

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 21ST MARCH 2022 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: One member of the public was in attendance (co-opted as a parish councillor at Item 5). County Cllr Webb was in attendance from Item 10.1 to Item 11.2.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. FILMING AND RECORDING

The member 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 17TH JANUARY 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2022 had been previously distributed. The Chairman signed the official copy of the minutes.

The Clerk noticed an error in the minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2021. Under Item 4, the meeting date should be 20th September, not 20th November. The Clerk noted the correction on the minutes, which was initialled and dated by the Chairman.

5. CO-OPTION OF A PARISH COUNCILLOR

Jean Fuller had expressed an interest in becoming a parish councillor and had observed the previous full council meeting. No other expressions of interest have been received. All Members **Agreed** that Jean Fuller should be co-opted as a parish councillor and welcomed her to the Parish Council. Mrs Fuller signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and joined the rest of the meeting as a Member. The Clerk provided Cllr Fuller with a 'Notification of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests' form, which needs to be completed and returned to MBC within 28 days. **ACTION: CLLR FULLER/CLERK**

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

Item 10.1 – The Clerk contacted Environmental Health about the bonfires on access land near The Chances, who suggested contacting Community Protection. Community Protection advised that it was a civil matter. The owner of the land could contact the police or, if the issue is specifically a smoke nuisance, a form should be completed on the MBC website and Community Protection would look into it.
Item 12.7 – The Parish Precept Requirement 2022/23 form was sent to MBC.

Item 13.2 – The decision date information for planning application 21/502279/FULL (The Chances, Lughorse Lane) was emailed to Members.

7. POLICE

7.1 Police

PCSO Goodwin has advised that a new PCSO has not been appointed for the area due to lack of numbers. PCSO Nicola Morris, who is the officer for Marden, Yalding and the surrounding area, will be a temporary point of contact. PCSO Goodwin suggested that it would probably be best to contact the main department email address for CSU (Community Safety Unit) if there are any issues.
No crimes have been logged on the e-watch website since the last Parish Council meeting.

7.2 **Huntonwatch**

A Huntonwatch report was not received.

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 provided the following report:

Boundary Fence:

The boundary on the north and west corner of the field is to be planted with a hedge along much of its length, with the addition of new trees under the Platinum Jubilee Queen's Green Canopy scheme. The work for this will be done at the end of March with help from members of the Playing Field Committee and any interested parishioners.

Football Changing Rooms:

Members of the management committee of Hunton Football Club attended the meeting and were given an update on the works being proposed by the Parish Council to ensure the building is safe and secure including wiring replacement (both internal and external), reinstatement of the fire exit (if required by building regulations), new fire signage and equipment and a replacement front door and frame. The football club were asked if they were in a sustainable position going forward and whether they would commit to using / cleaning the facilities appropriately after the works were completed. The club said they were, and it was suggested that a form of memorandum of understanding could be put in place to capture the commitments from both parties for the use of the changing rooms and the ground (ie the football club and the Parish Council as the owners of the building) and once in place, this would form the template for a similar document between the cricket club and the Parish Council for the use of the pavilion and the ground.

Play Equipment:

Following the latest inspection report from MBC and the annual inspection by the Play Inspection Company in January, although no significant risks were identified, the Playing Field Committee have agreed a programme of minor remedial works, which will be done in early April by members of the committee. These include cleaning, minor repairs and repainting of the multiplay and swings; cleaning and minor repairs on the picnic tables; cleaning and minor repairs of the activity trail.

Car Park:

The car park has a number of large holes in it and is in need of repair and consolidation. The Playing Field Committee have agreed the work to fill and level these with road scalplings and again, this will be done by members of the committee in early April.

Cllr Heaton noted that the hedge planting will take place on 26th March; a message will be posted on the Hunton Facebook page to ask for helpers.

The Clerk has contacted Kent County Playing Fields Association for a proforma agreement the Parish Council can use to create its own agreement with the football and cricket clubs. The football club have been told they must send a representative to the Playing Field Committee and contribute more. The Parish Council will go ahead with the electrical work in the changing rooms.

The Clerk advised that Kent Fire & Rescue Service will be carrying out a fire safety audit of the village hall, changing rooms and cricket pavilion.

