan for Hunton. It is based on the views of those who live and work in the village, expressed at community meetings and through responses to the questionnaire circulated to all households.

It reflects what we as a local community feel is special about the village, what makes us want to live here and what we want to see happen to Hunton in the future. It also identifies areas of particular challenge, similar to those that most rural communities have to contend with, but which can often be difficult to overcome. This Plan

presents us with a unique opportunity to begin to tackle these challenges whilst preserving and improving all that we love about Hunton.

Our thanks go to Hunton Parish Council, Maidstone Borough Council and to Action with Communities in Rural Kent for their advice and support. We are grateful to our County Councillor and three Borough Councillors, Action with Communities in Rural Kent, the Hunton Herald and to local business for funding in support of the consultation process and associated events and the printing of this Plan. Finally, thanks go to all those in the village, including the Primary School, the Village Club, St Mary's Church, the Village Hall, the Sports Clubs and not least the residents who have participated in the events and contributed their views, ideas, facilities and time to help with the project.

Bluebells photograph by L. Oliver winner of 'Landscape & Wildlife' adult category Hunton Calling!!

Hunton Past and Present

Hunton is a small village of 232 households six miles to the south of Maidstone, Kent. The village is sometimes seen as long and thin and as a through route to somewhere else. Yet the Ordnance Survey map tells a different story: the village is almost square in shape - from the main thoroughfares of East and West Streets there are small roads and lanes branching off, winding north and south to neighbouring villages or in some cases coming to a pleasing halt where they meet farmland.

The village sits in beautiful, verdant countryside. The Greensand Way, a landmark loved both by visiting walkers and residents alike and with stunning views over the Weald of Kent, occupies the northern part of the boundary. To the south and west, the River Beult delineates our border with Chainhurst and Yalding.

The way the village looks today is a consequence of decisions and actions taken by those who have preceded us over many centuries. Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of Hunton's appearance is the scattered distribution of housing, which is due to the earliest settlement.

Though it is probable that there were people living in what is now Hunton in the Pre-Roman and Roman periods, the first real evidence of people living here comes in the Anglo Saxon or Jutish period. That evidence is the name itself, Hunton: the name meaning the settlement of Hunta's folk. The etymology of this village name places it in the second wave of the Jutish settlement and expansion into Kent, along with other villages on the Chart ridge, Boughton, Linton, Chart Sutton and Sutton Valence, in the late seventh century. Jutish settlements tended towards individual farms surrounded by farmland, whereas the Anglo Saxon approach was of a nucleated village surrounded by large fields divided into strips. However, unlike our neighbouring villages,

where there has been a tendency towards nucleation over time, this original Jutish pattern has been preserved in Hunton. We may have kept this design because the village has not expanded greatly in the last thousand years, perhaps due to the present park of Hunton Court (once the home of Liberal Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman) and the historical park of Buston Manor (part of Lord Falmouth's Tregothnan Estate) acting as buffers to significant development.

During the thousand years since Bensted was mentioned in the Domesday book the village has seen both prosperity and decline. From the Middle Ages into the early modern period, Hunton seems to have been a prosperous community in an increasingly sophisticated and wealthy county. Kentish yeoman farmers were some of the first to embrace market economics: producing food specifically for sale on the markets as opposed to selling only surpluses from subsistence farming. Other industries were represented as well, notably weaving: Hunton



Collage of house in Grove Lane by T. Love, winner of 'Architecture' child category Hunton Calling!!



Hop Pickers at Buston Farm 1913

being an outlier of the Cranbrook cloth industry. Along with tanners, these weavers and yeoman farmers had enough wealth to require their wills to be proved at the Prerogatory Court of Canterbury.

It seems that Hunton went into relative decline during the eighteenth century, as weaving died out. Reliance on hops, which had started to be grown increasingly from the seventeenth century, meant that by the time of the industrial revolution Hunton actually became more rural and more reliant on agriculture than it had been since the Middle Ages. Even though the Rector, Bielby Porteous, (Rector from 1765-1788) could write about the locals as though they were living in an Arcadian paradise, reality was better reflected in the 1805 survey which noted that most of the population could be described as the 'labouring poor'.

The situation changed only slowly during the nineteenth century, as even by the time of the 1901 census most of the villagers were engaged in agriculture. Indeed many of the former yeoman's and weaver's houses were split into smaller units and lived in by labourers: though they may have been the lucky ones as some residents lived all year round in hopper huts.

The twentieth century started to see real change as transport links helped people find employment in neighbouring towns and others started to move into the village from where they could commute to Maidstone or even London.

Both world wars had their effect on Hunton as men went away: many of whom never returned



'Hunton Giant' Snowdrops photograph by A Way

due to the natural attrition of war or because their horizons had been changed.

