

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 15TH JANUARY 2024 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: No one.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr T Stanbridge.

2. FILMING, RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHING

No members of the public were present to film, record or photograph the meeting.

3. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

3.1 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3.2 Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20TH NOVEMBER 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2023 had been previously distributed and were agreed as an accurate record. The Chairman signed the official copy of the minutes.

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

Items 8.1 – The consultation details for the proposed Coxheath Primary School expansion were uploaded to the Hunton website.

6. POLICE

6.1 Police

The following crime has been logged on the e-watch website since the last Parish Council meeting: 25/12/23 - East Street - Somebody damaged a wooden seat/table.

6.2 Huntonwatch

Huntonwatch have provided the following update:

A group of youths on foot and adults in a car were reported to the police and members of Huntonwatch. They were all wearing masks and some with hoodies, walking through private land in the Bishops Lane area. The police have received a number of reports about this group.

A group of people with terrier-type dogs, crossing private land in the Lughorse Lane area, was reported to Huntonwatch members.

Huntonwatch assisted a member by reporting a leaning power cable pole on East Street to UKPN.

A fallen tree fouling power cables in Bishops Lane was also reported to UKPN.

A contact in KCC's school crossing patrol area was emailed, and the crossing wigwags have been fixed so they no longer flash all day.

7. LOCAL COMMUNITY

7.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The Chairman of the Playing Field Committee, Simon Taylor, was unable to attend the meeting. The following is a summary of the last Playing Field Committee meeting on 10th January 2024:

Work to be undertaken soon includes: trimming the Beech hedge between the Bowls Club and cricket pitch; fitting a new Community Orchard gate post (and fixing the whole gate now as the other post has also fallen); and filling the deepest potholes in the car park.

Work to be undertaken in the Spring includes: replacement of a low post on the adventure trail; installation of a new gate near the cricket pavilion; cutting a low branch overhanging the football pitch; and filling/rolling the potholes in the car park.

A new bench is being ordered for the fenced play area.

The annual play area inspection has been carried out by The Play Area Inspection Company Ltd. All the findings are low or very low risk and the majority require monitoring/no action, apart from one moderate risk finding (parts of the steel on the multiplay have corroded). Quotes will be obtained to repair the metalwork.

The Playing Field Committee currently has funds of £3,982. The Committee has requested £7,000 in grant funding for 2024/25, the same as 2023/24.

A Community Orchard working party will be held on 21st January. Cllr Trought asked if overgrown vegetation near the bins by the football pitch and play area could be cut back; the working party will do the trimming back.

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

Cllr Goddard has made a complaint on the Kent Highways portal about the state of the tarmac on West Street between Grove Lane and Scotts House after a near collision. It is dangerous due to drivers veering into the middle of the road to avoid potholes. Members **Agreed** that County Cllr S Webb should also be informed. ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

Cllr Summersgill noted that there are five salt bins currently being filled by KCC. These are located on George Street, halfway up Hunton Hill, near Barn Hill cottages, near Barn Hill House and at the rear of the school. Two additional salt bins are needed on East Street, near the junction with Redwall Lane and the junction with George Street, and at the bottom of Hunton Hill near the crossroads with Lughorse Lane and East Street. Members **Agreed** that Cllr Summersgill should engage in discussion with KCC about the locations. The Parish Council has previously agreed to fund additional salt bins. ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

The traffic mirror has been erected on Grove Lane to aid visibility for vehicles exiting Bishops Lane.

There are some missing road signs on East Street and West Street.

Cllr Simmons will place an article in the Hunton Herald on the plan for speed limit changes and other measures. ACTION: CLLR SIMMONS

The next Traffic & Road Safety Working Party meeting will be held in February.

7.3 **Tree & Pond Warden**

Cllr Summersgill, on behalf of Tree Warden Sam Andrews, advised that remedial tree works near the Village Hall are scheduled for the second week of February, which Cllr Summersgill will supervise as Sam is away.

Cllr Heaton advised that a large tree branch is causing issues for football matches; Cllr Summersgill stated that the limb could not be removed until the ground is drier.

Sam has cut back vegetation near the play area.

Tregoning's Trees have provided a report following the climbed inspection of the Turkey Oak tree; there is little change since the last climbed inspection. The recommendation is to remove the weight off the crown and side. The tree has not rotted any further.

