

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 29TH MARCH 2021 AT 7:30PM USING ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Three members of the public were in attendance. One left after Item 9.2 and a second left after Item 9.3.

OPEN SESSION:

A resident raised several items for information, relating to neighbouring parishes:

- The resident has received a letter from MBC advising of new documents pertaining to the Reed Court Farm planning application, with a 30-day review period. The applicant has been talking to the Environment Agency, Natural England and other agencies. The Clerk has also received a letter.
- In relation to Clock House Farm (CHF), there are concerns about the polytunnels at Rankins Farm. They were due to be removed between November and March in line with planning permission requirements but have not been taken down. Linton Parish Council have complained, MBC Planning Enforcement have visited and KCC Highways have asked for more detail. The resident's concern is the view from the Greensand Ridge. CHF have apologised for not removing the polytunnels but said it was due to Brexit and not having enough staff. They now want to keep the polytunnels to prolong the growing season and protect the crops from the frost. Linton Parish Council is objecting on visual and highway terms. CHF have said the traffic would reduce as they would not need to transport workers to take down and put up the polytunnels, but KCC believes traffic will increase if the growing season is being prolonged. Cllr Heaton advised that the MBC policy on polytunnels is to take them down, and the labour involved in taking them down is not intensive, so the CHF argument is weak.
- In Yalding, Clock House Farm on Kenward Road have put in a planning application to build polyhouses, which are all year-round heated plastic greenhouses with pumps and lighting. The traffic could increase considerably through the quiet period from November to March. The Environment Agency (EA) has been alerted as it is on a flood plain. A planning application was submitted in November, permission has not been granted, but the work has started anyway. The EA has objected twice and asked MBC to put a stop to the digging. Yalding Parish Council has no objection to the planning application as long as the EA is satisfied, but a number of Yalding residents are concerned about the noise and light disturbance. Cllr Heaton suggested the issue could be raised with the local MP.

Another resident raised concerns about a lady walking up and down Hunton Hill, which is dangerous for her and other road users. Some Members were aware of the issue, as are the lady's family. Members **Agreed** that the concerns should be notified to the family if contact details can be obtained and the PCSO could also be contacted.

ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Heaton expressed his sadness on hearing of the death of Cllr Gary Thomas. Members agreed that it was a very great loss to the Parish Council and the village. Members agreed that they are happy to make donations, outside of the Parish Council, to the Stroke Association. Cllr Heaton was also sorry to hear of the Clerk's recent bereavement.

Cllrs Ward and Lee have decided not to stand in the upcoming elections in May. Cllr Heaton thanked them both for all their hard work and their participation in meetings.

1. APOLOGIES

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

2. FILMING AND RECORDING

The members of the public did not wish to film or 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. PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY

The sad loss of Gary Thomas has resulted in a casual vacancy on the Parish Council. In accordance with Section 89(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, where the vacancy occurs within six months before the day on which the councillor whose office is vacant would regularly have retired, an election shall not be held under Section 89(1) of the Act, and the vacancy will be filled at the next election of councillors, to be held on 6th May 2021. The Council can choose to fill the vacancy for the period until that election. Members **Agreed** that the vacancy should not be filled prior to the election.

5. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 18TH JANUARY 2021

The minutes of the meetings held on 18th January 2021 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.

The Clerk has provided previous meeting minutes to Cllr Heaton for signing at home as all have been approved.

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

Item 8.2 – KCC PROW agreed that it is their responsibility to fix the damaged railings on the bridge to the permissive footpath and will organise the repair.

7. POLICE

PCSO Vasey has joined Cranbrook Police Station, as of 16th February 2021, to work with the Problem-Solving Task Force for a period of three months. This is something that all PCSOs have to do, but hopefully he will be returning after the three-month period.

In the absence of PCSO Vasey, the e-watch website was reviewed to find crimes logged since the last Parish Council meeting:

24/01/21 - East Street - Somebody drove through a hedge causing damage.

28/01/21 - East Street - Somebody broke the mixer and cut the electrics of DJ gear in stables.

12-13/02/21 - East Street - Somebody painted graffiti on a new fence panel.

20-21/02/21 - Vicarage Road - Somebody stole an inflatable hot tub from a residential garden.

Steve and Sue Wyles from Huntonwatch have provided the following report:

Our PCSO has been seconded to Cranbrook for 3 months leaving Hunton without a designated PCSO. Whilst others will 'fill the gap when needed' we have experienced a significant reduction in police contact and much less of a visible police presence in the village.

A number of outhouses and sheds were broken into during the storms overnight on 10th/11th March in the Hilltop/Barn Hill/Buston Manor area of the village. We hope that this does not signal the start of a mini crimewave like that we experienced a year or so ago.

