

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 10TH MARCH 2025 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: One member of the public was in attendance for the Open Session only. Borough Cllr C Russell was in attendance.

OPEN SESSION:

A member of the public asked if there has been any progress on the changes to the school crossing. Cllr Heaton advised that the Parish Council is waiting to hear from Kent County Council (KCC).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr I Simmons. Borough Cllr G Couch had also sent her apologies.

2. FILMING, RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHING

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 JANUARY 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2025 had been previously distributed and were agreed as an accurate record. The Chairman signed the official copies of the minutes.

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

Item 6.2 – KCC PROW have acknowledged but not responded about the broken gate at the exit of the footpath on to West Street. The Clerk has requested an update. The blockage on the footpath at the bottom of Barn Hill has been reported to KCC PROW.

Item 9.1 – KCC have confirmed that the triangle of land near the bridge to Chainhurst, known as Clapper Green, was registered as a Village Green in 1972 and is owned by the Parish Council, so it will need to be added to the asset register. ACTION: CLERK

Item 9.1 – Reports have been made to MBC Planning Enforcement.

Item 9.6 – The defibrillator installation form has been completed and submitted to the Community Heartbeat Trust. Cllr Trought asked whether the telephone kiosk can be used by the Parish Council, now that the defibrillator is being installed at the Village Club; the Clerk will contact the Community Heartbeat Trust. ACTION: CLERK

Item 9.7 – The nomination for the KALC Community Award has been submitted to KALC.

Item 10.7 – A quote was obtained from Q-Tec Solutions for a new CCTV camera and agreed at the Planning Committee meeting on 10th February.

Item 10.9 – The Parish Precept Requirement 2025/26 form was submitted to Maidstone Borough Council (MBC).

6. POLICE

6.1 Police

No crimes have been logged on the e-watch website since the last Parish Council meeting.

Cllr Summersgill advised that he will be attending a Ward Cluster meeting on 11th March if there is anything to report. Members asked if there is currently a specific police officer who covers Hunton; Cllr

Summersgill advised that there are two officers who cover Hunton as part of a larger area (PC Chad Maskell and PC George Head). Cllr Summersgill will ask if they can attend a drop-in at the Village Club and attend a Parish Council meeting. ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

6.2 Huntonwatch

Huntonwatch provided the following written report:
Joy riders on motorbikes have been seen on Bishops field.

7. LOCAL COMMUNITY

7.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The Chairman of the Playing Field Committee (PFC), Colin Slattery, was unable to attend the meeting. The following is a summary of the last PFC meeting on 5th March 2025:

The multiplay equipment is under repair; the fenced play area is closed until the work is completed. Other work to do includes:

- fixing the Community Orchard gate;
- cutting back the northern boundary of the field;
- cutting the roadside hedge on the eastern side;
- repointing the wall at the entrance to the car park;
- repairs to the posts (or possibly new posts) which hold the netting between the cricket pitch and bowls green. The netting may also be replaced.

The annual play area inspection report has been received from The Play Inspection Company.

The PFC currently has funds of £3,008.

Cllr Summersgill noted that there is a pothole at the entrance to the Village Hall car park and asked if it is the responsibility of the PFC. Cllr Heaton advised that it is; the tarmac will be replaced.

7.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

7.2.1 Update

Cllr Goddard did not have anything to report.

Cllr Summersgill reported on the following from the last Traffic & Road Safety Working Party (T&RSWP) meeting held on 28th February:

The finger post at the bottom of Barn Hill needs to be installed. One of the marker posts has also gone.

Cllr Summersgill is trying to establish whether KCC will fill two salt bins which the Parish Council has agreed to purchase.

Clearing open ditches is still a problem at the end of George Street with boundary stones in the ditch.

The East Street drainage has been jetted and cleared, but Redwall Lane was not jetted where the culvert is blocked, so water still flows on to the road. Cllr Summersgill will not know if the George Street culvert has been cleared until it rains.