Cllr Summersgill, as Pond Warden, had little to report other than to ask that Members are happy for the second stage of the Great Crested Newt pond surveys to take place in March/April on George Street and two locations on East Street, funded by CIL monies. Members **Agreed** that the surveys should be confirmed with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

8. **COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS**

8.1 **County Councillor**

County Cllr Simon Webb was not in attendance but had circulated a report in December.

8.2 **Borough Councillors**

The borough councillors were not in attendance.

9. PARISH MATTERS

9.1 Parish Councillors

Cllr Summersgill advised that the Maidstone Local Plan has been delayed and is unlikely to be implemented before the May elections. The Inspector has asked for clarity on the appendices. A resident has contacted Cllr Summersgill about a building being erected on East Street on land which was a field but is now a side garden. If this is agricultural land it will need planning permission for change of use to residential. Members **Agreed** that Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Planning should be contacted for advice to determine whether planning permission would be required. ACTION: CLERK Cllr Summersgill has also been contacted by a resident at Wilsons Yard as one of the unsold units is being used as an Airbnb. Members **Agreed** that this is outside the remit of the Parish Council, but the resident could contact the management company and check the constitution. ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

Cllr Trought supplied dates for events at the Village Club:

10th February - Garden Club Supper

23rd February - Walk and Lunch

23rd April - Walk and Lunch

4th May – Plants and Produce Sale

31st August – Beer Festival

4th October – Green Hop Beer Festival

The Club is open on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday evenings.

9.2 Flooding

Road signs had to be set out on West Street recently due to the road flooding. Cllr Summersgill needs to supply one of the Flood Wardens with signs. Members **Agreed** that Yalding Parish Council should be contacted for details of the person who needs to be notified when West Street is shut, so there is more coordination when the road floods. ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL / CLERK

There is currently coordination between Hunton, Marden and Collier Street using a WhatsApp group.

Cllr Summersgill suggested that an Emergency Plan would be useful to detail procedures.

An email has been received from a resident about flooding on Grove Lane. Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should reply to the resident to suggest that he contacts Cllr Goddard who would be happy to discuss any issues. ACTION: CLERK

Huntonwatch had reported that the Parish Council has been asked to request clearance of a blocked culvert in Bishops Lane following severe flooding in the wake of recent storms (this has been actioned).

Temporary exits were dug to and from the lane to allow flood waters to drain into the ditches. A Southern Water engineer was met on the site of the pumping station to discuss water fountaining out of a number of manholes. Members noted that there are a series of issues at this site. Cllr Heaton has advised that the Environment Agency should be contacted if there is any sewage.

9.3 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainability

Cllr Fuller reported that Marden Parish Council have adopted a Biodiversity Policy which she will be looking at with other rural parishes. It may be possible to pool resources with similar rural parishes to produce a policy, making the process less time consuming.

It is a requirement for parish councils to have a biodiversity action plan in place by 31st December 2023, but it has not been implemented by many councils.

Cllr Simmons pointed out that adopting a plan would give more weight to the Parish Council's responses to planning applications.

Members **Agreed** that Cllr Fuller should report back after the meeting. ACTION: CLLR FULLER

9.4 Speedwatch

Cllr Summersgill has submitted a report for the Hunton Herald, detailing Speedwatch results in the first six months and asking for more volunteers (the number of volunteers has reduced to six).

A police officer attended the last session outside the Village Club with his own speed gun. A vehicle was recorded travelling at 42mph.

Yalding have started Speedwatch and Marden are looking for someone to coordinate their Speedwatch.

9.5 Village Hall Wi-Fi

Members agreed that this item will be deferred to the next meeting as Cllr Stanbridge is not present. Cllr Fuller asked about a mast; the nearest one is in Linton.

9.6 KALC Community Awards Scheme 2024

Members agreed to adopt the KALC Community Awards Scheme at the last meeting. Members **Agreed** that David Jones should be nominated for the award, due to his active contribution to the village, his role in the church and pastoral care.

Cllr Simmons will check that David is happy to receive the award. ACTION: CLLR SIMMONS / CLERK

9.8 Clerk's Report

The Clerk had no items to report.

