

MINUTES OF THE HUNTON PARISH ANNUAL MEETING
held on Wednesday 12th May 2004 at 8.00pm at Hunton Parish Hall

PRESENT:

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| Cllr Roger Sawtell | Chairman |
| Cllr Keith Eatwell | |
| Cllr Les Leonard | |
| Cllr Mrs Liz Oliver | |
| Cllr Mrs Pat Parker | |
| Cllr Mrs Lorraine Redfarn | |
| David Swan | Clerk |

IN ATTENDANCE:

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| Borough Cllr Brian Mortimer | |
| Borough Cllr Moira Walter | |
| Borough Cllr John Williams | |
| County Cllr Eric Hotson | |
| Mr Alan Bishop | Chairman, Parish Hall Committee |
| Mrs Anne Bishop | Tree and Pond Warden |
| Mr Mark Day | Hunton Cricket Club |
| Mr Alan Peckham | Chairman, Hunton Club |
| Mr Michael Ellman-Brown | Resident |

1. Chairman's introduction and welcome

The Chairman welcomed all present, in particular the County and Borough Councillors and those who would report later.

2. Apologies for absence

These had been received from Cllr Gary Thomas who was abroad and PC Bryan Hillman who had to attend several other meetings that evening.

3. Minutes of the meeting of 14th May 2003

The Minutes, which had already been agreed by Members, were summarised by the Clerk and endorsed by the meeting. Matters arising would be taken during the meeting.

4. Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman introduced Members and the Clerk and advised the meeting that Cllr Parker would not be standing at the June 10th election. He offered her the warm thanks of the Council and the village as a whole for over ten years service. She always worked hard to get the best possible for Hunton and although her contributions would be missed he was in no doubt that she would still let us know when anything needed attention.

The Chairman thanked all those who worked for the village. In particular he mentioned Borough Councillors Brian Mortimer, Moira Walter and John Williams who regularly attend meetings and take up important issues on our behalf and County Cllr Eric Hotson. PC Bryan Hillman also always came to meetings when he could. He was most welcome.

The Chairman was grateful to those Members and the Clerk who attended outside committees and to all who give their time in the sports clubs, the school, the Church Council, the Hall Committee and in serving the village environment. The quality of social activity including events like the recent successful Auction of Promises and the use of the Hall for musical performances was excellent. Without such voluntary activity the village would be a much poorer place.

The Chairman made special mention of the good progress being made with the structure for the future management of the King George V Playing Field and in particular thanked Keith Eatwell who had done so much to put this in place. Much remained to be done however including a risk assessment of the area. He also thanked Roger Crooks whose insurance review is so important.

The Chairman commented that Hunton news is probably better reported than ever before thanks to the volunteers who prepare the Hunton Herald and to the regular supply of information which is provided for the Kent Messenger and Downs Mail.

5. Parish Council Finance Report

The Clerk outlined the outcomes of the Council's finances for the year. Due to the additional costs of the car park it had been necessary to use reserves of £908 which was disappointing. The high cost of insurance (£2756 of a precept of £5500) was of concern and the Council was grateful to Roger Crooks' review, at present in progress. The Clerk pointed out that the insurance premium for 2004/5 had increased to £3547, another £791 or 28%. The internal audit had just been completed and the report forms would be submitted to the District Auditor before the end of the month. Copies of all the forms and the report were available on request.

ACTION: CLERK

6. Village Reports

The Chairman welcomed and thanked all those who presented the following reports:-

6.1 Police

On behalf of PC Hillman the Clerk reported that the annual reported crime figures were 40 in 2002 and 26 in 2003, representing a welcome reduction of 35%. There had been 5 crimes in the last two months, most from outbuildings and sheds. Residents were advised to lock these and paint their postcodes in bright paint on valuables like mowers. PC Hillman would call in to the car park during evenings when passing to discourage unwelcome visitors.

