

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: One member of the public was in attendance from Item 5 to Item 7.1.
County/Borough Cllr Simon Webb was in attendance from Item 7.2.2 to Item 8.2

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr I Simmons and Cllr M Summersgill.

2. FILMING AND RECORDING

Those in attendance did not wish to film, record or photograph the meeting.

3. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

3.1 Declaration of Interests

Cllr Heaton declared an interest in Item 11.7 as he is the Chairman of the Friends of St Mary's.

3.2 Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 18TH JULY 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2022 had been previously distributed. The Chairman signed the official copy of the minutes.

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

Item 7.2.1 – The signage issues on West Street have been logged on the KCC Highways portal.

Item 11.1.1 – The breach of planning conditions at Little Clock House was reported to MBC Planning Enforcement.

Item 11.2 – The letter outlining issues with the current planning processes was sent to the MBC Head of Planning.

6. POLICE

6.1 Police

Two crimes have been logged on the e-watch website since the last Parish Council meeting:

13-14/08/22 – Redwall Lane - Somebody broke into the office at a farm and stole several items including the keys to farm equipment.

07/09/22 – West Street - Somebody entered a residential property uninvited and stole keys to two vehicles.

6.2 Huntonwatch

Nothing to report.

7. LOCAL COMMUNITY

7.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

7.1.1 Update

The Chairman of the Committee, Simon Taylor, provided the following report:

The Committee held its AGM in July, when the previous chairman, Steve Jones, resigned and Simon Taylor was elected.

Prior to the AGM and Committee meeting, the trustees walked round the field to identify any issues.

Areas the Committee is working on include the following:

- It is unaffordable to concrete the area where the old cricket pavilion was located. Instead, the area will be fenced off using a post and rail fence. A close-boarded fence will also be installed between the shed and the new pavilion for cosmetic reasons.
- There are ongoing issues with moles and rabbits.
- Autumn maintenance work is scheduled for 9th October.
- There is an issue with the MBC monthly health and safety reports as they seem to be using old photographs and reporting issues which have been rectified. This will be raised with MBC.
- The beech hedge between the recreation ground and the Bowls Club will be cut back before winter.
- The arrangements between the sports clubs and the Parish Council for use of the facilities are being formalised for the first time using a Memorandum of Understanding.

7.1.2 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Members **Approved** the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between:

- the Parish Council and Hunton Wanderers Cricket Club (HWCC); and
- the Parish Council and Hunton Football Club (HFC)

Two copies of the Parish Council/HWCC MOU were signed by the Chairman of the Parish Council and the Chairman of HWCC. The Chairman of the Parish Council signed two copies of the Parish Council/HFC MOU, which the Clerk will send to the Chairman of HFC for signature. ACTION: CLERK

7.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

7.2.1 Update

Cllr Goddard has not met Claire Venner yet, who is Jennie Watson's replacement at KCC Highways. He will go through the Hunton work plan and obtain an update on the kerbing outside the school when he does meet with her, ideally before the next T&RSWP meeting in the first week of October.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

Cllr Summersgill has been signed on by Kent Police as Speedwatch Co-ordinator for Hunton. He needs to complete the training module before reviewing the locations with them, and then get the others organised and trained. Cllr Summersgill has four volunteers so far and there is a note in the Hunton Herald coming out at the weekend.

7.2.2 Safety Mirrors Opposite Bensted Close

The landowner has agreed that safety mirrors can be installed on his land, opposite the junction between West Street and Bensted Close, to provide more safety for those exiting Bensted Close when cars are parked on or near the junction. Provided there is 450mm clearance from the carriageway, the mirrors can now be installed. Mirrors found online vary in construction, size and price, so Cllr Goddard will obtain guidance from Claire Venner.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

Members **Agreed** a budget of £1,000 for the mirrors.

Members are concerned that a serious accident could still happen near the school and would welcome the involvement of the school to remind parents of safety measures when parking and taking their children out of the car. Cllr Goddard will raise it at the next T&RSWP meeting. ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

7.3 Tree & Pond Warden

Cllr Summersgill was unable to attend the meeting but had provided the following update:

Tree Warden - the works required by the VTA in April have now been completed by Hoods Tree Services.
Pond Warden – nothing to report, except that many ponds dried out completely in August.

The school is interested in helping with Copse in a Box, but Cllr Summersgill needs to visit and talk to the Eco-TA at the school and there is not much time left as acorns and seeds need to be gathered as soon as possible.

8. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

8.1 County Councillor

County Cllr Simon Webb provided the following report:

The biggest issues at KCC relate to Highways. Claire Venner is no longer in post, so Cllr Goddard will need to speak to Susan Laporte about highways issues until the post is filled. The impact of transport changes at KCC affect the Conservative heartland.

Cllr Webb is asking parish councils for their views on KCC increasing its precept by 2% from April 2023.

Cllr Webb does not know what the 2% increase is required for specifically, just that members have been told they need it. Adult social care represents 56% of the KCC budget and children's social care represents 12%. As inflation is at 10%, Members did not consider a 2% increase to be unreasonable.

8.2 **Borough Councillors**

Borough Cllr Webb reported that MBC is withdrawing its funding for the parish monthly play area inspections from April 2023.

