

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7:30PM USING ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Four members of the public were in attendance. One left after Item 7.1.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs H Ward and G Thomas.

2. **FILMING AND RECORDING**

The members of the public did not wish to record 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 20TH JULY 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 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 6.2 – The Tregothnan Estate was contacted about the dead Oak tree on Barn Hill. It was due to be felled on 27th March but was cancelled due to lockdown; a new date will be arranged.

Item 6.4.5 – The Clerk wrote to Diamond Cold Storage about the operations at the Gennings cold stores; two letters were sent but no response received. It was suggested to the neighbours that they contact MBC Environmental Health if the noise persists. Members noted that there have been less lorries of late.

Item 8.1 – The Chairman has signed the Statement of Internal Control.

Item 8.4 – The Chairman has signed the Statement of Accounts 2019/20 and Financial Book.

Item 8.5 – The Chairman has signed sections 4 and 5 of the AGAR 2019/20.

Item 8.11 – A review date has been added to the risk register, which has been signed by the Chairman.

6. **LOCAL COMMUNITY**

6.1 **King George V Playing Field Committee**

Steve Jones introduced himself as the new Chairman of the Committee and provided the following update: The play area had to be closed due to the pandemic but was reopened in early July following an onsite risk assessment by the Committee. Signage was erected and one of the infant swings was removed to allow social distancing. The play equipment is being well-used on a regular basis.

The Committee held the AGM on 28th July, together with an inspection of the field. The Committee will organise the following work:

- Installation of non-slip matting at the entrance to the fenced play area to stop slippage and protect the grass; installation of a rubbish bin to fix to the play area fence; and purchase of an additional picnic table. All funded by the MBC SIPA grant.
- Replacement of the delaminating multiplay platform.
- Reinforcement of the loose poles which hold the safety netting.
- Repair of the car park surface.
- Replacement of one of the memorial benches between the cricket and football pitches. The bench was

due to be repaired but has disappeared since timber was bought, so will now be replaced.

- Usual maintenance work, including grass cutting, hedge trimming and bin emptying.

There is £8,750 remaining in funds. The Committee is considering capital projects.

A couple of years ago the Parish Council earmarked £2,500 for the demolition of the old cricket pavilion, which was an estimated figure. A quote has been obtained from a local company recently for £3,500 plus VAT, which includes an asbestos survey and removal of all waste materials. Two more quotes will be obtained so the Parish Council can make a decision.

Cllr Heaton welcomed Mr Jones as the new Chairman. Members agreed that a plan would need to be provided by the selected contractor for the removal and disposal of any asbestos found in the old pavilion. Mr Jones agreed that the quotes will cover an asbestos survey and disposal of any asbestos found.

Cllr Heaton noted that £10,000 has been received by the Parish Council from Maidstone Borough Council in the form of a Business Rates Grant for the cricket pavilion. The Business Rates Grant was to support organisations with their costs during the Coronavirus. The Parish Council itself does not receive any income or have any specific ongoing costs relating to the cricket pavilion, but the sports clubs have lost income. If the three clubs submit details of lost income, it could be possible to use part of the grant to reimburse the clubs perhaps purchase a capital item for the benefit of the community. Part of the grant could also cover the demolition of the old cricket pavilion (as the cost is likely to be more than estimated previously). Mr Jones advised that the Playing Field Committee will obtain details of losses incurred by the sports clubs, which will then be submitted to the Parish Council.

6.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

Cllr Goddard reported the following from the last meeting of the Traffic & Road Safety Working Party (T&RSWP):

Speed limit on East Street

At the end of February, a company was hired to measure number and speed of vehicles on East Street at three locations (chosen by the T&RSWP): 1. Between the bottom of Hunton Hill and Amsbury; 2. From Amsbury to the narrow section; and 3. Near Bull Oast. The monitoring was undertaken using wires placed across the road over a period of 7 days. The current speed limit on East Street is 60mph. The average speed at each of the three locations was approximately 32-33mph. The percentage of vehicles travelling at over 30mph was 70% in location 1, 64% in location 2 and 75% in location 3. The percentage of vehicles travelling over 40mph was approximately 8-10% at each location. When Cllr Goddard first reviewed the data, he thought it would be pointless applying for a speed limit of 40mph, but at a KCC Highways event previously attended by Cllr Ward, a member of staff had advised that if the average speed of vehicles is less than 40mph, that is a good reason to apply for a 40mph limit.

