

**HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 15TH JULY 2019 AT 7:30PM
AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Cllr D Heaton in the Chair, Cllrs A Trought, H Ward, T Stanbridge, J Goddard, G Thomas and R Lee and Mrs S Goodwin, Clerk.

IN ATTENDANCE: Eight members of the public were in attendance. One left after Item 10.2 and three left after Item 11.7. One member of the public arrived during Item 6.1.

1. APOLOGIES

All parish councillors were present at the meeting.
Borough Cllr R Web had sent his apologies.

2. FILMING AND RECORDING

The members of the public did not wish to film, record or photograph the meeting.

3. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

3.1 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

3.2 Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13TH MAY 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2019 had been previously distributed. The Chairman signed off the official copy of the minutes.

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

Item 16.5 – The Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/19 was sent to PKF Littlejohn before the deadline of 1st July 2019.

Item 16.10 – Maidstone Borough Council was contacted to agree that the terms of the Parish Services Scheme agreement 2019/20 are acceptable.

6. POLICE

6.1 Police

The following crimes have been logged on the e-watch website since the last Parish Council meeting:
19/05/19 - East Street - Damage was caused to caravans, windows were smashed, and graffiti sprayed over the walls.

31/05/19 - George Street - A lawnmower was stolen from the back of a vehicle.

6-7/05/19 - West Street - A shed was broken into and a strimmer, hedge trimmer and a lawn mower were stolen.

26/06/19 - West Street - A barn was broken into and several items of petrol-powered garden equipment were stolen.

25-27/06/19 - Lughorse Lane - Number plates were removed from a vehicle parked in the road. The owner of the number plates later found out that a vehicle with those number plates was used in a robbery.

26-29/06/19 - Water Lane - An outbuilding was broken into and gardening tools were stolen.

The cricket pavilion was also broken into on 31st May (not showing on the e-watch website).

Cllr Heaton advised that the Bowls Club had been broken into this morning. Nothing was taken but a lawn mower was damaged. The lock on the old cricket pavilion has also been snapped off and the doors of the machine shed were torn off. CCTV images have been captured.

Cllr Ward added that a glamping business at Amsbury Farm has also been broken into and items stolen.

6.2 Huntonwatch

Steve Wyles provided the following update on Huntonwatch:

There has been what can only be described as a mini crimewave in Hunton since the last report. We have been made aware of 10 incidents in the last six weeks, all targeting outbuildings except for one. There have been eight thefts of gardening equipment and an attempted theft of ladders. The incidents also include the break in at the cricket pavilion and theft of the church mower. With regards to the former, we have been able to provide the police with some CCTV footage (including that captured by the newly placed additional camera) which will hopefully help with their investigations. Cllr Heaton has contacted the police three times about the pavilion break in but has heard nothing further. CCTV footage has also been reviewed in relation to the Bowls Club break in and images of a white van have been found, which will be provided to the police.

At the Annual Parish Meeting we reported that interest in Huntonwatch seemed to have waned to the point where we were debating whether or not it was worth continuing. Following the meeting we took a number of actions as set out below:

1) We met with the PCSO and explained our frustrations at the lack of information flowing from the police to ourselves. It seems that during the handover from the previous PCSO, no mention was made of the need to inform us. Since that meeting, and because the Parish Council clerk is now kindly copying any emails she receives from the police to us, we are now much more informed and have been able to pass out to our members information on scams etc 'doing the rounds'.

2) We have used the Hunton Community Facebook page to issue 'Huntonwatch alerts' in order to raise our profile within the village. This has resulted in 8 new members signing up to receive our emails so far. We will continue to use the Facebook page in this way. We have also seen an increase in the information flow from members to ourselves, which means we have been able to report a number of suspicious vehicles to the police.

3) We are writing a long piece for the Hunton Herald which we hope to get published in the August edition. This will describe what we do and why Neighbourhood Watch is important. Hopefully this will further raise awareness in the village and re-ignite interest and a desire to join Huntonwatch.

Cllr Heaton proposed the installation of a lockable gate at the entrance to the car park near the Village Hall, as there have been two incidents of vehicles driving through (and damaging) the locked field gate and activities taking place in the car park after dark. A gate consisting of steel posts either side with a bar across would not be obtrusive. It could be locked at certain times and all the necessary groups would have keys. Signs would also be erected to state opening and closing times. Cllr Trought suggested that parishioners could be against the urban nature of a barrier and suggested cutting back the hedges, so the car park is more visible from the road. Members agreed that vehicles needed to be prevented from entering the car park after dark to stop the activities which have been occurring. Members **Agreed** to the basic principle of a gate and to hold a separate meeting to discuss it in detail. ACTION: CLERK

One of the Huntonwatch members has suggested that a feasibility study could be carried out to see what measures, including wider use of CCTV within the village, might be worth considering. Members agreed that, while the CCTV near the Village Hall is useful, it is unlikely to be beneficial over the whole village, as it is better at targeted spots.