The hops have now all gone and very few villagers are engaged in agriculture but the Parish remains a farming landscape. The population has actually declined since the 1870's, so that the number living in the village is now around 200 less than it was then. Most of the old houses, many of which are listed, have been restored and returned to single dwellings.

Today Hunton is an attractive and sought after place to live because nearly 1500 years of alternating prosperity and decline, neither dramatically affecting the original Jutish design, have left the pretty rural landscape we see today. Hunton has several public buildings: St Mary's Church, the Village Club, Hunton CEP School and the Village Hall. The King George V Playing Fields provide opportunities for recreation. The mobile library visits the village each Wednesday. There has been no shop in the village since the 1980s and residents rely on the amenities at Coxheath, Yalding, Marden and Maidstone to meet this need.

Left: Hunton Court, photograph courtesy of G Devas



St Mary's Church



centuries prominent residents have often left a lasting reminder of their involvement with St Mary's, notably one-time Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman who gave land in the North West corner of the churchyard to enlarge it.

The churchyard contains many monuments that, together with its trees, provide an appropriate setting for a country parish church. Of particular interest are fourteen table-top tombs, many of which are listed structures, as is the church itself. The largest yew trees may be up to one thousand years old and the lych gate dates from 1868. The churchyard contains the graves of local residents many of whom date from the nineteenth-century, including that of Henry Bannerman who bought Hunton Court in 1848. Recent restoration work includes the Canterbury window, the re-roofing of the South Aisle and strengthening of the Fane Memorial adjacent to the pulpit.

One service is held every Sunday and these services consist of Holy Communion, Morning Prayer or a Family Service, depending on the Sunday. At present, congregations are small but swell considerably at specific times such as Christmas and Easter, Mothering Sunday and Remembrance Sunday. The Hunton Herald lists the types of service and the times.

The church has a choir, although no regular organist at the present time. There is a rota for flower arranging and for coffee making after the Family Service. There is also a Hunton Sunday Club held at Scotts Farmhouse for children of primary school age. The Parochial Church Council meets regularly and the Fabric Committee look after the church building and grounds and a cottage, which is let.

The Friends of St Mary's is an active fund-raising support group.

Photograph by - P Nichols winner of 'Architecture' adult category Hunton Calling!!

St Mary's Church largely dates from the 13th century and stands at the centre of the village.

A church was in use on the present site at least in Saxon times and the building has evolved continuously ever since. Changes in prevailing religious practices, population size, distribution of wealth, new ideas and even legislation have all affected the appearance of the church as we see it today. Some prominent features from the past such as galleries, screens, box pews and an interior chapel have been swept away with the passage of time.

Hunton Church, however, is not a museum but rather a symbol of the enduring faith of the villagers who have worshipped here for over a thousand years. Across the

Hunton Village Hall

The Village Hall was constructed in 1926 on land bequeathed to the village by the Marquess of Ormande who lived at Gennings. It was built by a village firm operating as builders and wheelwrights from premises at the bottom of Hunton Hill.

The building has an artisan character with its timber frame, exposed to the roof, and steep roof form that fits well with its attractive location in the environs of St Mary's Church on West Street. The original entrance faced directly onto West Street and the space within consisted of a small kitchen, stairs to a gallery overlooking a single vaulted Hall and, at the far end, a separate male/female WC.

There do not appear to be any records of its early use but we can assume that it supported a range of typical village societies and activity associated with St Mary's and Hunton C of E School. There are good surviving photographs of village and school parties of the early 1950's.

The roof was stripped and re-laid in about 1982 and in 1991 local builders Hickman and Pope built a major extension, adding a large new kitchen, new toilets and a store. A car park was formed to the side of the Hall and from that time a new side door became the main entrance to the building. From 1991 to the present, a wide range of improvements and upgrading have

taken place including renovation of both kitchens, a replacement timber floor, a brick paved external area and a new storeroom.

Current activities in the Hall are numerous and varied. It is the home of the Hunton and Linton Under-5's pre-school;



is available for village and wedding functions; village clubs use it; and it is the local Polling Station. In the last 9 years it has been used for performances by artists sponsored by Applause, an organization dedicated to bringing professional arts to rural areas. This arrangement has brought world-class performers to the village.

The management of the Village Hall relies on local volunteers. For many years it was managed by what was known as the Hunton Sports and Social Committee that, under the wing of the Parish Council, also looked after the sports field. However in recent times the Village Hall has become a registered charity, with its own Committee that is set up to look after the building itself.



