

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 11TH MAY 2026 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: No one.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Heaton was unanimously elected as Chairman for the forthcoming year. Cllr Heaton completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Proper Officer.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Summersgill was unanimously elected as Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year. Cllr Summersgill completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Proper Officer.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received, accepted and approved from Cllr S Webb (holiday) and Cllr T Stanbridge (work).

Apologies have also been received from Borough Cllr C Russell.

4. FILMING, RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHING

There were no members of the public to film, record or photograph the meeting.

5. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

5.1 Declaration of Interests

Cllr Summersgill declared that he would not comment on the planning application under Item 18.1.1 as he is a close neighbour.

5.2 Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

6. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16TH MARCH 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2026 had been previously distributed and were agreed as an accurate record. The Chairman signed the official copy of the minutes.

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

Item 6.2 – A letter of thanks has been sent to the administrators of Huntonwatch.

Item 9.5 – Tim Higgs from Broadband for Rural Kent has agreed to speak at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Item 11.8 – Q-Tec Solutions have altered the sensitivity of the security light.

8. POLICE

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

11-12/04/26 – West Street - Somebody stole both number plates from a car parked in the road.

01-14/04/26 - Lughorse Lane - Somebody broke into a shed at a residential property and stole multiple items.

PC Charley Maskell and PC George Head are unable to attend the meeting or the Annual Parish Meeting on 18th May.

9. HUNTONWATCH

Steve and Sue Wyles have stood down from running Huntonwatch; no one has volunteered to take over.

Members **Agreed** that the Parish Council should take over Huntonwatch, which the Clerk will cover as part of her responsibilities. The current Huntonwatch membership will be contacted to check they wish to continue receiving Huntonwatch emails. An article will also be placed in the Hunton Herald to inform all residents of the changes and ask if those who are not members would like to sign up to Huntonwatch.

ACTION: CLERK

Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should be given an appraisal to review her responsibilities, taking into account additional work taken on over the years (including Huntonwatch), with a view to increasing her hours. Cllr Heaton and Cllr Simmons will carry out the appraisal on 15th May.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON / CLLR SIMMONS / CLERK

10. LOCAL COMMUNITY

10.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The following is a summary of the Playing Field Committee (PFC) meeting on 6th May 2026:

The posts holding the netting between the recreation ground and the bowls green will be replaced by scaffolding posts as some of the existing hop poles have rotted. New netting will also be purchased. A cherry picker will have to be hired.

The potholes at the entrance to the car park have been filled in.

The cricket pavilion decking has been replaced and the cricket outfield has been harrowed to improve the surface.

The wall at the entrance to the car park will be repointed.

The top slat on two seat backs have broken on one of the picnic tables near the play area, in addition to broken slats on a Community Orchard bench. A quote has been obtained for the wood to replace the slats (see Item 17.12).

Consideration was given to the responses from the Parish Council Community Projects questionnaire which relate to the recreation ground. Additional play equipment will be considered. The remaining six wooden posts on the multiplay equipment will not be replaced at the current time as there is no need. Grant funding of £2,156 is available from Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to the Parish Council until 31st March 2028, which could be used for additional play equipment or to replace the multiplay posts in future.

The PFC carried forward funds of £3,056 to 2026/27 and currently has funds of £2,358.

Steven Waring has increased the grass cutting prices by 5% for 2026. The PFC is happy with his work.

Cllr Summersgill advised that Collier Street Parish Council are obtaining costings for various pieces of equipment which he can access if required.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

10.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

10.2.1 Update

Cllr Summersgill advised that a Traffic & Road Safety Working Party (T&RSWP) meeting has not been held since the last Parish Council meeting. He provided the following update on highways:

Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) – a new HIP will be produced for the next Parish Council meeting. Of the four items on the current HIP, three items are in progress/completed:

1. Concerns about rock falls on Hunton Hill – a resident saw a large rock vibrating as a truck was travelling up the hill and reported it to Cllr Summersgill, who took photographs and submitted it as a fault to Kent County Council (KCC) Highways, in the hope that an expert will visit to check the site. This item will stay on the HIP until it has been inspected.
2. Kerbing on the sharp bend near Scotts Farm – this is not KCC land, so KCC Highways will not take an action. The landowner or Parish Council would need to action this.
3. Exit from The Square – the consultation results were provided to KCC Highways, who have agreed to 5 metre markings either side of the exit. It has been submitted to the KCC design team for action. Cllr Summersgill will raise this at the Annual Parish Meeting on 18th May.
4. Deer signs on Hunton Hill – these have been erected.