Steve Wyles also asked if the Parish Council can seek help from Borough Cllr Parfitt-Reid to obtain a more visible police presence in Hunton in the light of the recent thefts. Huntonwatch is working with the PCSO and getting crimes reported so that the PCSO can ask for additional patrols to be scheduled, but Borough Cllr Parfitt-Reid could also lobby the Police & Crime Commissioner. Cllr Heaton **Agreed** to speak to Borough Cllr Parfitt-Reid. ACTION: CLLR HEATON

7. LOCAL COMMUNITY

7.1 King George V Playing Field

The Chairman of the King George V Playing Field Committee, Simon Taylor, reported on the last meeting, held on 15th July:

The boundary walk prior to the AGM and Committee meeting did not result in any significant work being required. Work which does need doing includes:

- cutting down the nettle patch/small elder trees near the Turkey Oak tree;
- cutting the trees back from the bin near the play area;
- cutting back the hedge between the Bowls Club and recreation ground;
- digging down and concreting in a loose post on the trim trail;
- concreting the gap between the safety surfacing and edges under the cradle swings;

- removing the scalplings and sandbag in the car park (if not still usable).

At the AGM, Bryan Lindon (Bowls Club) resigned from the Committee and Stefan Baker was welcomed as a new Trustee from the Football Club. All other Trustees were re-elected, with no changes to the Chairman and Secretary.

From the Committee Meeting:

It has not been possible to obtain insurance for water pipes outside the buildings so water usage will be monitored by reading the meters and the showers in the football club changing rooms will be checked for leaks.

Maidstone Borough Council is now emptying the bins, at double the cost of the previous contractor (who can no longer provide the service).

The Committee will apply for funding for a new line marker from County Cllr Stockell's Member Fund.

Health and safety – two MBC reports received. The only issue is damage to one of the toddler swing seats, but the seat has subsequently been replaced.

Finance – there is £9,795 remaining in funds. The Committee will consider contributing towards the new changing rooms at the Bowls Club, after the Parish Council has considered its contribution.

Rabbits are becoming a problem and there is also evidence of moles.

Cllr Trought is aware that the Football Club would like funding to improve their changing rooms. Cllr Heaton advised that they need to present a case and be specific about their requirements to receive funding. In addition, members of the Football Club need to make a consistent effort to attend Committee meetings.

7.2 Hunton Village Hall Committee

The Chairman of Hunton Village Hall Committee, Cllr Trought, reported on the AGM, held on 24th June: Mike Summersgill stood down as a Trustee and all other officers and trustees were re-elected. Sue Pinks joined the Committee as a new Trustee. Sue would like to get Applause events back at the Village Hall and is applying to the Calor Fund to obtain a new cooker for the kitchen. The kitchen as a whole is in need of an upgrade.

The Village Hall finances are healthy.

Following a plea at the Annual Parish Meeting, a new handyman has been appointed, who is keen to do some decorating.

Cllr Stanbridge asked if there are plans for any significant expenditure on the Village Hall. Cllr Trought stated that the kitchen upgrade would be quite costly. The exterior of the building needs painting, but the Parish Council has agreed to fund that.

7.3 Hunton Primary School

Cllr Trought reported that the school would like to make a staff car park where the external classroom currently exists.

7.4 Hunton Village Club

Cllr Trought reported that there had been a very successful wine tasting evening, thanks largely to Lesley and Roger Lee.

Forthcoming events are:

- 11th August – Sunday Walk and Lunch
- 7th September – Beer Festival
- 21st September – Film Evening

Next year's Hunton Fete will take place on 20th June 2020.

The next major project for the Club is the improvement of the toilets.

7.5 Traffic and Road Safety Working Party

Cllr Goddard has been in discussion with KCC Highways about reducing the speed limit to 40mph on East Street, but they would require speed monitoring evidence. He has been given details of three different companies who could undertake speed monitoring over a 7-day period, each costing a similar amount of several hundred pounds. Cllr Goddard would like to canvass residents first to ensure they want this done.

Cllr Trought advised that County Cllr Stockell had supplied something similar at no cost some years ago.

Members **Agreed** in principle to spend the money on the speed monitoring. Cllr Goddard **Agreed** to look into funding from County Cllr Stockell and canvass residents. **ACTION: CLLR GODDARD**

Once the data has been obtained from the speed monitoring, if the average speed is more than 40mph, there would be a better case to put forward to KCC Highways.

Cllr Thomas asked whether there was any feedback on how effective the road markings in East Farleigh have been at reducing speeds through the village. Cllr Trought did not think there was any mechanism in place to measure the benefits.

