

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 16TH MARCH 2026 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Five members of the public were in attendance. Two left after the Open Session; two left after Item 7.2.2.

OPEN SESSION:

A resident asked for an update on the Clock House Farm operations on Barn Hill. Other residents also asked questions, as follows with Members' responses:

They have started putting the reservoir in but have placed orange netting across the footpath, blocking it. There are signs on the netting directing people to walk round the edge of the field. Once the reservoir is in place there are concerns that they will put another fence in to stop people getting close to the reservoir which will affect the footpath.

A footpath can be diverted temporarily, but notice needs to be given.

Have the final plans been submitted?

No. Work could start on the reservoirs as they only required consent as prior notification.

What do they need planning permission for?

The polytunnels – where they will be located.

Why have we been told that the polytunnels do not need planning permission as they are a temporary structure?

They are called temporary in a planning application because they can be removed, but due to the size, a planning application must be submitted.

Can residents still object?

Yes, when the planning application is submitted anyone can comment. If the planning officer at Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) decides to permit the application, if parish or borough councillors call it in, the planning officer's approval could be overturned.

Why are polytunnels being referred to as temporary as Clock House Farm have referred to a 20 year investment plan? What is the definition of temporary?

There is no definition of what temporary means. Polytunnels used to be deemed temporary because they were taken down each year. Planning permission is now required for polytunnels; it was not required in the past. Clock House Farm have acquired the lease for 20 years.

There are constant vehicle reversing beeping noises at Buston Manor. When the polytunnels are in place there will be beeping all day when moving the fruit.

Another resident identified the beeping as being on dumper trucks, which is needed for safety. The bulldozers are not making a noise.

Is there an argument which can be made regarding highways as Lughorse Lane has been ruined, due to large vehicles travelling down it. When the raspberries are collected there will also be an increase in traffic.

Lughorse Lane has a 7.5 tonne limit and the lorries using it are less than that, so they cannot be banned if they are legal for that road. It might form part of the planning application. Traffic monitors have been placed across the road at Hilltop, which is likely to be because an applicant has placed them there for a traffic count.

Could a permissive footpath be included inside the hedge on Hilltop near Shingle Barn Lane?

Clock House Farm would probably allow this, but it would be up to Buston Manor as landowner.

Isn't that land being let to another farmer for arable?

Land to the west of the drive to Buston Manor will remain as arable, but it is still up to the landowner.

There will be a block of polytunnels at Hilltop in the second phase.

Could Clock House Farm be asked to litter pick every couple of weeks?

It might be possible; they do litter pick on Redwall Lane.

Could white lines could be painted on part of Lughorse Lane?

It could be added to the Highways Improvement Plan.

The Barn Hill and Lughorse Lane group is informed about developments but the rest of the village does not receive any information. Can it be publicised more?

The Parish Council does not know any more as the planning application has not been submitted yet. There would not be time to publicise Parish Council Planning Committee meetings in the Hunton Herald as the Parish Council is only given three weeks to respond to applications. Full Parish Council meetings are advertised a year ahead and Planning Committee meetings are advertised on notice boards when they are called. Meetings are also publicised on the Parish Council website and on Facebook. The Parish Council can ask Clock House Farm when they plan to submit the planning application as parishioners are interested.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr S Webb and Cllr S Banks. Apologies had also been received from County Cllr R Ford.

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

Cllr Summersgill declared that he would not contribute to Item 12.2 as he is a parish councillor for Marden Parish Council.

3.2 Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 19TH JANUARY 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2026 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

Item 6.2 – Bishops Lane has been swept and the ditches cleared. It is not clear who arranged this; Cllr Summersgill will check with the Upper Medway Drainage Board.

Item 9.1 – The Clerk contacted the organisers of the afternoon tea boxes about costs but did not receive a response.

Item 9.8 – The proposed recipients of the KALC Community Award are happy to accept it. The nomination has been submitted to KALC.

Item 9.10 – The Clerk has asked Q-Tec Solutions to order the mobile CCTV camera.

Item 11.7 – The Parish Precept Requirement 2025/26 form was submitted to Maidstone Borough Council. Notification has been received from MBC that the precept application has been agreed and will be paid by 10th April 2026.

6. POLICE

6.1 Police

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

15/02/26 – Upper Barn Hill – Somebody stole shrubs from a residential garden.