There have been a few reports of possible intruders on private land. An East Street resident believes waste bins may have been used to gain access to a flat roof on their property and people with torches were seen on farmland in the Bishops Lane area. Police believe this latter incident may have been a 'lamping' trip and in neither case were there any reports of damage or items missing. Cllr Heaton noted that when passing the recreation ground after dark he had seen people on the field with lamps.

There has been a spate of graffiti around the village. A number of purple paint marks on fence posts, and what looks like a bicycle painted on walls/fences, appeared in the East Street/Redwall Lane area in late February. There is also purple paint on the disused phone box in West Street. The marks seem to follow a circular route around the village which has been used by cyclists in the past which may or may not be relevant.

8. LOCAL COMMUNITY

8.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The Chairman of the Committee, Steve Jones, raised three issues:

- The location of the new storage container – to be covered under Item 9.4.
- A request from Hunton Wanderers Cricket Club (HWCC), through the Playing Field Committee, for a

contribution towards a replacement mower.

- Items of interest about the playing field.

Mr Jones provided a paper which gives the background to the requirement for a replacement mower and the funding requirement, based on second-hand mowers seen on eBay. A new mower would cost approximately £3,500, but a good second-hand mower could be purchased for around £800. It will be insured and kept securely. The Clerk advised that a grant could be provided under s19 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (rather than Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972). Members agreed that HWCC keep the cricket pitch and wicket immaculate, enhancing the recreation ground for the village, and **Agreed** a contribution of £700. Mr Jones thanked the Parish Council.

ACTION: CLERK

The annual play area inspection report has been received. The most important points raised are:

- Remedial work is required on the multiplay equipment. The platform is being replaced.
- The nest swing is too low and needs to be raised.
- The safety surface under the cradle swings needs replacement. Quotes will be obtained.

A picnic table needs to be installed which a small working party will do in the next few weeks. A post has been taken down near the Community Orchard as it was resting on the fence, so it is no longer a safety hazard.

Organised sport can recommence on 29th March. The Football Club has their first game on 3rd April and the cricket season begins on 8th May. Hopefully, the Bowls Club will also start soon.

Cllr Heaton advised that his tractor had been fixed so he could lay the scalplings to fix the holes in the car park.

8.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

Cllr Goddard has circulated a briefing paper to Members on three speed limit reduction schemes and the relevant government guidance. For the Parish Council to make a robust decision, it needs to be guided by KCC. According to the guidance, for a 30mph limit to be put in place there should be 20 houses close to the road. In terms of East Street, Jennie Watson of KCC Highways does not feel that it warrants a 30mph limit as it does not meet this guidance due to the lack of development, but a 40mph limit would be possible. After discussion about the merits of the schemes, Members **Agreed** that the best option at the moment would be for a 40mph speed limit on East Street, as it would bring the speed limit in line with the rest of the village. It would start north of 'Wheelwrights' on Hunton Hill and extend to the bends on East Street. The cost for two pairs of 40mph entry signs and eight repeater signs would be £4,040. In addition, a Traffic Regulation Order would cost £3,000 and temporary traffic lights during installation could cost around £2,000, so the total cost would be approximately £9,000. Cllr Goddard advised that KCC have a huge backlog, so the work would not be done this year. Half of the cost could be ringfenced this year and half next year.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

Cllr Goddard **Agreed** to ask Jennie Watson whether the cost of a road closure to install a 'Road narrows' sign on the narrow section of East Street by the Redwall Lane junction (estimated at £1,000) could be incorporated in the cost of the 40mph speed limit work if done at the same time. The sign itself would cost £700.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

Cllr Goddard has been contacted by a resident to say that a lorry has further eroded the verge near the school and asked if kerbing in that area could be considered again. KCC took it off the works schedule some time ago. Members **Agreed** that Cllr Goddard should contact Jennie Watson.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

Cllr Ward advised that the '7.5T' sign on the bend on East Street was taken out. The post and sign have been erected again but the sign is on the wrong side of the post. Cllr Lee has seen it and will try and fix it.

ACTION: CLLR LEE

Cllr Heaton noted that a response has been received from Wares Farm concerning the complaint from the Parish Council regarding the lack of signage which allows HGVs to turn west towards Hunton. Linton Parish Council is also concerned about this.

8.3 Tree & Pond Warden

The Tree & Pond Warden, Mike Summersgill, reported that he had been called out by a neighbour as people were cutting down trees on George Street, but it was not found to be the case.

A tree which was leaning on the BT lines outside the Village Hall has been removed as a matter of emergency as it could have brought the lines down.

Mr Summersgill and Cllr Heaton have both looked at the two trees requiring attention according to the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA). There is no risk of the Poplar tree in the far corner falling on the road, so

no work is required. The Oak tree needs some deadwood removing, so Mr Summersgill will contact Hood's Tree Services to look at it.