The new HIP will include several new items, to be considered at the next T&RSWP meeting and presented at the next full council meeting in July. One of the items will be a 30mph speed limit throughout the village. Cllr Simmons can supply data from the consultations he carried out, which would provide evidence that the community has been consulted. Cllr Summersgill advised that, when a 30mph limit was requested on East Street five years ago, KCC Highways put traffic sensors across the road, then refused the speed limit. However, more villages do have a 30mph limit now, with some having a 20mph limit.

One of the suggestions from the responses to the Community Projects Questionnaire is the refurbishment of the village gates and 'Please drive carefully' signs. The gates need painting white and signs can be erected where necessary. Members **Agreed** that One2One Deco should be contacted for a quote for the work.

ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Summersgill reported the grit piles which have built up on East Street. Following inspection, KCC Highways have responded to say they will not take action, nor will they clear the gullies.

10.2.2 Hunton Safer Streets & Lanes Steering Group

Covered under Item 10.2.1.

10.3 Tree & Pond Wardens

The Tree Warden, Sam Andrews, had nothing to report.

Cllr Summersgill had nothing to report on ponds. Cllr Heaton commented that the water table is lower this year than the same time last year.

11. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

Members **Agreed** the following Committee arrangements for the forthcoming year:

- Planning Committee – a minimum of three Councillors is required for the Committee to be quorate. All Councillors are members of the Planning Committee.

12. APPOINTMENT OF WORKING PARTIES/OUTSIDE BODIES

Members **Agreed** the following Working Party arrangements for the forthcoming year:

- Traffic & Road Safety Working Party – a minimum of two Councillors and one member of the public is required for the Working Party to be quorate. Cllr Summersgill, Cllr Simmons and Cllr Banks are members of Traffic & Road Safety Working Party.
- Finance Working Party – Cllr Webb, Cllr Heaton, Cllr Simmons and Cllr Trought are members of the Finance Working Party.

Members **Agreed** the following appointments of Council representatives for outside bodies for the forthcoming year:

- KCC Highways – Cllr Simmons and Cllr Webb
- KALC Area Committee – Cllr Summersgill
- Policing matters – Cllr Trought and Cllr Heaton
- Hunton Primary School – Cllr Simmons
- Representative Trustees of the King George V Playing Field Committee – Cllr Heaton and Cllr Stanbridge
- Representative Trustees of the Hunton Village Hall Committee – Cllr Trought and Cllr Heaton

Members **Agreed** the following Parish Council responsibilities:

- Footpaths and ditches – Cllr Heaton (primary) and Cllr Summersgill (secondary)
- Road conditions and speed limits – Cllr Summersgill (primary) and Cllr Simmons (secondary)
- Events and communications – Cllr Trought
- Planning issues and consultations – Cllr Summersgill
- Liaison with KALC, MBC and other external bodies – Cllr Summersgill (primary) and Cllr Heaton (secondary)
- Utilities (broadband, water, electricity) – Cllr Stanbridge (primary) and Cllr Summersgill (secondary)
- Speedwatch – Cllr Summersgill

Parish Council nomination of trustee for the Peace Cottages Charity:

- The nomination of a trustee for the charity takes place every five years.
- The last nomination was on 21st March 2022; the nomination will need to be reviewed in March 2027.

13. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Members **Agreed** to appoint Lionel Robbins as the Internal Auditor for the forthcoming year.

14. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

14.1 County Councillor

County Cllr Robert Ford was unable to attend the meeting.

