

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 17TH MAY 2021 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Cllr D Heaton in the Chair, Cllrs J Goddard, T Stanbridge and M Summersgill, and Mrs S Goodwin, Clerk.

IN ATTENDANCE: Borough Cllr R Webb and County Cllr/Borough Cllr S Webb. One candidate for co-option and three members of the public were also in attendance. Two members of the public left after the Open Session and one left after Item 12.1.

OPEN SESSION:

Cllr Heaton introduced Matthew Woodhams, an architect working on a development at Burford Farm. Mr Woodhams advised that he is representing GHK Developments for the Burford Farm development site on Redwall Lane, which is just inside the Hunton boundary. Permission has been granted for seven units on the site (back in 2018), but only six will be developed, three units at the front and three behind. The steel-framed barn on the site is being retained. The units will be black weather-boarded with clay tiles. The street scene will remain as it is at present and the orchard front will be retained. Some of the buildings on the site are reaching the end of their life; the redevelopment is sympathetic. The houses will be 3, 4 and 5-bed properties as MBC did not want smaller units. There is no social housing. Biodiversity measures are being considered: bat surveys will be carried out; bird boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog houses will be installed; and gaps will be left for wildlife. Air source heat pumps will be used, and rainwater will be recycled.

The development is at the pre-application stage with MBC, with the planning application due to be submitted in June. The Parish Council will likely be consulted on the application in July.

County Cllr Webb noted that the number of units would be below the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) level, but Mr Woodhams advised that as the development is greater than 100 square metres, CIL will be payable.

Mr Woodhams provided information on the development and will send the plans through in due course. He would be happy to attend another Parish Council meeting in future to discuss them or be contacted to deal with any concerns.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Goddard proposed, and Cllr Summersgill seconded, that Cllr Heaton be elected as Chairman for the forthcoming year. All councillors were in agreement and Cllr Heaton completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Proper Officer.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Stanbridge proposed, and Cllr Goddard seconded, that Cllr Trought be elected as Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year. All councillors were in agreement. Cllr Trought was unable to attend the meeting but had confirmed prior to the meeting that she was happy to be elected as Vice Chairman again. Cllr Trought has already completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Proper Officer.

3. PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCIES

There are two vacancies on the Parish Council. All Members **Agreed** that Sue Pinks and Iain Simmons should be co-opted as parish councillors. Mrs Pinks signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and joined the rest of the meeting as a Member. Mr Simmons was unable to attend the meeting and will be asked to sign the Declaration prior to the next Parish Council meeting.

ACTION: CLERK / CLLR SIMMONS

4. MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

All Members elected in the recent uncontested parish election, and present at the meeting, completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Proper Officer.

5. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr A Trought.

Apologies had also been received from Borough Cllr Parfitt-Reid and Steve Jones (Chairman of the King George V Playing Field Committee).

6. FILMING AND RECORDING

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

7. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

7.1 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

7.2 Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

8. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Following the election and co-option of Members, the MBC Monitoring Officer requires all Members to complete a new Disclosable Pecuniary Interests form. All Members present at the meeting completed the form. Cllr Trought has already completed the form. Cllr Simmons will complete the form outside of the meeting.

ACTION: CLERK / CLLR SIMMONS

9. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 29TH MARCH 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2021 had been previously distributed. Members approved the minutes. The Chairman signed off the official copy of the minutes as well as the minutes from meetings held virtually between March 2020 and January 2021 and Planning Committee meetings held between December 2019 and February 2021.

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

Item 8.2 (18/01/21 meeting) – KCC PROW have not repaired the damaged railings on the bridge to the permissive footpath yet - the Clerk has chased them up. A parishioner has kindly carried out a temporary repair.

Open Session – The Clerk contacted the PCSO about the lady walking up Hunton Hill, who advised contacting the Kent Community Wardens, which was done. The Kent Community Wardens team leader said they will contact the lady and her family to provide help.

Item 9.5 - The lamp in the streetlight on Bensted Close has been replaced with an LED lamp.

11. POLICE

11.1 Police

PCSO Paul Vasey has been moved to a task force permanently – the area will be covered by PCSO Megan Mcleod from now on. PCSO Mcleod has provided the following crime report for the period between 29th March and 14th May:

- One report of a nuisance youth, drunk seen heading towards King George V Playing Field.
- Two reports of suspicious events – one male knocking on a door and one cloning plates.
- One report of a woman being followed.

Local officers have conducted high visibility patrols in Hunton and the surrounding area, giving reassurance to local people, victims and witnesses, and collected CCTV from shops as requested by officers.

Cllr Heaton asked County Cllr Webb if he could enquire about increasing the number of PCSOs in the area as Hunton's PCSO covers a large area. The PCSOs also seem to move on very quickly.

