

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 23RD NOVEMBER 2020 AT 7:30PM USING ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Five members of the public were in attendance. One member of the public left after the open session and a second left after Item 8.4.

OPEN SESSION:

A Marden resident asked to address the Parish Council regarding his investigation of a potential proposed development of Reed Court Farm which could impact on the river. A Hunton resident is also involved in looking at the Fridays Ltd proposal, particularly from an environmental standpoint. He has visited Fridays' other chicken farm at Bedgebury, along with other local residents and the Parish Council could also visit the site. Cllr Heaton advised that the parish councillors had been due to visit the Bedgebury farm, but it was on the first day of lockdown, so it had been cancelled.

Fridays have a website with details of the development, but a planning application has not been submitted yet. Many residents in Chainhurst and several from Hunton have joined the 'We Love Chainhurst' website, which also contains information. The residents wanted to make the Parish Council aware of both websites and the points being raised.

The development is of a large scale, and although it falls within Marden parish, there would be a wider impact in terms of highways and transport, the environment, the smell, etc.

Cllrs Heaton and Ward have both seen the websites, but until a planning application is submitted there is not much the Parish Council can do. Questions asked by Members were answered by the residents:

- *Have there had been problems at the other two Fridays' sites? Have there been complaints?* Yes, the Sissinghurst site had problems with the use of open-backed trailers carrying chicken manure. Residents of Sissinghurst complained. An application for a site at Horsmonden was withdrawn five years ago, having received considerable opposition. The Bedgebury site is more remote, is not very visible and does not have a river with an SSSI running alongside it.
- *The open-backed tractors were travelling from the old site at Knoxbridge, which is now the place where the manure will be taken to for power generation.* Yes. They will have to take the manure from Chainhurst in appropriate vehicles.
- *What will be the environmental impact on the river? Is there potential for any by-product to enter the river?* The applicant has indicated that they will put sustainable drainage in to prevent run-off from the sheds and roads from entering the river. They will need lagoons/ponds, but these will be near the river and the river does not always stay within its banks. In addition, there are Great Crested Newts on the site. There are currently wildlife corridors on the site connecting everything which will not exist if there is a fenced in chicken farm. The manure from 192,000 chickens is considerable, but Fridays have made an assumption that only 10% will be deposited on the land. It is also a large-scale development - the chicken sheds will be 250m x 32m x 8m in size which will impact the landscape.
- *If the plan is to use SuDS (sustainable drainage systems), these do not provide treatment, only attenuation, so how would SuDS treat any pollution?* The run-off will be collected in ponds. Presumably, the application when submitted will outline the treatment and environmental impact. The size of the operation requires an environmental impact assessment, but the applicant has not even given indication of an environmental statement, only that they have spoken to MBC Planning about the environmental aspects. It could be why the application has not been submitted yet as they are not currently complying with environmental impact regulations. The applicant has commissioned a study comparing arable run-off to poultry run-off, which states that the numbers are equal, but the scientific back-up has not been available to review.
- *The two are not comparable as arable run-off is laden with phosphates and poultry run-off is ammonia laden.* Yes, we will have to wait for the detail. Aside from the ecology, anglers also use the river as far as Yalding and the river is used for sports at Yalding. Details have been sent to Yalding and Collier Street parish councils too as the impact will be wider than the farm.
- *Was there a distinct smell at the Bedgebury farm when you visited?* There was a smell within 100m of

the sheds, no further than that, very strong in the shed. When the chickens are culled in the shed, there is a 2-3 week clean out period and over 2-3 days there is apparently a very bad smell.

- *Was the manure being removed on a daily basis?* Yes.
- *Were there noise emissions from fans etc?* The noise was fine apart from a truck delivering feed.
- *What happens to the detritus from the annual clean?* Believe it is treated the same way as normal waste would be when the birds are living there.
- *Are the chickens kept on sawdust?* Suspect it is a manufactured absorbent material, which will also be removed as well.
- *Did MBC say there was no need for an environmental impact assessment?* Cllr Parfitt-Reid asked the applicant, who said they had discussed the environmental statement with MBC. There is no environmental impact assessment as yet.
- *What is the Marden Parish Council stance on this?* A dozen residents and the planning consultant attended the October parish council meeting and spoke during the open session. It was not discussed formally by the parish council at the latest meeting as the application has not been submitted.
- *If the applicant wants to divert the footpaths on the land it could take 2-3 years. They will not be able to put fences up until they are diverted. KCC PROW is completely unaware. They seem to intend to do that separately. Maidstone Ramblers will object when a planning application exists. The applicant has indicated they will apply for a temporary change to the footpath while they apply for approval for the footpath. This is usually time limited for a week, other than for construction purposes. They definitely could not operate where one footpath is currently as it would pass through a chicken shed.*

