

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 13TH JANUARY 2014
AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Cllr R Sawtell in the Chair, Cllrs G Thomas, D Heaton, L Leonard, S Wyles and Mrs S Goodwin, Clerk.

IN ATTENDANCE: County Cllr P Stockell and Borough Cllr Collins were in attendance until Item 9. Borough Cllr Mortimer and one member of the public were in attendance until Item 7.7. Three members of the public were in attendance until Item 7.4.

Please note that items in the minutes are recorded in the same order as the agenda, but items were moved around during the meeting to allow the County and Borough Councillors to attend other meetings.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs R Porter and T Stanbridge. PCSOs A Hunter and R Kemp had also sent their apologies.

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

2.1 Declaration of Interests

There were no councillor declarations.

2.2 Dispositions

There were no requests for dispensations.

3. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 11TH NOVEMBER 2013

The minutes had been previously distributed.

The minutes of the meeting on 11th November state that Cllr Thomas (as Chairman of that meeting) “expressed his great regret and sorrow at the passing of Alan Bishop and appreciation of his significant contribution to the village”. Cllr Thomas clarified that he had said that on behalf of the whole Parish Council, not just himself.

Cllr Thomas signed off the official copy of the minutes.

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

Item 4 – Mrs Gibbs-Naguar, the new head teacher at Hunton Primary School, was invited to the 13th January meeting, but was not able to attend. She is happy to meet a member of the Parish Council at the school.

Cllr Wyles met with Mrs Gibbs-Naguar in December as Parish Council representative regarding the school. Both agreed that the Parish Council should work closely with the school and will liaise regularly. There are two main issues, the first being cars parking dangerously at the end of Bishops Lane. Parents are regularly notified and one employee of the school has now stopped parking there. The other issue is use of the footpath to walk to school, using the Village Hall car park, rather than park outside the school. The school wants the walking bus to happen and a staff volunteer will run the bus, but a safety assessment needs to be carried out first.

The Chairman commented that there has been an issue with water running from the school towards the almshouses opposite. The residents and vicar have spoken to the school about this and the maintenance person is to look into it.

Item 7.5 – The KCC Highways Survey 2013 was completed.

Item 8.5 – The KALC County Secretary confirmed that the KALC Community Award could be given to Alan Bishop posthumously.

Item 9.4.2 – Cllr Sawtell is happy to be the nominated representative of the Parish Council, as a member organisation of Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau.

5. POLICE BUSINESS

5.1 Police

PCSOs Alan Hunter and Rebecca Kemp were both unable to attend the meeting. The latest crime figures are as follows:

30/11/13 – West Street – Criminal damage to garden statue overnight

26/12/13 – West Street – Theft of heating oil overnight

5.2 Neighbourhood Watch

Cllr Wyles reported that there had been a lawnmower theft in Water Lane in December. There have been a lot of break ins in East Farleigh, thefts of laptops, mobile phones, etc.

Huntonwatch was voted Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator 2013 by Maidstone & District Neighbourhood Watch and now has a membership of 103 properties, a third of the properties in the parish. A newsletter was put out before Christmas. Owners of 4x4 vehicles were requested to volunteer to assist in times of snow or flooding, two have come forward.

6. HIGHWAY & FOOTPATH MATTERS

6.1 Footpath – Bensted Close to Village Hall

The hedge cutting has been completed by Tregoning Trees and KCC has reimbursed the £2,400 cost to the Parish Council. At the time of the meeting, a reply had not been received to the email sent to David Hubble, asking for permission to replace the oil barrel full of concrete and wire with a gate, at the cost of the Parish Council. The Clerk will follow up with a letter.

ACTION: CLERK

A hole has reappeared at the end of the footpath near the village hall. Borough Cllr Collins kindly agreed to fill in the hole. There was some discussion about the MBC housing allocation, as the sites are still to be provided by MBC. Borough Cllr Collins stated that the sites would be considered at the Planning, Transportation & Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 3rd February and approved at Cabinet a week or two later.

6.2 Gateways

Andy Padgham from KCC is meeting the contractor at the Gateways site on 14th January. Installation will take place shortly after.

6.3 West Street Problems

Andy Padgham will be advising the contractor where to install the three marker posts on the verge near the playing field on West Street on 14th January.