11.2 Huntonwatch

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

Sadly, as the Parish Council will already know, our PCSO Paul Vasey has moved to pastures knew. We have details of his replacement and will endeavour to make contact soon. We are sorry to see Paul go since he was the most visible and proactive PCSO we have had for many years, and he always responded quickly to any issues that we raised. We wish him well in his new role based at Cranbrook.

Some weeks ago, we had a series of out-building break-ins in the Buston Manor/White House area of the village. These were reported to the police by the Huntonwatch member who discovered them.

One female dog walker was alarmed by the behaviour of a man who had parked his car in Bishops Lane and appeared to be following her. We were walking our dogs at the time and had seen the man in his car. It was very early in the morning and something did not seem right. When the dog walker mentioned his behaviour to us, we went to his car and asked him to move on - which he did. The incident and details of the man and his vehicle were reported to the police who later contacted the dog walker to offer advice on keeping safe.

There has been a noticeable increase in dog fouling on pavements and footpaths, graffiti and litter in the village. We also note that more people from other villages (Coxheath, Yalding, Chainhurst and Laddingford) are using our network of footpaths but also walking around private land, presumably unaware that they have strayed from the public rights of way. Some of the issues above may be as a result of this increased traffic.

We have been made aware of trail bikes using the playing fields and we have encountered one man riding his around Bishops Field and the adjoining fields. The boundary on Bishops Lane has been enhanced by the landowner to prevent it happening again.

12. LOCAL COMMUNITY

12.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The Chairman of the Committee, Steve Jones, was unable to attend the meeting but had passed on thanks from the Cricket Club for the funding towards a replacement mower and for the grant funding provided to the Playing Field Committee to assist the sports clubs which had suffered losses as a result of Covid.

Angela Baptie, a Trustee of the Playing Field Committee, also thanked the Parish Council for its support over the last two years, for the grant funding provided towards the new Bowls Club changing rooms and the funding for Covid losses.

Cllr Heaton noted that the Playing Field Committee has erected a new picnic table near the play area and a working party will be doing some further work on the coming weekend. A new container has been purchased to secure parish and Playing Field Committee items.

12.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

Cllr Goddard is working on three issues with Jennie Watson of KCC Highways:

1. A 40mph speed limit for East Street.
2. A 'Road narrows' sign in East Street.
3. Kerbing outside the school on West Street.

Cllr Goddard is arranging a Zoom meeting to discuss the issues, which will be followed by a meeting on site and finalising the costings.

County Cllr Webb asked who will pay for the signage costs. Cllr Goddard confirmed that it would be the Parish Council and agreed to email the costs to Cllr Webb.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

Cllr Summersgill noted that the work has not been done on the marked areas on the verge near Brickyard Cottages. Cllr Goddard will remind KCC Highways.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

12.3 Tree & Pond Warden

Cllr Summersgill, as the Tree & Pond Warden, reported that emergency work had been undertaken on a tree outside the Village Hall by Hoods Tree Services as it was leaning on the BT lines.

Hoods Tree Services have also removed the deadwood from the Oak tree on the recreation ground, as required by the Visual Tree Assessment. They did a good, cost effective job.

Nothing to report on ponds.

13. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

Members **Agreed** to the following Committee and Working Party arrangements for the forthcoming year:

- Planning Committee – all Councillors are members of the Planning Committee. A minimum of three Councillors is required for the Committee to be quorate.
- Traffic & Road Safety Working Party – a minimum of two Councillors and one member of the public. Cllrs Goddard and Summersgill agreed to be on the Traffic & Road Safety Working Party. Three members of the public are also on it, with a fourth showing interest. Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should ask Cllr Simmons if he wishes to be on the Working Party.

ACTION: CLERK

14. COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Members **Agreed** to the following appointments for the forthcoming year:

- KCC Highways – Cllr Goddard
- KALC Area Committee – Cllr Heaton
- Policing matters – Cllr Trought and Cllr Heaton
- Hunton Primary School – Cllr Trought
- Representative Trustees of the King George V Playing Field - Cllr Heaton and Cllr Stanbridge
- Trustees of Hunton Village Hall Committee – Cllr Trought, Cllr Heaton and Cllr Pinks
- Parish Plan Steering Committee (*on hold*) – Cllr Trought, Cllr Heaton and Cllr Stanbridge

Members **Agreed** to the following Parish Council responsibilities:

- Footpaths and ditches – Cllr Heaton (primary) and Cllr Goddard (secondary)
- Road conditions and speed limits – Cllr Goddard (primary)
- Events and communications – Cllr Trought
- Planning issues and consultations – Cllr Summersgill
- Liaison with KALC, MBC and other external bodies – Cllr Heaton
- Utilities (broadband, water, electricity) – Cllr Stanbridge
- Hunton Parish Plan/Neighbourhood Plan (*on hold*) – Cllr Trought
- Speedwatch (*on hold*) – N/A

Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should ask Cllr Simmons if he wishes to be a Council representative for KCC Highways and Hunton Primary School and have secondary responsibility for road conditions and speed limits. The Clerk will also check that Cllr Trought is happy to be responsible for events and communications.

ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Heaton noted that the speedwatch equipment owned by the Parish Council is not being used at present.

15. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Members **Agreed** to appoint Lionel Robbins as the Internal Auditor for the forthcoming year.

16. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

16.1 County Councillor

As the newly elected County Councillor, Cllr Simon Webb remarked that people who put themselves forward for election, including parish councillors, need to be supported. Cllr Webb has written to Cllr Heaton to ask what the Parish Council expects from him and if there are any particular issues he can follow up on the Council's behalf. Cllr Webb is working well with Borough Cllr Richard Webb and will continue to do so to solve problems.

Cllr Summersgill advised that parish councillors at Collier Street are getting very angry about HGVs flouting weight restrictions and are getting the MP and police involved. Cllr Webb was aware of this. Cllr Heaton noted that the police do not have the manpower to police the weight limits.

16.2 Borough Councillors

Borough Cllr Richard Webb advised that he has been very busy with work, as a subsidiary key worker, and apologised for not attending many meetings, but his work situation is easing now. He is looking forward to meeting people again at face-to-face meetings, rather than on Zoom.

17. PARISH MATTERS

17.1 Coronavirus

Steve and Sue Wyles from Huntonwatch have advised that the meds collection service was discontinued on 15th May. Take up this time around was minimal.

Cllr Heaton noted that the Parish Council still has the emergency mobile phone should it be needed in future.

17.2 Parish Councillors

No issues raised.

17.3 Culvert on Grove Lane

Cllr Goddard advised that the culvert is running well at the moment. Cllr Heaton suggested that the way the land is being farmed may stop the flooding.

17.4 Website

Parishcouncil.net was the website provider chosen to develop a website for the Parish Council. The Website Development Brief required by Parishcouncil.net was completed but since then, despite numerous emails and telephone calls, the Clerk has been unable to get any response from Parishcouncil.net. Members agreed to select an alternative website provider to move the project on, using information supplied by the Clerk on four providers.

Members **Agreed** to select VCS Websites Ltd to develop the new website.

ACTION: CLERK

17.5 Clerk's Report

The Clerk attended the KALC Workshop 'All About the AGAR' on 14th April 2021, which was very useful for the preparation of the AGAR.

The Clerk has prepared a risk assessment for face-to-face meetings. It will be reviewed for the next meeting in July, taking into account government guidance.

The Clerk asked whether Members wished to change the agenda now the Parish Council is back to having face-to-face meetings. Members agreed to keep it as it is for now.

18. POLICIES

18.1 Scheme of Delegation Policy

The Scheme of Delegation Policy is a new policy which has been created to set out the delegated responsibilities of the Clerk, Council and Committee. It also identifies additional delegated authority in exceptional circumstances, such as the Coronavirus epidemic.

Members reviewed the Scheme of Delegation Policy and **Agreed** to adopt it.

18.2 Complaints Procedure

The Parish Council adopted the Complaints Procedure on 13th May 2010. The policy has been significantly updated, using the Society of Local Council Clerks model procedure as the basis, with some amendment.

Members reviewed the Complaints Procedure and **Agreed** to adopt it.

18.3 Code of Conduct Complaints Policy

The Parish Council adopted the Code of Conduct Complaints Policy on 10th May 2010. The policy has been updated.

Members reviewed the Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure and **Agreed** to adopt it.

19. FINANCE

19.1 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. A Statement of Internal Control was 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 Chairman and the Clerk.

19.2 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.

19.3 Internal Audit Report

The Internal Auditor, Lionel Robbins, carried out the internal audit on 11th May 2021 and has completed the Annual Internal Audit Report on page 3 of the 2020/21 Annual Governance & Accountability Return. Members considered and **Approved** the report of the Internal Auditor.

19.4 Accounts 2020/21

Members reviewed the Council’s Statement of Accounts, year-end Financial Book and Fixed Asset Register. The Accounts were signed by the Chairman and the Clerk, and the Chairman also signed the Financial Book.

Cllr Heaton remarked that the Parish Council could consider increasing the contribution towards the Village Hall.

19.5 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21

19.5.1 Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement

Members considered the Annual Governance Statement contained in Section 1 on page 4 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR), consisting of 9 assertions. To properly consider the assertions, the Clerk 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 Chairman and the Clerk.

