

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2021 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: One member of the public was in attendance until Item 13.6 had been discussed. PCSO Macleod and PCSO Goodwin were in attendance until Item 7.2. County Cllr S Webb was in attendance from Item 8.3 to Item 9.2.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Simmons.

2. FILMING AND RECORDING

The members of the public did not wish to film, record or photograph 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 NOVEMBER 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2021 had been previously distributed. The Chairman signed the official copy of the minutes.

5. PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY

Following notification from the MBC Democratic & Electoral Services Team that the Parish Council could fill the vacancy by co-option, it was advertised on the notice boards and website, with a deadline of 14th November to provide a written expression of interest. The Clerk has not received any response.

Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should advertise the vacancy again, with a deadline of 16th January 2022.

ACTION: CLERK

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

Item 8.2 (18/01/21) – KCC PROW have now repaired the damaged railings on the bridge to the permissive footpath.

Item 10.3 – Cllr Summersgill has submitted an application for electrical charging points in Hunton and received acknowledgement of the application from KCC.

Item 10.4 – The threshold of the Football Club changing rooms has not been repaired yet. Cllr Heaton will give the keys to the Village Hall caretaker so he can carry out the repairs.

Item 10.6 – The Bowls Club submitted an application for the KCC Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund (and were successful).

Item 11.1 – The Clerk submitted a response to the KALC Learning and Development Survey 2021.

Item 13.1 – In response to a question about the level of general reserves which should be retained, the JPAG recommendation is between 3 and 12 months of the precept value.

Item 13.7 – The insurance was renewed with Zurich Municipal.

Item 13.8 – The Clerk contacted KALC regarding the comment made by PKF Littlejohn on the AGAR. The KALC Financial Consultant contacted PKF Littlejohn, who stated it was their view, but acknowledged there was room for debate and have taken the issue to JPAG for clarification.

7. POLICE

7.1 Police

(Item moved before Item 5)

PCSO James Goodwin and PCSO Megan Macleod introduced themselves to the Parish Council.

PCSO Macleod is the PCSO for Allington and Bridge, but as there was no PCSO cover for Coxheath & Hunton she had taken it on temporarily. PCSO Goodwin is taking over from PCSO Macleod and is responsible for a large area, which includes Hunton, from January 2022.

PCSO Goodwin asked about the main issues affecting Hunton. The response was: a number of break ins two years ago; some trail bike riding; fly tipping; scam calls; and lorries using unsuitable roads. The PCSOs have been addressing cars parked on North Folley Road and mentioned incidents of pushy ex-prisoners selling door-to-door.

In response to a question about monitoring speeding, PCSO Macleod stated that parishes can pay for officers to come out and use the speed gun.

Numbers to call for the police are 101 and 999.

As the new PCSO, PCSO Goodwin has tried to contact Huntonwatch. He is also trying to get a Community Warden out into the villages.

The Clerk will send out the Parish Council meeting dates to PCSO Goodwin. The police do not send the crime statistics out anymore but has given details of two websites that parish clerks can look at.

7.2 Huntonwatch

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

PCSO - the new PCSO has been confirmed and has tried to make contact. We are waiting for him to try again and will try to arrange a meeting as soon as possible.

Scams - the number of new scams is increasing as we head towards Christmas. We are urging our members to be extra vigilant.

Dognapping - Three attempts to steal dogs were reported to us over the last month or two. Two males in a large white high-top van tried to call dogs to them, twice with dogs off the lead in Bishops Field and once from a private garden in the same area. Fortunately, they were unsuccessful and on the last occasion the dog owner gave chase and the criminals sped away onto West Street.

Dog fouling - We have seen the 'clean it up' signs that have been put up by the Parish Council, but it is too soon to know whether they have made a noticeable difference. Early signs are encouraging but during the first week after the signs had been put up, we found several poo bags left on the ground and hung on fencing.

Facebook - Following a couple of incidents where our Facebook account had been hacked, we have taken the decision to not use Facebook for Huntonwatch purposes. This includes no longer monitoring the Hunton Facebook page (the possible source of one virus which allowed someone to replicate our personal account).

Membership - we have had a few new members following a number of outbuilding thefts in the general area of the church. It is our intention to validate our mailing list in the new year and to put an article in the Hunton Herald to see if we can attract a few more - especially anybody new to the village.

8. LOCAL COMMUNITY

8.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The Chairman of the Committee, Steve Jones, sent his apologies for not attending the meeting but has provided the following report:

Play equipment:

Work is ongoing to repair and uplift the play equipment and surrounding area. The wooden platform on the multiplay has been replaced, addressing the final issue from the annual safety inspection and the metalwork will be repainted in the spring. The Committee are exploring options to enhance the existing play area with the possible addition of a 'springer' rocking horse, which would be ideally suited to younger children.