7.6 Tree & Pond Warden

The Tree & Pond Warden, Mike Summersgill, had the following to report:

Following the tree survey, Hood's Tree Services have completed all the remedial work recommended in the report and have done a very good job. The next inspection is due in October 2020.

The Hadlow Tree Warden has calculated that the planting of trees for the Woodland Creation Scheme at Hunton Court represents a 0.5% increase in savings to public health costs for the Maidstone Borough. This is a £2,000 reduction in NHS spending per annum due to reducing pollution.

There is nothing to report on ponds.

8. COUNTY & BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

8.1 County Councillor

County Cllr Stockell was unable to attend the meeting.

8.2 Borough Councillors

None of the Borough Councillors were able to attend the meeting.

9. PARISH COUNCILLORS

9.1 Liaison with External Bodies

Cllr Thomas was unable to attend the recent KALC Maidstone Area Committee meeting.

On 6th June, he met, together with other KALC Maidstone members, with William Cornall and Mark Egerton of Maidstone Borough Council to discuss the result of the Call For Sites exercise. They will decide on Call For Sites actions at the end of August, so there should be another meeting in September. Although it was a useful meeting, and it is positive that they are meeting with parishes, there was not much indication as to where development will be. Maidstone Borough will need over 7,000 more houses. There are three major developments being considered: 2,000 houses at Marden; 2,000 houses off the A249 near Detling Hill; and a development at Lenham.

CPRE has not changed its name but has spent money on consultants to change its image, as it is seen as an organisation which objects to everything and would like to be seen as more positive and proactive.

In terms of local planning issues, nothing further has been heard about Durrants Farm. A strong objection was submitted to the planning application for the Spice Lounge site in Coxheath, as it is the only licensed premises in Coxheath/Hunton. The Spice Lounge has now closed and another planning application has been submitted for flats. Cllr Thomas will write an objection. ACTION: CLLR THOMAS

Cllr Heaton noted that neighbouring authorities are also proposing large housing developments – 4,000 houses in Tudeley/Capel and thousands between Borough Green and Wrotham.

A petition signed by 66% of Marden residents has been handed in to Downing Street. They are demanding that the government consider the wording in the NPPF of a 'garden village'. Capel is also doing the same.

9.2 Footpaths and Ditches

Cllr Heaton will spray herbicide on the permissive footpath when conditions are appropriate.

Mike Summersgill is looking for Himalayan Balsam in ditches and asked that he be informed if anyone spots any.

9.3 Communication & Events

Cllr Ward reported that the editing of the Hunton Herald by rotating pairs is working well.

The Hunton Fete was excellent once again and well attended. Cllr Trought noted that the Fete usually makes around £2,000, which is used to put the Fete on in the following year, underwrite the Christmas Fair and contribute to various causes.

Musicals on the Green will take place on 18th August.

9.4 Planning Issues and Consultations

Cllr Thomas covered all planning issues under Item 9.1.

9.5 Utilities

Cllr Stanbridge had nothing to report.

10. OTHER PARISH MATTERS

10.1 Traffic Calming Measures on West Street

Cllr Heaton suggested that a decision should be made on the flashing speed signs for West Street. Cllr Goddard advised that the portable signs can be sited permanently or semi-permanently. He will come up with a plan.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

10.2 Use of the Cricket Pavilion

Following a request to use the cricket pavilion for private use, Members clarified usage of the pavilion as there is no system for private hires.

Cllr Heaton advised that the Village Hall has a structure for hires, which the pavilion does not.

Members **Agreed** that the pavilion is a community asset and should only be used for community activities, involving the community as a whole, rather than private hires. It is also not big enough for large groups and is only suitable for use during the summer.

10.3 Clerk's Report

Two quotes have been received for the gate post replacement, following the break in at the cricket pavilion, from Tate & Tonbridge Fencing and Jacksons Fencing. Members **Agreed** to accept the cheaper Tate & Tonbridge Fencing quote. The Clerk will accept the quote and arrange for the work to be undertaken.

ACTION: CLERK

A response has been received from KALC on further action which could be taken on the complaint concerning the Spice Lounge pre-application advice and the manner in which Maidstone Borough Council dealt with the complaint. As the Local Government Ombudsman does not investigate complaints by public bodies, the remaining course of action would be to seek legal advice. Cllr Thomas **Agreed** to write an objection to the new Spice Lounge planning application and mention the complaint. He will also contact Coxheath Parish Council about potentially taking legal advice as Coxheath also objected to the application.