There are two suggested issues for the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) – a deer/animal sign on Hunton Hill (which could be placed on the pedestrian sign) and protective barriers/posts on the Scotts Farm corner where trees are being eroded in the bank. There has been damage to the verges on East Street and Redwall Lane; Cllr Summersgill has been in contact with Clock House Farm. Another potential addition to the HIP is an ‘elderly people’ sign at the Bishop’s Lane junction with West Street.

Residents contacted KCC about drainage outside the Gudgeon back in October as flooding was worse than previously; it was inspected the next day and no problems were found at the time. The final culvert to the River Beult by Bridge House was blocked recently, resulting in the manhole overflowing. It was reported to KCC Highways.

The morning lollipop person is working well and a volunteer for the afternoon had come forward but is not going to proceed with it.

In early January, there were eight skids on ice on East Street (three at Redwall Lane junction and five at the south bend, including demolition of the chevrons). The chief cause of the ice was an overflowing ditch higher up. The George Street salt bin was reported as being empty, was filled and then knocked over by a foreign HGV a week later. It has been reported again.

Vans have been parked on the corner of Grove Lane and opposite the Bishop’s Lane T-junction; informative Highway Code notices will be placed on vehicles.

There are two missing speed limit signs at either end of West Street.

A request had been made to contact the farmer alongside the permitted path to the hall, as dog walkers are leaving waste behind. There used to be signs stating it is a food production area which are no longer there.

A resident had suggested a bin halfway along the path but there would be an issue with emptying it; dog owners need to take dog waste home or find a bin.

The two or three drainage chutes from West Street (between the houses and hall) need to be cleared of brambles and silt debris. Gullies drain out from the top of West Street into the ditch on the corner near the houses, but there is a mound of soil at the end of the outlet stopping the flow. Cllr Summersgill will report it to KCC Highways to establish responsibility for the ditch. ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

7.2.2 Hunton Safer Streets & Lanes Steering Group

Cllr Simmons was unable to attend the meeting.

Cllr Summersgill reported that a questionnaire was issued to school parents; there were 15 replies. Cllr Simmons will be speaking to Clock House Farm, Betts and Hunton Engineering.

7.3 Tree & Pond Wardens

7.3.1 Update

The Tree Warden (Sam Andrews) and Pond Warden (Cllr Summersgill) did not have anything to report.

7.3.2 Visual Tree Assessment Fee Proposal

Silva Arboriculture Ltd provided a quote of £455 for the Visual Tree Assessment. Members **Agreed** that a revised fee proposal should be requested, to include the Clapper Green land which has been confirmed to belong to the Parish Council. ACTION: CLERK

8. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

8.1 County Councillor

County Cllr Simon Webb had provided a written report prior to the meeting.

Cllr Webb added that the likely Kent County Council overspend in the financial year will be £20million, all due to Adult Social Care costs. The Cabinet Member has advised that over the last year they have cut back as they are now ensuring that resident's needs are still being met but at a more reasonable cost, rather than at any cost. Savings of £2million has been made this year already. PWR have been engaged to carry out an assessment of the whole system within Adult Social Care.

The Police & Crime Commissioner has agreed that the police will look at the zebra crossing at Nettlestead and KCC Highways have also agreed to look at it; a child was nearly injured because of a two car shunt. There will be a death on the zebra crossing unless action is taken and nothing further can be done to the crossing itself. Cllr Summersgill has been speaking to the Speedwatch team in Nettlestead.

8.2 Borough Councillors

Borough Cllrs Summersgill and Couch had provided a combined written report and Borough Cllr Russell had also provided a written report prior to the meeting.

Cllr Russell added that the main current issue is local government reorganisation. Kent has not been included on the government's priority list, but a plan still needs to be put forward in March 2025 for reorganisation. Every area in the county can put forward a different plan. In terms of geography, it would be preferable to group Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells councils as a unitary authority, but central government may disagree. PWC have been engaged to look at all the systems in Kent to determine how to split them between the new unitary authorities.