Parking outside the school was discussed as it is a problem for residents on West Street. County Cllr Stockell offered to help where possible. Possibilities to follow up could be painting double yellow lines and also policing of the parking by the PCSOs.

ACTION: CLERK

It was agreed that the suggestion of installing posts on the eroded verge near the school would not be considered until the parking situation was sorted out.

6.4 Speedwatch

Guy Oliver was invited to attend the meeting to provide an update on Speedwatch, but he advised that, due to Christmas and poor weather conditions, there has not been any recent Speedwatch activity.

7. RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

7.1 King George V Playing Field

The Chairman of the King George V Playing Field Management Committee, Danny Peacock, reported that the following was discussed at the last committee meeting on 8th January 2014:

- The keys have been cut for the gate.
- A quotation has been received from Robert Cox to cut the overhanging trees. The work cannot be done at present due to the muddy conditions.
- Iden Signs has been contacted for a quote for the new signage.
- One step on the slide is rotten, which Alan Blackledge-Smith is to fix.
- George Sharp to be contacted regarding the poplar trees.
- The use of scalping is to be considered to improve the car park, costs to be obtained.

The Chairman introduced Christine Harrison, the new Chairman of the Village Hall Committee. Mrs Harrison reported that at the last Committee meeting on 26th November all of the officers were re-elected. There are a number of concerns regarding the state of the Village Hall: the fire doors cannot be easily closed, the water fire extinguisher needs replacing, the boiler is leaking water and a couple of switches need attention. The Committee wants the leaves and gutters cleaned and the front of the Village Hall looking presentable. Demand for hall bookings is very good.

7.2 Hunton Parish Plan

The Chair of the Hunton Parish Plan Steering Committee was unable to attend the meeting and there was no report.

7.3 Hunton Village Club

Members of the Parish Council held a meeting with Phil Nichols from the Village Club before Christmas. Four new people have joined the Village Club Committee which is thinking of new ways to increase funds. The Club cannot be used as a community centre as it is a Club, requiring members, who now have secure cards. Despite interest it cannot be used for private functions as members would still be allowed access. The Club has an open bar which needs securing if the Club is used for coffee mornings, etc. The Village Hall Committee will hold their meetings there and others have used it for meetings.

7.4 Joint Parishes Group

Members **Agreed** that it would be useful for the Parish Council to join the Joint Parishes Group (JPG), which is a consortium of local parish councils which considers planning matters, sharing ideas and experiences. Cllr Thomas agreed to attend the meetings. The Clerk was asked to contact the Clerk of the JPG to inform her that Hunton would like to join the group and be advised of future meeting dates.

ACTION: CLERK

7.5 Flooding

Members considered the recent flooding and felt it would be useful to establish the responsibilities of different organisations for clearing ditches, drains and gullies, which appear to be as follows:

- Ditches - adjacent landowner
- Larger ditches - internal drainage board
- Gullies – KCC
- Policing ditch clearing – the Environment Agency

It was noted that the storm drains do get cleared, but keep getting blocked. Cllr Wyles agreed to make some phone calls to find out more about the various responsibilities.

ACTION: CLLR WYLES

7.5 MBC Policy SP3 – Rural Service Centres

MBC Policy SP3 proposes to make Coxheath and Yalding Rural Service Centres (RSCs).

There had been a lack of consultation with Coxheath and Yalding parish councils on this proposal,

who were against it, as was Borough Cllr Mortimer.

Colin Parr of Coxheath Parish Council was asked to outline what had happened. A number of parish councillors from Coxheath and Yalding had been present at an MBC Planning, Transport & Development Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) meeting and were appalled at the lack of consultation. The items were withdrawn from the agenda, but the parish councillors still spoke. A meeting had subsequently been held with MBC councillors and officers at MBC where the parish councillors had put their case forward. Coxheath has prepared a Neighbourhood Plan very scientifically from the bottom up and is not against development as long as it is only development which is required. Mr Murphy of MBC Planning was questioned on the increase in housing numbers from 14,800 to 19,600 and how the figure had been arrived at. Spatial strategy should be considered, but MBC is only using a dispersal strategy. If Members have strong views, Cllr Parr asked that they are sent to MBC ahead of the MBC O&S meeting next week where the RSCs will be discussed.