PC Charley Maskell and PC George Head were invited to attend the meeting or provide a report if unable to attend. Cllr Heaton has had several email exchanges with them; they do not attend any of the parishes' meetings but would try to attend any village events if they are informed.

Cllr Summersgill attended a Ward Cluster meeting on 10th March:

The cluster consists of Staplehurst, Marden, Yalding, the small parishes in between, two police officers and the inspector. Hunton, Nettlestead and Marden representatives attended.

MBC staff spoke about their work – support for the community and waste crime. MBC are using secret cameras and have been able to take 10-12 people to court. There are plans to distribute rubbish bags and trolleys for litter picking.

The police would like people to use My Community Voice to identify the three community priorities they require police action on in their area.

The police spoke about crime and anti-social behaviour. From My Community Voice, the main issues people are concerned about are speeding, anti-social behaviour, drug-related crimes and off-road bikes.

Catapult-related anti-social behaviour has declined. Shoplifting at Sainsbury's in Staplehurst has virtually stopped since barriers were installed.

Cllr Summersgill will send round some notes about the meeting and contact Huntonwatch to ask for details of My Community Voice to be circulated. ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

6.2 Huntonwatch

Steve and Sue Wyles have advised that, after 13 years, they can no longer dedicate the time required to continue running Huntonwatch and will be stepping down. They have informed the Huntonwatch members and asked for a volunteer to take over from them. Steve and Sue have asked to place on record their thanks for the support they have received from the Parish Council and will advise if someone else agrees to take over the running of Huntonwatch.

Members **Agreed** that a letter of thanks should be sent to Steve and Sue for all their diligence over the years and excellent management of Huntonwatch. ACTION: CLERK

Members **Agreed** that an article should be placed in the Hunton Herald if a volunteer does not come forward. The list of people with 4-wheel drives and those who are vulnerable will be requested for the Parish Council to keep. ACTION: CLERK

7. LOCAL COMMUNITY

7.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The following is a summary of the Playing Field Committee (PFC) meeting on 11th March 2026:

Work to do includes: repointing the wall at the entrance to the car park; additional support to three of the posts which hold the netting between the recreation ground and bowls green and tightening of the netting; filling potholes in the car park and entrance to the car park; and cutting back brambles on the north side of the field.

The back of one of the benches in the Community Orchard has broken, which is the responsibility of the Parish Council. A quote will be obtained for the wood. The Community Orchard Group working party will repair the bench.

The PFC would like to replace the remaining six wooden posts on the multiplay equipment, as well as the platform near the slide. The Parish Council paid for the replacement of the first six posts, which was subsequently covered by a grant from MBC. Grant funding of £2,156 is still available from MBC, which could be used towards the remaining posts and the platform. A quote of £3,203.80 plus VAT has been received from Playscape for the replacement of the six posts, but a quote needs to be requested for the platform.

The annual play area inspection was conducted by The Play Inspection Company in January. All findings are low or very low risk.

The PFC currently has funds of £3,194. The PFC thanks the Parish Council for the £8,000 grant for 2026/27. A quote will be provided by Steven Waring for grass cutting in 2026/27, but indications are that costs will increase by 5% due to the rise in diesel prices.

The PFC is allowing a fund raising event to take place on the field on 20th June, with approximately 200 people attending, but full access to the car park, play area and field will still be available for members of the public.

It is the 90th anniversary of Hunton Bowls Club this year.

Members to note the report.

Cllr Heaton advised that two of the posts holding the netting between the bowls green and cricket outfield have collapsed; action will be taken this week.

The results of the Community Projects Survey will be shared with the Playing Field Committee.

7.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

7.2.1 Update

Cllr Summersgill reported on the last Traffic & Road Safety Working Party meeting held on 2nd March 2026.

The current Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) contains four items:

1. Hunton Hill – potential for rock falls on to the road – there has been some back and forth between Cllr Summersgill and Kent County Council (KCC) about how often it happens. Cllr Summersgill needs to speak to residents living half way up the hill to find out if they have issues.
2. Kerbing on the bend on West Street near Scotts Farm – KCC will not progress this as it is not their land. It will be necessary to speak to the landowner to see if they wish to fund kerbing.