Cllr Heaton stated that the holes in the car park will be filled on 10th April.

8.2 **Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways**

Cllr Goddard reported that the signs have been installed on East Street, paid for by KCC Highways. One sign needs to be moved as it is obstructing the view; this will be rectified by KCC Highways in the next financial year. Potholes are being reported online to KCC Highways; the water leaks on East Street have caused a big pothole.

Cllr Stanbridge reminded Members that South East Water have committed to the replacement of the East Street water main by 31st March 2022. This deadline is clearly not going to be met; Cllr Stanbridge will contact the head of engineering.

ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE

Cllr Goddard advised that the following are works in progress with KCC Highways:

- Speed Indicator Devices – waiting for a meeting;
- 40mph speed limit extension at the bottom of Hunton Hill – Cllr Goddard will keep pressing although Jennie Watson (KCC Highways) is not keen;
- Kerbing outside the school – waiting for feedback from Claire Chewter (KCC Highways).

Cllr Summersgill reported that the Traffic & Road Safety Working Party (T&RSWP) had met recently. There are two new members; membership now consists of five residents and three parish councillors. Items discussed at the meeting:

- Speedwatch and Lorrywatch – further action required on these initiatives.
- A request has also been received from two residents of Bensted Close for mirrors at the junction with West Street as visibility is poor due the parked cars close to the junction at school drop off and pick up times. Members agreed that landowner permission would be needed for this, and the issue is being caused by people parking their cars contrary to the Highway Code ie too near to the junction.
- Someone will need to take over the recording of HGVs travelling down the wrong roads.
- KCC Highways staff have visited Redwall Lane following a complaint about mud on the road.
- The bank of gravel on East Street has been reported to KCC Highways as it is increasing and narrowing the road. Cllr Goddard agreed to raise this with Jennie Watson also.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

- Some gullies are full of soil and need to be reported.
- Cllr Summersgill will look at the road surface on Barn Hill and North Folly Road.

Questions raised at the meeting included whether quad bikes need to be taxed to be on the highway and why KCC are not cutting back vegetation which is covering road signs.

Cllr Heaton will replace the signpost at the bottom of Barn Hill.

Cllr Fuller reported that the 40mph sign on the way out of Hunton has disappeared.

The next T&RSWP meeting will be held in three months.

8.3 Tree & Pond Warden

Cllr Summersgill advised that the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) will be carried out by Silva Arboriculture on 8th April. A previous VTA recommendation was to cut down a tree in the northeast corner of the recreation ground; the storm has taken it down.

Ponds are at much higher levels than a month ago and look to be in good order. Some of the ponds on Redwall Lane are showing signs of life. Cllr Summersgill has a list of 15 to 20 ponds that he reviews.

9. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

9.1 County Councillor

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

9.2 Borough Councillors

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

10. PARISH MATTERS

10.1 Parish Councillors

Cllr Heaton advised that there is a new government system for Ukrainian refugees. MBC held a briefing in the previous week. Many people are interested in supporting Ukrainian refugees. The Diocese of Rochester has advised that it is better to work collectively rather than individually, perhaps using the church as a hub. In the community, if individuals want to support the cause, it may be better to contact Clock House Farm, which has a large number of Ukrainian workers, rather than wait for MBC and the government. A lot of questions are being asked but there are not many answers at the current time. MBC will help with healthcare, education, etc for refugees and they will be treated as if they are domiciled here. County Cllr Webb advised that provision will be found for child refugees in schools; there are places in most schools in Maidstone.

Cllr Heaton thanked Cllr Webb for his help and agreed to distribute the emails they had shared on this issue with Members.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON

There is no indication when Ukrainian refugees may arrive if allocations are made, but Cllr Webb has a briefing with the chief executive of MBC soon and will pass on any information received.

10.2 Flooding

Cllr Summersgill has not progressed much further on the risk mapping for areas at risk of flooding.

He has had meetings with West Street residents to obtain the history of flooding in the back garden and try and establish the cause.

Cllr Summersgill is looking at the culverts under Grove Lane – one is blocked. Cllr Heaton advised that

the problem is that Grove Lane is an unadopted road.

10.3 Peace Cottages Charity

The trustees of the Peace Cottages Charity have suggested Graham Dolman as the Parish Council nomination for trustee.