Hunton CEP School

Hunton Church of England (Aided) Primary School is one of the oldest schools in the Rochester Diocese and has a long history. The original school, called Hunton National School, opened on 21st May 1838 and had a capacity of more than 200 pupils. It was housed in a building, now a private dwelling in East Street, built by the then Vicar of Hunton, the Rev Robert Moore, and paid for by Bishop Porteus to educate children to be 'good and useful members of the community'. A board in the Church Porch records: 'The Schools built by me and endowed by Bishop Porteus, were opened this day under the teaching of George Neal and Delina his wife. The annual salary of the Master and Mistress jointly is to be £50 per annum ... £5.4s.8d. remaining annually for purchase of books, repairs etc ... each child to pay one penny regularly every Monday morning'

Though there was some opposition to the instigation of education for 'The Poor', the school soon made progress. J Bartholomew, a former pupil who started school in 1870, his parents having been there from 1840, has painted a fascinating picture of the first 100 years: 'Initially boys and girls were taught separately but



by 1870 they were mixed, one class for juniors and one for infants'. He recalls the amusement caused by stumbling because of different floor levels! His friend Arthur Freud commented on the appointment of his favourite teacher Mr Geo Winter as 'my dear old Master' and 'the Winter has set in!' Fires were lit in the classrooms. The attendance of pupils was also very much affected by seasonal work on farms or in the hop fields. In 1881 a smallpox outbreak forced a three-week school closure. A century later, in 1987, the school closed for five and a half days caused by snow, heating failure and fallen trees following the storm of October 16th 1987.

In September 1963, the school moved to its present site on the corner of West Street and Bishops Lane. The new school opened with 56 children in three classes, this dropped to 36 children in 1988 and the school once again had two classes: one for infants and one for juniors. In 1988 the school celebrated 150 years with a spectacular

celebration Victorian style. Alastair Stewart, the newsreader, attended, as did many old pupils and teachers.

The school has continued to grow and in the 1990's three classes were once again in use. A school hall was built in 2003 and a further classroom and new entrance were added in 2009. The school now has 80 pupils and four thriving classes. The school is judged by Ofsted to be good with many outstanding features and outstanding under the Anglican statutory inspection criteria.

Many, many changes have taken place since our school opened 172 years ago. We continue to strive for every child to reach their full potential and to enjoy school and learning. Importantly, we continue to hold to the aim of Bishop Porteus that we educate children to be 'good and useful members of the community' - so that in a rapidly changing world every child who leaves the school is adaptable and creative and equipped to deal with the challenges of modern life.

Hunton Village Club



Hunton Village Club is located in West Street between Bensted Close and the entrance to The Square. It is a small building, which dates back to the 19th century.

A photograph, taken in 1905 (above), shows the original building with a bell tower, two chimneys and a gabled entrance porch. The building today has been extended at the front, rear and side, the bell tower and one chimney have been removed but a gabled entrance remains. It is believed that the building was originally used as a non-conformist meeting house and as a school for young ladies. There is a font, which remains in the building today but is buried under the floor. It was part of the Hunton Court Estate once owned by the Campbell-Bannerman family.

In May 1956 the Hunton Village Club came into existence and the property was, by way of a conveyance, sold for the sum of £200 and entrusted to two trustees. It remains in trust to this day. The Club was also affiliated to the Working Men's Union. There were open fires at each end of the building and the beer barrels were in open

view and kept cool by wet sacks being draped over them. The toilet facilities were external and there was also a bike shed provided. Originally an annual membership cost six shillings (30p today) but it should be remembered that a farm worker in the 1950s earned only about £5.00 for at least 50 hours work each week.

In the late 1950's the decision was taken to admit women, but only on Fridays. Women were eventually allowed greater access to the Club and could become Associate members but that did not give them the right to vote nor to speak directly to the Chair at General Meetings: it was necessary for them to speak via their husbands!

There were many years of prosperity, with sufficient funds available in 1979 to extend the building and to include indoor toilet facilities. At one time there was sufficient money in the bank for the Committee to consider buying a house in Bensted Close for the use of the Steward, who was employed on a full time basis, but the purchase did not get approved. Recent years, however, have seen a much reduced membership and financial problems. In December 2005, the Treasurer reported that the Club was insolvent with debts of over £10,000. A special meeting was called and the membership responded in an extraordinary way, making voluntary donations and interest free loans to allow the Club to continue trading. Unfortunately, the Steward had to be made redundant and the only way for the Club to continue to function was

for all work to be carried out

on a voluntary basis.

Within a year all of

the loans had been

repaid and debts

cleared. Six

years later the

Club continues

to be run by

volunteers all

of whom have

learned new

skills in business

management, bar

work and customer care!



King George V Playing Fields

The King George V Playing Fields were founded in 1938 as a memorial to the late king who had died early in 1936. The creation of the recreation ground also belonged to the wider movement in the interwar years to create playing fields for sport and recreation in recognition of the poor state of the nation's health highlighted by the high number of recruits rejected from full military service during the Great War.

Money was raised from various sources both within the village and from grants from the Playing Fields Association, KCC and Maidstone Borough Council amongst others. The £1000 raised was used to purchase and provide facilities on the eight acre site adjacent to the Village Hall. The whole project would not have been completed though without the generosity of Mrs Campbell-Bannerman of Hunton Court and the Marchioness of Ormande of Gennings. The former provided the land at a price below market value and the latter paid for the thatched pavilion, the bowling green and a tennis court (no longer in existence). There was great celebration at the official opening by Brigadier Maud of the Playing Fields Association in June 1938.