Cllr Stanbridge asked about the timescale for the reorganisation. It will be 2027/28.

Cllr Heaton asked if there would be a mayor in Kent. The local government reorganisation will take place first, then a mayor will be elected.

Cllr Russell advised that MBC's plan will be considered by cabinet next week.

Cllr Summersgill added that there is also a discussion on whether some parishes should become part of an urban town council. There will be a consultation with parishes but it will not affect Hunton.

9. PARISH MATTERS

9.1 Parish Councillors

Cllr Summersgill has been liaising with the residents of Brickyard Cottages, in his role as borough councillor, who have complained about issues with the Linton Growers site. Another meeting will be held later in the week.

Cllr Heaton asked whether the Village Club is planning an event to celebrate VE Day. Cllr Trought was not aware but will contact the committee members. Cllr Summersgill noted that there will be beacon lighting in both Marden and Yalding.

Cllr Heaton announced that Cllr Goddard has submitted his resignation to himself and the Clerk, effective from 10th March. Cllr Heaton expressed his thanks to Cllr Goddard for the great job he has done in his years on the Parish Council; it will be a loss to the Council and Cllr Goddard will be missed. All Members agreed. Cllr Goddard thanked everyone and said how much he had enjoyed his time as a parish councillor. He will send details of his KCC Highways contacts to Cllr Summersgill.

9.2 Flooding

Cllr Summersgill advised that the new Environment Agency flood mapping has been released (5 year review) which is supposed to be more accurate; there are now two flood maps. From a preliminary review, some Hunton properties have come out of the flood zone and some have gone in. Cllr Summersgill will look at the 34 properties which were in flood zones 2 and 3 to see if there are any changes and report back at the next full Parish Council meeting.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

9.3 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainability

Cllr Summersgill attended a Parish Councils Environment Network meeting at the end of February. 'No idling' signs are available to erect near schools. Sutton Valence and Marden have put the signs up. Cllr Summersgill will speak to Cllr Simmons about putting signs up near Hunton school.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

Two repair cafes are now operating in Tovil and Yalding.

KCC has given approval for a scenic green trail, connecting green spaces from Lenham to West Malling; stickers will be placed along the trail. It does not include Hunton.

9.4 Speedwatch

Cllr Summersgill reported that there has been no Speedwatch activity for a couple of months due to the weather and availability, but it should restart in the next month. New Speedwatch volunteers have taken the training as a result of Hunton Herald article.

9.5 Broadband Services

Cllr Stanbridge has left messages with the manager of Trooli at Kings Hill, after having no success with the Trooli call centre at the Paddock Wood office. Cllr Stanbridge wants to establish Trooli's plans for Hunton. It looks likely that BT Openreach will need to be petitioned to extend their network into Hunton.

9.6 Annual Parish Meeting

Members **Agreed** the speakers' invitation list and format of the Annual Parish Meeting (APM), to be held on 19th May 2025. The APM will be advertised on the boards, which the Clerk will obtain locks for, and an article will be submitted for the Hunton Herald. Cllr Heaton will ask if Ray Morris is able to speak about the work of the Marden Wildlife.

ACTION: CLERK / CLLR HEATON

9.7 Clerk's Report

The Housing Needs Survey should have been distributed to residents by Rural and Community Housing Enabling in the last week.

All Members were reminded to set up their .gov.uk email addresses.

The National Non-Domestic Rate Demand Notice has been received from MBC for the cricket pavilion. After Small Business Rate Relief, the amount due is £0.

The 2025/26 precept application has been approved by MBC; the precept will be received on 4th April.

The interest rate (AER) on the Redwood Bank account decreased from 4.6% to 4.5% on 3rd February and will decrease to 4.25% on 12th May.