Cllr Thomas stated that the housing numbers and RSCs are interlocked. Under the definition of an RSC, MBC considers that Coxheath and Yalding tick all the boxes, but the parish councils do not agree.

Borough Cllr Collins advised that the housing numbers proposed by MBC must be evidence based and statistics from the Office of National Statistics have been used by an outside contractor. By 2031 there will be 19,800 more people over 65 years old than there are now and within that will be a large proportion of single people. Just their need over the next 20 years at 1½ people per house means 14,000 extra houses are required.

Cllr Thomas had read the 192 page report by GL Hearn, the contractor used by MBC. This company acts for many leading developers. The basis for the housing figures in the report is the use of past trends to project for the future. Projections are not forecasts; they provide an indication of the future population if past trends continue. 19,600 houses are a third extra to what is there currently. The planned build for the ten years to 2011 was 6,178 houses, but actual build was 8,091. Now 1,000 houses are planned per year, the calculation does not make sense. Cllr Thomas felt that if it went to the Planning Inspector the report would be found unsound. Borough Cllr Mortimer stated that past trends are important to look at the future, but if that is the case MBC should have taken into account trends in windfall sites.

Cllr Thomas agreed to write a letter to MBC.

ACTION: CLLR THOMAS

7.7 Maidstone Housing Numbers 2011-2031

This was discussed under Item 7.6.

7.8 MBC Consultation – Draft Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

Green and Blue Infrastructure covers a very wide range of areas/topics, but is most commonly considered to be: natural and semi-natural green spaces, green and blue corridors (such as rivers), outdoor sports space, parks and gardens, amenity green space (such as general green space within housing areas), provision for children and teenagers, allotments and community gardens, cemeteries and churchyards, and accessible countryside and nature reserves.

Cllr Thomas could not attend the MBC meeting on this consultation, but others who attended felt patronised by officers and that the policies are weak. The need for Green and Blue Infrastructure should be supported.

7.9 MBC Consultation – Changes to Planning Department Operations

The back office Planning functions at Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells local authorities are to be combined into a single shared service. Parish Councils have been asked to complete an e-consultation questionnaire. Members **Agreed** the answers to the questionnaire.

7.10 Government Consultation – Local Authority Parking Strategies

The Department for Transport has issued a consultation on Local Authority Parking Strategies. Members did not wish to send a response to the consultation.

8. MATTERS OF REPORT

8.1 County and Borough Councillors

8.1.1 County Councillor

County Cllr Stockell reported that the KCC budget will be considered at a meeting on 13th February. Flooding has been a big issue and Cllr Stockell will be attending a meeting with the Environment Agency to determine what they are going to do. The county boundary review will be considered at a meeting in February to determine how many councillors there should be. A reduction will probably be agreed which will come in before 2017. The roads are in a poor condition at the moment; the road in Leeds has collapsed due to caverns underneath. KCC is working to sort it out.

8.1.2 Borough Councillors

Borough Cllr Collins reported that The Beast House planning application was refused by MBC. It is likely to go to appeal.
Borough Cllr Mortimer advised that a 1.99% increase in council tax is likely.

8.2 Chairman

The Chairman did not have anything to report.

8.3 Individual Councillors

Members did not have anything to report.

8.4 Clerk

8.4.1 Invitation to Annual Civic Service

Members did not wish to attend the Annual Civic Service held by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent.

8.4.2 Little Clock House Complaint

A response has been received from Rob Jarman, Head of MBC Planning, to the complaint made by the Parish Council regarding the manner in which the Little Clock House planning application was dealt with by the case officer. A questionnaire has also been received from the Head of Policy & Communications to allow the Parish Council to comment on the way the complaint was handled by MBC.

Members **Agreed** that the complaint should be escalated to Stage 2 and completed the questionnaire accordingly.

9. FINANCE

9.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31st December 2013 was **Noted**.

Members discussed the FIT payments received for the solar panels on the Village Hall roof as Kevin Boatwright, current Treasurer of the Village Hall Management Committee, is leaving. Mr Boatwright is currently the nominated person to receive the FIT payments from EDF and is planning to handover to Mike Summersgill as incoming Treasurer. Members felt that the Parish Council should receive the FIT payments directly, but were unsure whether the FIT tariff would change. Cllr Heaton agreed to discuss it with Mr Boatwright and Christine Harrison.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON

9.2 Income Received

Members **Noted** the following income received since the last meeting:

MBC – Parish Services Scheme funding – Second half	£974.50
NatWest – Business Reserve Account bank interest	£0.30

Cllr Wyles reviewed and signed the bank reconciliation.