The recreation ground is run by the King George V Playing Fields Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Parish Council. All Parish Councillors are trustees and are there to act as guardians of the original wishes of the trust so that the area can be enjoyed by all.

Today the Football, Cricket and Bowls Clubs all enjoy these facilities, as do younger children in the play area.

Hunton Football Club first team plays in Division 1 of the Maidstone and District Football League and the reserves in Division 2.

Club cricket has been played at Hunton for at least 100 years. Current Club history dates from 1987, when Trevor Stevens started Hunton Wanderers. Prior to using the King George



V Playing Fields, the Club had no ground, hence the "Wanderers". From playing friendly cricket only the Club grew rapidly and at its peak in the early 1990's had over 70 playing members. Today the Club is represented in the Kent Regional Cricket League, where it has two Saturday sides, and is in the Kent Village League on Sundays. It has a steady membership of about 35.

The Bowls Club as we know it today was formed in 1936 although it is possible that some organised bowling may have been taking place at Hunton a year or two earlier.

Always small, the Club has benefited over the years by the enthusiasm and hard work of the members. Since the original small green was laid it has been lengthened, widened and steadily improved. Major improvements took place in 1962 when an extra rink was added and a beech hedge planted to give some protection from the cricketers' more powerful boundary shots. The Pavilion was extended in 2008 and a new changing room for the ladies created. Hunton Bowls Club celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2011.



Contact Information

Parish Council	Chairman Mr Roger Sawtell Clerk Mrs Sharon Goodwin	huntonpc@googlemail.com	01622 820731 01622 861238
County Councillor	CLlr Paulina Stockell	Paulina.Stockell@kent.gov.uk	01622 842508
Borough Councillors	CLlr Brian Mortimer CLlr Dennis Collins CLlr John Wilson	brianmortimer@maidstone.gov.uk denniscollins@maidstone.gov.uk JohnAWilson@maidstone.gov.uk	01622 746046 07803 909191 01622 820468 01622 720989
Editors of the Hunton Herald Newsletter	Mr & Mrs David Heaton Articles to hunton@herald.org.uk		01622 820678
Village Hall	Chairman Mr Alan Bishop Bookings Secretary Mrs Jane Crane		01622 820683 01622 820127
Policing	PC Tom Mepstead PCSO Richard Chainey	tom.mepstead@kent.pnn.police.uk richard.chainey@kent.pnn.police.uk	01622 604392
Neighbourhood Watch			01622 608173
St Mary's Church	Rector Revd Peter Walker Assistant Rector Revd David Jones Church Warden Mrs Alison Ellman-Brown		01622 747570 01622 741474 01622 820288
Peace Cottages	Parochial Trustee Mrs Ruth Porter		01622 820220
Hunton Village Club	Secretary Mr Alan Blackledge-Smith www.huntonvillageclub.co.uk		01622 820428
Hunton CE Primary School	Head Teacher Mrs Sue Wood		01622 820360
Hunton & Linton Pre-School	Ms Tansy Watts		01622 820309
Hunton Wanderers CC	Chairman Mr Simon Taylor Secretary Mr Steve Jones www.hwcc.play-cricket.com	simon@passmores.co.uk steve.c.jones@btinternet.com	01622 674193 01622 726151
Hunton Football Club	enquiries to the Secretary of the Playing Fields Committee		01622 744262
Hunton Bowls Club	Chair Mrs Margaret Carpenter		01622 744262
Hunton Parish Plan Steering Committee	Chair Mrs Sue Heaton Secretary Mrs Barbara Wright	huntonparishplan@btinternet.com	01622 820678 01622 820218
Friends of St Mary's	Chairman Mr Ron Porter		01622 820220
Potholes 24-hour hotline			08458 247800
Fly tipping 24-hour hotline			0800 807060

This information will be updated regularly and communicated to residents on the Hunton village website (www.hunton.org.uk), on notice boards in the village and to all households via the Hunton Herald.



Our Plan



Why a Parish Plan?

A Parish Plan, also known as a 'Community-led Plan', provides a structured platform for residents to set out what they would like happen in their village, to ensure that their views are taken into account by local authorities and other organisations, and to give impetus to community activity. The

concept of Parish Plans arose from the Government's Rural White Paper *'Our Countryside – the Future'* (November 2000), which envisaged local communities having their own

vision of what is important to them, of how those things they value should be preserved and of how future development should be managed. A successful Parish Plan should reflect the views of all sections of the local community obtained through a formal consultation process. Plans can take up to 18 months to complete and generally have a lifespan of 5-10 years. Normally a Plan should be revisited every 5 years to ensure that actions proposed are still current.

