

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Borough Cllr R Webb and two members of the public were in attendance. County Cllr S Webb was also in attendance and left after Item 13.7.

OPEN SESSION:

Matthew Woodhams, the architect working on the Burford Farm development on Redwall Lane, asked to speak to the Parish Council about the planning application to be discussed under Item 14.1.1. Mr Woodhams attended a previous Parish Council meeting, prior to the application being submitted, to provide information on the proposed development.

A long pre-application meeting was held with planning officers from MBC. There have been a number of planning permissions over the years; MBC has granted permission for 7 units. The submitted planning application is for 6 units, of which two already have planning permission (the threshing barn and granary). The threshing barn will be restored and refurbished and the granary will be taken down and rebuilt as it is in a poor state. From the road, there will be no change to the appearance of both of these buildings. The additional units will be in a similar style to the threshing barn and granary – ragstone, dark weather boarding and mixed brick construction. The developer wants the site to be as low impact as possible and enhance the area. MBC has a 10-year supply of housing; more sites are not required. Although the planning officers believe the site is unsustainable from a location point of view, they have given permission for 7 houses and are happy that the style is in keeping with the area.

To make the development sustainable, an environmental wetland area, ground source heat pumps and solar panels are included. There are bats on the site, but the bat licence will be received soon.

Members made comments and asked questions about the development:

What is happening to the oast on the site? It is a conversion in its own right, not owned by the developer. The property is being let.

How will the swale area and orchard be maintained? Through a 5-year management plan.

Will the swale area be linked to the house deeds so it cannot be sold at a later date (so the homeowners will always know the rainwater can go into the swale)? Yes, it should be, but would need to check.

Could you check with the conveyancer about this, to ensure it is legally tied up to the property in perpetuity? Will double check with the developer, but he is keen for it to be linked.

What is the difference between the blue and red lines on the map? The red line marks the limit of the planning application and the blue line marks the limit of ownership.

Why is the blue line not encompassed by the red line, as if drainage is entering the area, it is an integral plan? It has to be marked this way to show the area which is subject to planning. The area covered by the blue line is included in the management scheme.

The street scene now has less windows than the last plan we saw. Is that due to MBC? Yes. They wanted it to look more agricultural than residential in style.

The geological document is not on the website. Will check, but the upshot is that there is a lot of clay.

The parish boundary runs right through the middle of the development. Yes. Several meetings were held with MBC, but the planning officers would not come out to the site. Borough Cllr R Webb did visit the site and was shown the boundary as part of the site visit.

Did MBC raise any issues with the road layout as it is tight to turn out of the site? KCC Highways have not raised any issues. It is suitable for a dustbin lorry to turn round for instance.

There are two access points to the site? Yes. The tighter one will only be used by one unit; the rest will use the better access.

Member thanked Mr Woodhams for attending the meeting.

A parishioner asked whether anything was being done about the flooding issue on West Street. Cllr Heaton stated that the issue is being discussed under Item 10.2.

1. APOLOGIES

None, as all Members were present.

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 19TH JULY 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2021 had been previously distributed. The Chairman signed the official copy of the minutes.

5. **PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY**

Following the resignation of Sue Pinks, the MBC Democratic & Electoral Services Team was notified and a Notice of Casual Vacancy was placed on the notice boards and website to give electors the opportunity to request a by-election. If such a request is not received by MBC by at least 10 electors within 14 days, the Parish Council can co-opt.

Members **Agreed** that, assuming a by-election is not called, a new councillor should be co-opted. The vacancy will be publicised in the Hunton Herald, the website and notice boards. **ACTION: CLERK**

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

Item 8.2 (18/01/21) – KCC PROW have not repaired the damaged railings on the bridge to the permissive footpath. The Clerk has been in contact several times with no response received. The Clerk will contact Michelle Snoding at KCC PROW, copying in County Cllr Webb. **ACTION: CLERK**

Open Session – Cllr Heaton will order signs requesting that dog owners pick up dog waste, to be erected at the entrance to footpaths. **ACTION: CLLR HEATON**

Item 10.5 – The overhanging hedges at the top of Bensted Close have been cut back.

Item 11.1 – Cllr Summersgill completed a response to the MBC Affordable Housing Survey.

Item 13.7 – The contribution to the Village Hall insurance has been paid.

7. **POLICE**

7.1 **Police**

PCSO Macleod has provided a crime report:

No crimes between July and September.

One road traffic collision.

Regular patrols of Hunton and liaison with residents.

There has been a delay in the PCSO changes and the handover to PCSO James Goodwin has not taken place yet.