Members **Agreed** that Mr Dolman should be the nominated trustee for the Peace Cottages Charity by the Parish Council.

10.4 Neighbourhood Plan

Following the last full council meeting, Cllr Heaton was going to speak to Loose Parish Council about their Neighbourhood Plan but spoke to the Chairman of Brenchley & Matfield Parish Council instead. This parish council is in the last stages of the Neighbourhood Plan process before the referendum. The chairman provided the names of several good consultants, who could be suitable for a small village like Hunton. The cost to date for Brenchley & Matfield PC has been £17,000 for a population of 2,800 people. Cllr Simmons contacted MBC to obtain some information on the process but does not have any information on funding sources. Cllr Summersgill was aware that Marden, and probably Yalding, obtained funding. Cllr Webb suggested contacting the chairman of Lenham Parish Council as they had produced a very good document.

Members considered the difficulty in getting people other than parish councillors involved in the Neighbourhood Plan process and the cost versus the risk of not having a Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Webb added that the MBC housing allocation for Hunton is only five houses.

Cllr Simmons agreed to review the original Neighbourhood Plan reports prepared several years ago. If Members then consider it worth pursuing a Neighbourhood Plan, consultants can be contacted for more information.

ACTION: CLLR SIMMONS

10.5 The Downs Mail

The Downs Mail have sent a letter regarding a sponsored parish page in the newspaper.

Members **Agreed** not to have a sponsored parish page in the Downs Mail as the Hunton Herald reaches everyone in the parish.

10.6 Annual Parish Meeting

Members **Agreed** the invitation list and format of the Annual Parish Meeting (APM), to be held on 23rd May 2022. The first half of the meeting will be an open session where residents can ask questions and raise issues; the second half will consist of presentations from local organisations. Cllr Fuller suggested that a suggestion box could be included. Cllr Heaton will include an article in the Hunton Herald to publicise the APM.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON

10.7 Clerk's Report

Members **Agreed** that the Clerk could attend the 'All About the AGAR' and 'Data Protection for Clerks' KALC training at a cost of £110 plus VAT.

The National Non-Domestic Rate Demand notice has been received from MBC for the cricket pavilion. The bill is £0 due to 100% Small Business Rate Relief being applied.

11. CONSULTATIONS

11.1 KCC – Bus Funding Reduction Consultation

KCC's budget for the 2022/23 financial year includes a reduction to the Supported Bus budget to £4.3m, representing a decrease of £2.2 million. KCC currently spends about £6 million a year to contract services which are not profitable for bus companies but which the council thinks are important to the communities they serve. The proposed changes mean 48 contracts have been selected for possible withdrawal from the budget.

Members **Agreed** not to respond to the consultation as the Hunton buses are not affected by the cuts.

11.2 The Local Government Boundary Commission – Maidstone Ward Boundaries Review Consultation

The Commission is consulting on new ward boundaries across Maidstone. The Commission has also announced that it is recommending that the Maidstone Borough Council should have 48 councillors in the future and is to draw up a new pattern of wards to accommodate 48 councillors. The Commission has not yet proposed any new wards as it wants to consult to find out what residents and organisations think of the current wards and where the new ones should be.

Members discussed different options and **Agreed** that the best option would be for Hunton to be in a ward with Marden, Yalding and Linton (Hunton is currently in a ward with Coxheath). They are all in the River Beult catchment and Hunton and Yalding have more in common than Hunton and Coxheath. Being in a large ward allows more representation at Borough Councillor level. The option selected aligns with MBC's response to the Commission. The Clerk will submit the response. ACTION: CLERK

12. POLICIES

12.1 Standing Orders

The Parish Council last reviewed its Standing Orders on 29th March 2021. 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.

12.2 Financial Regulations

The Parish Council last reviewed its Financial Regulations on 29th March 2021. 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.

13. FINANCE

13.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 28th February 2022 was **Noted**.

13.2 Income Received

Members **Noted** that no income has been received since the last meeting.

Notification has been received from MBC that the precept application for 2022/23 has been agreed and the precept will be paid on 8th April.