When a Plan is finalised, the likelihood is that the community itself will be able to tackle many of the actions. A number of issues, however, will fall within the responsibility of one of the various tiers of local government but the Plan is a tool to be used to influence and improve the services they provide to the community.

The Consultation Process

A Hunton Parish Plan Steering Committee was established to run the consultation and develop the Plan. The Committee met monthly and the minutes of those meetings were published on the village website (www.hunton.org.uk). Updates on progress were also published in the Hunton Herald. All main committee meetings were open meetings for residents to attend. A number of sub-groups were established to work on the detail. In addition to circulating the questionnaire to all households in the village in September 2010, the Parish Plan Steering Committee organised three events to ensure residents had every opportunity to influence the development of the Plan:

- Ideas Night in the Village Hall on 20 May 2010, to get a first impression of views and concerns in order to help develop the questionnaire
- Hunton Calling! on 18 September 2010, to launch the questionnaire and to showcase the village facilities

Outcome of the Consultation

299 questionnaires were issued, of which 165 were returned – a healthy response rate. Not surprisingly, 80% of respondents wanted the village to remain the peaceful, rural haven it is now - the Jutish tendency is clearly too ingrained after nearly 1500 years! The main issues to emerge from the questionnaires were consistent with those raised by villagers who attended the three Plan-related events, so we can

- Hunton Calling – We're Listening on 12 February 2011, to brief on the outcome of the questionnaire and to fine tune the list of priorities.

As the planning process went on, it was noticeable that more people took part in village events, that there was an increase in activities organised and that more residents volunteered for forthcoming events. This increase in community spirit has been a vital element of the Plan, and one that we hope will continue to develop and prosper.

Throughout the process we sought advice and guidance from Action with Communities in Rural Kent and Maidstone Borough Council. We also consulted other local Plans and had a guest speaker from our neighbouring village, East Farleigh, at an early Committee meeting to give us helpful pointers. The Parish Council has been kept informed throughout.

be confident that we have captured the expectations and concerns of the village. What follows is a statement of the main issues to arise, organised by broad categories, together with proposals for resolving them and an indication of where the responsibility lies for taking that work forward. A detailed analysis of the outcome of the questionnaire and records of the consultation events are on the village website.

Plan Priority 1 – Highways and Transport

► *What you said*

By far, the area of most discontent – in both the responses to the questionnaire (and additional comments) and during the public consultation events – concerned traffic and the maintenance of the roads, highways and footpaths, with 94% not satisfied. Particular criticism was aimed at the number of HGV's (79%), potholes (90%) and the general traffic speed through the village (75%). Traffic calming was considered inappropriate, however, often reflecting a critical view of the scheme in Coxheath, which has generated congestion and increased traffic in the side roads. 63% were dissatisfied with snow clearance. 73% said public transport was very important and only 3% felt it was of no importance. 42% were not satisfied with bus services. Residents wanted increased destinations, increased frequencies of existing services, lower costs and better access for those with disabilities. In some parts of the village, parking was an issue, although overall 87% said that they never had problems parking.



► *What we need to do*

Issue 1.1- HGVs

Action 1.1a. Maintain pressure on Kent County Council (KCC) and local businesses to direct HGV traffic to take more appropriate routes through the village.

Responsibility 1.1a. Parish Council in partnership with Borough and County Councillors and local businesses, Kent Highway Services (KHS), the Freight Transport Association, and the Road Haulage Association.

Action 1.1b. Information campaigns and placing clear signage for drivers in the village.

Responsibility 1.1b. As for 1.1a.

Issue 1.2 – Potholes

Action 1.2a. Residents to contact Kent Highways Pothole reporting number or report online.

Responsibility 1.2a. KHS and local residents.

Action 1.2b. Maintain pressure on KHS to address potholes.

Responsibility 1.2b. Parish Council in partnership with Borough and County Councillors.

Issue 1.3 – Snow Clearance

Action 1.3a. Stress to KHS importance of maintaining gritting of primary (West Street) and secondary (East Street) routes in the village.

Responsibility 1.3a. Parish, Borough and County Councillors.

Action 1.3b. Investigate need for additional salt bins within the village.

Responsibility 1.3b. Parish Council and local residents.

Issue 1.4 – Speeding

Action 1.4a. Improve village signs and introduce gateway entrances within the village.

Responsibility 1.4a. Parish Council.

Action 1.4b. Parish Council to lobby for 20mph sign outside the school.

Responsibility 1.4b. Parish Council in partnership with Hunton CE Primary School and Kent Police to ensure enforcement.

Action 1.4c. Undertake Speed Watch campaigns on principal roads in the village to inform further action.

Responsibility 1.4c. Local residents and Parish Councillors in partnership with Kent Police, Parish Council, KHS, and the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership.

