

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2011 AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Cllr R Sawtell in the Chair, Cllrs D Heaton (present from Item 4), L Leonard, R Porter, M Walter and Mrs S Goodwin, Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr T Stanbridge was in attendance throughout. Five parishioners, County Cllr P Stockell (present from Item 5) and Borough Cllr D Collins were in attendance until Item 12.8. Two parishioners were in attendance until Item 13. Borough Cllr J Wilson was in attendance until Item 13.2. R Jarman and S Clarke of Maidstone Borough Council were in attendance until Item 6 and Mrs G Brown of Yalding Parish Council was in attendance until Item 9.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr G Thomas.

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

There were no councillor declarations.

3. PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY

Three parishioners had expressed an interest in the vacancy on the Parish Council. Members unanimously agreed to appoint Mr Tony Stanbridge as the new parish councillor. Mr Stanbridge signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and joined the rest of the meeting as a Member.

4. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8TH SEPTEMBER 2011

The Minutes of the meeting had been previously distributed and were unanimously **Agreed** to be an accurate record. The Chairman signed off the official copy.

5. ROB JARMAN, HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT, MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Rob Jarman, Head of Development Management, and Mr Steve Clarke, Principal Planning Officer, from Maidstone Borough Council attended the meeting at the request of Members to provide guidance on the planning consultation response options available to parish councils when planning applications are received. The Chairman outlined the five response options and asked when parish councils should request applications go to the MBC Planning Committee. Mr Jarman stated that, if the Parish Council does not want an application to go to Committee, the Case Officer within MBC Planning has delegated powers and Mr Jarman or Mr Clarke can sign off on the decision. If the Parish Council recommends that an application is referred to Committee, the Case Officer's recommendation to Committee can be overturned.

The Chairman asked which course of action would be best if the Parish Council wishes to see an application approved. Mr Jarman replied that the decision to approve or refuse an application should be based on sound planning judgement, paying regard to Local Planning Policy documents. For Hunton, the Planning Policy Statements most relevant are 1 (General), 3 (Housing) and 7 (Countryside).

The Chairman asked whether the best option would be to choose to go to Committee. Mr Jarman reiterated that the decision should be based on sound planning judgement. He added that the Chair of the Planning Committee asks parish councils to come to Committee and speak for three minutes if they would like applications to go to Committee. Cllr Porter expressed concern about the limit of three minutes as he felt it was not in proportion with the amount of time spent by parish councils in considering applications and asked that consideration be given to extending it. Mr Jarman stated that Members of the Planning Committee receive detailed reports, including the information on planning consultation forms received from parish councils, and parish councils can put as much information as they like on the forms, it will be read by the Committee. The Chairman expressed frustration that, after the three minutes, the Parish Council cannot ask questions of the Members of the Planning Committee. Mr Jarman replied that there is no harm in lobbying Members.

Cllr Heaton questioned that when parish councils wish to see an application approved they are not required to give planning reasons, yet they are when they wish to see an application refused. Mr Jarman replied that

with refusals much more detail is required, as applications may then go to appeal, costs awarded and so on and this is based on refusal reasons. Cllr Heaton also asked whether the Parish Council should state the reasons it wants an application to go to Planning Committee. Mr Jarman said that if the Parish Council wants an application to be approved, it is worth putting in as much detail as possible.

County Cllr Stockell commented that case officers should contact parish councils if they have a different opinion on the application to the parish councils as it was pointless requesting that applications go to Committee if there is no necessity. Mr Jarman replied that it is worth speaking to the Case Officer or the Principal Planning Officer. Mr Clarke stated that he does encourage Case Officers to contact parish councils if there are any grey areas.

The Chairman thanked Mr Jarman and Mr Clarke for attending the meeting.

6. GERALDINE BROWN, CHAIR OF YALDING PARISH COUNCIL

Mrs Geraldine Brown attended the meeting to tell Members about the upgrade of broadband in Yalding, which will also affect residents in Hunton.