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 – January	£464.47
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – February	£464.47
Hope Grove Nurseries Ltd – Hedging plants	£1,125.00

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:

Action with Communities in Rural Kent – Annual membership subscription	£60.00
Q-Tec Solutions Limited – Additional CCTV camera	£600.00
Sharon Goodwin – Salary back pay	£81.73
Sharon Goodwin – Travel / Postage / Stationery	£50.79

13.5 Queen's Platinum Jubilee lunch

At the Planning Committee meeting on 28th February, the Parish Council agreed in principle to a funding request from the Village Club for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Lunch, to be held on 5th June. Members reviewed the details provided and **Agreed** that the Parish Council would fund any items pertaining to the public in general, but not those relating to the paid meal (which constitutes a private event within the public event). The amount of funding equates to approximately £1,000.

13.6 Fete Committee Funds

All members of the Hunton Fete Committee resigned in 2019, disbanding the Committee. There is approximately £6,000 in funds remaining in the bank account which the previous members of the Fete Committee would like to be transferred to the Parish Council in case others wish to resurrect the Fete in future or for use towards other events.

The Clerk contacted the Parish Council's bank, Unity Trust Bank, to see if they could assist in setting up a trust for the funds, but they only set up bank accounts. The internal auditor was subsequently contacted, who advised that the Parish Council could accept the funds from the Fete Committee and, if the Fete Committee sets restrictions on how the funds are spent, the funds can be ringfenced in the council's accounting records. Other options would be to set up a charitable trust or not accept the funds. Cllr Trought confirmed that there had been a winding-up meeting of the Fete Committee and there are minutes which confirm that the Committee wants the funds to be transferred to the Parish Council to support entertainment and events in the parish. Members **Agreed** that the Parish Council could accept the Fete Committee funds on that basis.

13.7 Parish Services Grant 2022/23

MBC is increasing the Parish Services Scheme Grant by 2%, from £1,639 in 2021/22 to £1,677 in 2022/23. Members were provided with the assumptions underlying the calculation of the grant. Members noted the increase in the Parish Services Scheme Grant for 2022/23.

13.8 Review of Clerk's Salary

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has agreed new pay scales, applicable from 1st April 2021. Members **Approved** the increase in the Clerk's salary (at SCP 12) in line with the NJC pay scales from 1st April 2021. Members **Approved** the Clerk's back pay of £81.73 for April 2021 to February 2022 and **Agreed** to authorise the standing order mandate to increase the Clerk's monthly salary payment from March 2022. The back pay and standing order mandate will be authorised online.

ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE/CLLR SUMMERSGILL

14. PLANNING

14.1 Planning Application

14.1.1 The Old Forge, Barn Hill - 22/500908/FULL

Erection of a new double garage with 2 no. roof windows.
Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

14.1.2 Martins Bungalow, George Street - 22/500713/FULL

Retrospective application for conversion of outbuilding from a forge to an annexe for use ancillary to the main dwelling.

Parish Council recommendation: Comment that the Parish Council is unable to make a recommendation as the information provided is inadequate.

14.1.3 Reed Court Farm, Hunton Road, Marden - 20/505751/EIFUL

Erection of a new free-range egg farm consisting of 3 no. hen houses with extensive outdoor ranges and fencing, formal vehicle access from Hunton Road and associated parking, landscaping, woodland and tree planting, drainage and other associated works. Additional information received.

Parish Council recommendation: Renew the objection as there is still inadequate technical documentation. Cllr Summersgill provided Members with a briefing note on the additional information provided by the applicant.

14.1.4 Burford Farm, Redwall Lane, Linton – 22/501015/AGRIC

Prior notification for erection of an agricultural building for cold storage. For its prior approval to: - Siting, design and external appearance.

Parish Council recommendation: No comment. The site is in Linton parish, with the entrance in Hunton parish.

14.2 Planning Decisions

No planning decisions have been made by Maidstone Borough Council since the last Planning Committee meeting.

Cllr Summersgill reported that the applicants have produced more documents, but still no Design & Access Statement for planning application 21/505627/FULL (The Green Barn, Water Lane).

Cllr Summersgill also advised that planning application 21/506545/FULL (Wilson's Yard, George Street) is on the agenda for the MBC Planning Committee on 24th March. The case officer recommended that the application should be permitted (as did the Parish Council) but it has to go to committee as new buildings will be created in the countryside.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Parish Council meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 9th May 2022 at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 10:17pm.