Cllr Heaton stated that parish councillors will rearrange a visit to the Bedgebury site. Cllr Thomas noted there was a recent article in the Kent Messenger, but it was not very complimentary to the company. The Parish Council will wait for the application to be submitted. Cllr Heaton thanked the residents for the information.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence (all Members present).

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 21ST SEPTEMBER 2020 & THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 19TH OCTOBER 2020

The minutes of the meetings held on 21st September and 19th October 2020 had been previously distributed. Members approved the minutes. 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 (20/07/20) – The Tregothnan Estate has taken down the dead Oak tree on Barn Hill. Cllr Thomas noted that the Oak tree on Barn Hill had been removed very skillfully.

Item 7.4 (21/09/20) – The bin for the car park has been ordered, to arrive in December.

Item 8.1 (21/09/20) – Cllr Trought completed the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners Roads Enforcement and Safety Survey.

Item 9.5 (21/09/20) – All Members are set up as internet banking users.

Item 9.6 (21/09/20) – The insurance has been renewed with Zurich Municipal.

Item 9.7 (21/09/20) – The standing order mandate has been put in place for the increase to the Clerk's salary.

Item 4 (19/10/20) – The quote from P Allison & Sons, for the demolition of the old cricket pavilion, was accepted.

Item 5 (19/10/20) – The constitution of the Peace Cottages Charity was obtained.

6. POLICE

PCSO Vasey had provided the following crime report:

05/10/20 – Cricket Club – Burglary

21/10/20 – East Street – Travellers in field without permission

03/11/20 – Hill Top – Vehicle hit another vehicle and drove off

10/11/20 – Redwall Lane – Burglary

Anti-social behaviour:

04/11/20 – Hunton Hill – Nuisance vehicle/motorcycle. Youths driving without helmets at speed.

Cllr Stanbridge added that number plates had been stolen from a car parked at the end of Grove Lane on 22nd/23rd November.

7. LOCAL COMMUNITY

7.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The Chairman of the Committee, Steve Jones, provided the following update:

Three quotes for the demolition of the old cricket pavilion were considered at the Parish Council meeting on 19th October, and P Allison & Sons Ltd was selected. After the company agreed to hold the quote until spring/early summer 2021, the Clerk sent an order for the work. The demolition work will be undertaken in the spring, which will give time for the services to be disconnected. The recovery of any asbestos will take place before spring.

The Committee had discussed the potential allocation of the MBC Business Rates grant (received by the Parish Council for the new cricket pavilion) at its last meeting.

7.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

Cllr Goddard has spoken to Jennie Watson at KCC Highways about the speed limits in the village. She has asked the Parish Council to discuss the speed limits it would like in the village, on East Street, West Street and Hunton Hill, then she will consider the proposal and whether it is worth taking forward. Any speed limit change requires a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), which costs £3,000, but all changes could be covered by the same TRO. Cllr Goddard suggested the following:

- Starting in Yalding, it is the national speed limit from Cheveney Farm to round the corner from Scotts Farm. The 40mph limit from Grove Lane in Hunton could be extended round the sharp corner near the river.
- 40 mph limit to Grove Lane.
- 30mph/20mph limits past the school.
- By South Lodge, 40 mph to the Lughorse Lane junction.
- Change from the national speed limit to a 40 mph limit on Hunton Hill, up to Amsbury Road. It is likely that Jennie Watson will support this as she feels the current national speed limit on this road is too high.
- On East Street there is a big pinch point near Court Lodge and also the big S-bend. Suggest 40 mph from the bottom of Hunton Hill, past the Amsbury Farm corner to just before the narrow section, then 30 mph, then 40mph between the narrow section and the S-bend, then 30mph to the River Beult. The speed monitoring survey on East Street showed an average speed of 33 mph.

Jennie Watson will take notice if a coherent plan is suggested. She considers how close houses are to the road - if they are close, a 30pmh limit is more likely.