Mrs Brown informed Members that Yalding Parish Council had obtained a £50,000 community grant from KCC to upgrade broadband. The work is being carried out by Call Flow Solutions, in conjunction with BT, using Sub-Loop Unbundling, creating mini-exchanges in BT cabinets. This creates faster broadband, guaranteeing 20Mbps, which is perhaps double what many users are currently obtaining. There are seven green cabinets which service Yalding, one of which is on the corner of East Street in Hunton. Due to financial constraints Yalding Parish Council is working on five cabinets, but this does include the cabinet on East Street, so Hunton can still have the high speed broadband. Call Flow Solutions has worked on a number of villages successfully, such as King's Hill.

There is a list of postcodes that can definitely be provided with high speed broadband and others which cannot be included at the current time, but Mrs Brown will email the Clerk to obtain the telephone numbers for each of these postcodes. If there are properties in Hunton that Yalding Parish Council cannot cover, extra funds may be required to cover all of Hunton parish. County Cllr Stockell said she may be able to help with this funding.

Mrs Brown said that she could send an email with the Call Flow Solutions presentation for Members to look at, which Members agreed they would all like to receive.

Mrs Brown and her neighbour are to be the first to try out the new broadband, hopefully in January 2012. If Hunton residents wish to take up the high speed broadband, they will need to change their internet provider, but Mrs Brown assured Members that rates are reasonable. Some users may need to have small individual aerials installed.

Mrs Brown also mentioned Concurrent Functions, which is to be discussed at the KALC Maidstone Area Committee on 15th November 2011. The reply to the consultation on the Parish Services Scheme needs to be returned by all parishes by 25th November 2011. It is hoped that the Concurrent Functions grant will remain the same in 2012/13 as 2011/12, and this proposal is supported by the Leader of MBC. The Chairman said that he would attend the KALC meeting.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Brown for attending the meeting and informing Members about the high speed broadband.

7. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES NOT INCLUDED IN THE AGENDA

Item 8.1 – Letter sent to County Cllr Stockell regarding funding alternatives for the repair of the King George V Playing Field car park. Cllr Stockell stated that she had replied to the letter. Unfortunately the deadline for small community grants has just passed. It is possible that some funding can be found from Members grants, but the funds required are considerable. Cllr Stockell recommended 'Inside Track' magazine as being useful for different areas of funding. In terms of contractors, the King George V Playing Field Management Committee could select its own or use KCC's contractors. Cllr Stockell agreed to send information on the Big Society funds, but did remark that £37,000 was a lot to obtain in one grant. KHS could provide a quote for the work. The Chairman remarked that the car park needed doing properly, with adequate drainage.

Item 8.2 – Letters of thanks sent to Sue Heaton and Barbara Wright for all their hard work and contribution to the production of the Parish Plan.

Item 8.6 – Cllr Thomas provided a response regarding the Draft National Planning Policy Framework consultation which was sent to the Department for Communities and Local Government and KALC.

Item 8.6 – The Chairman has not looked into the Local Government Resource Review to establish whether it is relevant to Hunton.

Item 9.2 - The Chairman did not write a letter to John Burr, Director of KHS, regarding dissatisfaction of the water situation on West Street as KHS have rectified the problem.

Item 9.4 – The Clerk could not attend the KALC Finance Conference as it was fully booked.
Item 10.5 – The forms detailing the Concurrent Functions expenditure for 2010/11 were sent to MBC.
Item 10.5 – Borough Cllr Wilson met with Members to discuss Concurrent Functions.

8. POLICE BUSINESS

PC Tom Mepstead and PCSO Richard Chainey were not present at the meeting. Up to date crime figures were not provided in advance of the meeting. However, PCSO Chainey had provided the crime figures for September following the last meeting:

02/09/11 – Criminal damage, Forsters Farm

03/09/11 – Theft, St Marys Church

10/09/11 – Burglary, Scotts Farm

Mrs Brown stated that there is a new non-emergency number for the police – 101. Following the police restructure there will be more sergeants and PCSOs, but less regular officers and there should also be more police cars, so PCSOs will be more mobile. PCSOs will also work later hours and have more responsibilities. PCSO Jo Watts is coming back to Coxheath and will also cover Hunton. The PCSO Supervisor will come out if a PCSO is not available. PC Tom Mepstead will no longer cover Hunton. Members remarked that very little information was received from the police about arrests made.

