

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20TH JULY 2020 AT 7:30PM BY TELECONFERENCE

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

IN ATTENDANCE: One member of the public was in attendance.

OPEN SESSION

The applicant for the planning application to be discussed at Item 9.1.1 (Amsbury Farmhouse, East Street) introduced herself, stating that she was attending in case Members wanted to ask any questions about the application.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs T Stanbridge and J Goddard.

2. FILMING AND RECORDING

The member of the public did not wish to record the meeting.

3. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

3.1 Declaration of Interests

Cllr Ward declared that she is a neighbour to the applicant for the planning application to be discussed at Item 9.1.1 and will not take part in the discussion.

3.2 Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 18TH MAY 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2020 had been previously distributed. The Chairman will sign the official copy of the minutes at the next Full Council meeting held in person.

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

Item 6.4 – A fault was reported on the KCC Highways portal about the damage to the verges on Redwall Lane, caused by large tractor/trailers. Claire Chewter of KCC Highways advised that nothing can be done. Cllr Heaton noted that the large tractor/trailer movements have stopped for now.

6. OTHER PARISH MATTERS

6.1 Coronavirus

Steve Wyles was unable to attend the meeting but had provided the following report on the Coronavirus support provided so far:

As the restrictions are being eased and people are becoming more comfortable going out and about, we are finding that fewer and fewer people are asking us to collect their medication for them. This has been particularly noticeable over the last two weeks. We originally said that we would continue to offer the service until September, and will do so throughout August but unless things have changed dramatically we will not continue beyond that point.

Should the need arise we will look to reinstate it as necessary. We will notify those who have used the service individually and place a notice in the September Herald to that effect.

Cllr Heaton advised that the government's website provides Coronavirus statistics on a daily basis.

Maidstone has had only four new cases in ten days up to 17th July. Kent as a whole is higher than most; Ashford has the second highest rate in the country.

Members were very thankful for all the hard work undertaken by Steve and Sue Wyles to provide support for residents and **Agreed** that a letter of thanks should be sent. **ACTION: CLERK**

6.2 Parish Councillors

Cllr Thomas advised that the dead Oak tree on Barn Hill has not been cut down by the Tregothnan Estate and debris is still dropping on to the road. Members **Agreed** that the Tregothnan Estate should be contacted again.

ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Trought reported that the Village Club was opened for the first time on 19th July and is fully compliant with regulations. Phil Nichols has been working extremely hard to get everything ready. Cllr Trought urged people to support the Club when they feel comfortable to do so. It will be open on Sunday lunchtimes and evenings and Wednesday evenings. The Club is taking contactless payments.

Cllr Heaton has ordered the new mower, which he will collect on 24th July. It is not the electric start version like the previous one as these mowers will not be arriving in this country until next year. Cllr Heaton has two padlocks for the mower housing and will provide a set of keys to the church and others who require it.

Cllr Heaton reported that Cllr Goddard has obtained the results from the traffic survey carried out on East Street. The average speed was below 40mph; Cllr Goddard will circulate the results.

6.3 Website Accessibility

The Clerk contacted KALC to establish whether parish councils should host their own websites, as Hunton Parish Council currently does not; the response was not clear, but most parish councils do have their own website.

The Webmaster (Dudley Farman) for the Hunton village website believes the website is generally compliant other than a few areas which would need changing. Mr Farman is happy to work on the existing website to make it compliant but would also be supportive if the Parish Council wanted to host its own website.

Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should contact the West Farleigh Parish Clerk for feedback on their website as West Farleigh is also a small parish and is in the process of changing website.

ACTION: CLERK

6.4 Clerk's Report

6.4.1 Police

The new PCSO, Paul Vasey, has been unable to access the crime figures but has provided details of anti-social behaviour/other incidents:

07/07/20 – Tree cutting noise reported in Amsbury Wood early in the morning. No further reports following contact with a local resident.

11/07/20 – Fire in a field in Lughorse Lane. The PCSO has ensured regular patrols in the area.

PCSO Vasey has been in regular contact with the Clerk. Cllr Heaton was pleased to hear that there has been regular liaison and positive action is being taken on anti-social behaviour.

6.4.2 Play Area

Following a risk assessment by members of the King George V Playing Field Committee, the play area was reopened on 16th July, following the removal of one of the infant swings and the posting of signage outside and inside the play area. The administrators of the Hunton Facebook group, Hunton website and Hunton Herald have been informed.

Cllr Heaton is opening the barrier to the car park in the mornings at 7:30am and locking it in the evenings; in winter it will close at dusk. When the Village Hall reopens for hires it will be left open later for events at the hall.