Boundary fence:

We have now received a firm quote for the supply and installation of a 90m boundary fence at the North-West corner of the field of £8,200 plus VAT for standard green painted metal palisade fencing similar to that along the boundary with Hunton Engineering. This type of fencing would offer only limited security and the Committee are looking at other options that may be more economical and aesthetically pleasing, while still providing an element of security, for example hedging comprising Pyracantha, Berberis, etc.

Cllr Heaton suggested that trees could be planted behind the hedging as part of the Queen's Jubilee planting.

Requests for funding:

- a) The Bowls Club need to replace their aging lawnmower by the start of next spring and are currently pursuing several funding opportunities to help towards the cost of £5,700, including the Hunton Herald (confirmed - £1,000), KCC Members Grant (to be confirmed) and KCC Covid-19 Recovery Fund (confirmed - £650) as well as contributing themselves (confirmed - £3,000). Based on responses received to date, it is possible that they will not reach their funding target if not all the opportunities come to fruition, and they are looking for the Parish Council and Playing Field Committee for help in this regard (the current shortfall in funding is likely to be in the region of £1,000). The Playing Field Committee have agreed in principle to make up the potential shortfall after any contribution from the Parish Council.
- b) The Football Club changing rooms are in need of refurbishment which could include rewiring, re-plumbing and general decoration and repair. The building, which is owned by the Parish Council, will be surveyed by members of the Parish Council to determine what work should be carried out and whether or not it is safe for ongoing use by the Football Club. The results of the survey will be fed back to the Playing Field Committee and the Parish Council as soon as possible.

Cllr Heaton noted that the electric cable from the Village Hall to the changing rooms is not an armoured cable. Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should ask the Village Hall caretaker to enclose the cable in flexible conduit.

ACTION: CLERK

Members **Agreed** that Cllr Heaton and Cllr Stanbridge should survey the changing rooms within the next fortnight.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON/CLLR STANBRIDGE

8.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

Cllr Goddard has supplied the map showing the location of the signage to be installed by KCC Highways. Jennie Watson informed Cllr Goddard that the budget has been exhausted for 2021/22, so the options are to wait until April 2022 for the new KCC budget allocation or for the Parish Council to pay for the signs. As the Parish Council was expecting to pay for the signage, Members **Agreed** that it would be preferable to wait until April. The £5,000 ringfenced in the Parish Council budget will be carried forward to 2022/23. Cllr Goddard is waiting for a meeting to establish where a speed indicator could be located on West Street. Cllr Summersgill has spoken with people in Collier Street, who are thinking of setting up a Joint Parishes Group to monitor lorries. There is also a KCC 'Get lorries out of our lives' campaign. Although HGVs are not such an issue in Hunton now, these initiatives are worth considering. Cllr Heaton noted that the Parish Council owns Speedwatch equipment which is not being used at the moment.

8.3 Tree & Pond Warden

Cllr Summersgill has contacted the Woodland Trust about the Queen's Green Canopy. They do not have any saplings left, but there are other options available through the Kent Tree & Pond Partnership. Cllr Trought contacted other members of the Community Orchard Group, who felt that planting in the orchard may not be a good idea due to it being too dry. Cllr Summersgill suggested that a commemorative tree, several years old, could be planted.

Cllr Summersgill advised that the ponds are full. In response to a question about whether he checks the contents of the ponds, Cllr Summersgill advised that he has been involved with the Medway Valley Partnership (MVP) regarding Great Crested Newts, as the MVP has funding for an initiative to restore ponds to increase numbers of Great Crested Newts. Cllr Heaton noted that some of the old ponds are degraded with little wildlife. Cllr Summersgill advised that there is a national move to regenerate old ponds.

9. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

9.1 County Councillor

County Cllr Simon Webb had provided a written report for Members.

Full Council - at the meeting on 4th November, KCC Members shared memories of Ann Allen (Chairman of KCC), who had sadly passed away.

Adult Social Care – the Adult Social Care strategy is out for consultation; Cllr Webb is on the committee.

Education - additional bank holidays of 2nd and 3rd June 2022 have been confirmed.

Environment - a grant of £250,000 has been received to plant trees in Ashford and Swale.

Libraries - there is an under 5s initiative in libraries to get children to play and talk.

Alcohol awareness – during the Covid lockdown 53 to 60 year olds were found to be susceptible to alcohol, particularly women.

Violence against women and girls – Cllr Webb attended a good seminar at which all KCC senior officers were also present.

9.2 Borough Councillors

Borough Cllr Simon Webb had attended a Full Council meeting which considered the Local Plan. It became very political - the Liberal Democrats disagreed with the Local Plan, but the Conservatives voted for it, as if it is not agreed, it would become a developers' charter. There were a lot of people from Lidsing at the meeting as 2,000 new houses are proposed. Cllr Webb is against the Beacons Park development between Coxheath and Loose as it was included at the last minute. Following the meeting, four Liberal Democrats broke away from their party to form The Maidstone Group. As a result, the committees have to be reconstituted. The Conservatives put forward a motion for 4-yearly elections at the Full Council meeting but lost the vote.