9. HIGHWAY AND FOOTWAY MATTERS

9.1 Footpath – Bensted Close to Village Hall

The Chairman reported that he had received an email from David Smith at KCC to say that Mr Hubble has still not signed the legal agreement prepared by KCC. Once the agreement has been signed the work on the footpath can get underway, hopefully soon. The other landowner, the Tregothnan Estate, is happy with the agreement. Mr Smith stated that the bridges for the footpath are ready.

9.2 Gateways

The Chairman reported that Helen Cobby, a design engineer at KHS, has told the Clerk that the Hunton Gateways project is on the contractor's programme for the week commencing 14th November 2011. Cllr Stockell also commented that she had been in contact with KHS to move the project along.

9.3 West Street Problems

9.3.1 Drainage, Ditch & Road Verge

The Chairman reported that, thanks to Alastair Coleman, Drainage Engineer at KHS, the drainage scheme on West Street has been installed. Water is no longer running down West Street, it is diverted into the ditch. According to Mr Coleman, as part of the order for the drainage works he included the ditching work to be done at KCC's expense, but unfortunately KHS was unable to do this at the time of the drainage work. Regarding the replenishment of the verge, Mr Coleman has previously spoken to the Operations Engineer and this will be co-ordinated when the ditching works are carried out. Unfortunately Mr Coleman is unable to give a timescale for this at the moment, but will advise once he knows. Who bears the cost of the verge works will depend on the nature of the entire works and Mr Coleman will advise further when the works are scheduled. He has said it would be helpful if the parish could arrange for the hedge to be trimmed on each side.

9.3.2 20mph Speed Limit Outside Hunton School

The Chairman reported that Ben Hilden, Traffic Engineer with KHS, has told the Clerk that he is currently working on the six locations in the pilot with regard to designing the schemes and working with the County Councillors to ensure they are satisfied with the proposals. He currently has designs for two of the six locations and will be working on Ham Lane (Lenham) and West Street (Hunton) designs hopefully the week commencing 14th November 2011.

PC Warren Jarvis is to provide training in the use of the speed gun within the next six weeks. A group of five local residents have volunteered to be trained, six are required for the training to be run.

9.4 Stonewall Oasthouse Fence Damage

The Chairman reported that the Clerk has received a letter from Mr Furlong of Stonewall Oasthouse, East Street requesting the support of the Parish Council in his request to KHS for an Armco barrier, after a motorist crashed into the chevron sign and Mr Furlong's fence. Members agreed to support Mr Furlong's request.

ACTION: CLERK

10. RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

10.1 King George V Playing Field

The Chairman of the King George V Playing Field Management Committee, Danny Peacock, reported the issues brought up at the last meeting on 9th November 2011:

- Matters arising – signs are to be produced for the car park and laminated copies of the playing field byelaws are to be displayed.
- Car park – temporary repairs have been made to the car park by Mr Peacock and two others. The Committee discussed putting chippings down, a quote has been received for approximately £300. Another quote has been received for the full repair of the car park at £27,000, which is £10,000 lower than the other quotes received. The Committee will need to raise funds before any work can be done.
- Health and safety – a few problems on the play equipment have been identified which are low risk.
- Litter bins – the bins are being emptied.
- Hedge – the hedge along West Street has been trimmed. It also needs to be cut from the Village Hall to the bowling green.
- Lighting – 50:50 split on cost between the Village Hall and the King George V Field Management Committee.
- Play equipment – long discussion about this at the meeting, but it is dependent on the footpath being put in place. Mr Peacock mentioned that there is a new tenant on the Tregothnan land.