14.2 Borough Councillors

Borough Cllrs Summersgill and Couch have provided two combined written reports since the last meeting and Borough Cllr Russell has provided one report. The reports are available on the parish website. Cllr Summersgill had nothing further to add. Cllrs Russell and Couch were unable to attend the meeting.

Members **Noted** the continued action that all three borough councillors take to support the community.

15. PARISH MATTERS

15.1 Parish Councillors

Cllr Summersgill has been asked to raise an issue on East Street by residents regarding a triangular piece of land at the end of a track which passes by Bull Oast. The Parish Council asked MBC Planning last year about planning permission; planning permission was granted in 1996 for two holiday lets. Car transporters have been seen taking cars to and from the site, where 10+ cars are parked. There is also a metal shed on the land. A business cannot be undertaken from a holiday let, so Members agreed that the Parish Council should ask MBC for the conditions which apply. Depending on the response, Planning Enforcement may need to be contacted to investigate. **ACTION: CLERK**

Cllr Heaton advised that tables need to be moved around the village for events and suggested that lighter, foldable tables are purchased for easier portability. Quotes will be considered at a future meeting.

15.2 Flooding

Cllr Summersgill noted that there has been no flooding.

Cllr Heaton notified Members that Hugh Lowe Farms have planted vegetables in fine soil in all three fields between the Village Hall and Bensted Close. If there is a summer storm, water could run off the field. The Parish Council has discussed this with the manager previously and advised that they should not be planting in this way as flooding has occurred several times before. In the event of any damage being caused, parishioners would need to contact Hugh Lowe Farms.

15.3 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainability

Cllr Summersgill is waiting for a response to the application for a £5,000 Nature Recovery Fund grant from MBC. The closing date was 31st March but the deadline has been extended. Cllr Summersgill has obtained quotes for an initial biodiversity study but action will not be taken until a response has been received about the grant. Cllr Heaton suggested that if a grant is not received, citizen science could be considered.

15.4 Speedwatch

Cllr Summersgill reported that no Speedwatch sessions have been held since the last meeting.

15.5 Broadband Services

Tim Higgs of Broadband for Rural Kent (B4RK) will be giving a presentation at the Hunton Annual Parish Meeting on 18th May.

15.6 Parish Consultation

A total of 47 responses were received to the questionnaire – 25 on paper and 22 online.

Members considered the responses and **Agreed** that the Parish Council should initially action the following:

- Fund a village-wide 30mph speed limit (through the HIP)
- Additional equipment in the play area
- Replacement of Village Hall doors (quotes received previously will be considered)
- Broadband improvements (utilising B4RK)
- Mixed rubbish and dog waste bins in the village (the Parish Council would pay for the bins and routine emptying)
- Planting/planters
- Refurbishment of village gateways
- Footpath improvements (if not on registered land) **ACTION: CLERK**

Regarding footpath improvements, it is the responsibility of the landowner to keep the footpath clear but the landowner has no obligation to surface it. There is at least one footpath in the village where there is no ownership (ie not on registered land) at the bottom of Barn Hill. Volunteers do occasionally clear it but the Parish Council could pay someone to do this if it gets overgrown. Members considered the potential for community-based volunteers to undertake clearance work on other footpaths if enough people would like to see them cleared, despite it being the responsibility of the landowner. The landowner's permission would need to be obtained and the Parish Council could potentially provide equipment to clear it. Careful consideration would need to be given to this so as not to set a precedent where landowners are not maintaining the footpaths running through their land and to ensure safety for volunteers with equipment.

The questionnaire results will be communicated at the Annual Parish Meeting

15.7 Barn Hill Finger Post

Cllr Heaton has been unable to arrange a meeting with a contact who may be able to fix the post; he will try again. ACTION: CLLR HEATON

15.8 Clerk's Report

Members were reminded to set up their .gov.uk email addresses if not already done; the Clerk will provide the email provider's details to Members. ACTION: CLERK

16. POLICY

16.1 Standing Orders

The Parish Council last reviewed its Standing Orders on 12th May 2025. The NALC Model Standing Orders, on which the Parish Council's Standing Orders are based, have not been updated since March 2025.