Action 1.4d. Investigate the interest in and relevance of 'Quiet Lanes' within the village.

Responsibility 1.4d. Parish Council and the Parish Plan Steering Committee in partnership with KHS, Kent Quiet Lane Scheme, Department for Transport, The Countryside Agency and Kent County Council (KCC) and local residents.

Issue 1.5 – Parking

Action 1.5a. Ensure Parish Council continue to develop the permissive path from the Village Hall to the School to help reduce the parking in West Street and Bensted Close at school arrival and departure times.

Responsibility 1.5a. Parish Council in partnership with KHS, Maidstone Borough Council (MBC), landowners, local residents and Hunton CE Primary School.

Action 1.5b. Parish Council to explore with the Local Authority the possibility of the development of a scheme for additional parking for West Street and Bensted Close. (This may be dependent on the degree of Local Authority land/housing ownership within and around Bensted Close).

Responsibility 1.5b. Local residents and the Parish Council in partnership with KHS, MBC, Housing Association and landowners.

Issue 1.6 – Public and Community Transport

Action 1.6a. Carry out a survey of village needs. Investigate options for community and voluntary transport schemes to move towards greater sustainability and ensure that those unable to drive, including the elderly and the younger residents, have access to transport in and out of the village.

Responsibility 1.6a. Parish Council and Parish Plan Steering Committee in partnership with community transport schemes – Community Transport Facilitator, Rural Access Services Programme, Voluntary Action Maidstone and Action with Communities in Rural Kent and local residents.

Action 1.6b. Work with neighbouring villages to explore joint bus or transport schemes and demand for improved public bus services.

Responsibility 1.6b. Parish Council and Parish Plan Steering Committee to establish links with neighbouring villages to explore options utilising partnerships at 1.6a.

Plan Priority 2 – Village Infrastructure

► *What you said*

There was agreement that Hunton lacks a central hub, and sadness that we no longer have a post office or shop. 94% thought having a central hub was very important or of some importance, and 82% that a local shop was very important or of some importance (however, only 32% said they would shop daily and 61% weekly). 72% thought a post office was important. The Village Club was suggested by some as a possible central hub. Many comments encouraged the Club to become more accommodating and to be reinvented in effect as a 'village pub', with an overhaul to its décor and outdoor seating. Only 26% of respondents were members but 96% considered the membership cost reasonable. 44% of respondents said they attend events at the Village Hall only occasionally and 25% said they had never attended an event. But the comments suggest there was a desire for greater use of the Hall for a wider range of activities. Most respondents regarded the Church as an important historical building at the heart of the village and many valued it for occasional services and for peace and quiet. Facilities within the village for older children were seen as lacking. In the comments, residents were keen to see wider community use of the playing fields and the facilities and better opportunities for informal games and activities. There was little enthusiasm for significant development within the village, with only 10% in favour of the provision of new housing. However 65% of respondents thought that affordable housing was either very important or of some importance and 69% felt that sheltered housing was important or of some importance. Those running a business in Hunton identified a need for agricultural land, better access to power and conversion of existing buildings. Mobile phone reception is not good in the village but 83% would not agree to a telephone mast being erected near their property.



► *What we need to do*

Issue 2.1 – Heart of the Village/Central Hub

Action 2.1a. Investigate options for the creation of a single hub in an existing facility or a 'community' of facilities with co-ordinated/co-operative programmes of events.

Responsibility 2.1a. Parish Council in partnership with Village Club Committee, Village Hall Committee, St Mary's Parochial Church Council and King George V Playing Fields Committee and local residents.

Action 2.1b. Improve the décor and encourage new membership of the Village Club. Ensure it has an important role in staging community events on a regular basis and that these are well supported.

Responsibility 2.1b. Village Club Committee and local residents.

Action 2.1c. Support the activities of the Friends of St Mary's and the Fabric Committee. Encourage the Church to participate fully in community events.

Responsibility 2.1c. Parish Council and residents in partnership with the Parochial Church Council, Fabric Committee and Friends of St Mary's and local residents.

Action 2.1d. Support the activities of the school and encourage them to participate in community events.

Responsibility 2.1d. Parish Council, residents and club committees in partnership with the Governors of Hunton CEP School.

Action 2.1e. Continue the popular Applause events. Improve information about Village Hall facilities and events and encourage new activities. Ensure it has an important role in staging community events on a regular basis and that these are well supported. Look to improve the car park.

Responsibility 2.1e. Village Hall Committee and local residents.

Action 2.1f. Encourage greater use of the playing field and facilities for the community as a whole. Look at options for improving the play equipment and introducing facilities for older children. Longer term, consider whether the site provides an opportunity to develop more extensive facilities for community use.

Responsibility 2.1f. The Parish Council, King George V Playing Fields Committee and the Parish Plan Steering Committee in partnership with Action with Communities in Rural Kent, Local Parent & Teachers Association and the school and local residents.