10.2 Hunton Parish Plan

Cllr Heaton reported the following matters arising from the last Hunton Parish Plan Steering Committee meeting on 26th October 2011:

- David Hubble – Mr Hubble and his advisor attended the meeting. He would like support to use the land for other reasons, but nothing can be done until the footpath is sorted out. Mr Hubble subsequently emailed the Chair, Annette Trought, to say that the work on the footpath can start, but the legal agreement needs to be in place.
- Community orchard – support has been received from the Medway Valley Partnership.
- Litter pick – took place on 17th October 2011. Thirty bags of rubbish were collected, as well as thirty tyres, an exhaust, etc. The next litter pick will be in March 2012.
- Welcome Pack – this is being worked on.
- Village diary – Barbara Wright is working on this. It has had 22 ‘hits’.
- Mentoring – it has been previously mentioned that parish councillors could take a section of the Parish Plan to mentor. Cllr Porter felt this was very important. Cllrs Heaton and Stanbridge, and possibly the Chairman, will attend the next Steering Committee meeting.

10.3 Notice Board & Village Sign

The Chairman reported that the East Street notice board is to be cleaned and recoated by Alan Blackledge-Smith, which will be done once the work on the village sign is complete.

Mr Blackledge-Smith has almost finished making a new outer frame for the village sign. Mr Blackledge-Smith noticed that the sign is badly faded, leaving mainly pink and blue colours. A local company has provided a quote for a new sign in full colour, at a cost of £73.44. Members thought the quote was very reasonable and asked what material the sign would be made of and how it would be affected by the sun, but agreed that the new sign should be purchased. ACTION: CLERK

10.4 Village Hall

The Chairman asked Alan Bishop, Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, to report on progress regarding the use of solar panels on the Village Hall roof. Mr Bishop reported that a meeting had been held after September’s Parish Council meeting. A planning application has been sent to MBC, funding was being looked into and an order was about to be made for the solar panels, when news was received that the tariffs are to be reduced by half by the Government. It probably still makes sense to continue. A 4.5% return is being suggested by the Government under the scheme. The position is a bit unsure at the moment, so the best course of action would be to get the planning permission, a sub group of the Parish Council can look into funding and then professional advice can be obtained. The original deadline of April 2012 is no longer a feasible time frame. Mr Bishop also pointed out that a simple public consultation exercise should be carried out.

Cllr Heaton reported that he had contacted Terry Martin at KALC for advice on obtaining a loan through the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). It is a good route to explore and is feasible, but not in time to obtain

the old tariff. Cllr Heaton said that he had booked a meeting with Barry Nutley of Viridis Energie Consulting on 15th November 2011. With the rate being 21p (inflation proofed) rather than 43.5p, it is important that the right scheme is selected. Mr Nutley will carry out a survey and a report and recommend which system will maximise the return.

Mr Bishop remarked that the Village Hall uses all electricity, mainly in the day time, so it would be useful to benefit from the energy in the day.

10.5 Woodland Trust Trees

The Chairman asked Mr Bishop whether he had asked Anne Bishop, as Tree Warden, about the Woodland Trust trees and where would be best to plant them. Mr Bishop said that Mrs Bishop was keen to obtain some trees from the Woodland Trust, but felt that a pack of 105 trees was too much, as there is not that much public land in Hunton, half that number would be better. The Chairman asked the Clerk to communicate with other parishes to see if they would be interested in sharing a pack. ACTION: CLERK

10.6 Consultations

Note: This item was discussed after Item 13.

10.6.1 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations

The Chairman commented that it would be useful to speak to Flo Churchill, Interim Head of Spatial Planning at MBC. The parish needs a Neighbourhood Plan, a Housing Needs Survey or both. The Parish Plan Steering Committee is looking at the Housing Needs Survey. Cllr Stanbridge said that he would contact Flo Churchill to see if she could meet with Members. ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE

10.6.2 Community Infrastructure Levy

Members discussed the consultation and agreed not to respond.

10.6.3 Local Government Pension Scheme

Members discussed the consultation and agreed not to respond.

10.6.4 Mineral and Waste Sites Development Plan Documents – Supplementary Options

Members discussed the consultation and agreed not to respond.

10.6.5 KALC Maidstone Area Committee Polytunnel Policy

Cllr Heaton stated that he thought the document seemed reasonable on both sides. The Chairman agreed. Members agreed not to respond to the consultation.