Cllr Goddard asked that Members email him with any views on the suggestions he has made before the next Parish Council meeting, when the proposal can be considered further. If changes are made to speed limits, there will be a cost to putting up new signage, but it should not be too expensive.

ACTION: ALL MEMBERS

Cllr Goddard raised the issue of parking at the end of Grove Lane which is causing an issue. According to Rule 243 of the Highway Code, vehicles should not park within 10 metres of a junction. Grove Lane is unadopted from the letter box. Members **Agreed** that the best course of action would be to talk to residents first, to make them aware. Cllr Goddard agreed to speak with the residents on Grove Lane.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

7.3 **Tree & Pond Warden**

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

A Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) is completed every 18 months. Silva Arboriculture Ltd did the latest assessment in October 2020. The report identifies less problems than at the previous assessment. Three trees need to be dealt with within 3 months:

- Ash tree belonging to Hunton Engineering – a limb has fallen down but not dangerously. Hunton Engineering are aware and will action it.
- Oak tree on the perimeter of the cricket ground – it has deadwood in the crown and lower limbs.
- Poplar tree in the corner of the field – it has split and one limb has fallen partly into the adjacent field on to another tree. The report recommends taking the other limb down in case it falls into the road, but it may fall against another tree.

Mr Summersgill and Cllr Heaton will look at the oak and poplar trees and decide the action required.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON

The report also recommended action on two trees within 6 months. This involves removing moving minor twigs from the lime trees near the Village Hall which the caretaker could do.

The next inspection will be due in April 2022.

Hoods Tree Services Ltd have removed 2-3m from the top of the Turkey Oak tree, and 2m from the side.

They have done a good job in taking the weight off the tree and restoring the shape. It will be necessary to keep inspecting the tree, but it can remain as a feature on the field and will not have to be removed.

Mr Summersgill has been meeting the Tree & Pond Wardens for training on Zoom every Wednesday. He receives the presentations, which provide good reference information.

8. **PARISH MATTERS**

8.1 **Coronavirus**

Steve and Sue Wyles at Huntonwatch have not received any contact from villagers asking for assistance since the end of August. They will let the Parish Council know if the situation changes. The mobile phone has been topped up in case it is required.

8.2 **Parish Council Meeting Dates 2021**

Members **Agreed** to the following meeting dates for 2021:

Monday 18th January 2021

Monday 15th March 2021

Monday 10th May 2021 (Annual Meeting)

Monday 17th May 2021 (Annual Parish Meeting)

Monday 19th July 2021

Monday 20th September 2021

Monday 15th November 2021

All meetings to be held at 7:30pm.

8.3 **Parish Councillors**

Members did not have any issues to raise.

8.4 **Storage Container**

Cllr Heaton has received quotes from Mr Lawrence at Gennings for second-hand storage containers - a 10-foot container would cost £1,600 and a 20-foot container would be £2,000. Prices include delivery and containers are painted green. The intention was to situate a container behind the Football Club changing rooms but there is unlikely to be enough room and it would probably need to be craned in so the car park may be a better location. Members agreed that the 20-foot option is likely to be more suitable based on the number of items it would need to contain, as long as it is not an eyesore. Cllr Heaton **Agreed** to look up additional prices for comparison.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON

8.5 **Website Accessibility**

The Clerk has obtained costs and information from five website providers and has spoken to all apart from one. These providers were selected as they assure compliance with the Website Accessibility Regulations and are more specific to parish councils.

After some discussion, Members **Agreed** to select the Parishcouncil.net Bronze package at a cost of £150 for the website build plus £100 per annum. However, the Clerk will speak to other parish clerks who use

Parishcouncil.net first to establish how easy it is to maintain the websites and the responsiveness of the company. ACTION: CLERK
The Clerk has not produced an accessibility statement for the Parish Council sections of the village website as the Parish Council will now be creating a new website. There will be an accessibility statement for the new website when it is in operation.

8.6 Clerk's Report

8.6.1 Security Lights

The replacement security lights have been installed.

8.6.2 CCTV Maintenance

The annual maintenance of the CCTV system has been undertaken.

8.6.3 Training

The Clerk attended the KALC Clerks' Conference on 24th September and Finance Conference on 14th October. There was some overlap of content, but both were good and well worth attending.