Members reviewed the existing Standing Orders and **Agreed** to adopt them.

16.2 Financial Regulations

The Parish Council last reviewed its Financial Regulations on 12th May 2025. The NALC Model Financial Regulations, on which the Parish Council's Financial Regulations are based, have not been updated since March 2025.

Members reviewed the existing Financial Regulations and **Agreed** to them.

17. FINANCE

17.1 Statement of Internal Control

The Council needs to review the effectiveness of the system of internal control for the Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR). A Statement of Internal Control was prepared by the Clerk to assist in this review. Members reviewed the Statement and **Agreed** that it could be signed and included with the year-end accounts. The Statement was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

17.2 Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit

In carrying out the Council's annual review of Internal Audit, Members **Agreed** that:

- the Internal Auditor is independent of the Council and has no involvement or responsibility in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council;
- the Internal Auditor is competent to carry out an effective audit of the Council's system of internal control;
- the review and scope of the internal audit adequately assesses the Council's internal controls, governance processes and management of risk;
- they understand the importance of the relationship between the Internal Auditor and the Council;
- adequate preparations are made for the audit procedure to facilitate the work of the Internal Auditor, including making available all relevant documents and records and supplying any information or explanations required; and
- reports received from the Internal and External Auditor are actioned when necessary.

17.3 Internal Audit Report

The Internal Auditor, Lionel Robbins, conducted the internal audit on 30th April 2026. He has completed the Annual Internal Audit Report on page 3 of the 2025/26 AGAR and provided a separate internal audit report. The only comment on the separate report is about the level of reserves. Members considered and **Approved** the reports.

17.4 Accounts 2025/26

Members **Approved** the Council's Statement of Accounts, year-end Financial Book and Fixed Assets Register. The Accounts were signed by the Chairman and the Clerk, and the Chairman also signed the Financial Book. Members **Agreed** that the telephone box does not need to be insured.

17.5 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26

17.5.1 Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement

Members considered the Annual Governance Statement contained in Section 1 on page 4 of the AGAR, consisting of 10 assertions. To properly consider the assertions, the Clerk provided Members with a table comparing the Parish Council's practices to proper practices according to the 'Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel Practitioners' Guide 2025'.

Members **Agreed** that statements 1 to 8 and 10 could all be answered "Yes" and statement 9 should be answered "N/A". Members **Resolved** that the Annual Governance Statement be approved, and page 4 of the AGAR was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

17.5.2 Section 2 – Accounting Statements

Members considered the Accounting Statements contained in Section 2 on page 5 of the AGAR and **Resolved** that they be approved. The Clerk had already signed page 5 of the AGAR according to the requirements of the external auditor. The Accounting Statements were signed by the Chairman.

The period for the exercise of public rights will be Wednesday 3rd June to Tuesday 14th July 2026.

Members also **Approved** the Bank Reconciliation, Explanation of Significant Variances and Explanation of Reserves required by Forvis Mazars.

17.6 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 30th April 2026 was **Noted**.

17.7 Income Received

Members **Noted** that the following income has been received between 1st March and 30th April 2026:

Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Feed-in tariff	£291.81
Maidstone Borough Council – Precept for 2026/27	£26,865.00

The bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed by Cllr Trought.

17.8 Payments Made

Members **Approved** the following payments made between 1st March and 30th April 2026:

SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – February	£587.48
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – March	£587.48
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – February	£7.00
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – March	£7.00

17.9 Electronic Payments

Members **Approved** the following payments:

King George's Field, Hunton – Grant for 2026/27	£8,000.00
Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Contribution towards running costs (1 st half)	£750.00
Hadlum Design & Print – Posters for boards to publicise Annual Parish Meeting	£144.00
Passmores – Materials for replacement cricket pavilion decking	£776.91
Steve Jones – Materials for replacement cricket pavilion decking	£82.48
KALC – Annual membership subscription	£421.98
Robert Cox – Maintenance of permissive footpath hedge and verges	£520.00
Q-Tec Solutions Ltd – Installation of replacement CCTV camera	£288.00
Npower – Street light electricity	£37.10
VCS Websites Ltd – Web hosting	£160.00
Sharon Goodwin – Reimbursement for payment of Employers NI / Travel expenses / Stationery	£122.00
Lionel Robbins – Internal audit of 2025/26	£105.00
Q-Tec Solutions Ltd – CCTV remote camera	£1,086.00

Cllr Summersgill and Cllr Banks will authorise the payments set up in Unity Trust Bank using online banking.