11. MATTERS OF REPORT

11.1 County and Borough Councillors

County Cllr Stockell reported that staff at KCC is working on the budget. It appears that most of the money in Icelandic banks will be returned to KCC. Cllr Stockell said she would see if she could use some of the Highway Fund for the repairs to the car park.

The Chairman asked how the new contractor was performing in KHS. Cllr Stockell replied that performance was generally good and the contractor is catching up and doing things quickly.

Cllr Stockell mentioned the Big Society funding as a possibility for the Village Hall solar panels, parish councils can apply for those funds, and it does not have to be a community group.

Borough Cllr Wilson reported that the Olympic torch will be coming to Maidstone on 19th July 2012. It will go to Leeds Castle, where there will be a celebration, which will be ticket only. MBC will be televising the arrival of the torch at Mote Park for those who cannot get tickets. The torch will leave at 6:30am the following morning down the river, a lot of interest is expected. BBC TV will be attending. There is also a Maidstone Triathlon on 24th June 2012, entries are expected to total 10,000.

Cllr Wilson reported that a Maidstone Joint Transportation Board meeting had been held, nothing has been done about the Yalding bridge speed limits.

At the KALC AGM, KHS had mentioned a HGV Strategy, but this has been brought up before and nothing has happened in years.

In terms of reducing speed limits, Cllr Wilson reported that a crash history is required to get a change in speed limits by KHS.

Cllr Wilson had attended a meeting on Localism, which did not focus on the Localism Bill, more about what Localism is and about communication with the electorate and listening to what the electorate want and how

it can be achieved.

Cllr Wilson made a comment about consultations, bearing in mind the number of consultations considered at the meeting, and remarked that a lot of time goes into this, which needs to be balanced with the importance of the consultations.

Borough Cllr Collins did not wish to add anything further.

11.2 Chairman

The Chairman reported on the KALC AGM. He was very impressed with Ann Millington, Chief Executive of the Kent Fire & Rescue Services. Kent Fire & Rescue is sending out a consultation and would like to know about people in vulnerable positions in the village, so they are aware of them in case they get called out and will have some background. David Hall of KHS also gave a good talk. The Chairman thanked him for the work done on West Street and he said Mr Hall was aware of the issue.

11.3 Individual Councillors

The councillors did not have anything to report other than that already covered elsewhere in the meeting.

11.4 Clerk

11.4.1 The British Red Cross – Community Emergency Response Teams

The Clerk reported that she had received an email from The British Red Cross in Maidstone, which is developing local volunteer teams to assist communities in times of crisis. Members were asked if they were interested in taking part in this project. Members agreed that it would be worth obtaining further information, but it may be something to pass on to the Parish Plan Steering Committee. ACTION: CLERK

11.4.2 Upcoming Events

The Clerk advised that invitations had been received for the following events and asked whether any Members would like to attend:

ACRK – Village Hall Networking Session on Monday 28th November 2011 7:00-9:00pm at Woodchurch Memorial Hall.

CPRE – AGM of the CPRE Maidstone Committee on Tuesday 6th December 2011 7:30pm at the Archbishops Palace, Maidstone.

Members agreed that Cllr Thomas would probably be aware of the CPRE AGM, but the Clerk should inform him. ACTION: CLERK.

11.4.3 Training

The Clerk reported that she had attended a KALC Minutes & Records Management Course which was very good.

The Chairman remarked that the MBC Parish Conference had been very good. The Clerk had also attended.

12. FINANCE

12.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31st October 2011 was noted. Proposed by Cllr Heaton and seconded by Cllr Porter.