Cllr Heaton was surprised the VTA did not pick up on the tree near the Village Hall leaning on the cables. Regarding ponds, Mr Summersgill advised that they had been very full in the winter but are starting to reduce now.

9. PARISH MATTERS

9.1 Coronavirus

Steve and Sue Wyles of Huntonwatch are continuing to offer the meds collection service but the take up this time around has been far less than last year, and only seven collections have been arranged so far.

9.2 Parish Councillors

Cllr Lee noted that, down Lughorse Lane, work has started to fence in a field and a proper kissing gate will be put in for the footpath. Cllr Heaton advised that the KCC Footpaths Officer is moving the footpath closer to the driveway than it is currently.

Cllr Heaton noted that there was a lot of water on Barn Hill and Lughorse Lane.

Cllr Heaton has collected the sleeve for the finger post at the bottom of Barn Hill, which is painted with red oxide and needs painting black. Some of the wood on the post is rotten so he will replace the boards. Cllr Heaton also suggested the purchase of screw on acrylic letters to replace the transfers currently on the post which would cost in the region of £70. Members **Agreed** to the purchase of the wood and letters.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON

9.3 Culvert on Grove Lane

Cllr Goddard obtained two quotes to rebuild the culvert, as the culvert at 90 degrees to Grove Lane has collapsed (but the diagonal pipe is clear), but they are expensive. A third contractor has advised against installing a new pipe due to the excessive cost and has recommended the fabrication of a curved section of pipe to divert the stream to the diagonal pipe which would be significantly cheaper. Cllr Goddard could ask Betts whether they would consider doing the work when they are installing other drainage, perhaps at cost price.

Members agreed that a more reasonable price would need to be obtained to rectify the culvert.

9.4 Storage Container

Cllr Heaton and Steve Jones, as Chairman of the King George V Playing Field, have discussed the location of the new storage container, due to concerns from the Bowls Club about the proposed siting. Mr Jones had previously met ten members of the Bowls Club on site.

The conclusion is that the best location for the container, in terms of security and accessibility, would be parallel to the other container, on the other side of the path to the Football Club changing rooms. It would not obscure the view of the CCTV cameras, nor restrict access to the Football Club. In response to concerns about the visual aspect of the container, a climbing plant or evergreens could be planted in front of the container to soften the appearance and it would not look too different to the appearance at the moment as it would be in front of the existing container. Mr Jones will inform the three sports clubs and ask if they have any concerns about the location, with five working days to respond. Cllr Heaton will order the container after this time if there are no objections. The Playing Field Committee will pay one-third of the cost and the Parish Council two-thirds.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON

9.5 Street light on Bensted Close

Q-Tec Solutions have been out to look at the street light on Bensted Close as it is not currently working. It could be that the bulb is faulty, but Q-Tec are unable to guarantee this and due to the age of the light, the bulbs are now difficult to locate and have increased in cost quite considerably since the last replacement in 2017. The advice is to update the existing light fitting with an LED lamp head as simply replacing the bulb may not resolve the problem. The replacement of the bulb would cost £200 plus VAT, taking into account call out and installation charges and supply and installation of an LED lamp head would be £420 plus VAT.

Members **Agreed** to replace the lamp head with an LED lamp head.

ACTION: CLERK

9.6 Website

The Clerk, Cllr Ward and Cllr Stanbridge held a Zoom meeting to complete the Website Development Brief required by Parishcouncil.net for the new website. The Clerk has contacted Parishcouncil.net but has

not received any response as yet, she will continue trying to obtain contact. Cllr Ward has some photos which could be used on the website and has put a call out for additional photos. ACTION: CLERK

9.7 Parish Council Election

MBC have sent an email to parish clerks with instructions for the forthcoming Parish Council election on 6th May 2021, which has been provided to Members. The Clerk has provided nomination papers to those councillors wishing to stand and will need to receive them in time for her appointment on 31st March with Electoral Registration at MBC. ACTION: ALL MEMBERS WISHING TO STAND

Cllr Heaton noted that if more than seven people submit nomination papers there will be an election.

9.8 Annual Parish Council Meeting/Annual Parish Meeting

Annual Parish Council Meeting:

The Annual Parish Council Meeting (APCM) is due to be held on 10th May. However, due to the Parish Council elections being held on 6th May, if the election is contested, it would not allow the three clear days required to summon councillors to the meeting. In an election year the APCM has to be held within 14 days of councillors taking office, which is four days after the election, so the APCM would have to be held by 24th May. Members **Agreed** to change the date of the APCM to 17th May 2021.