7.2 **Huntonwatch**

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

At around 1am on the morning of 20th September, thieves were heard breaking into a shed in the vicinity of the church. Sadly, the police were not called at the time. Although initial investigations suggest nothing was taken, we have since heard that other outbuildings in the immediate vicinity were also targeted and items including two chainsaws were stolen. We are still awaiting further information from residents in the area and will provide an update if and when we receive any further information. We are regularly seeing reports of scams (all the usual format) and still have had no luck making contact with a PCSO for this area or even knowing if we have one.

Cllr Heaton reinforced the need for residents to call 999 if they hear a crime in progress.

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 swing seat was reinstalled following the lifting of Covid restrictions and the safety surface under the swings, which was in a very poor condition, has now been replaced with a new wet pour surface at a cost of just over £2k. The wooden platform on the multiplay is being replaced and the metalwork will be repainted in the spring. If the Parish Council or any parishioners have ideas for further improvements or additions to the area, please contact the Committee via the Clerk to inform our future planning.

Boundary fence:

Initial estimates for an 85-90m boundary fence at the north-west corner suggest that it could cost around £15k for standard metal palisade fencing, which would offer only limited security, or more substantial fencing at around £25k. We are hoping to get a formal quote on this shortly and will report back to the Parish Council at a later meeting with the details.

Potential requests for funding:

a) The Bowls Club need to replace their ageing lawnmower by the start of next spring and are currently pursuing several funding opportunities to help towards the cost of £5.7k including the Hunton Herald, KCC Members Grant and the National Lottery as well as contributing themselves. It is possible that they will not reach their funding target if not all the opportunities come to fruition and at that stage, they may approach the Playing Field Committee and Parish Council for support.

b) The Football Club are looking at a programme of works on the changing rooms which could include rewiring, re-plumbing and general decoration and repair. They will come back to the Playing Field Committee at our next meeting with more detailed plans for the work and at that stage, may then approach the Parish Council for funding.

Regarding the funding for the Bowls Club mower, Cllr Heaton advised that the Parish Council has previously provided funding for the replacement mower requested by the Cricket Club. However, the Cricket Club play on land owned by the parish, and the Parish Council was able to provide funding as they are maintaining a public space. Although the parish owns the Bowls Club land, the Bowls Club owns the club itself, and there is no public access. The benefit to the parish would have to be considered in any funding decision.

The Football Club changing rooms do belong to the Parish Council, so if there are any safety concerns with the building they need to be addressed by the Parish Council. Cllr Simmons suggested that the Football Club could use the cricket pavilion as they play at different times of the year.

Cllr Stanbridge noted that the Cricket Club won the Kent-wide league this year.

8.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

Cllr Goddard reported that a job sheet has been received from KCC Highways showing the location of the 'road narrows' signs, which he will send to the Clerk. Information is still to be received on the T-junction sign.

Cllr Simmons has made contact with a colleague at KCC to see if any funding is available but has been unable to meet as yet. He will report back to the next meeting. ACTION: CLLR SIMMONS

8.3 Tree & Pond Warden

Cllr Summersgill, as the Tree & Pond Warden, provided information on the Queen's Green Canopy. It is a commemorative celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 and an opportunity to plant trees. Parishes are being encouraged to hold an event like a Jubilee lunch, which could involve the Community Orchard. Cllr Summersgill will make further enquiries as any planting would need to take place in winter.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

Members agreed it would be a good idea to have a commemorative celebration, which could be led by the Community Orchard Group, if the Group is able to manage the workload. Cllr Trought will contact other members of the Community Orchard Group. ACTION: CLLR TROUGHT

Cllr Summersgill will find out what other parishes are planning at the next Tree & Pond Wardens meeting. ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

Members considered other public spaces where trees could be planted, including: the square at the top of George Street; the junction of Hunton Hill and East Street; and the woodland in the north-east corner of the recreation ground.

9. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

9.1 County Councillor

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

Not related to Hunton, but for information, KCC stopped taking in unaccompanied child asylum seekers in June. The Home Office had to move the children to other counties as KCC had reached capacity. There was a government consultation to ensure equity between county councils, but KCC felt this should be legislated and launched a judicial review against the Home Office. A deal was brokered between the Home Office and KCC, so the judicial review was stopped and more children are now being accepted. In response to a question about how many Afghans had been housed, Cllr Webb advised that there was a target of 300, but he did not know how many had actually been housed.

Cllr Simmons asked about the 'Road Safety Strategy for Kent' event that Cllr Webb attended as it could be of interest for Hunton. Cllr Webb felt that it was an excellent day, and very interactive.

9.2 Borough Councillors

Borough Cllr Simon Webb advised of two MBC consultations. The Archbishop's Palace is coming back into MBC control, so there is a consultation is to find out what people want it to be used for. The other consultation relates to Maidstone town centre.

Cllr Webb is now the vice chair for the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee. He is upset that officers have not supplied costings for securing Brenchley Park and closing it overnight. He would also like the toilets to be removed, as a further measure to stop drug dealing in the park.

