

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9TH JANUARY 2012 AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Cllr G Thomas in the Chair, Cllrs L Leonard, R Porter, T Stanbridge and Mrs S Goodwin, Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: PCSO J Watts was in attendance until Item 6. Mrs A Trought, Chair of the Hunton Parish Plan Steering Committee, was in attendance until Item 7.3. Mr B Nutley of Viridis Energie Consulting was in attendance until item 7.5. County Cllr P Stockell, Borough Cllr J Wilson and Mr A Bishop were in attendance until Item 9.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs R Sawtell and D Heaton.

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

There were no councillor declarations.

3. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 14TH NOVEMBER 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. The Clerk reported that a parishioner had made a comment on Item 6, that it is not possible for the service provider to 'guarantee' 20Mbps using the faster broadband, but performance can be 'up to' 20Mbps.

The Clerk was asked to obtain an update from Geraldine Brown, Chair of Yalding Parish Council, on the launch of the broadband upgrade.

ACTION: CLERK

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

Item 9.1 – The Clerk sent a letter to Mr Furlong expressing the Parish Council's support of his request to Kent Highway Services (KHS) for an Armco barrier.

Item 10.6.1 – Flo Churchill of Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) was invited to meet with Members to provide information and guidance on Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. The Chairman has produced a response to the MBC Core Strategy document, to be progressed outside the meeting. There will be an opportunity for parish councillors to obtain training at MBC, but details are not available as yet. One of the key note speakers could be the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP.

11.4.1 – The Clerk emailed the British Red Cross for further information on Community Emergency Response Teams. Information has been received and passed to the Secretary of the Parish Plan Steering Committee.

11.4.2 – The Clerk informed Cllr Thomas of the date of the CPRE AGM.

12.8 – The Chairman circulated a response to the Parish Services Scheme consultation to other Members. The Clerk provided the response to MBC.

13.2.1 – The Clerk did not contact Planning Enforcement about the second mobile home at The Chances, Lughorse Lane as the residents put in a planning application to increase the number of caravans on the site. The Parish Council has been consulted on the application and provided a response.

5. POLICE BUSINESS

The Chairman welcomed PCSO Jo Watts back to the area. PCSO Watts provided the following crime figures:

01/10/11 – Theft of 3 metres of electrical earthing cable, Water Lane

27/10/11 – Burglary from outbuilding, Bishops Lane

15/11/11 – Theft of 4 metres of electrical earthing cable of the UK Power network, Bishops Lane

PCSO Watts said that the theft of electrical cabling is a problem across Kent. Outbuildings around Maidstone are also being targeted by thieves. PCSO Watts said that, following the restructure, many people have gone from the offices into the Neighbourhood Policing department and there is now a team of two PCSOs, six officers and one sergeant which covers the area from Tovil to Staplehurst. There has been a move towards more foot patrols and police on bicycles to assist in providing better communication with the public.

6. HIGHWAY AND FOOTWAY MATTERS

6.1 Footpath – Bensted Close to Village Hall

The Clerk provided an update from information received from Cllr Sawtell. David Smith of Kent County Council (KCC) confirmed that Mr Hubble has signed the licence agreement. Mr Smith will advise the Parish Council in the new year regarding commencement of the work. An email has been sent from Mr Hubble to Mr Smith requesting his copy of the agreement and also confirmation that KCC would be covering the footpath under its public liability insurance. Mr Hubble does not feel that there is a secure agreement in place until he has received these documents. The Chairman expressed frustration at the length of time it is taking to get the agreements in place and suggested that the Clerk follows up with Mr Smith with regard to sending the agreement to Mr Hubble and find out whether the Tregothnan Estate has signed its agreement.

ACTION: CLERK

The importance of cutting the hedge before nesting starts was highlighted as it cannot be carried out until the agreements are signed. County Cllr Stockell said that she would find out if there is a hold up and the Clerk agreed to provide the background to the current situation.

ACTION: CLERK

6.2 Gateways

The Clerk reported that Helen Cobby, Design Engineer at KHS, had told her that the contractor started to erect the Hunton Gateways on 19th December 2011. She subsequently said that while the Gateways have been started, they are not finished. The Clerk contacted Ms Cobby to say that there was little evidence of any work in Hunton, and Ms Cobby replied that she has a meeting with the contractors on 10th January 2012 to discuss various issues with their workmanship and will then provide a further update. Cllr Stanbridge said that the gateway on the Marden road has been installed. County Cllr Stockell suggested contacting Richard Dixon of KHS to move things along.

ACTION: CLERK

6.3 West Street Problems

6.3.1 Ditch & Road Verge

Cllr Porter commented that the road has got wider and needs to be remedied. The Chairman remarked that the hedge needs to be pulled back. The Chairman of the Village Hall Committee said that the plan was to cut a new ditch which would help relieve the pressure on the car park and stop the surface water. There is also a culvert in front of the village hall which needs clearing, which is not the responsibility of KHS. There is a good ditch on the other side of the village hall that the water would drain into. Members **Agreed** that it would be useful to hold a site meeting and asked the Clerk to contact Richard Dixon of KHS to arrange a date.