Members agreed that East Street is not a road that can be travelled at 60mph due to the bends and narrowing of the road, and questioned whether an application could actually be made for a 30mph limit as there is no footpath or street lighting. If KCC Highways will not sanction a 30mph limit, then the 40mph limit should be pursued. Cllr Goddard **Agreed** to pursue this with Jennie Watson at KCC Highways. If a new speed limit is applied to East Street, new signage would be required which KCC Highways should pay for, as long as the Parish Council can present a persuasive case for the change in speed limit. It was agreed that the reduced speed limit should apply to the whole of East Street up to Chainhurst (where there is a 40mph limit).

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

Clock House Farm tractors and buses

Cllr Goddard reported that there are mixed views from the T&RSWP on the Clock House Farm blue tractors and trailers which take produce to Wares Farm, particularly on East Street and Redwall Lane. Some believe it is a rural area and something residents need to put up with, whereas others believe the vehicles start too early and are too noisy. The staff buses also travel along East Street/Redwall Lane. The T&RSWP has asked whether the Parish Council would consider engaging with Clock House Farm to establish their plans for next year as activity is tailing off for this year. The vans they were using previously would have generated twice the number of journeys as the trailers they use now can take twice the load, so the number of journeys has reduced but there are still a considerable number. It has been suggested that they could be asked to slow down at certain points or put a one-way system in place. Cllr Heaton advised that they are operating early in the morning due to the heat, as soft fruit needs to be picked in the cooler part of the day.

The T&RSWP had also questioned whether Clock House Farm's use of Wares Farm is in line with the planning consent or a contravention. Cllr Heaton does not believe it to be a contravention as the Berry

Gardens application outlined that more packhouse space was required for foreign fruit, and for packing Clock House Farm fruit (which has been packed at Wares Farm for ten years). Clock House Farm is not doing anything illegal, so the Parish Council cannot take any specific action. The operators could perhaps slow down at certain points, but activity is diminishing anyway, and it would be unreasonable to ask the lorries to divert. It could be that residents are noticing the vehicles more now this year as they are working from home more; it is nothing new.

Speedwatch

There are currently insufficient volunteers to resurrect Speedwatch. Cllr Ward is considering drafting an article for the Hunton Herald asking for volunteers as some residents have voiced their concerns about the speed of traffic in the village recently. Cllr Heaton suggested that the article should state that if residents are concerned about speeding, then they should join the Speedwatch group. It was acknowledged that it can be difficult to find people who have time for the Speedwatch sessions during the day when they are working or have other commitments. Cllr Goddard will contact Cllr Ward. ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

6.3 Tree & Pond Warden

The Tree & Pond Warden, Mike Summersgill was unable to attend the meeting but has obtained a quotation of £435 for the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) from Silva Arboriculture Ltd, who carried out the last VTA in April 2019. The recommended period for reinspection is 18 months, so the VTA should be carried out in October 2020. Members **Agreed** to accept the quotation.

Mr Summersgill has also obtained four quotations for the reduction of the Turkey Oak tree on the playing field, as recommended by Tregoning's Trees when it was inspected earlier this year. Quotes have been received from Hoods Tree Services Ltd, Broadleaf Tree Surgery Ltd, Day Tree Fellers and Tregoning's Trees. Members **Agreed** to accept the quotation of £600 plus VAT from Hoods Tree Services Ltd.