3. Access from The Square to West Street – KCC required pre-consultation engagement with residents. This has been conducted (see Item 7.2.2).
 4. Wildlife signs on Hunton Hill – these have been installed.
- KCC Highways have put a pedestrian sign in place, made a footpath safer and filled some potholes. Cllr Summersgill will produce a new HIP for the next Parish Council meeting.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

Culvert work – the jetter has been out on West Street; a blocked culvert was found. The gully cleaner has been round West Street, East Street and George Street. Cllr Summersgill informed KCC of some gulleys missing from their list. A culvert issue at the end of East Street has been notified to the cabinet member for KCC and Katie Lam MP as it caused flooding for six weeks, issues for Bridge House and collapsed the road. Cllr Summersgill has contacted the cabinet member; there has been some activity but is unsure if it has been fully cleared. The gullies fill very quickly. There has been considerable discussion about this issue in rural areas and also in the town, involving MPs.

The stolen salt bin on Hunton Hill has been replaced.

Traffic calming on West Street and school drop-off issues were discussed.

There has been an issue with a private road which cannot be reported to KCC Highways as it is not their road.

New issues raised: potential traffic increase on Barn Hill due to new polytunnels need further discussion with Clock House Farm and a plan to protect and remediate damage to verges; a request for a permitted path on Hilltop has been made; and Cllr Summersgill will report a tree leaning into the road on Hunton Hill.

Cllr Heaton saw that KCC Highways have marked up a large hole near the telecoms manhole on West Street and put bollards inside the hole. The ducting is blocked and water is leaking out.

Cllr Stanbridge noted that there is a lot of grit banking the dip in East Street and asked whether it should be added to the HIP. Although KCC have said that it does not restrict the road width and does not cause a hazard, Cllr Summersgill will add it to the HIP.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

7.2.2 Road Markings

Cllr Summersgill advised that the third item on the HIP is the consideration of road markings on West Street, either side of the access to The Square. KCC required a consultation with nearby residents which was conducted by the Parish Council. Responses have been received, which will be sent to KCC. If there are five objections, it must be considered by the MBC Joint Transportation Board. Several of the responses could be classified as objections, although they do not explicitly state an objection.

Cllr Trought asked about the status of the planning application for the school car park, which a consultee had raised. Cllr Simmons advised that the school has approval but does not have sufficient funds for a car park. Some cars do park on the area of grass at the school where planning permission has been given for hardstanding parking, to help alleviate the parking on West Street. Nothing further can be done until the school has more funding available.

Regarding the entrance to The Square, Cllr Simmons advised that the Highway Code states that vehicles should not park with 10 metres of a junction, but it is a driveway, an anomaly for The Square.

Cllr Summersgill advised that KCC will make the technical decision but cannot if there are five objections. Eleven responses were received – 6 in support, 2 neutral and 3 possibly object. Members **Agreed** that the responses will be submitted in a table with a covering letter and map of properties consulted.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL / CLERK

Cllr Trought asked whether the school staggers the arrival and departure of pupils; it does. Parents are also asked in the newsletter not to linger after drop-off.

7.2.3 Hunton Safer Streets & Lanes Steering Group

Cllr Simmons reported the following:

Two consultations have taken place – one at a village event and another with school parents. 16 responses were received from the community and 15 from parents. The issues raised were similar, such as use of the land at the back of the school for parking. Parents' responses about parking were: 5 very poor; 5 poor; 4 average and 1 thought the school was doing as well as it could. Community responses focussed on the following issues: 6 - school pick up and drop off; 5 - junctions; 8 - speeding traffic; and 6 - potholes and drainage.

The only way to alleviate the parking issues is to create car parking off West Street. Regarding the land at the back of the school, the landowner offered the land and fenced it off. There was a lack of drive at the school at the time as approval was required from the Diocese of Rochester and a formal submission would need to be made to the Department of Education to increase the school's land. Cllr Simmons asked the

landowner if the Parish Council could take ownership of the land but he refused. It was then suggested that the school rent it at a peppercorn rent. All contact with the landowner ceased when the landowner's house went on the market and there has been no engagement since. Once the house has been sold, the new owner can be approached, but not much more can be done at present other than encouraging people to use the permissive footpath and direct community engagement.