6.4.3 Tree & Pond Warden

The Tree & Pond Warden, Mike Summersgill, was unable to attend the meeting, but provided the following report:

Mr Summersgill has attended the Kent Tree Wardens informative Zoom meeting where attendees were encouraged to send the Tree Council guidance leaflet on Ash Dieback Disease to parishes, and perhaps advise on it. Mr Summersgill has provided the leaflet, but there are no Ash trees on parish land. He has distributed it already to a couple of local residents who asked him about their Ash trees.

Prices need to be obtained for the Turkey Oak reduction work in the winter, as a result of the Tregoning's Trees inspection last January, which suggested 3m height reduction and 1.5m side growth. The Visual Tree Assessment report by Darren Hood in April 2019 also recommended an 18-month period for re-inspection (ie October 2020). Mr Summersgill would like to continue using Darren Hood for the VTA

(cost £430 last time) and will obtain prices for the Turkey Oak reduction and the Visual Tree Assessment for the September 2020 PC meeting.

Members noted the report and agreed that a quote should be obtained from Darren Hood for the VTA and quotes should also be obtained for the Turkey Oak reduction work.

6.4.4 Insurance claims

Zurich have offered to settle the insurance claim for the stolen mower, for £920. This represents the cost of the new mower (see Item 8.8) of £1,170, less the £250 excess. The Clerk accepted the offer.

Zurich have also paid the insurance claim of £771 for the broken security lights into the Parish Council's bank account.

6.4.5 Gennings Cold Store

Two residents have made complaints about the cold store on the Gennings estate, due to the noise, use of articulated lorries and damage to the road from the lorries.

Maidstone Borough Council have confirmed that there are no planning conditions in place on the site.

Claire Chewter of KCC Highways has said that nothing can be done about the damage to Lughorse Lane unless there is proof that the lorries actually caused it, and there is no enforcement of the weight restrictions.

The Clerk has emailed Clive Baxter who rents out the cold store from Paynes, who in turn let it to Diamond Cold Storage.

Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should write to the director of Diamond Cold Storage to ask that consideration is taken of the neighbours on the Gennings estate and ask that lorries arrive after 7:30am.

The Clerk will also write to the residents affected to suggest that a log is kept of the noise and to contact MBC Environmental Health if it persists.

ACTION: CLERK

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Local Government Association – Model Member Code of Conduct

The LGA has reviewed the existing Model Member Code of Conduct and updated it, incorporating the recommendations from the Committee on Standards in Public Life's recommendations on Local Government Ethical Standards and the representation from its membership. The consultation addresses key areas that the LGA would like a view on to help finalise the Code, aimed at councillors and officers from all tiers of local government.

Members **Noted** the consultation and **Agreed** not to respond.

8. FINANCE

8.1 Statement of Internal Control

The Council must review the effectiveness of the system of internal control as the Annual Governance Statement needs to be completed in the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR). A Statement of Internal Control has been prepared by the Clerk to assist in this review. Members reviewed the Statement and **Agreed** that it could be signed and included with the year-end accounts. The Statement was signed by the Clerk, who will arrange for the Chairman to sign it.

8.2 Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit

In carrying out the Council's annual review of Internal Audit, Members **Agreed** that:

- the Internal Auditor is independent of the Council and has no involvement or responsibility in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council;
- the Internal Auditor is competent to carry out an effective audit of the Council's system of internal control;
- the review and scope of the internal audit adequately assesses the Council's internal controls, governance processes and management of risk;
- they understand the importance of the relationship between the Internal Auditor and the Council;
- adequate preparations are made for the audit procedure to facilitate the work of the Internal Auditor, including making available all relevant documents and records and supplying any information or explanations required; and
- reports received from the Internal and External Auditor are actioned when necessary.

8.3 Internal Audit Report

The Internal Auditor, Lionel Robbins, carried out the internal audit on 1st July 2020 and has completed the Annual Internal Audit Report on the 2019/20 Annual Governance & Accountability Return. Members considered and noted the report of the Internal Auditor.

8.4 Accounts 2019/20

Members reviewed the Council's Statement of Accounts, year-end Financial Book and Fixed Asset Register. The Accounts were signed by the Clerk, who will arrange for the Chairman to sign it and the Financial Book.

Cllr Thomas asked when the old cricket pavilion, which is on the Fixed Asset Register, will be removed. Cllr Heaton advised that the King George V Playing Field Committee is obtaining quotes for demolition.

8.5 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20

8.5.1 Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement

Members considered the Annual Governance Statement contained in Section 1 on page 4 of the AGAR, consisting of 9 assertions. To properly consider the assertions, the Clerk had provided Members with a table comparing the Parish Council's practices to proper practices.