12.2 Income received since the last meeting

Income received since the last meeting is as follows:

NatWest Business Reserve Account Interest	£0.30
MBC – Concurrent Functions Grant - 2 nd Half	£1,955.00

12.3 Confirmation of payments already made

Members agreed that the following payments made since the last Meeting are approved:

SO – S Goodwin – Salary & Office Allowance – September	£368.53
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12.4 Cheques for signature

Members agreed that the Council approve the following payments and the cheques were signed by the

Chairman and Cllr Heaton:

1031 – Robert Cox – Hedge Cutting (KGF)	£50.00
1032 – Audit Commission – Audit Fee	£162.00
1033 – E.ON – Street Lighting (3 quarters – cheque for previous 2 quarters not received by E.ON)	£20.82
1034 – MBC – Litter Picking for July, August and September (KGF)	£374.40
1035 – KALC – Minutes and Record Keeping Course / AGM Lunch	£154.00
1036 – Danny Peacock – Supplies for Repair of Car Park	£290.00

12.5 Annual Return and Audit 2010/11

Members noted that, following the audit of the Annual Return, the Audit Commission has given Hunton Parish Council a ‘clean’ certificate. The statutory ‘Notice of Conclusion of Audit and Right to Inspect the Annual Return’ has been displayed on the notice boards for the requisite 14 days.

12.6 Tree Warden Scheme

Members considered a request from Kent BTCV to contribute £100 towards the Tree Warden Scheme. Cllr Porter asked Mr Bishop what is obtained for the contribution. Mr Bishop said that a regular magazine is received, advice, promotion of tree care, etc. Members agreed to the contribution and the Clerk wrote a cheque for £100, signed by the Chairman and Cllr Heaton.

12.7 Victim Support

Members considered a request from Victim Support to make a contribution. Members agreed that Hunton was not a high crime area and the contribution should not be made.

12.8 Parish Services Scheme Consultation

Borough Cllr Wilson advised Members to respond to this consultation as it provides a good chance for parishes to have their say. Cllr Wilson also commented that the Concurrent Functions grant for 2012/13 is likely to remain the same as for 2011/12. The Chairman agreed to formulate a response to the consultation which he would circulate to Members.

ACTION: CHAIRMAN

13. PLANNING

13.1 Planning Applications

The following applications were considered and recommendations made:

13.1.1 Forsters Cottage, Water Lane - MA/11/1667

Listed building consent for replacement of existing roof light with dormer window (retrospective).

Council recommendation: Approve, but do not request the application is reported to MBC Planning Committee.

13.1.2 Hunton Village Hall, West Street - MA/11/1708

Installation of solar PV panels to southern roof slope.

Council recommendation: Approve, but do not request the application is reported to MBC Planning Committee.

13.2 Planning Decisions

The following decisions received from MBC were noted:

13.2.1 The Chances, Lughorse Lane – MA/101336

Variation of enforcement appeal reference ENF/8968 conditions 1 and 2 to allow the use of the site for the siting of a mobile home and a touring caravan on a permanent basis for an extended gypsy family.

Council recommendation: Refuse.

MBC: Granted Planning Permission.

Cllr Heaton remarked that there are actually two mobile homes on the site, where permission has only been given for one. Planning Enforcement need to be reminded that the second mobile home is still there.

ACTION: CLERK

13.2.2 The Beast House, West Street – MA/11/1110

Change of use and conversion of former agricultural building to a live-work unit.

Council recommendation: Approve.

MBC: Refused Planning Permission.

13.2.3 Elphicks Barn, Water Lane – MA/11/1340

Erection of a single storey side extension.

Council recommendation: Approve.

MBC: Granted Planning Permission.

13.2.4 The Woodyard, East Street – MA/11/1374

Outline application for demolition of existing commercial buildings and redevelopment of 7no. B1 starter units within a single storey building and associated parking with means of access, layout and scale to be considered at this stage and appearance and landscaping reserved for future consideration.

Council recommendation: Refuse.

MBC: Refused Planning Permission.

Cllr Porter remarked that the site has now been sold on to Arnolds, or they are working there.

13.2.5 Elm Croft, Redwall Lane – MA/11/1378

Erection of a two storey side extension.

Council recommendation: Approve.

MBC: Granted Planning Permission.

13.3 Informal Hearing - Plot 5 Land at, Lughorse Lane

Members noted that the informal hearing into the appeal to be held on 7th December 2011.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Council Meeting is on Monday 9th January 2012 at 8:00pm at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to be discussed the meeting closed at 10:20pm.