ACTION: CLERK

County Cllr Stockell was asked whether it would be possible to put a kerb at the side of the road. Cllr Stockell replied that the cost would be prohibitive over the full length, although if only small amounts of kerbing were required it would not be too expensive.

6.3.2 20mph Speed Limit Outside Hunton School

The Clerk reported that Ben Hilden, Traffic Engineer at KHS, was on site in the week leading up to Christmas and has identified the sites for the interactive signs. He is currently awaiting the formal design and cost of the scheme in order for him to pass it to County Cllr Stockell. Borough Cllr Wilson was asked whether the scheme just provided signs, he said that he had not seen the design. Cllr Wilson commented that KHS should be progressing highways issues as many seemed to be moving slowly. Members **Agreed** that a meeting should be held with Richard Dixon of KHS to discuss all current highways issues, using an agenda set by Members.

ACTION: CLERK

7. RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

7.1 King George V Playing Field

The Clerk reported that the Chairman of the King George V Playing Field Management Committee, Danny Peacock, had been in contact to say that there had not been a meeting since the last Parish Council meeting and there was nothing new to report.

7.2 **Hunton Parish Plan**

Annette Trought, Chair of the Hunton Parish Plan Steering Committee was invited to provide the following update:

- There were meetings in October and December 2011.
- The delay in installing the permissive pathway provides a problem for the Committee in moving other actions forward.
- A litter picking group has been formed which will meet three times a year.
- Guy Oliver has organised six people to help with Speedwatch, but due to the changes within the police the training has not been carried out as yet. This will fit in with the 20mph limit outside the school.
- The Committee will liaise with the Parish Council regarding the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The first meeting to progress the community orchard will be held in January 2012. The orchard will be approximately the size of two tennis courts and the area will require clearance of nettles and mowing. The area does not necessarily need to have trees, it can be a community picnic area. Mrs Trought was asked about the cost and whether the Parish Council would be asked to provide some of the funding. Mrs Trought did not have details of any costs at the present time.

7.3 **Notice Board & Village Sign**

This item was not discussed at the meeting.

7.4 **Village Hall**

The Chairman invited Barry Nutley of Viridis Energie Consulting and Mr Bishop to provide an update on the use of solar panels to generate energy for the village hall. Mr Nutley said that three quotes had previously been received for the work, which would have resulted in a 43.3p feed-in tariff (FIT) at that time. The Government then announced that the FIT would be reduced to 21p for installations after 12th December 2011. However, Friends of the Earth and other organisations deemed this illegal and took the Government to court. Friends of the Earth won the court hearing, which the Government then appealed against. The court has said that the Government is unlikely to win the appeal. The hearing for the appeal is on 13th January 2012. If the Government does lose the appeal, the 43.3p FIT will be reinstated. The price of solar panels has decreased and Mr Bishop has already received a much better quote from one of the three companies who originally provided quotations, reducing the price from £12,000 to £9,000. Mr Nutley advised that all three original companies should be approached for a requote. Mr Nutley said that solar panels have to meet certain criteria to obtain MCS Accreditation, but there can be a huge difference in price, performance and quality, depending on the type used. For the three quotes received, they would all pass the test, being all tier one equipment. Mr Nutley stated that the Parish Council is in a good position as it is now possible to obtain a cheaper price than previously and hopefully the 43.3p FIT can be obtained. Depending on the hearing on 13th January, the Parish Council would have a minimum of 40 days to install the solar panels, to obtain the higher FIT. The minimum FIT will be 21p if the panels are installed by April, after which the FIT is likely to be 9p. Mr Nutley advised that the installation should be carried out as soon as possible. Mr Bishop agreed to obtain quotes from all three original companies and Mr Nutley agreed to obtain a quote from the company used by Viridis Energie Consulting. Mr Bishop raised the issue of paying for the installation, stating that the Village Hall Committee could put in a cash lump sum as it has around £8,000 in reserve and could provide a quarter or third of that amount. Other options include a grant from the Parish Council and/or a loan from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). Mr Bishop agreed to arrange a meeting in two or three weeks time, once the revised quotes had been received. The Clerk agreed to look into the loan from the PWLB with the Kent Association for Local Councils (KALC).

ACTION: CLERK

7.5 **Woodland Trust Trees**

The Clerk reported that she has contacted five other parish councils to ask whether they would like to share a pack of 105 trees from the Woodland Trust with Hunton Parish Council. Chart Sutton Parish Council replied that they could take a maximum of ten trees and the Teston Land Conservation Trust (Teston Parish Councillors are trustees) would take any remaining trees which could not be used. Mr Bishop asked Members whether they would be happy to plant some trees on non-public land owned by the Village Hall if it enhances the area as there is limited public land in Hunton. On this basis, Members agreed that they could use a whole pack of 105 trees. Members agreed that it would be better to order a pack in the Autumn, rather than Spring.

