

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL
Held on 14th January 2004 at 7.30pm at Hunton Parish Hall

PRESENT: Cllr Roger Sawtell Chairman
Cllr Keith Eatwell
Cllr Les Leonard
Cllr Mrs Liz Oliver
Cllr Mrs Pat Parker
Cllr Mrs Lorraine Redfarn
Cllr Gary Thomas
David Swan Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: County Councillor Eric Hotson
PC Bryan Hillman
Alan Bishop, Chairman Hall Committee
Anne Bishop, Tree and Pond Warden
Tim Pitt, Downs Mail
Two parishioners

Before the meeting began the Chairman offered congratulations to Cllr Thomas on his recent election as Chairman of the Kent Branch of the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

These had been received from Alison Williams.

2. REGISTER OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

The Register was available for revision and/or public inspection.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 12th NOVEMBER AND MATTERS ARISING

These had been distributed and were agreed and signed as a correct record with the following Matters Arising:-

3.1 Hall Car Park

The Council thanked the Hall Committee for their contribution of £2173 to the cost of this project. It was agreed to accept the agents' explanation for the time-related charges and pay the bill, at the same time pointing out the drainage problem during wet weather. ACTION: CLERK

3.2 Comprehensive Performance Assessment

The Clerk had completed this exercise on the Council's behalf.

4. POLICE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH (NHW) BUSINESS

PC Hillman reported 9 reported crimes in the last four months of which four were criminal damage.

The Chairman welcomed the 4 or 5 NHW groups in the village and was optimistic that better support would be forthcoming from the centre.

5. COUNTY COUNCILLORS' BUSINESS

Cllr Hotson reported on the Local Boards scheme, details of which Members had seen.

He advised that bids for 2005/6 highway schemes were to be made by June. In response to questions about the frequency of drain and gully clearance including reference to the fatal accident in Redwall Lane, he advised the meeting that the drains budget was to be £130,000 in 2004/5. The Borough Council Tax was expected to increase by 5% next year. The aims of the South Maidstone Highways Group and their funding and possible links with the TRAMP Group were discussed.

6. OPEN SESSION

Discussions are Minuted under the appropriate agenda item.

7. FINANCE

7.1 Income & expenditure and bank reconciliation – 2003/2004

Members endorsed the Clerk's report at 14th January which showed income of £13208.69, expenditure of £16900.19 and bank and cash book balances of £2881.24, the lowest for some time.

7.2 Analysis and projection – Concurrent Functions 2003/2004

The Clerk reported that the car park renovation had cost £14163 to date over two years. This had used up all the Concurrent Functions grants and absorbed £6000 of the £9500 Precept income in the two years. This had led to the reduction in reserves and in the Council's ability to spend on other things.

7. FINANCE (Cont)

7.3 Setting the Precept for 2004/2005

The Clerk submitted a table showing the cost per parishioner of a number of parishes in the current year for which the Hunton Precept was £5500. He also submitted a basic budget for 2004/5 of £5937.00 which included

£3000 for insurance. This excluded any matters relating to the Field and had no contingency element. After careful consideration it was agreed to set a Precept of £6500 and the Clerk would advise the Borough accordingly.
ACTION: CLERK

7.4 The Hunton Herald (HH)

As they have an interest the Chairman and Cllr Leonard left the meeting during this discussion. Members agreed to an annual donation of £400 to the Hunton Herald from the Council's Concurrent Functions grant. This decision would enable the HH Committee to plan and budget accordingly. Because of the publications' immediate problem an advance payment from the current year of £300 was authorised. The balance of £100 would be paid in 2004/2005. The HH Committee would be advised.

ACTION: CLERK

7.5 Other payments

A payment of £25 to Linton Parish Council for membership of the South Maidstone Roads Group was prepared and would be sent on.
ACTION: CLERK

7.6 Banking

Members confirmed their wish to continue banking with NatWest but agreed that the Clerk should have sole authority to move funds between the Council's two accounts. This had not been possible recently and a change of bank had been considered.
ACTION: CLERK

7.7 Further commitments

Members again reviewed possible future commitments including fees for the sports clubs leases, ongoing repairs and maintenance, the play equipment including safety fencing and the need for a risk assessment.

8. KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD

8.1 Insurance

The lease documents were virtually complete but it was clear that one matter which would form part of the agreement, insurance, was in need of a professional review. The Clerk would write formally to Mr Roger Crookes to confirm his earlier informal agreement to undertake this. It would be necessary for all concerned (the sports club, the hall and the Council) to give him access to whatever information he might need.
ACTION: CLERK

8.2 Future discussion

It was agreed that as the length and diversity of this meeting might prejudice full discussion of issues related to the Field another meeting should be convened for 7.30pm on Wednesday 11th February. All the clubs should be invited.

9. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTWAYS

9.1 South Maidstone Roads and TRAMP Groups

The parish would belong to both with Cllr Thomas or the Chairman as representative. They had been discussed in Councillor Hotson's session.

9.2 Outstanding enquiries

The Clerk had as directed written to the HMU on various issues but replies were not yet to hand. He had also written to the PROW Officer about the blocked footway off Lughorse Lane. He would follow up as necessary.
ACTION: CLERK

10. VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDING PLANNING MATTERS

10.1 Planning application for a holiday caravan park

The proposal for a year-round park adjacent to the top of Hunton Hill, for which the plans had just been received, was fully discussed. It was unanimously opposed on the following grounds:-

- It was a misconceived proposal, totally out of character with the area. If the site was fully occupied the population could be the size of Hunton village.
- Parts of the site are in a Special Landscape Area and a site of Nature Conservation Interest.
- The significant increase of traffic on to an already stretched road network in all directions from the site.
- The dangers of traffic movements on and off the site within yards of the junction at the top of Hunton Hill
- The adequacy of local water and drainage services.

It was agreed that a joint meeting of the villages involved with Highways and Development Control Departments might be helpful if it could be arranged. The Clerk would ask the Borough Councillors about this. He would also speak to Peter Rosevear of KCC about the advice said to have been given to the applicants by County Highways.
ACTION: CLERK

10. VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDING PLANNING MATTERS (Cont)

10.2 Tree works

Anne Bishop submitted a quotation for works around the Hall and gave a likely price for three new trees. Both would be considered at the meeting on 11th February.
ACTION: CLERK

10.3 Dog bite

The Clerk would make enquiries into this reported incident on the Greensand Way. ACTION: CLERK

10.4 The Green Barn

Notice had been received that the agreement to the pole barn on this site was to be referred to the Planning Committee the following day.

10.5 Mulberry Farm

The Clerk would prepare and despatch a submission to the Inspector setting out the Council's views on this site. The view of an apparent mix of caravans and a mobile home when viewed from the Greensand Way or from the south was a continuing concern. ACTION: CLERK

11. NEW SWEEPING AGREEMENT

The Clerk had that day attended a meeting with the Borough at which the new proposals were discussed and revised. Full written details would follow but in the meantime he would terminate the arrangement with Sweepclean from 1st April. This was regretted but they would be performing some of the Borough contracts. ACTION: CLERK

12. QUALITY PARISH SCHEME

It was agreed to meet half the cost of a correspondence course for the Clerk if West Farleigh did likewise. It seemed likely to benefit both parishes in the longer term. ACTION: CLERK

13. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

This had been considered within the meeting and would be circulated. ACTION: CLERK

14. OTHER MATTERS FOR INFORMATION OR FUTURE DECISION

Meetings in 2004 were confirmed as 11th February (Field only), 10th March, 12th May (AGM), 14th July, 8th September and 10th November. There being no other business the meeting ended at 21.55 pm.