9.3 **Payments Made**

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

SO – S Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – November	£396.81
SO – S Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – December	£396.81

9.4 **Cheques for Signature**

Members **Agreed** that the following payments be approved and the cheques were signed by Cllrs Thomas and Leonard:

1138 – South East Water – Cricket field water charges (KGF)	£177.68
1139 – E.ON – Street lighting	£6.99
1140 – Commercial Services Trading Limited – Grounds maintenance (KGF)	£446.98
1141 – KALC – Publication	£42.88
1142 – CANCELLED	
1143 – Yalding Parish Council – Contribution to Yalding Summer Playscheme 2014	£140.00
1144 – S Goodwin – Travel/Postage/Stationery & office expenses	£70.24

9.5 **Grounds Maintenance 2014**

Members considered the quotation received from KCC Landscape Services for the maintenance of the King George V Field for 2014. Members **Agreed** to accept the quotation of £763.58 (excluding VAT) for 16 cuts. Members asked the Clerk to check with the Secretary of the King George V Playing Field Committee whether 16 cuts are actually carried out. **ACTION: CLERK**

9.6 **Bank Accounts**

The Parish Council's NatWest bank accounts yield very little interest per annum - £0 on the current account and approximately £1.20 on the business reserve account. There have also been numerous administrative problems with the NatWest accounts.

A review of alternative bank accounts has been carried out. None of the high street banks provide any interest on current accounts, but the Unity Trust Bank and Co-operative Bank both do and have specific council accounts. The Clerk provided Members with a comparison of the two bank accounts and Members **Agreed** that the Parish Council's bank should be changed from NatWest to the Unity Trust Bank. In accordance with the requirement from the Unity Trust Bank Members **Agreed** that:

1. Hunton Parish Council (The Parish Council) wishes to open an account with Unity Trust Bank plc (The Bank) and produced to the meeting a copy of the Bank's terms and conditions for operating an account;
2. The Bank's terms and conditions are approved and the Parish Council appoints the Bank as its Bankers;
3. The Bank's terms and conditions may vary from time to time and the Parish Council agrees to be bound by them;
4. The Mandate for the operation of the bank accounts, payment instructions and banking services to be provided to the Bank by persons authorised to do so in accordance with the Bank's procedures;
5. The Bank is entitled to rely upon this Mandate until it receives a later Mandate amending it;
6. The Bank will be provided with a copy of the registration documents;
7. The parish councillors acknowledge that they shall be jointly and severally liable for any liabilities of the Parish Council to the Bank.

As the minutes from this meeting need to accompany the application form, the change of bank will take place after the next Parish Council meeting, when the minutes have been signed.

9.7 2014/15 Budget and Parish Precept

Members had received the budget papers produced by the Clerk prior to the meeting. Members accepted the budget, subject to increasing the Open Spaces budget allocation. Members **Agreed** that the Precept should remain the same as last year at £17,000. This precept creates a tax of £57.10 per property. The Chairman signed and dated the MBC Parish Precept Requirement 2014/15 form for the Clerk to submit to MBC. ACTION: CLERK

10. PLANNING

10.1 Planning Decisions

10.1.1 The Beast House, West Street – MA/13/1494

Erection of a single dwelling and conversion of part of existing building to B1 office use and part domestic storage to create a live/work premises.

Parish Council recommendation: Approve, and request the application is reported to MBC Planning Committee should the Case Officer wish to refuse the application.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Refused planning permission.

10.1.2 Pepper Cottage, Vicarage Road, Yalding – MA/13/1423

An application for an extension to garage building to provide a sitting room and link extension to main house.

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Granted planning permission.

10.1.3 Pepper Cottage, Vicarage Road, Yalding – MA/13/1424

Listed building consent for an extension to garage building to provide a sitting room and link extension to main house.

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Granted planning permission.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Council Meeting is on **Monday 10th March 2014** at 8:00pm at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to be discussed the meeting closed at 10:50pm.