Cllr Summersgill asked about the possibility of changing speed limits as quite a few village roads have a speed limit of 30mph. Cllr Heaton noted that a traffic survey on East Street showed most people were not travelling more than 30mph. Cllr Simmons suggested that it could be included in the HIP but queried whether KCC would require evidence for a 30mph limit throughout the whole village. Cllr Summersgill advised that KCC will require evidence that people want a blanket 30mph limit. Cllr Simmons will check the detail from the consultations. ACTION: CLLR SIMMONS

7.3 **Tree & Pond Wardens**

The Tree Warden, Sam Andrews, had nothing to report

Cllr Summersgill reported that there is water in ponds, but the levels are not as high as previous years. The ground water has not recovered as much.

8. **COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS**

8.1 **County Councillor**

County Cllr Robert Ford was unable to attend the meeting.

8.2 **Borough Councillors**

Borough Cllrs Summersgill and Couch have provided two combined written reports since the last meeting, and Borough Cllr Russell has also provided two reports. The reports are available on the parish website.

Cllr Summersgill had nothing further to add.

Members agreed that the feedback from borough councillors is appreciated.

9. **PARISH MATTERS**

9.1 **Parish Councillors**

Cllr Heaton has received a letter from a landowner regarding public footpaths as he believes the definitive maps are incorrect. This is not within the remit of the Parish Council; the landowner needs to contact KCC Public Rights of Way if he thinks changes need to be made. Cllr Heaton will arrange a meeting to speak with him which Cllr Summersgill will also attend. ACTION: CLLR HEATON

9.2 **Flooding**

Cllr Summersgill reported that the River Beult was quite high in January. Water was released from the Leigh Barrier to give capacity which Yalding were unhappy about. The Leigh Barrier is still not finished; it is due for completion in the summer.

9.3 **Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainability**

Cllr Summersgill reported that MBC has won a gold award from Kent Wildlife Trust for its work on biodiversity and climate change.

Cllr Summersgill has applied for a Nature Recovery Fund grant from MBC for the Clapper Green village green.

9.4 **Speedwatch**

Cllr Summersgill reported that a Speedwatch session has been held outside the Village Hall; one vehicle was recorded as speeding. The team would like to do a session outside the Village Club but there are many cars parked in the area.

9.5 **Broadband Services**

Cllr Heaton has received a response from the assistant to Katie Lam MP to his letter about broadband concerns. Cllr Stanbridge has also written to her recently.

Cllr Stanbridge suggested that the representative from Broadband for Rural Kent (B4RK) could be invited to speak at the Annual Parish Meeting, which could be advertised in the Hunton Herald. Members **Agreed** that this would be useful to provide information to residents. ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE

Cllr Heaton has heard of a link between Openreach and Starlink for communities; Cllr Stanbridge will investigate. ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE

9.6 Parish Consultation

A total of 47 responses have been received to the Hunton Community Projects questionnaire; 25 paper questionnaires and 22 online responses.

Cllr Heaton suggested an informal discussion could be held before the next meeting to review the responses with a view to making decisions on action to take at the next meeting. The responses can be mentioned at the Annual Parish Meeting. ACTION: CLERK / ALL COUNCILLORS

9.7 Barn Hill Finger Post

Cllr Heaton will arrange to meet with someone to look at the post. ACTION: CLLR HEATON

9.8 Annual Parish Meeting

Members **Agreed** the speakers' invitation list and format of the Annual Parish Meeting (APM), to be held on 18th May 2026. Cllr Stanbridge will produce posters which will be printed for the boards. The APM will also be advertised in the Hunton Herald. ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE / CLERK

9.9 Clerk's Report

Members were reminded to set up their .gov.uk email addresses if not already done.

The National Non-Domestic Rate demand notice has been received for the cricket pavilion for the year ending 31st March 2027. The amount due is £0 after Small Business Rate Relief has been applied.

10. POLICY

10.1 IT Policy

The IT Policy was adopted at the meeting on 19th January 2026, but a review date was not agreed. Members **Agreed** to review the policy on an annual basis.

11. FINANCE

11.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 28th February 2026 was **Noted**.

11.2 Income Received

Members **Noted** that the following income has been received between 1st January and 28th February 2026:

Maidstone Borough Council – Strategically Important Play Areas (SIPA) grant	£2,843.80
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The bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed by Cllr Trought.