Cllr Webb has been asked to attend the GP Commissioning Group with other councillors.

The Revised Local Plan will be published soon, and the consultation completes in summer 2022.

Borough Cllr Richard Webb reported that the Democracy Committee held a meeting two weeks ago, with recommendations to full council for a change in governance, reverting from a committee structure to a cabinet system. The cabinet will have a Scrutiny Committee. It will come into force in May 2022.

10. PARISH MATTERS

10.1 Parish Councillors

Cllr Summersgill has been to Yalding and Marden parish council meetings, where climate change is included as an agenda item. Members agreed that they could bring climate change issues up under this agenda item rather than including it as a separate item.

Cllr Summersgill remarked that residents at the Yalding meeting were concerned about an increase in traffic as a result of the polyhouses in the Kenward Road area. As it will be in winter there should not be a huge amount of traffic to affect Hunton.

Cllr Trought reported that the work on the Village Club toilets is complete. More work is planned, including changing the bar. The Club has lost some committee members if anyone is interested in joining or helping with the bar rota. The Club AGM is in December.

Cllr Heaton stated that the Village Hall caretaker will be fixing the East Street notice board.

Cllr Heaton suggested using the phone box on West Street to house a defibrillator, in addition to the one at the Village Hall. It will need to have an electricity supply. Cllr Trought spoke to BT three years ago about buying the box for £1, but it did not progress. Cllr Trought **Agreed** to look into it.

ACTION: CLLR TROUGHT

Cllr Simmons **Agreed** to ask the school if they have a defibrillator.

ACTION: CLLR SIMMONS

10.2 Flooding

Since the Planning Committee meeting on 9th August, when flooding on West Street was discussed, a letter and email have been sent to Betts requesting a meeting, but a response has not been received. Cllr Goddard **Agreed** to contact Betts to arrange a meeting with Cllrs Heaton and Summersgill.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

Cllrs Heaton and Summersgill are meeting KCC drainage operatives in the week commencing 27th September.

Cllr Summersgill has been researching flooding information on Hunton. The Environment Agency (EA) produced more data in December 2019, which is more accurate than before, and includes surface water flood maps. Cllr Summersgill has cross referenced them to the 2015 database of at-risk properties and found additional properties, but has not contacted any of the homeowners to find out why some did not respond to the 2015 requests from the EA. There are more in East Street than on the original list. It is a work in progress, but Cllr Summersgill intends to create a database, and will then report back to the Parish

10.3 Electrical Vehicle Charging

Cllr Summersgill received two responses from the article in the Hunton Herald and has also counted the number of electric vehicles in the car park when the sports clubs have been playing matches.

The KCC scoring system concentrates mainly on local need – how many people with electric vehicles, no driveway, live within half a mile of the charging point, etc. The application for Hunton would receive points for solar panels and electricity but nothing for the ‘within half a mile’ criteria. A lot of points are awarded if residents request charging points. The application could be a lot of work for nothing, although KCC have recommended that an application is submitted which may mean they have not received many applications.

Cllr Summersgill **Agreed** to submit an application and copy County Cllr Webb in.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

10.4 Repairs to Football Club Changing Room Door

Cllr Heaton has spoken to the Village Hall caretaker about the changing room door; the threshold just needs to be secured. Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should contact the caretaker and the manager of the Football Club to arrange for the work to be done.

ACTION: CLERK

10.5 Recreation Ground Fencing

The King George V Playing Field Committee has been considering the security of the north-west part of the field. A quote of up to £15,000 has been obtained to supply and fit 6-foot steel palisade fencing. Members agreed that the cost is prohibitive and this type of fencing would not guarantee absolute security. An alternative idea could be to plant woodland.

10.6 KCC Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund

County Cllr Simon Webb has passed on information about the KCC Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund, a grant of £6,000 available for each KCC Member to distribute. The awards given will be between £300 and £2,000, designed for smaller organisations and community groups, which are properly constituted and have a bank account, who have failed to sustain funding during the pandemic. Cllr Webb advised that he has spent around £2,500 but is struggling to spend the remainder.

Members considered uses for the funding and **Agreed** to think about it outside the meeting and email round any ideas.

ACTION: ALL MEMBERS

Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should contact the Bowls Club to suggest that an application is made for funding towards the new mower.

ACTION: CLERK

10.7 Website

The Clerk has made all the Parish Council’s documents accessible from September 2018 (not required prior to that). VCS Websites Ltd are in the process of building the new website in the test location. The domain name will be huntonparishcouncil.org.uk with a redirection from the hunton.org.uk website for a period of time. The website should be up and running by early October.

10.8 Clerk’s Report

The Clerk asked if she could attend the upcoming KALC Annual Clerks’ Conference and KALC Finance Conference, which Members approved.