9. FINANCE

9.1 Budget Monitoring Report

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

9.2 Income Received

The following income has been received since the last meeting:

MBC – Business Rates grant	£10,000.00
King George's Field Hunton – Match funding for SIPA grant	£83.89
MBC – Parish Services Scheme (second 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.

9.3 Payments Made

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

SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – August	£453.30
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – September	£453.30
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge	£18.00
300414 – Cancelled cheque	£0.00
300415 – Yalding Forge – Tube sleeves for Barn Hill finger post repair	£122.00
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – October	£464.67

9.4 Electronic Payments

Members **Agreed** that the following payments be approved. Cllrs Ward and Stanbridge will authorise the payments set up in Unity Trust Bank using online banking:

KALC – Clerk's Conference	£60.00
KALC – Finance Conference	£60.00
E.ON – Street lighting electricity	£14.73
PKF Littlejohn LLP – Limited assurance review of AGAR 2019/20	£240.00
Sharon Goodwin – Reimbursement for purchase of bin (Broxap)	£244.73
Q-Tec Solutions Ltd – Annual CCTV maintenance	£295.20
Hoods Tree Services Ltd – Reduction of Turkey Oak tree	£720.00
Silva Arboriculture – Visual Tree Assessment	£435.00
Q-Tec Solutions Ltd – Installation of security lights	£1,008.00

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

The specification for the two-year contract for the maintenance of the hedge and verges near the permissive path on West Street was sent to Robert Cox, who provided a quote before the deadline. The price has increased by just £15 on the previous contract.

Members **Agreed** to accept the quote.

ACTION: CLERK

9.6 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) & Audit 2019/20

Following the audit of the 2019/20 AGAR, PKF Littlejohn LLP has given Hunton Parish Council a ‘clean’ External Auditor Report and Certificate, with no matters for concern. Members considered and **Approved** the External Auditor Report and Certificate.

The statutory ‘Notice of conclusion of the audit’ and audited AGAR is displayed on the notice boards and parish website from 23rd November 2020.

9.7 MBC Business Rates Grant

Cllr Heaton stated that, following the receipt of the £10,000 Business Rates Grant from MBC for the cricket pavilion, at its last meeting, the Parish Council considered using some of the money as a grant to the Playing Field Committee. This would be used by the Committee to provide grants to the three sports clubs as they have suffered from problems as a result of Covid-19. Advice was sought from the Parish Council’s Internal Auditor, at the suggestion of the KALC Advisor. The Parish Council has powers under s19 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 in respect of the provision of recreational facilities. The Parish Council can provide the grant if it is satisfied that the spending is reasonable in relation to the purpose/benefit and obtains evidence as it considers fit.

Based on the figures provided by the clubs so far, the grant is likely to be in the region of £3,000 in total, but the Football Club still needs to provide a definitive amount. Once all the figures have been received by the Playing Field Committee at its next meeting, the Committee will request the grant from the Parish Council at the January 2021 meeting.

Members agreed that the sports clubs make a large contribution towards the maintenance of the recreation ground and it would be appropriate to give the Playing Field Committee a grant once all the information has been submitted.

Cllr Heaton confirmed to the Chairman of the Playing Field Committee that the Committee could put other capital projects forward for further grants in future.

10. PLANNING

10.1 Planning Application

10.1.1 Wheelwrights, Hunton Hill - 20/505048/FULL

Erection of a detached garage/workshop.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

10.2 Planning Decisions

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

10.2.1 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.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

10.2.2 2 The Square, Hunton - 20/503320/FULL

Demolition of existing porch and erection of a replacement porch.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

10.2.3 The Grove, Grove Lane - 20/503724/FULL

Repairs and alterations to outbuilding, including rebuilding of former wall attached to main dwelling, and installation of a pergola, patio door and hot tub.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.
Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

10.2.4 The Grove, Grove Lane - 20/503725/LBC

Listed Building Consent for repairs and alterations to outbuilding, including rebuilding of former wall attached to main dwelling, and installation of pergola and patio door.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.
Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

10.2.5 Scuffits, Elphicks Farm, Water Lane - 20/503735/FULL

Conversion of existing garage workshop and store to a one bedroom apartment for use ancillary to the main dwelling.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.
Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Parish Council meeting is on Monday 18th January 2021 at 7:30pm.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:20pm.