10. POLICIES

10.1 Standing Orders

The Parish Council last reviewed the Standing Orders on 18th March 2024. 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.

10.2 Financial Regulations

The Parish Council last reviewed the Financial Regulations on 18th March 2024. The NALC Model Financial Regulations, on which the Parish Council's Financial Regulations are based, were rewritten in April 2024. These have been used as the basis for revised Financial Regulations for the Parish Council, with changes made to the model to adapt them for Hunton. Members discussed the revised Financial Regulations and **Agreed** to adopt them. ACTION: CLERK

11. FINANCE

11.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 28th February 2025 was **Noted**.

11.2 Income Received

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

Hunton Parish Hall Committee – FIT	£449.28
The Cambridge Building Society – Bank interest	£27.10

The bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed by Cllr Trought.

11.3 Payments Made

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

SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – January	£570.50
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – December	£6.00
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – February	£570.50
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – January	£6.00

11.4 Electronic Payments

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

Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses / Stationery / New laptop, mouse and Microsoft 365	£480.08
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11.5 CIL Neighbourhood Receipts

Cllr Summersgill proposed that two more ponds on East Street are surveyed for Great Crested Newts by Medway Countryside Valley Partnership at a cost of £465 plus VAT. Members **Agreed** that the surveys should go ahead. The cost will fall under s137 expenditure. ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

Other suggested use of CIL funds included repairs to footpaths and placing QR codes on footpaths.

The Clerk will check the deadline for use of CIL funds. ACTION: CLERK

11.6 Village Hall Insurance

The Village Hall Committee has paid the Village Hall buildings and contents insurance premium, to which the Parish Council has contributed 80% of the buildings premium in previous years. The premium this year is £1,139.31, of which £831.70 (73% of total premium) relates to the building, so an 80% contribution calculates as £665.36. Members **Agreed** to contribute £665.36. The Clerk will set up an online payment for Cllrs Summersgill and Stanbridge to authorise.

ACTION: CLERK / CLLR SUMMERSGILL / CLLR STANBRIDGE

11.7 Finance Working Group

11.7.1 Terms of Reference

Cllr Webb provided Terms of Reference for the Finance Working Group which Members **Agreed**.

11.7.2 Proposals

Cllr Webb advised that a Finance Working Group meeting had been held between Cllr Heaton, the Clerk and himself. Cllrs Trought and Simmons were unable to attend.

The proposals from the meeting are:

- Recommend that £40,000 is earmarked to improve the IT infrastructure in the village.
- Use funds to support environmental and highways ideas.

- To consult with residents when the proposals are more concrete.
- To consider a simpler way to provide the finances to the Parish Council.

Members **Agreed** the proposals.

The Clerk will look at the presentation of finances.

ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Summersgill will research the cost of provided electric vehicle charging points.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

11.8 Football Club Changing Rooms

Q-Tec Solutions Ltd have provided a quote of £2,940 plus VAT to supply and fit two electric showers in the Football Club changing rooms, with an upgrade of the electrical supply from 32A to 100A. Members **Agreed** that the quote should be accepted and that further quotes should not be sought due to Q-Tec Solutions having undertaken good, cost effective work previously.

ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Stanbridge asked if the drains are clear for when the showers are installed. The Clerk will contact the football club to check.

ACTION: CLERK

12. PLANNING

12.1 Planning Application

12.1.1 9 Bensted Close - 25/500795/FULL

Erection of a first-floor rear extension with Juliet balcony, installation of an obscure glazed window to south east elevation and roof light.

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object.

12.2 Planning Decisions

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

12.2.1 Stonewall, East Street - 25/500096/LBC

Listed Building Consent for the repairs to garage building including replacement of floor slab, new weatherboarding and roof tiles and changes to fenestration. Repairs to boundary including dismantle and re-build using new concrete footings and salvaged rag stone to match existing.

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Application withdrawn.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Parish Council Annual Meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 12th May 2025 at Hunton Village Hall.

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