ACTION: CLERK

7. PARISH MATTERS

7.1 Coronavirus

Steve Wyles gave the following report:

Huntonwatch agreed to provide six months of support but found after five months, following the easing of lockdown, that rather than all three surgeries being used/several patients per surgery each week, it had reduced to one surgery/one patient. Support continued until 31st August and advance notice was given so patients could use other means for their collections, with the offer of assistance if there were no other means. The Yalding volunteers ceased collections at the beginning of August due also to a drop in demand. Volunteers were being alternated to limit exposure, but it became complicated at times. Phillippa Webb did every Coxheath surgery collection (many thanks for her significant contribution), Steve Wyles did the Yalding surgery collections and the Marden surgery collections were shared between several volunteers. It worked effectively. The mobile phone provided by the Parish Council was a great help. As the service may be required again in future it would be sensible for Huntonwatch to keep the phone for now. Members **Agreed** that Huntonwatch should keep the phone for the time being and the Parish Council will pay for a new bundle. ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Trought asked whether Huntonwatch is happy to provide support in future if required. Mr Wyles agreed that Huntonwatch is ideally placed to do so and would be happy to resurrect it again if needed. Members thanked Mr Wyles.

7.2 Parish Councillors

Cllr Trought advised that there has not been much activity in the Community Orchard this year and the gate will need to be rehung in future.

Cllr Heaton reported that he is meeting a PROW Officer from KCC with a resident, regarding the footpath across her land. Maidstone Borough Council is unlikely to object to her planning application for the fencing of the land and if it is used for grazing livestock, it will be gated. It would stop the nuisance of motorcycles riding around on the land.

7.3 Permissive Footpath on West Street – Hedge and Verges Maintenance Contract

The two-year contract for the maintenance of the hedge and verges near the permissive footpath on West Street, which was awarded to Robert Cox, is at an end. Members reviewed the specification for the next two-year contract without making any amendments.

Members **Agreed** that the specification should be sent to Robert Cox as his work has been of a good

standard in the past and other contractors who have been sent the specification in previous years have not returned a quote. ACTION: CLERK

7.4 Bins

It was agreed at the Parish Council meeting on 20th January 2020 that the 'missing' bin in the car park should be replaced. Members **Agreed** that the 90 litre Maelor Trafflex Round High Security Litter Bin should be purchased from Broxap at a cost of £129 plus VAT before optional extras. ACTION: CLERK

7.5 Storage Container

Cllr Heaton proposed the purchase of a 10 or 20-foot container to be situated near the Village Hall, behind the Football Club changing rooms, due to the lack of storage in the Village Hall. Some items are stored in the existing container on site, but this belongs to KCC rather than the Parish Council. Members **Agreed** that this would be a good idea as long as it is very secure. Cllr Heaton **Agreed** to research the cost of containers. ACTION: CLLR HEATON

7.6 Barn Hill Finger Post

Cllr Heaton has obtained a price of approximately £80 from Yalding Forge to make a steel sleeve to sink into the ground to slide the finger post in. The post will also need to be sanded and painted which should be inexpensive. Claire Chewter from KCC Highways is happy with the solution to mend the finger post and has put the three marker posts around the green where it will be located. Members **Agreed** that the steel sleeve should be purchased from Yalding Forge. ACTION: CLLR HEATON

7.7 Website Accessibility

The Parish Council does not currently have its own website, it is part of the village website. The Clerk attended a Website Accessibility Regulations Workshop recently, where speakers were of the opinion that parish councils should have their own websites, which need to be compliant with the Website Accessibility Regulations. The Clerk has also spoken to the Clerk at West Farleigh Parish Council, who was of the same opinion and had been very helpful.

Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should research website providers with a view to the Parish Council running its own website. The Clerk will also consider an accessibility statement for the Hunton Parish Council section of the village website. Cllr Goddard suggested the possibility of including a video link on the website so Parish Council meetings could be broadcast. ACTION: CLERK

7.8 Clerk's Report

7.8.1 Police

PCSO Vasey is away on leave at the moment but has provided a crime report from 1st July to 18th August. There has been one crime in Hunton – the theft of a van in Bensted Close on 31st July.

7.8.2 Call For Sites

Members noted that both of the Hunton sites submitted for consideration in the Call For Sites exercise, Durrants Farm and Land Opposite Dingley Dell, have been rejected by Maidstone Borough Council.

7.8.3 Security Lights

Q-Tec Solutions are ordering the security lights to replace those broken during the Football Club changing rooms/container break in. The Clerk will chase this up to establish a date for installation.