10. CONSULTATION

10.1 Kent County Council – Kent Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2024-2034

Cllr Summersgill advised that the updated strategy is not too different from the previous version. Hunton is not specifically mentioned. Members **Agreed** that Cllr Summersgill should submit a response on behalf of the Parish Council.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

11. FINANCE

11.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31st December 2023 was **Noted**.

11.2 Income Received

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

Maidstone Borough Council – Parish Services Scheme grant (2 nd half)	£863.96
The Cambridge Building Society – Bank interest	£123.15

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 – November	£545.81
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge	£18.00

The following payments were authorised at the Planning Committee meeting on 11th December 2023:

Cllr Goddard – Chairman's Allowance – Food for Christmas event	£330.00
Hunton Village Club – Chairman's Allowance - Drinks for Christmas event	£182.85
Sharon Goodwin – Chairman's Allowance – Food for Christmas event	£33.74

11.4 Electronic Payments

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

Npower – Street light electricity	£34.63
Q-Tec Solutions Ltd – Annual maintenance of CCTV system	£317.89
Tregoning's Trees – Climbed tree inspection	£240.00
Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses / Stationery / Postage / Traffic mirror	£70.94

11.5 CIL Neighbourhood Receipts

Nothing further considered.

11.6 CCTV

Q-Tec Solutions Ltd carried out the annual maintenance of the CCTV on 19th December. The engineer found an issue with one of the cameras. For an engineer to attend and investigate the issue will cost £90 for attendance and the first half hour and £50 for any additional hours.

Members **Agreed** that the investigation should go ahead.

ACTION: CLERK

11.7 **Hunton CEP School PTA**

A letter has been received from the PTA to request funding towards a new shed. However, the shed has already been purchased and, in accordance with the Grant Awarding Policy, the Parish Council cannot give retrospective grants. Members suggested that the PTA could apply for funding in future for something which benefits the children and has a proportional benefit to the village, particularly if it is related to environmental and sustainability aims. ACTION: CLERK

11.8 **Saver Account**

At the 20th November 2023 meeting, the account opening forms were completed for The Cambridge Building Society Council Saver account and United Trust Bank Business 100 Day Notice account. A letter has been received from United Trust Bank to say that they do not offer accounts for local councils. Members considered various saver accounts and **Agreed** to open a 95 day Business Savings Account with Redwood Bank (current interest rate 4.30%). The application form will be obtained for completion at the next Parish Council meeting. ACTION: CLERK

11.9 **Budget and Parish Precept 2024/25**

Members received the budget papers prepared by the Clerk prior to the meeting.

Members **Agreed** the budget for 2024/25.

Members **Agreed** that the Precept should be set at £26,338, the same amount as the last five years. This creates a tax of £80.32 per property, a decrease of £0.89 on last year. The Chairman and Clerk signed the Parish Precept Requirement 2024/25 form for submission to MBC. ACTION: CLERK

12. **PLANNING**

12.1 **Planning Application**

12.1.1 **2 West Street - 23/505500/FULL**

Insertion of dormer in rear catslide roof slope and alterations to bedroom window on first floor rear side extension.

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to comment.

12.2 **Planning Enforcement**

Riverside House, West Street – A new brick structure with no planning permission was reported to MBC Planning Enforcement in October 2023. Planning Enforcement have requested that the new structure is removed in its entirety.

Little Clock House, George Street – A breach of planning conditions was reported in October 2023.

Planning Enforcement have opened an investigation. There has been an increase in the number of mobile homes on the site to three. Members **Agreed** that this should be reported to Planning Enforcement.

ACTION: CLERK

12.3 **Planning Decisions**

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

12.3.1 **25 Bensted Close - 23/505149/FULL**

Garage conversion into a habitable space with the erection of a first floor side extension above. Erection of a detached garden shed in the front garden.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

12.3.2 **Stonewall, East Street - 23/504732/SUB**

Submission of details pursuant to conditions 4 (details of materials), 5 (lime-based mortar details), 8 (schedule of works and repairs), 13 (floor/floor joist construction details, structural engineers report, log burner details) and 14 (archaeological monitoring programme) of application 22/505899/LBC.

Parish Council recommendation: No comment.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

12.3.3 Meadowside, East Street - 23/505254/FULL

Erection of single storey side extension to replace existing fully glazed conservatory.

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 18th March 2024 at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:36pm.