Cllr Webb had an online meeting with West Kent GPs which was interesting, but they are still not moving appointments to surgeries. There is a shortage of GPs. Cllr Webb advised the GPs to submit objections to planning applications as there is not enough infrastructure.

As part of the MBC Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan a call for tree planting sites is being undertaken.

Cllr Summersgill asked Cllr Webb if he had heard of the 'Get lorries out of our lives' campaign. He had not but will contact the MBC Member heading the campaign.

Cllr Webb is the Vice Chair of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee. It is a statutory obligation for waste bins to be collected but due to driver shortages not all garden waste is being collected.

10. PARISH MATTERS

10.1 Parish Councillors

Cllr Heaton advised that the school does not have a defibrillator so it would be a good idea for one to be installed in the phone box on West Street. Cllr Trought has enquired with BT; the Community Heartbeat Trust has already adopted the phone box so she will get in contact with them.

ACTION: CLLR TROUGHT

Cllr Summersgill was asked how much it costs to install an electric vehicle charging point if the application to KCC is not successful – he will find out.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

10.2 Flooding

Cllrs Heaton and Summersgill met with KCC drainage operatives on West Street, to explain the flooding issues in the area and point out the poor state of the road. KCC Highways subsequently resurfaced and widened the road and have done a very good job. They are also planning to clear the ditches, including the ditch near the Beast House.

Cllr Goddard has not contacted Betts yet about the mud washing off the field but **Agreed** to do so before they make the beds up in spring.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

Cllr Heaton noted that Betts have put crop cover on now.

Cllr Summersgill has continued the work on a flooding database. He has also trained as a Flood Warden and will be liaising with Yalding and Collier Street, which will also be a useful way to obtain more information for the database.

10.3 Parish Council Meeting Dates 2022

Members **Agreed** to the following meeting dates for 2022:

Monday 17th January 2022

Monday 21st March 2022

Monday 9th May 2022 (Annual Meeting)

Monday 23rd May 2022 (Annual Parish Meeting)

Monday 18th July 2022

Monday 19th September 2022

Monday 21st November 2022

All meetings to be held at 7:30pm.

10.4 **KCC Fire Hydrant Initiative**

KALC has been working with Kent Fire & Rescue Service (KFRS) over the last 8 years on the fire hydrant initiative project, which is aimed at helping to increase community resilience within local communities. Many councils have already signed up to the initiative and are monitoring and reporting any fire hydrant defects and water provision issues in their local area to KFRS.

Members **Agreed** that the Parish Council should sign up to the initiative and inform people of the process for reporting a leak. ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Stanbridge **Agreed** to write an article for the Hunton Herald to inform parishioners.

ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE

10.5 **Hunton Parish Plan**

Members considered whether to update the Parish Plan, but as the Parish Council took steps towards producing a Neighbourhood Plan some years ago, this would supersede the Parish Plan. Priorities for the village can be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. If the parish does not have a Neighbourhood Plan, MBC will not take notice of the Parish Council's planning concerns and there could be a threat of development if MBC decide they need more sites. Members need to consider whether to continue the process already started. Consultants would need to be employed for the next stage but there could be grant money available.

Members **Agreed** that the Neighbourhood Plan should be included as an agenda item on the next full council meeting agenda. Before then, Members **Agreed** that the Clerk would carry out the following research:

- Find the documents produced several years ago when the Neighbourhood Plan process started
- Contact clerks of other small parishes who have a Neighbourhood Plan
- Obtain information from KALC

ACTION: CLERK

Members **Agreed** to discuss the information informally prior to the next meeting.

ACTION: ALL MEMBERS

10.6 **Hunton Village Club**

Cllr Trought asked all Members to attend the Village Club AGM on 3rd December. The Club would welcome input to give it a different steer. The Committee is looking for a new chairman. Money has been spent on the kitchen, the cellar has been improved and the toilets refurbished, but the Club needs to know what the village wants and the direction to take

10.7 **Website**

The new website, huntonparishcouncil.org.uk is now live. There is a redirection from the old website to the new one. Cllr Heaton mentioned in an article in the last Hunton Herald that the Clerk can be notified of events for publication on the website. The Clerk also updates the website with events listed in the Hunton Herald.

Members **Noted** the update.

10.8 **Clerk's Report**

The Clerk attended the KALC Annual Clerks' Conference on 28th September. The most useful sessions were: Developing Professionalism – life after lockdown and an SLCC presentation.

The Clerk attended the KALC Finance Conference on 20th October which centred mainly around presentations from the KALC Financial Consultant which were very helpful. The insurance workshop was also informative.