8. MATTERS OF REPORT

8.1 County and Borough Councillors

8.1.1 County Councillor

County Cllr Stockell reported on the following:

- The KCC budget has been prepared and should go through with the cuts and savings identified.
- It appears that 95% of the money in Icelandic banks will be returned to KCC.
- The Overview and Scrutiny committees at KCC are to be removed, with only Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee remaining.
- Following the departure of the Chief Executive, a decision has been made to not replace her. The Corporate Management Team will report to the Cabinet.
- Following the change in contractor and changes within KHS, the work is now bedding in well.
- 1,500 members of staff have left KCC under the reorganisation.
- Council tax has been frozen.

8.1.2 Borough Councillors

Borough Councillors B Mortimer and D Collins were not able to attend the meeting. Borough Cllr Wilson reported on the following:

- After 12 years a weight restriction is to be placed on Yalding bridge for heavy goods vehicles. Ben Hilden at KHS is dealing with this. The heavy goods vehicles will be routed around the north of Maidstone.
- KALC is looking at heavy goods vehicles traffic in the whole of Kent.
- Lately there have been a lot of consultations asking for input from parish councils. From now on, Terry Martin at KALC will complete draft responses to consultations and parishes can provide comments on the draft responses.
- A recent Halifax quality of life report listed Maidstone as 8th out of 450 areas, beating all other areas in Kent. Maidstone was the best in terms of its rate of employment.
- Major schemes for MBC in 2012 are the regeneration of the High Street, improvements to Mote Park and the extension of the Museum .
- Other events in 2012 are the Jubilee celebrations and the Olympic torch passing through Maidstone.
- The Concurrent Functions grants for parishes should remain the same in 2012/13 as in 2011/12. This will go to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January.

8.2 Chairman

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

8.3 Individual Councillors

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

8.4 Clerk

8.4.1 Fair Play for Children – Children’s Play Area Survey

The Clerk reported that she has received a survey from Fair Play for Children and would like assistance from Members in completing the survey. Members **Agreed** to assist the Clerk after the meeting.

ACTION: ALL MEMBERS

8.4.2 Highways & Transportation Tracker Survey

The Clerk reported that she has received a survey from KHS and would like assistance from Members in completing the survey. Members **Agreed** to assist the Clerk after the meeting. ACTION: ALL MEMBERS

8.4.3 Keys for Notice Boards

The Clerk asked whether Members would agree to her having two spare sets of keys cut for the notice boards, so there is a set each for Cllr Sawtell, Cllr Heaton and the Clerk. Members **Agreed** to the request.

ACTION: CLERK

9. FINANCE

9.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31st December 2011 was noted.

9.2 **Income received since the last meeting**

Income received since the last meeting is as follows:

NatWest Business Reserve Account Interest	£0.30
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9.3 **Confirmation of payments already made**

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

SO – S Goodwin – Salary & Office Allowance – November	£368.53
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9.4 **Cheques for signature**

Members **Agreed** that the Council approve the following payments and the cheques were signed by Cllrs Leonard and Porter:

1038 – MBC – Litter Picking for October and November (KGF)	£149.76
1039 – KCC (KCS) – Second Half Grounds Maintenance (KGF)	£553.04
1040 – Fields In Trust – Annual Membership Subscription	£35.00
1041 – Colin Langridge – Hedge Cutting (KGF)	£60.00
1042 – Viridis Energie Consultants – Consultancy on Solar panels for the Village Hall	£180.00
1043 – Sharon Goodwin – Expenses October 2010 to December 2011	£316.29
1044 – South East Water Ltd – Cricket Field Water Charges	£109.23
1045 – E.ON – Street Lighting	£6.94

Cllr Porter asked the Clerk to contact E.ON as the street light on Bensted Close is not working.

ACTION: CLERK

9.5 **Yalding Parish Playscheme**

Members considered a request from Yalding Parish Council for a small grant towards the 2012 scheme. In 2011 the scheme cost Yalding Parish Council approximately £14 per parish attendee, with nine children attending from Hunton. Members **Agreed** to contribute £120 to Yalding Parish Council for the Playscheme.

9.6 **Grounds Maintenance 2012**

Members considered the quotation received from KCC Landscape Services for the maintenance of the King George V Field for 2012/13. Members **Agreed** to accept the quotation of £949.38 for 21 cuts (an increase of 3% on last year).

9.7 **2012/13 Concurrent Functions, Budget and Parish Precept**

Members noted that the Concurrent Functions Grant for 2012/13 will be the same as last year at £3,910.

Members had received the budget papers produced by the Clerk prior to the meeting. Members accepted the Budget and **Agreed** that the Precept remains the same as last year at £15,000, which creates £46.60 tax per property. The Clerk will provide the Precept figure to MBC.

ACTION: CLERK

10. **PLANNING**

10.1 **Planning Decisions**

The following decisions received from MBC were **Noted**:

10.1.1 **1, The Watermill, West Street – MA/11/1924**

Erection of a chimney on the rear roof slope.

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

MBC: Granted Planning Permission.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next full Council Meeting is on Monday 12th March 2012 at 8:00pm at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to be discussed the meeting closed at 9:50pm.