Issue 2.2 – Shop

Action 2.2a. Explore the possibility of the Village Club being an option for a 'shop' for essentials.

Responsibility 2.2a. Parish Plan Steering Committee in partnership with Parish Council, Village Club Committee and Action with Communities in Rural Kent and local residents.

Action 2.2b. Explore the possibility of a temporary mobile shop.

Responsibility 2.2b. Parish Plan Steering Committee in partnership with Parish Council and Action with Communities in Rural Kent and local residents.

Action 2.2c. Investigate options for a monthly Farmers' Market.

Responsibility 2.2c. Parish Plan Steering Committee and residents in partnership with the Parish Council, King George V Playing Fields Committee and a dedicated Committee to be defined, and Farmers' Market in Kent.

Issue 2.3 – Affordable Housing

Action 2.3a. Undertake an independent survey to determine the requirement, if any, for some affordable housing units in the village based on a proper understanding of what is involved.

Responsibility 2.3a. Parish Council and Parish Plan Steering Committee working in partnership with MBC, Action with Communities in Rural Kent and local residents.

Plan Priority 3 – Environment

► *What you said*

On the local environment, the poor upkeep of footpaths was a major issue for 80% of respondents. A large number of people regularly walk around Hunton: 82% within the month of the questionnaire being completed. 77% of respondents thought that increasing footpaths, bridleways and permissive paths was very important or of some importance. 45 respondents regularly cycle on the local roads and paths and 10 respondents ride horses. 76% thought that maintaining ditches and hedges was very important and 63% were dissatisfied with flood protection and drainage – these issues were the subject of substantial individual comments by residents. Fly tipping and littering was a major issue for 60% of residents, with many people commenting on the amount of rubbish thrown from cars, the litter on most streets in the village and the hot spots of regular fly tipping. On sustainability, 21% would seriously think about issues related to recycling and climate change, 38% would be interested to know more, and 27% were already taking action of various sorts. 14% were not interested. 63% would like to see recycling points in the village. Adapting to the impact of climate change, use of renewable energy and promoting and protecting diversity had the biggest votes for more information. There was interest from a number of respondents in allotments.



► *What we need to do*

Issue 3.1 – Footpaths

Action 3.1a. Encourage KCC and landowners to maintain existing paths.

Responsibility 3.1a. Parish Council in partnership with Countryside Access Service, Action with Communities in Rural Kent, Countryside Access Forums, Countryside management partnerships and Medway Partnership and the Wildlife Trust.

Issue 3.2 – Ditches, Drainage and Hedges

Action 3.2a. Ensure landowners and businesses in the village maintain hedges and verges and lobby Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board (UMIDB) to clear ditches.

Responsibility 3.2a. Parish Council in partnership with landowners, businesses, KHS, Environment Agency, UMIDB, Countryside Access Service, Action with Communities in Rural Kent, Countryside Access Forums, Countryside management partnerships and Medway Partnership and the Wildlife Trust.

Issue 3.3 – Fly Tipping and Rubbish

Action 3.3a. Residents to report incidents of fly tipping by phone or on line to the Environment Agency hot line 0800 807060.

Responsibility 3.3a. Local residents, and Environment Agency.

Action 3.3b. Parish Council to lobby MBC to provide more enforcement on fly tipping.

Responsibility 3.3b. Parish Council, Keep Britain Tidy Network and MBC.

Action 3.3c. Parish Council to seek the option for more bins for dog litter in the village and to use its powers to enforce control of dog fouling.

Responsibility 3.3c. Parish Council and MBC.

Action 3.3d. Establish village litter picking group.

Responsibility 3.3d. Local residents with support from the Parish Council.

Issue 3.4 – Recycling

Action 3.4a. Expand recycling initiatives, including improved publicity for freighter service and bulky rubbish collections and explore options for other recycling schemes.

Responsibility 3.4a. Parish Council together with a Hunton Sustainability Group (once established) in partnership with waste organisations, Environment Agency and Local Authority and other schemes such as Furniture Re-use Network and Freecycle.

Issue 3.5 - Sustainability

Action 3.5a. Explore the interest in setting up a sustainable development group to campaign and inform residents and local organisations on issues of sustainability and develop a plan of action to address sustainability (reduction of carbon footprint) as a community.

Responsibility 3.5a. Parish Council and residents with a Hunton sustainability group (once established) in partnership with UK Climate Impacts programme Waterwise, the Environment Agency, Local Authority schemes, and National Energy Action.

Action 3.5b. Support school activity in the area of sustainability.

Responsibility 3.5b. Parish Council, School, Hunton Sustainability Group, residents.

Action 3.5c. Investigate options for solar panels on Village Hall roof.

Responsibility 3.5c. Parish Council and Village Hall Committee in partnership with solar panel companies and grants and schemes.