The Clerk has been notified about a telegraph pole leaning (securely) on a tree in front of the Village Hall. Cllr Heaton advised that it is an old hop pole, not a telegraph pole, and it has been there for many years. There is no need to take any action.

The Clerk advised that E.ON are increasing the price of the street lighting electricity from 22.10p per kWh to 25.4p per kWh. The current cost is less than £15 per quarter so Members agreed no action was required.

11. CONSULTATION**11.1 KALC – Learning and Development Survey 2021**

The survey is for KALC to understand how to approach returning to in-person training alongside the training needs councils have.

The deadline for responses is 8th October 2021.

Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should submit her response to the survey.

ACTION: CLERK

12. POLICIES

12.1 Grant Awarding Policy

The Parish Council adopted the Grant Awarding Policy on 10th July 2008. The Clerk has reviewed the document against the Society of Local Council Clerks model policy and other councils' policies and made significant changes.

Members asked for an amendment to be made regarding due diligence and **Agreed** to adopt the policy.

12.2 Co-option Policy

This is a new policy created using National Association of Local Councils guidance and other councils' policies.

Members reviewed the Co-option Policy and **Agreed** to adopt it.

13. FINANCE

13.1 Budget Monitoring Report

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

Cllr Simmons asked whether a certain level of reserves needs to be retained. The Clerk advised that the auditor requires an explanation if reserves are more than double the precept.

13.2 Income Received

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

Hunton Parish Hall Committee – FIT	£626.69
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The bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed by Cllr Stanbridge.

13.3 Payments Made

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

DD – ICO – Data protection fee	£35.00
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – July	£464.47
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – August	£464.47

13.4 Electronic Payments

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

CPRE – Annual membership subscription	£36.00
KCPFA – Annual membership subscription	£20.00
Robert Cox – Permissive footpath hedge and verge maintenance	£500.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP – Limited assurance audit review	£240.00
Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses/Postage/Stationery	£59.90

13.5 Authorised Signatories

At the last Full Council meeting, the Unity Trust Bank account management form was signed to add the new councillors to the authorised signatories list and remove those who have left. Before the form could be submitted, Sue Pinks resigned, so the form has been completed again without her details.

The form was signed and authorised.

The Clerk will supply the Unity Trust Bank telephone number to Cllrs Goddard and Trought as their internet banking logins have most likely expired.

ACTION: CLERK

13.6 Contribution to Village Hall Running Costs

The Parish Council contributes £1,000 per annum to the Village Hall running costs.

Members considered increasing the contribution but **Agreed** it was not necessary at the current time.

13.7 Annual Review of Insurance

The Parish Council's insurance policy is due for renewal on 1st October 2021 for the year to 30th September 2022. The current insurance provider, Zurich Municipal, has provided a quotation for £928.62

(2020: £883.58), a 5% increase from last year. Came & Company (broker) said their insurers would not be able to provide such a competitive quote. Members **Agreed** that the insurance should be renewed with Zurich Municipal. The Clerk will set up an online payment for £928.62. ACTION: CLERK

13.8 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) & Audit 2020/21

Members to note that, following the audit of the 2020/21 AGAR, PKF Littlejohn LLP has given Hunton Parish Council a 'clean' certificate. A comment has been made on 'other matters' regarding the netting off of insurance receipts and payments which the Clerk and Internal Auditor do not agree with.

The statutory 'Notice of conclusion of the audit' and audited AGAR have been displayed on the notice boards and parish website (deadline 30th September).

Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should contact KALC about the comment made by PKF Littlejohn.

ACTION: CLERK

14. PLANNING

14.1 Planning Applications

14.1.1 Burford Farm, Redwall Lane, Linton – 21/504236/FULL

Demolition of grain store and erection of 3(no) dwellings. Conversion and rebuild of implement store and granary store, into 2(no) dwellings including external alterations and insertion of rooflights.

Conversion of Threshing barn into 1(no) dwelling and associated parking.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

14.1.2 The Old Stables, Salters Cross, Vicarage Road, Yalding – 21/504532/FULL

Installation of an oil storage tank.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

14.1.3 The Old Stables, Salters Cross, Vicarage Road, Yalding – 21/504568/LBC

Listed building Consent for installation of an oil storage tank.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

14.1.4 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.

14.2 Planning Decisions

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

14.2.1 Redwall Grange, Redwall Lane - 21/502389/FULL

Part conversion of existing outbuilding to provide accommodation for use for holiday lettings.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

14.2.2 1 Cheveney Oast, Salters Cross, Vicarage Road, Yalding – 21/503132/FULL

Erection of single storey garden room with a flat roof.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

14.2.3 Riverside House, West Street – 21/503444/FULL

Revised balcony design to a holiday let.

Parish Council recommendation: No comment other than that the oil tank is very close to the house.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Parish Council meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 15th November 2021 at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 10:15pm.