ACTION: CLLR THOMAS

Di Martin, who is in charge of the litter picks in the village, has notified the Parish Council that Maidstone Borough Council will no longer support the litter picking team, either through insurance or provision of materials and collection of rubbish, on roads where the speed limit is greater than 30mph. Staplehurst Parish Council's insurance covers volunteers on roads with a 30mph limit as long as there is a risk assessment in place, but it is not clear whether they are covered on roads with a higher speed limit. A risk assessment has been passed to MBC Legal Department and MBC is trying to work with the team as much as it can. Mrs Martin has asked whether the Parish Council's insurance would cover the litter pickers in the parish. Cllr Trought suggested contacting KALC for advice as other parish councils could have been affected by this. Members **Agreed** to contact KALC prior to contacting the insurance company.

ACTION: CLERK

11. FINANCE

11.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 30th June 2019 was **Noted**.

Cllr Goddard will check with Claire Chewter (KCC Highways) whether the kerbstones are to be installed near the school.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

11.2 Income Received

The following income has been received since the last meeting:

Maidstone Borough Council – Parish Services Scheme grant (first half)	£769.50
---	---------

Cllr Stanbridge reviewed and signed the bank reconciliation.

11.3 Payments Made

Members **Approved** the following payments made since the last meeting:

SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – May	£453.30
300295 – Lionel Robbins – Internal audit	£75.00
300296 – Adlor Security Shutters – Repairs following cricket pavilion break in	£216.00
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge	£18.00

11.4 Cheques for Signature

Members **Agreed** that the following payments be approved, and the cheques were signed by Cllrs Goddard and Lee:

300297 – E.ON – Street lighting electricity	£14.56
300298 – SLCC – Annual membership subscription	£106.00
300299 – Acorn Glass Ltd – Replacement double-glazed unit in cricket pavilion	£222.00
300300 – Robert Cox – Footpath maintenance	£495.00
300301 – Hood’s Tree Services Ltd – Tree surgery	£984.00
300302 – Steve Wyles – Replacement memory stick for CCTV	£10.99
300303 – Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses/Postage/Stationery (March to July)	£128.84
300304 – Steve Jones – Replacement lock and keys for cricket pavilion	£54.44
300305 – Simon Taylor – Replacement lock and wood to secure cricket pavilion	£156.97

Members **Agreed** that at least six memory sticks should be purchased for Huntonwatch to copy CCTV footage for the police. ACTION: CLERK

11.5 Internal Audit Report

The Internal Auditor, Lionel Robbins, carried out the internal audit on 14th May 2019 and has completed the Annual Internal Audit Report on page 3 of the 2018/19 Annual Governance & Accountability Return. Members considered and noted the report of the Internal Auditor.

11.6 Village Hall Insurance

A request has been received from the Village Hall Committee to contribute towards the Village Hall insurance premium. In previous years the Council has paid an 80% contribution. The premium this year is £1,389.40 (2018: £1,298.51), so an 80% contribution calculates as £1,111.52 (2018: £1,038.81). Members **Agreed** to contribute £1,111.52 and cheque 300306 was signed by Cllrs Goddard and Lee.

11.7 Hunton Bowls Club

(This item was moved before Item 11.1)

Cllr Heaton recapped that members of the Bowls Club had attended the last Parish Council meeting to ask the Parish Council to consider contributing towards the new changing rooms. The Bowls Club is the sole owner of the building, which is not a Parish Council asset. The only power available to the Parish Council to provide funding is under Section 137, but there must be some benefit to the community, which must be commensurate with the expenditure concerned.

Angela Baptie, of Hunton Bowls Club, explained that the Club has received a quotation for £14,000 for the work, against which County Cllr Stockell has provided KCC Member funding of £1,500 and the Hunton Herald will also contribute £500 when the work is complete. The Bowls Club has £9,000 in funds. Members suggested that the Bowls Club should put together a statement of funding to show how much money is required and to highlight what the community benefit would be, to provide justification for any funding. Angela Baptie agreed to do this and will attend the next Parish Council meeting in September.

11.8 Security Lighting

Q-Tec Solutions Ltd have provided a quote for security lighting over the container near the Village Hall. There are two existing lights above the Football Club changing rooms and Q-Tec have quoted to update these lights as well. The cost to remedy the existing lights is £320 plus VAT and the cost of new lighting is £270 plus VAT.

Members **Agreed** to accept both quotes. Cllr Heaton will cut back the branches near the Football Club changing rooms. ACTION: CLLR HEATON

12. PLANNING

12.1 Planning Decisions

Members to note the following planning decision made by Maidstone Borough Council since the last Planning Committee meeting:

12.1.1 Plot K81213 Adjacent to Hopview Cottage, Hilltop – 19/502247/FULL

Removal of existing asbestos barn garage and hardstanding and erection of a detached 3 bedroom dwelling, with associated parking and landscaping.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection but concerned that there is no access to the rear.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Refused.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Council Meeting will be the Annual Meeting to be held on **Monday 16th September 2019** at 7:30pm at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:40pm.