E.ON are increasing the price of the street lighting electricity again, from 25.4p per kWh to 33.8p per kWh.

11. **CONSULTATION**

11.1 **Maidstone Borough Council – Local Plan Review Regulation 19 Consultation**

Maidstone Borough Council has published the Draft for Submission version of its Local Plan Review, which sets out proposed planning policies for development over the period 2022-2037. Representations at this stage should relate to matters of compliance with legal and procedural requirements and the soundness of the Local Plan Review, as these are the matters that will be examined.

Member **Agreed** not to submit any comments as the consultation centres on legal and procedural matters.

11.2 **Kent Police and Crime Commissioner – Police and Crime Plan Survey**

The Police and Crime Plan Survey is an opportunity for the Parish Council to have its say on various topics, such as safety, experiences of being a victim and road safety, amongst others. Responses to the survey will shape the next Police and Crime Plan.

Cllr Heaton **Agreed** to submit a response on behalf of the Parish Council. ACTION: CLLR HEATON

12. POLICIES

12.1 Freedom of Information – Model Publication Scheme

The Parish Council adopted the ICO's Model Publication Scheme in November 2008, through a declaration. The Model Publication Scheme has been produced as a document to replace the declaration. Members cannot change the Model Publication Scheme as it must stay in the ICO format. Members **Agreed** to adopt the Scheme.

12.2 Freedom of Information – Information Available

The Parish Council adopted the information available for the Publication Scheme in November 2008. The Information Available has been updated significantly using the ICO template guidance and review of other councils' templates. Members **Agreed** to adopt the Information Available.

Members **Agreed** that all policies should be reviewed every 3 years, other than Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which should be reviewed annually.

13. FINANCE

13.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31st October 2021 was **Noted**.

Cllr Heaton asked the Clerk to research the KALC advice about the Fete Committee money as it should be considered again. ACTION: CLERK

13.2 Income Received

Members **Noted** that the following income has been received since the last meeting:

Hunton Parish Hall Committee – FIT	£821.94
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The bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed by Cllr Trought.

13.3 Payments Made

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

SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – September	£464.47
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge	£18.00
VCS Websites Ltd – Website build, hosting and domain name	£335.00

13.4 Electronic Payments

Members **Approved** the following payments. Cllrs Stanbridge and Summersgill will authorise the payments set up in Unity Trust Bank using online banking:

E.ON – Street lighting electricity	£15.45
Q-Tec Solutions Ltd – Annual maintenance of the CCTV system	£302.58
David Heaton – Reimbursement for signage and key cutting	£73.28
KALC – Finance Conference and Clerks Conference	£120.00
Sharon Goodwin – Reimbursement for top up of mobile phone	£30.00

13.5 Additional CCTV camera

Q-Tec Solutions Ltd tried to turn the existing CCTV camera so the front of the new container is covered but could not achieve the required coverage. A quotation of £500 plus VAT has been provided to supply and install an additional camera.

Members **Agreed** to accept the quotation.

ACTION: CLERK

During the annual CCTV maintenance work, the DVR was found to be faulty. A quote of £490 plus VAT was given to supply and fit a new 16 Channel Turbo DVR. This was agreed outside of the meeting to ensure the CCTV is up and running as soon as possible.

13.6 **Hunton Bowls Club**

(Item moved before Item 5)

Hunton Bowls Club need a new mower and can raise most of the £5,700 required, leaving a shortfall of approximately £1,000.

A funding request was made to the Playing Field Committee on 10th November, which agreed to fund the remaining amount after the Parish Council has made a funding decision.

Cllr Heaton advised that the Bowls Club is a private club without public access and is not a Parish Council asset. The Parish Council does have powers under s137 to provide a grant, but it needs to be of benefit to the residents of Hunton.

Angela Baptie, a representative of the Bowls Club, advised that two members of the Bowls Club live in Hunton and it is a facility which is maintained and keeps going for Hunton residents, anyone is welcome to join the club.

Cllr Stanbridge asked Mrs Baptie whether the KCC Members Grant application had been successful - it had not due to the allowance being cut.

Members **Agreed** that a s137 grant of £500 should be given to the Bowls Club towards the new mower.

14. **PLANNING**

14.1 **Planning Application**

14.1.1 **Grove Barn, Grove Lane – 21/505754/FULL**

Erection of a single storey side extension.

Parish Council recommendation: No comment.

14.2 **Planning Decisions**

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

14.2.1 **1 Clocktower House, Gennings, Lughorse Lane – 21/504572/FULL**

Section 73 - Application for removal of condition 3 (agricultural occupancy) pursuant to MK/3/69/0343 for - Conversion of a first floor of an existing stable block into two agricultural dwelling units.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

15. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next full Parish Council meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 17th January 2022 at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:55pm.