11.3 Payments Made

Members **Approved** the following payments made between 1st January and 28th February 2026:

SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – January	£587.48
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – December	£6.00
Friends of St Mary's – Grant towards memorial bench (s137 expenditure)	£750.00
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – January	£6.00

11.4 Electronic Payments

Members **Approved** the following payments:

Urban Blue Bus (Maidstone) Ltd – Defibrillator training	£50.00
Forvis Mazars LLP – Limited assurance review for the year ending 31 st March 2025	£252.00
Q-Tec Solutions Ltd – Visit to investigate faulty camera	£168.00
Hadlum Design & Print – Printing community questionnaires	£93.60
Sharon Goodwin – Reimbursement for payment of Employers NI / Travel expenses / Stationery	£104.83

Cllr Summersgill and Cllr Stanbridge will authorise the payment set up in Unity Trust Bank using online

banking.

11.5 CIL Neighbourhood Receipts

Expenditure of CIL funds will be considered further after the results of the residents' questionnaire have been discussed in more detail.

11.6 Village Hall Insurance

The Hunton Parish 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 £1,182.01, of which £862.87 (73% of total premium) relates to the building, so an 80% contribution calculates as £690.30. Members **Agreed** to contribute this amount. The Clerk will set up an online payment for Cllr Summersgill and Cllr Stanbridge to authorise.

ACTION: CLERK / CLLR SUMMERSGILL / CLLR STANBRIDGE

11.7 Village Hall Centenary

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

Cllr Summersgill has booked the Track Dogs band to play at the hall. The concert will have to be ticketed as the Track Dogs fee would be too high. Cllr Summersgill will find out more about the financial details and the split of ticket sales between the band and the Village Hall, with a view to residents being subsidised. The number of tickets sold would have to be restricted to the capacity of the hall.

Cllr Summersgill will put an article in the Hunton Herald.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

An article was put in the Hunton Herald previously to advertise the event and ask for volunteers; no one has volunteered to help so far. Food will be provided, so a grant from the Parish Council could be used towards that. Grant funding will be considered further at the next full council meeting in May when more information is known. The ticket agency details will be released to Hunton residents first and then put on general sale, to ensure priority for residents.

11.8 CCTV

During the annual maintenance of the CCTV system, camera 8 was identified as being faulty.

Investigation found that the camera requires replacement. Q-Tec Solutions have quoted £240 plus VAT to supply and install a replacement IP camera. Members **Agreed** that the quote should be accepted.

ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Summersgill noted that the security light is on quite regularly. Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should contact Q-Tec Solutions to ask them to look at it.

ACTION: CLERK

11.9 Parish Services Scheme Grant 2026/27

MBC has supplied details of the Parish Services Scheme grant for 2026/27. The proposal is to increase the overall grant by 3% from £1,705 in 2024/25 to £1,756 in 2025/26.

Members **Noted** the Parish Services Scheme grant for 2026/27.

12. PLANNING

12.1 Planning Application

12.1.1 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.

12.2 Marden Neighbourhood Plan Review

Marden Parish Council is reviewing the Marden Neighbourhood Plan (MNP). Although Regulation 14 consultation was undertaken in 2025 it came to light that the modifications were not included. Therefore, following advice from Maidstone Borough Council a further Regulation 14 consultation is being carried out.

Members **Agreed** to not provide a response to the consultation.

12.3 Planning Decisions

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

12.3.1 Petty Hoo, Bishops Lane - 25/505082/LBC

Listed Building Consent for replacement of the existing single glazing with heritage slimline panes in all the exterior single paned facing oak framed windows.

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

12.3.2 Burford Farm, Redwall Lane, Linton – 25/502670/FULL

The retrospective change of use of land for the sitting of four mobile homes for agricultural workers, and storage in situ when unoccupied, together with a farm track and staff welfare unit in addition to the eight mobiles approved under application 22/504667/FULL.

Parish Council recommendation: The Parish Council requests that, if the decision is made to permit the submitted application 25/502670/FULL, the following conditions are applied:- Operating hours to be between 8am and 6pm from Monday to Saturday and nothing on Sunday. The Maidstone Borough Council Community Protection team has previously stated that no noise should be generated outside of these hours.- No external lighting between 11pm and 7am for fixed lighting or motion sensor timed lights.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Parish Council Annual Meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 11th May 2026 at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:48pm.