17.10 CIL Neighbourhood Receipts

Members to remain aware of the deadline for the CIL funds to be spent (2nd November 2027).

17.11 Village Hall Centenary

The Village Hall Centenary celebrations will take place on 25th July 2026.

Cllr Summersgill advised that a group of residents is planning to decorate the hall and would like to display photographs taken at the hall over the years.

Cllr Heaton is organising a new sign for the hall.

Cllr Summersgill will submit an article for the Hunton Herald. Tickets to see Track Dogs in the evening will be discounted for residents but the method for doing so needs to be agreed with the band's agent. Full price tickets will be £21, with Members agreeing that residents should be charged a discounted rate of £15 (£25 for two) up to 50 tickets. Another 50-60 tickets will be available for those who live outside the village. Cllr Summersgill will announce when tickets are on sale and advise residents to obtain them at the discounted price, most likely from himself. He will keep a list of residents who have requested tickets and collect cash from them, which will be paid to Track Dogs. Track Dogs will receive the full ticket price less any costs for the hall and PA system; the Parish Council will subsidise the discounted tickets.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

Food will be included in the price of the ticket, which is likely to be a BBQ. Several people have offered to help with the food. Members **Agreed** that the Friends of St Mary's should be asked to provide the food and run the bar.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON

Members **Agreed** that the ticket subsidy and cost of the catering should be taken from the Entertainment Fund. The amount will be agreed at the next full Parish Council meeting on 20th July.

17.12 Community Orchard Picnic Benches

Two slats are missing from the back rests of the Community Orchard picnic tables and two slats are also broken on one of the picnic tables near the play area. Sustainable Furniture, who supplied the picnic tables, have quoted £45.83 plus VAT per slat. Members **Agreed** that four slats should be purchased, to be delivered to Councillor Heaton for fitting.

ACTION: CLERK

18. PLANNING

18.1 Planning Application

18.1.1 Land To West Of East Street – 26/501117/FULL

Proposed relocation and completion of partly-constructed storage building and use as a holiday let with the provision of 1no. car parking space.

Parish Council recommendation: Wish to see the application refused and request the application is reported to the Planning Committee if the Planning Officer wishes to permit it, for the following reasons:

- It creates an inappropriate, additional building in open countryside.
- The building is in close proximity to two Grade II listed buildings, Bull Oast and Clock House Farm House, harmfully impacting the character of the area.
- The applicant has not provided any proof of the demand for a holiday let and the building appears to be unsuitable for holiday accommodation. There are also two holiday lets next door.
- The planning notice is not visible to the public, as it is located on a telegraph pole near the entrance to the site, at the end of a private access to the field. The notice should be located on East Street, which is a public area where it would have been visible to residents.

18.2 Planning Decisions

The following planning decisions have been made by Maidstone Borough Council since the last full council meeting:

18.2.1 Buston Manor, Shingle Barn Lane, West Farleigh – 25/505181/FULL

Change of use from Use Class C3 (Dwellinghouse) to Use Class C2 (Residential Institution) to allow the property to operate as a residential care home for the elderly (retrospective).

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object, but query whether a Listed Building Consent needs to be obtained as Buston Manor is a listed building.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

Cllr Summersgill will check the MBC Planning Officer's report to determine if the Parish Council's query was considered

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

18.2.2 Elphicks Barn, Water Lane – 26/500675/FULL

Section 73- Application for Variation of Condition 6 (to allow for minor relocation of the annexe) pursuant to 25/503210/FULL for Erection of a detached residential annexe.

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 20th July 2026 at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:28pm.