6.2 Hunton Village Club

Mr Peckham had been the Chairman for the last year and was fortunate with his Committee who were prepared to work hard for the Club. There were now 250 Members and a profit of £1000 had been made. The problem was the lack of awareness of the Club's existence in the village. Cllrs Oliver and Leonard would do what they could to help improve this and publicise Club functions.

ACTION: CLLRS OLIVER AND LEONARD

6.3 Hunton Bowls Club

The Clerk read a witty and optimistic report from David Froud, Chairman, who was unable to be present. In conclusion Mr Froud said that the Bowls Club looked forward to playing its part on the new Playing Fields Committee and expressed the hope that co-operation between all the clubs could lead to better sports facilities in the area.

6.4 Hunton Cricket Club

Mark Day reported that the Club had two Saturday and one Sunday sides. They had had a reasonably successful year, the highlight of which was the Lashings charity match which had raised £3,000 for Nick Packham who was confined to a wheelchair. Club membership was static and Hunton members were badly needed.

6.5 Hunton Football Club

Keith Eatwell reported a good season. There were 59 members in two teams; the first team had been runners up in the league cup final and the reserves about half way in the league. Hunton had been honoured to be asked to represent the Maidstone Football League. The Club were grateful to the Borough and Parish Councils for their financial help towards renovating the pitch which was at its best ever.

6.6 Tree and Pond Warden

Anne Bishop reported another busy year including attendance at a Tree Wardens Conference at which the vulnerability of old trees was discussed and a Pond Wardens course which included advice about monitoring the great crested newt. Tree work around the hall and in the Field was complete. Much work was to be done in John Scott's old orchard which was an important landscape feature and the Council's support on public rights of way would be needed. Mrs Bishop would look at the hedging between West Street and the Playing Field with a view to future planting.

6.7 Hunton Parish Hall

Alan Bishop reported a good year for the Hall with a first rate June Fete and very successful Applause events and a recent auction of promises. There would not be a Fete this year but two extra Applause events were planned as was a Concert by Relative Minors, a local orchestra. Repair and maintenance work continued but there was a real need for additional storage in a separate unit which would be out of sight. Mr Bishop expressed his warm thanks to Lisa Danch and her mother for all they did and to the Hall Committee itself for which new members would be welcome.

6.8 Borough Councillors

Because of the clash of interests in membership of both Borough and Parish Councils they had with reluctance had to stand down from the Parish. However they would continue to attend meetings whenever possible and serve the parish as before.

The Borough's agreed corporate aims were a cleaner Maidstone, better customer care (telephone enquiries on 01622 602162) and greener open spaces.

On planning the Borough had looked at best practice elsewhere and made some changes to improve performance.

6.9 County Councillor

Councillor Hotson was very grateful for the work done by the Parish Council and was always available when required for parish matters.

7.0 Open Forum

7.1 Records Officer

The vacancy for a records officer would be mentioned in the Hunton Herald.

ACTION: CLLR LEONARD

7.2

Highways

As always this subject occupied a lot of time and the Clerk would take up (in some cases not for the first time) the following items:-

The flickering street light in Bensted Close (Seeboard's successor), the priority given to the re-surfacing of West Street as opposed to Lughorse Lane, the surface of Bishops Lane, surface water in East Street north of Redwall Lane and in West Street by Lughorse Lane, the influence TRAMP might have on the speed of traffic in George Street, the desirability of a roundabout at the top of Hunton Hill (all Steve Goulette at suggestion of Cllr Hotson) mud on the road opposite Smithfield House (Jeremy Scott) and dangerous parent parking at Bensted Close (the Headmistress).

ACTION: CLERK

7.3 Hall and Playing Field

It was thought that misuse of the car park area would be controlled by a repair to the chain.

The Clerk would write to the agent about the car park snagging items including the outstanding finishing work and the standing water which would cause damage if not remedied.

ACTION: CLERK

A vote of thanks to Alan Bishop and the Committee for all the work associated with the Hall was proposed by Mr Ellman-Brown and passed unanimously.

8. Any other business

There being no other business the meeting ended at 9.40 pm