19.5.2 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. The Clerk pointed out that ‘Staff Costs’ and ‘Other Costs’ have been restated for 2020 due to staff costs being treated differently in 2021 according to the guidance. The Accounting Statements were signed by the Chairman.

19.6 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 30th April 2021 was **Noted**.

19.7 Income Received

The following income has been received since the last meeting.

| | |
|---|------------|
| Hunton Parish Hall Committee – FIT receipts | £216.63 |
| Maidstone Borough Council – Precept for 2021/22 | £26,338.00 |

The bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed by Cllr Stanbridge.

19.8 Payments Made

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

| | |
|--|---------|
| SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – February | £464.47 |
| SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – March | £464.47 |
| SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – April | £464.47 |
| Unity Trust Bank – Service charge | £18.00 |

19.9 Electronic Payments

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

| | |
|--|-----------|
| E.ON – Street lighting electricity | £14.41 |
| Q-Tec Solutions Ltd – Supply and installation of replacement LED streetlight | £504.00 |
| Kathy Reid – Reimbursement for replacement defibrillator battery | £174.96 |
| KALC – Annual membership subscription | £346.49 |
| Fields In Trust – Annual membership subscription | £65.00 |
| Lawrence Containers – Steel container for secure storage | £2,400.00 |
| Hoods Tree Services Ltd – Removal of deadwood from oak tree | £240.00 |
| KALC – Training course ‘All About the AGAR’ | £42.00 |
| P Allison and Sons Demolition Contractors Limited – Asbestos survey and demolition of old cricket pavilion | £3,600.00 |
| Glynn Bell – Reinstatement of plumbing services following demolition of old cricket pavilion | £98.00 |
| King George’s Field, Hunton – Contribution for 2021/22 less 1/3 contribution to container | £5,333.34 |
| Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Contribution towards running costs (First half) | £500.00 |
| Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses/Postage | £26.40 |
| Lionel Robbins – Internal audit | £90.00 |

20. PLANNING

20.1 Planning Applications

20.1.1 Riverside Cottage, Vicarage Road, Yalding – 21/502071/FULL

Conversion of garage into single bedroom annexe.
Parish Council recommendation: No comment.

20.1.2 The Old Stables, Salters Cross, Vicarage Road, Yalding – 21/501879/FULL

Minor internal alterations to improve the dining room together with the removal of an existing window, the enlargement of the existing opening in external wall and installation of a new external door frame.
Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

20.1.3 The Old Stables, Salters Cross, Vicarage Road, Yalding – 21/502083/LBC

Listed Building Consent for installation of a wood burning stove together with an insulated metal chimney.
Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

20.1.4 9 Bensted Close, Hunton – 21/502296/FULL

Single storey side/rear extension.
Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

20.1.5 Dwelling Beech Farm, Shingle Barn Lane, West Farleigh – 21/501876/FULL

Retrospective application for the erection of garden store, including dog kennel area and log store.
Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

20.1.6 Wilsons Yard, Unit 2 and 4-5, George Street – 21/502130/SUB

Submission of details pursuant to condition 1 (contamination) of application 19/501420/PNQCLA.
Parish Council recommendation: Cllr Summersgill informed Members that a previous submission of details to discharge a condition on contamination was refused by MBC as further investigation was required. When the investigation was carried out, hydrocarbons were identified. After further investigation, the report considers the assessment to be fine, but gas protection membranes are required. Cllr Summersgill is concerned that three properties are being built on the site, but it is up to MBC to consider. No comment.

20.1.7 Wilsons Yard, George Street – 21/502131/SUB

Submission of details pursuant to condition 1 (contamination) in relation to planning permission 18/506016/PNPA.
Parish Council recommendation: No comment.

20.2 Planning Decisions

Members **Noted** the following planning decisions, made by Maidstone Borough Council since the last Full Council meeting:

20.2.1 2 The Square – 21/500883/FULL

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

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

20.2.2 24 Bensted Close – 21/500850/FULL

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

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

20.2.3 The Old Stables, Salters Cross, Vicarage Road, Yalding – 21/501149/FULL

Installation of an insulated metal chimney.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

Cllr Summersgill advised of some planning issues outside the parish which may be of interest:

- Rankins Farm – the applicant wanted to have polytunnels erected all year round but have now withdrawn the application. Linton Parish Council wrote a very good objection letter which has been passed on to Yalding Parish Council who were objecting to polyhouses on Kenward Road (same applicant).
- Chainhurst egg farm – awaiting a response to the application from MBC. KCC and the EA have withdrawn objections to the application, although the EA has imposed two onerous conditions. The area included in the application has been reduced but not the number of chickens. More documents will be produced. Cllr Heaton asked if the applicant has discussed the footpaths with KCC PROW; Cllr Summersgill understood there has been a discussion.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 19th July 2021 at 7:30pm.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:02pm.