Annual Parish Meeting:

The Annual Parish Meeting (APM) was due to be held on 17th May. With the change of date of the APCM, the APM could be held on 24th May (it should be held between 1st March and 1st June) but holding the APM could be problematic as the legislation allowing virtual meetings expires on 6th May, and the government has confirmed it will not be extended, which means it would need to be a face-to-face meeting. Members **Agreed** that an APM should not be held this year, due to lack of activity from most of the groups and clubs due to Covid and the number of people who could potentially attend the meeting. Although the APM is usually organised by the Parish Council, there is no statutory duty for a parish council to call an APM, as the Chairman, two councillors or six local government electors can call it.

Cllr Lee will put an article in the Hunton Herald to publicise the fact that the APM will not be held this year. ACTION: CLLR LEE

9.9 Clerk's Report

The Clerk would like to attend the KALC Workshop 'All About the AGAR' on 14th April 2021, at a cost of £35 plus VAT. Members **Agreed**. ACTION: CLERK

MBC have agreed the precept of £26,338 for 2021/22. It will be received on 9th April 2021.

The National Non-Domestic Rate demand notice has been received for the cricket pavilion – it is £0 after Small Business Rate Relief has been applied.

10. POLICIES

10.1 Standing Orders

The Parish Council last reviewed its Standing Orders on 16th March 2020. The NALC Model Standing Orders, on which the Parish Council's Standing Orders are based, have not changed since that time. Members reviewed the existing Standing Orders and **Agreed** to adopt them with no changes.

10.2 Financial Regulations

The Parish Council last reviewed its Financial Regulations on 16th March 2020. The NALC Model Financial Regulations, on which the Parish Council's Financial Regulations are based, have not changed since that time.

Members reviewed the existing Financial Regulations and **Agreed** to adopt them with no changes.

10.3 Public Participation Policy

The Parish Council adopted the Public Participation Policy on 10th July 2008. The policy has been updated, with few changes.

Members reviewed the revised Public Participation Policy and **Agreed** to adopt it.

10.4 Press & Media Policy

The Parish Council adopted the Media Policy on 13th May 2010. The policy has been significantly updated, using the Society of Local Council Clerks model policy as the basis, with some amendment. Members reviewed the revised Press & Media Policy and **Agreed** to adopt it.

11. FINANCE

11.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 28th February 2021 was **Noted**.

Members **Agreed** that a £5,000 Road Signs Fund should be earmarked from general reserves in 2020/21 and another £5,000 in 2021/22.

11.2 Income Received

The following income has been received since the last meeting.

Hunton Parish Hall Committee – FIT receipts £1,227.01

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.

11.3 Payments Made

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

SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – January £464.47

11.4 Electronic Payments

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

Action with Communities in Rural Kent – Annual membership subscription £55.00

Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses/Postage/Phone top up £52.35

Hood's Tree Services Ltd – Coppicing the lime tree in front of the Village Hall £420.00

Members agreed that the Clerk should also set up the following payment when the relevant bank account details have been received:

Hunton Wanderers Cricket Club – Contribution towards a replacement mower £700.00

11.5 Parish Services Grant 2021/22

The proposal from MBC is to increase the Parish Services Scheme Grant by 2% for 2021/22, from £1,601 in 2020/21 to £1,639 in 2021/22. Members were provided with the assumptions underlying the calculation of the grant.

Members noted the increase in the Parish Services Scheme Grant for 2021/22.

12. PLANNING

12.1 Planning Applications

12.1.1 2 The Square - 21/500883/FULL

New pitched roof and changes to elevations of the existing garage.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

12.1.2 24 Bensted Close - 21/500850/FULL

Erection of a single storey infill extension to link annex to main dwelling.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

12.1.3 The Old Stables, Salters Cross, Vicarage Road, Yalding - 21/501149/FULL

Installation of an insulated metal chimney.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

12.2 New Road Name

MBC have been in contact regarding an application to register six new dwellings at the Wilsons Yard site.

The development has one new road which requires a street name. The developer has proposed the street name Wilsons Yard. MBC have asked for the Parish Council's views/recommendation.

Members **Agreed** to the suggested name of Wilsons Yard.

ACTION: CLERK

12.3 Planning Decisions

Members **Noted** the following planning decision, made by Maidstone Borough Council since the last Planning Committee meeting:

12.3.1 Old Savage Farm, East Street - 21/500103/PNQCLA

Prior Notification for change of use of agricultural buildings to 2 no. residential dwelling and associated operational development. For its prior approval to: - Transport and Highways impacts of the development - Noise impacts of the development - Contamination risks on the site - Flooding risks on the site - Whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the use of the building to change from agricultural use to C3 (dwellinghouses) - Design and external appearance impacts on the building, and - Provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses.

Parish Council recommendation: No comment.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Refused.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Parish Council meeting is on Monday 17th May 2021 at 7:30pm.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 8:48pm.