Members **Agreed** that assertions 1 to 8 could all be answered "Yes" and assertion 9 should be answered "N/A". Members **Resolved** that the Annual Governance Statement be approved, and page 4 of the AGAR was signed by the Clerk, who will arrange for the Chairman to sign it.

8.5.2 Section 2 – Accounting Statements

Members considered the Accounting Statements contained in Section 2 on page 5 of the AGAR and **Resolved** that they be approved. The Clerk had already signed page 5 of the AGAR according to the requirements of the external auditor and will arrange for it to be signed by the Chairman.

8.6 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Reports to 30th June 2020 was **Noted**.

Cllr Thomas asked about the amounts in the budget for the old cricket pavilion removal and the new mower. The budgeted figure of £2,226 is a budget of £2,500 for the pavilion removal/green container clearance, less £274 paid in a previous year for the green container clearance. The budgeted figure for the mower was based on a quoted cost, but the purchase price for the new mower was less.

8.7 Income Received

The following income has been received since the last meeting:

Zurich Insurance – Insurance claim for security lights	£771.00
MBC – Parish Services Scheme (First half)	£800.50

The bank reconciliation was provided to Members for review but will need to be signed by one Member at the next Full Council meeting held in person.

8.8 Payments Made

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

SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – May	£453.30
300342 – Steve Wyles – Flowers for Covid-19 helpers (Chairman's Allowance)	£49.98
300343 – Mower Plant Services – New mower	£1,170.00
300344 – David Heaton (Iden Signs) – Reimbursement for car park barrier signs	£132.00
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – June	£453.30
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge	£18.00

8.9 Cheques for Signature

Members **Agreed** that the following payments be approved. The cheques will be posted to Cllrs Heaton and Trought for signature:

300345 – E.ON – Street lighting electricity	£14.56
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300346 – SLCC – Annual membership subscription	£109.00
300347 – KCPFA – Annual membership subscription	£20.00
300348 – Lionel Robbins – Internal audit	£75.00
300349 – CPRE – Annual membership subscription	£36.00
300350 – Traffic Transport Systems – East Street traffic counts	£540.00

8.10 Internet Banking

The Clerk explained the process for setting up internet banking which involves completion of an online form, which will need to be printed off and signed by two signatories. The Clerk will set up all payments which two signatories would need to authorise (as for cheques).

Members **Approved** the use of internet banking. All Members attending the meeting **Agreed** to become internet banking users. Cllrs Goddard and Stanbridge will be asked for their consent at the next full council meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

8.11 Risk Assessment

The Clerk has reviewed the Parish Council's risk assessment.

Members **Approved** the risk assessment, subject to a review date of July 2021 being added at the bottom.

The Clerk will arrange for the Chairman to sign the risk assessment.

ACTION: CLERK

8.12 Village Hall Insurance

The Village Hall Committee has paid the Village Hall buildings insurance premium, to which the Parish Council has contributed 80% in previous years. The premium this year is £1,333.06 (2019: £1,389.40), so an 80% contribution calculates as £1,066.44 (2019: £1,111.52).

Members **Agreed** to contribute £1,066.44 and cheque 300401 was written, to be sent to Cllrs Heaton and Trought for signature.

ACTION: CLERK

8.13 Kent Tree Wardens

The Parish Council last made a contribution to the Kent Tree Wardens in January 2018. The Hunton Tree & Pond Warden has attended a number of training courses which have all been free of charge due to donations received.

Members **Agreed** a contribution of £25 to the Kent Tree Wardens under s137 expenditure. Cheque 300402 was written, to be sent to Cllrs Heaton and Trought for signature.

ACTION: CLERK

8.14 Kent Pond Wardens

The Parish Council last made a contribution to the Kent Pond Wardens in January 2018. The Hunton Tree & Pond Warden has attended a number of training courses which have all been free of charge due to donations received.

Members **Agreed** a contribution of £25 to the Kent Pond Wardens under s137 expenditure. Cheque 300403 was written, to be sent to Cllrs Heaton and Trought for signature.

ACTION: CLERK

9. PLANNING

9.1 Planning Application

9.1.1 Amsbury Farmhouse, East Street - 20/502710/FULL

Section 73A application for retrospective planning permission for the change of use of land from agricultural use to glamping use comprising 2no. pods, 2no. tents, 1no. snub/restroom and 1no. outdoor kitchen/seating area, together with associated washing/shower facilities and parking.

Cllr Stanbridge was unable to attend the meeting but had provided comments prior to the meeting.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

9.2 Planning Decisions

No planning decisions have been made by Maidstone Borough Council since the last Planning Committee meeting.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Parish Council meeting is on Monday 21st September 2020 at 7:30pm.

Members suggested that the next meeting could be held using Zoom video conferencing. Members recorded their thanks to the Clerk for her ongoing work.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:19pm.