Action 3.5d. Investigate further the demand to create a village allotment and land availability.

Responsibility 3.5d. Parish Council and the Parish Plan Steering Committee in partnership with local landowners, National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners, and Action with Communities in Rural Kent also looking at land share schemes.

Investigate options for the creation of a village orchard. Continue to maintain the village wildlife area in the Churchyard.

Plan Priority 4 – Community

► What you said

A very mixed picture has emerged from the consultation about Hunton as a community. There appeared to be considerable enthusiasm for more community activity and lots of ideas were put forward for new groups and activities. A Christmas fair, a farmers' market, and a summer fete were all events that respondents would like to see happen regularly within the village. There were volunteers for a number of new activity groups at the Hunton Calling – We're Listening event. Whilst the Hunton Herald is the most popular source for information about events and activities in the village, followed by the Downs Mail and word of mouth, there was a general view in comments that events were poorly communicated. Village notice boards were not very well signposted or were poorly located and there was criticism that they were not kept up-to-date. Many respondents were unaware of the village website or commented on the sparse or out of date information on it. 63% were satisfied that the Parish Council meets its responsibilities, though 33% said they were unable to judge, 65% would be interested in seeing an annual Parish Report. In comments, there was concern about the scale of police presence and speed of response in the village. Respondents were split almost 50/50 on knowledge of local Neighbourhood Watch Schemes. 59% said they would not be prepared to become a member of a local scheme.



► What we need to do

Issue 4.1 – Village Activity

Action 4.1a. Establish a Hunton Village Fundraising Committee to organise annual Summer Fetes and the possibility of Christmas Fairs.

Responsibility 4.1a. Hunton Village Fundraising Committee, Parish Plan Steering Committee and residents in the village in partnership with the Parish Council, King George V Playing Fields Committee and the Village Hall Committee and local residents.

Action 4.1b. Establish a variety of groups to reflect demand indicated in responses to the consultation, such as the walking, keep fit and gardening groups.

Responsibility 4.1b. Local residents, Parish Plan Steering Committee and professional bodies dependent on the particular activities.

Issue 4.2 – Village Communications

Action 4.2a. Continue to provide Hunton Herald monthly to each household. Take account of comments made during the consultation and work towards ensuring that all village events are communicated through the Hunton Herald.

Responsibility 4.2a. Editors of the Hunton Herald in partnership with all the village Committees and groups, Parish Council, webmaster and local residents.

Action 4.2b. Revamp village website and ensure it, in conjunction with the Hunton Herald, becomes a comprehensive central source of information about Hunton.

Responsibility 4.2b. All the groups and committees, the Parish Council and Parish Plan Steering Committee with the village webmaster.

Action 4.2c. Explore options for re-siting and revitalising village notice boards and ensure they are kept up to date.

Responsibility 4.2c. Parish Council, Parish Plan Steering Committee and volunteers responsible for the notice boards.

Action 4.2d. Ensure all residents are provided with up-to-date contact details for local services and facilities and develop a welcome pack for distribution to new comers to the village.

Responsibility 4.2d. Parish Council in conjunction with Parish Plan Steering Committee, Hunton Herald and webmaster.

Issue 4.3 – Parish Council

Action 4.3a. Ensure Parish Council meetings are widely publicised in advance via several media, that brief reports of meetings appear in the Hunton Herald and continue to publish minutes on the village website.

Responsibility 4.3a. Parish Council with Hunton Herald and webmaster.

Action 4.3b. Publish an annual Parish Council Report which is distributed to all households in the village.

Responsibility 4.3b. Parish Council, Hunton Herald and webmaster.

Issue 4.4 – Safety

Action 4.4a. Discuss with Kent Police improved presence in the village.

Responsibility 4.4a. Parish Council.

Action 4.4b. Promote Neighbourhood Watch scheme and encourage increased membership.

Responsibility 4.4b. Parish Council, current members of the scheme and local residents with Kent Police.

Next Steps

A detailed implementation plan will be needed to set out more specifically the implications of the various actions, timescales and resources involved in delivering this Plan. In some cases, for example allotments, quiet lanes and affordable housing, there will need to be further consultation within the village before any actions can be agreed. A Parish Plan Steering Committee with the support of residents will need to develop this more detailed plan and maintain pressure on those made responsible through this Plan for taking the actions forward. The Parish Council will also want to take a close interest in the success of the actions arising from this Plan. As action is taken and events are arranged, the Steering Committee will want to ensure that all residents are kept informed through the Hunton Herald and the village website. An annual report on progress against this Plan should be produced and distributed to all residents.

Most importantly, if the Plan is to be a real success and reflect properly the outcome of the consultation, residents must take ownership and responsibility for supporting and addressing the actions. If we do, Hunton will be a thriving community that continues to honour its past and maintain its beautiful rural environment whilst reflecting the needs of its present-day inhabitants.