ACTION: CLERK

7.8.4 Insurance claim

The insurance claim for the stolen mower has been settled by Zurich (£1,170 less £250 excess).

7.8.5 Training

Members **Agreed** that the Clerk could attend the KALC Clerks' Conference on 24th September and the Finance Conference on 14th October 2020 at a cost of £50 plus VAT each. Both will be held on Zoom.

ACTION: CLERK

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 Association of Police and Crime Commissioners – Roads Enforcement and Safety Survey

The Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Scott, is supporting a national survey, the results of which will help shape the future of traffic law enforcement nationwide.

Cllr Trought **Agreed** to complete the survey.

ACTION: CLLR TROUGHT

8.2 National Highways and Transport – Survey 2020/21

Kent County Council is taking part in the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey on highways and transport services. There are six web-based surveys on specific issues: highway maintenance; accessibility; walking and cycling; public transport; road safety; and tackling congestion.

Members **Agreed** that a response would not be provided.

9. FINANCE

9.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31st August 2020 was **Noted**.

9.2 Income Received

The following income has been received since the last meeting:

HMRC – VAT recovered to 31/03/20	£4,743.69
Hunton Parish Hall Committee – FIT receipt	£829.79
Zurich Insurance – Insurance claim for stolen mower	£920.00

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.

9.3 Payments Made

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

DD – ICO – Data protection fee	£35.00
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – July	£453.30
300404 – Robert Cox – Footpath maintenance	£495.00

9.4 Cheques for Signature

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

300405 – KALC – Web Accessibility Regulations Workshop	£60.00
300406 – Hunton Parish Hall – Contribution towards running costs (second half)	£500.00
300407 – Sustainable Furniture (UK) Ltd – Picnic table	£835.00
300408 – Sharon Goodwin – Reimbursement for purchase of a bin (AJ Products - £106.80) and matting (Grassform – £212.52)	£319.32

Cheques 300407 and 300408 are to pay for items for the playing field, funded by a grant received from MBC in the last financial year. The Playing Field Committee applied for the grant on behalf of the Parish Council.

Cllr Heaton will send the receipt for the padlock and keys purchased for the container.

9.5 Internet Banking

At the last Parish Council meeting, the use of internet banking was approved and is in the process of being set up. Cllrs Goddard and Stanbridge were not able to attend the last meeting, so they could not give permission to become internet banking users. Cllrs Goddard and Stanbridge **Agreed** to become internet banking users.

ACTION: CLERK

9.6 Annual Review of Insurance

The Parish Council's insurance policy is due for renewal on 1st October 2020 for the year to 30th

September 2021. The current insurance provider, Zurich Municipal, has provided a quotation for £883.58 (2019: £865.93), which is only a small increase considering three claims were made in 2019. Came & Company was asked to provide a quotation but have concluded that they will not be able to provide a competitive quotation from the three insurers they approach.

Members **Agreed** that the insurance should be renewed with Zurich Municipal and cheque 300409 was written for £883.58, to be sent to Cllrs Heaton and Trought for signing. **ACTION: CLERK**

9.7 Review of Clerk's Salary

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) agreed new pay scales for 2020-2021 to be implemented from 1st April 2020. Members:

- **approved** the increase in the Clerk's salary (at SCP 12) in line with the NJC pay scales 2020-21.
- **approved** the Clerk's back pay of £68.22 for April to September 2020. Cheque 300410 was written, to be sent to Cllrs Heaton and Trought for signing.
- **agreed** to sign the standing order mandate to increase the Clerk's monthly salary payment from October 2020. **ACTION: CLERK**

10. PLANNING

10.1 Planning Decisions

Members **Noted** the following planning decision, made by Maidstone Borough Council:

10.1.1 Hilltop Farm, Shinglebarn Lane, West Farleigh – 20/503182/FULL

Conversion of an agricultural building to a single residential dwelling (previously approved under reference 19/505751/PNQCLA), including erection of a single storey rear extension.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Parish Council meeting is on Monday 16th November 2020 at 7:30pm.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:10pm.