Ukrainians who have stayed with a sponsor for six months under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, but then do not wish to extend their stay with the sponsor after that time become homeless, which is creating a housing issue.

Cllr Heaton asked if Cllr Webb has received a response from Sue King in Planning Enforcement about Little Clock House – he has not.

9. **PARISH MATTERS**

9.1 **Parish Councillors**

Cllr Heaton recorded his thanks to James Forster for the excellent flag etiquette employed outside the church for Operation London Bridge.

9.2 **Flooding**

Cllr Summersgill continues with the property spreadsheet; he has had about 14 replies to 38 circulars. There should have been an update article in the next Hunton Herald but it has been postponed due to space. Cllr Summersgill held a useful co-ordination meeting with the Collier Street Flood Warden (and also the Parish Council chair), who will add Cllr Summersgill to the local Flood WhatsApp group for the Medway/Beult/Teise catchment. Cllr Summersgill has still heard nothing from Yalding despite sending two emails of introduction.

9.3 **Climate Change and Sustainability**

No points to consider.

9.4 **Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr Simmons was not at the meeting, so the item was deferred.

9.5 **Permissive Footpath on West Street – Hedge and Verges Maintenance Contract**

The two-year contract for the maintenance of the hedge and verges near the permissive footpath on West Street, which was awarded to Robert Cox, is at an end. Members reviewed the specification for the next two-year contract without making any amendments.

Members Agreed that the specification should be sent to Robert Cox again as his work has been of a good standard in the past and other contractors who have been sent the specification in previous years have not returned a quote. The deadline for a response will be 31st October 2022. ACTION: CLERK

9.6 **Clerk's Report**

- The Parish Council's external auditor, PKF Littlejohn, has provided the external auditor report and certificate for the 2021/22 AGAR. No matters for concern have been raised in the external auditor report and the certificate has been signed. The statutory 'Notice of conclusion of the audit' and audited AGAR will be displayed on the notice boards and parish website before the 30th September 2022 deadline. ACTION: CLERK
- A resident from Bishops Lane has asked if Hunton Court can be contacted by the Parish Council, to clear the ditches that run along Bishops Lane. Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should contact the landowner. ACTION: CLERK

10. **CONSULTATION**

10.1 **The Local Government Boundary Commission – Maidstone Ward Boundaries Review Draft Recommendations**

The Parish Council responded to the Maidstone Ward Boundaries Review consultation, agreeing with the Maidstone Borough Council recommendation that Hunton should be in a ward with Marden, Yalding and Linton.

The Boundary Commission recommendation is for Hunton to be in a ward with Marden, Yalding, Collier Street and Nettlestead. Linton is in a ward with Loose.
Members **Agreed** not to respond to the recommendations.

11. FINANCE

11.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31st August 2022 was **Noted**.

11.2 Income Received

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

Hunton Parish Hall Committee – FIT	£758.69
Hunton Fete Committee – Transfer to entertainment fund	£4,246.90

The bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed by Cllr Stanbridge.

11.3 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	£472.10
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – August	£472.10

11.4 Electronic Payments

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

Hoods Tree Services Ltd – Tree surgery	£540.00
PKF Littlejohn – Limited assurance audit review	£240.00
Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Contribution to running costs (second half)	£500.00
Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses / Stationery	£32.35
Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Grant towards renovation work on the toilets	£4,000.00

11.5 Annual Review of Insurance

The Parish Council's insurance policy is due for renewal on 1st October 2022 for the year to 30th September 2023. The current insurance provider, Zurich Municipal, has provided a quotation of £949.93 (2021: £928.62), a 2.3% increase from last year. Came & Company (broker) have 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 £949.93, for authorisation by Cllrs Goddard and Heaton.
ACTION: CLERK/CLLR GODDARD/CLLR HEATON

11.6 SAAA Ltd External Auditor Appointment Arrangements

Under the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015, SAAA is responsible for appointing external auditors to all applicable opted-in smaller authorities. Smaller authorities are those whose gross annual income or expenditure is less than £6.5 million.

The next 5-year appointing period runs from 2022-23 until 2026-27 and SAAA has undertaken a procurement exercise to appoint auditors to each County area from 1st April 2022. All authorities have the option to opt-out of the central procurement and appointment scheme and appoint their own external auditor for the next 5-year period.

Members **Agreed** to remain opted-in to the central procurement of external auditors.

11.7 Friends of St Mary's

A member of the Friends of St Mary's Committee has requested a grant of £2,000 towards the funding of the inaugural Hunton Fireworks Display, from the funds transferred to the Parish Council from the Fete Committee. Details of costings and expected income have been provided.

Members **Agreed** not to provide a grant for the event.

12. PLANNING

12.1 Planning Decisions

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

12.1.1 Willow House, Bishops Lane - 22/502657/FULL

Removal of lean-to rear conservatory. Erection of a first floor extension with roof lights and changes to fenestration.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection but recommend that the west-facing velux windows are frosted.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

12.1.2 Scuffits, Water Lane - 22/503500/FULL

Erection of a garden room.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Parish Council meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 21st November 2022 at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:20pm.