

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 17TH JULY 2023 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: One member of the public was in attendance until Item 7.2.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr J Goddard. County Cllr S Webb had also sent his apologies.

2. FILMING, RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHING

The member 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 15TH MAY 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th May 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

Item 2 – Cllr Summersgill has signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Vice Chairman.

Item 15.2 – The Clerk submitted the response to the KALC Membership Survey 2023.

Item 16.5 – The Clerk submitted the AGAR to Mazars and put the AGAR and Notice of Public Rights on the notice boards and website.

6. POLICE

6.1 Police

One crime has been logged on the e-watch website since the last Parish Council meeting: 31/05/23 – Bensted Close – Somebody stole a van from the road.

6.2 Huntonwatch

Huntonwatch have not provided a report.

7. LOCAL COMMUNITY

7.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The Chairman of the Committee provided the following report:

The Playing Field Committee is continuing to meet every two months and is well supported with all three sports clubs as well as the Parish Council regularly represented.

The Committee held its AGM on 12th July, prefaced by the annual walk around the field to look at the general condition and to identify areas where action might be needed in the next 12 months.

The main issue identified was the exceptional level of plant and tree growth due to the very mild winter and wet spring and the following aspects were highlighted as requiring action:

- The majority of the large Oak trees require undercutting to raise the canopy. This is in part for safety reasons due to their proximity to the cricket and football playing areas and also to allow the mower access underneath to keep the grass down. The lower branches are very heavy with leaves this year and this is accentuating the problem.

- Some trees behind the play area need cutting back as they are starting to encroach over the play equipment and have the potential to be hazardous.
- Hopefully the above items will be picked up by the next tree survey.
- The brambles behind the football goal at the top left of the field are starting to encroach again and need cutting back.
 - Hedges and nettles have grown up again in various locations and now that the nesting season has passed these could do with a general tidy up.
 - The play area needs strimming and weeding.

The play equipment was maintained and painted in the spring but there are still a couple of outstanding items, namely the installation of the springy tractor and the replacement of one of the low posts on the adventure trail. This work will now be carried out in the autumn when the ground has softened again. The equipment is required to be inspected annually by an outside professional company but the monthly visual inspections are now being carried out by the trustees.

Further improvements have been made to the inside of the football club changing rooms and it has been noted that since the involvement of Scott Elliott as a trustee, the football club have been much more fully engaged in the process of looking after the facilities and working with the other clubs and the Parish Council.

Following the walk round the field, the AGM was held and all present confirmed that they were happy to continue standing as trustees. Simon Taylor was re-elected as chairman for the year although there may be a change in tenure next July as it does committees and organisations good to have a fresh approach and ideas periodically. Sharon Goodwin has confirmed that she is happy to continue to act as secretary. Cllr Stanbridge advised that the football club is looking to replace the boiler in the changing rooms and may be in a position to provide quotes for the September Parish Council meeting. Cllr Summersgill suggested that the CIL monies could possibly be used for this work.

7.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

Cllr Goddard was unable to attend the meeting. Cllr Summersgill provided the following update:

- The kerbs are being installed near the school on 7th/8th August; the carriageway has been marked out.
- There is a dispute between highways and KCC Drainage about who should pay for resurfacing the damaged area of West Street. Cllr Summersgill will contact County Cllr Webb.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

- Redwall Lane is closed for three weeks. UK Power Networks did not inform residents even though it was planned and not emergency work; it has caused much disruption to residents who have nowhere to park. There is also no road closure signage in Chainhurst. Cllr Summersgill will report the lack of notice and signage to KCC Highways.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

The Traffic & Road Safety Working Party (T&RSWP) met in mid-June:

- Overgrown and dirty signs have been cleared.
- Three old manholes have been found to the drainage culvert on Redwall Lane.
- At the bottom of George Street, six of eight ragstone boulders are now in the ditch. KCC will not remove them as they are the owner's responsibility; the owner has been contacted but part of the land is derelict. Cllrs Summersgill and Goddard will work with the landowner to remove the boulders.
- Three proposals were submitted to KCC: 1) KCC have not approved 'Road narrows' signage by The Gudgeon; 2) KCC have approved new signage for the tight bend near Scotts Farm House (subject to the Parish Council paying for the design fee and work); and 3) KCC strongly advise against an extension of the Hunton Hill 40mph limit.
- The Redwall Lane white lines have been re-marked.
- The Bensted Close double yellow lines are still a topic.
- Cllr Simmons has put flyers on cars and a message on Facebook about not parking on the pavement or too near junctions on West Street; two cars are now parking on the road.
- There have been three reports of HGVs.
- KCC have done some work on the blockage on East Street.
- Cllr Summersgill has spoken to the resident at Elm Corner about concerns of damage to the property from vehicles. There is not much that can be done other than a larger boulder as KCC will not narrow the carriageway and the owner does not want a bollard.

The next T&RSWP meeting will be held in September.

Cllr Fuller noted that cuttings had been left behind when hedges have been cut which have blocked the drains. Cllr Stanbridge will feed back to the landowner.

ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE

Cllr Simmons met one of the parents from the school, who wants to make improvements regarding parking

on West Street. A governance structure is to be put in place, looking at West Street as an entity; Cllr Simmons will bring it to the next Parish Council meeting. The school has been asked to cut back the hedge to improve visibility. The Peace Cottages will also be removing their hedge, moving it further back and installing sleepers to improve visibility. These are short term solutions but long term solutions also need to be considered.

7.3 Tree & Pond Warden

Cllr Summersgill reported that a volunteer has been found to replace Cllr Summersgill as Tree & Pond Warden; he will hopefully be involved in the Visual Tree Assessment process. There has been notification from MBC of a Tree Preservation Order relating to trees at Cock House on Lughorse Lane.

8. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

8.1 County Councillor

County Cllr Simon Webb was unable to attend the meeting.

8.2 Borough Councillors

Borough Cllrs Lottie Parfitt-Reid, Simon Webb and James Reid were unable to attend the meeting.

9. PARISH MATTERS

9.1 Parish Councillors

Cllr Summersgill attended the KALC Maidstone AGM on 26th June; nothing to raise from the meeting. Cllr Simmons has put his name forward to be the Hunton Church Warden as a process of change has started within the Benefice and, without a Church Warden, the parish does not receive information. Cllr Trought reported that the piano has been tuned in the Village Club and the bench outside the Club has been repaired. The Committee are thinking of opening the Club on a Friday rather than a Sunday. There was a poor turn out for the recent Film Night but it was a good evening. There will be a Quiz Night in August and the Beer Festival will be held on 2nd September. Cllr Trought is taking over the administration of Hunton Facebook page.

9.2 Flooding

Cllr Summersgill noted that there has not been any flooding. Water has been coming out by Cheveney Mill, which has been extracted by a tanker but there is still water there so it could be a leak. Cllr Fuller suggested that the Parish Council should organise ditch clearing to prevent flooding; Cllr Heaton suggested flooding will be less of an issue in future due to the changes in farming (not growing vegetables).

9.3 Climate Change and Sustainability

Cllr Summersgill asked whether the Parish Council needs to update its procedures in relation to climate change and sustainability. It was not thought that this is currently necessary.

9.4 Pond Surveys

Medway Valley Countryside Partnership (MVCP) have undertaken pond surveys and bottle trapping on Redwall Lane and George Street, paid for by CIL monies. Cllr Summersgill found it very instructive to attend with MVCP. No Great Crested Newts were found. MVCP is keen to reinstate a pond. The rest of the budget for the work will be spent in April 2024 on two pond surveys in East Street.

9.5 Speedwatch

Cllr Summersgill reported that Speedwatch has been re-energised and there are now seven qualified people and one in training; Cllr Summersgill is the co-ordinator. Four Speedwatch sessions have been held so far in two places – outside the Village Hall (40mph speed limit) and outside the Village Club (30mph speed limit). The sessions last for one hour at a time; half an hour each way. Most people have been caught speeding outside the Club. Of 420 vehicles logged, 26 were over the speed limit+10%+ 2 (ie 35mph or 46mph). Five were outside the Village Hall and 21 outside the Club. Of those 26, 22 were approved by the police (18 first offences; 3 second offences – receive letter; and one third offence – receive longer letter) and 4 were not approved as some of the details logged were incorrect. Apart from one truck, no vehicles were logged travelling over 40mph outside the Club or 50mph outside

the Village Hall. Speedwatch is not enforceable, it is about awareness. However, if a record is built up, the police may decide to use speed traps. Further Speedwatch sessions will be held on 18th and 20th July; the aim is to hold one per week. Yalding are planning to start Speedwatch and Marden are also thinking about it.

9.6 **Bench Repair**

Three residents have replaced the slats on the bench outside the Village Club at a cost of £290.16.

Members previously agreed to fund the replacement of the slats at a quoted price of £195. Cllr Heaton noted that the slats are made of English Oak and the residents have done an excellent job.

Members **Agreed** to approve the payment of £290.16 for the slats. The Clerk will set up an online payment for two Members to authorise.

ACTION: CLERK / TWO MEMBERS

9.7 **Village Hall Wi-Fi Connection**

Cllr Stanbridge completed the required form on the BT website for an upgrade to the network but BT have no plans to upgrade in the area.

Cllr Stanbridge has obtained a list of packages from the Call Flow website; the Parish Council would need to establish how much data and the speed required to determine the package. Members **Agreed** that information is needed from the Pre-school about the data and speed they require too; the Pre-school Secretary will be asked at the Village Hall AGM on 15th August.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON / CLLR TROUGHT / CLERK

Different passwords would be required for the Parish Council, Pre-school and the public. The contract with Call Flow would be with the Parish Council. Members **Agreed** that Call Flow should be used to supply the Wi-Fi connection at the Village Hall (subject to determining the package required) as it would be of benefit to the Parish Council for looking at documents online during meetings and as the hall is a hub for the village. Cllr Stanbridge will contact Call Flow to find out more about protections etc.

ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE

9.8 **Telephone Box**

The Clerk contacted BT to enquire about ownership of the West Street telephone box. It was adopted by The Community Heartbeat Trust in 2015, but the charity works with communities and provides heart defibrillators. The Clerk contacted the Secretary to find out if the charity will work with the Parish Council, the process involved and the likely costs but he is currently on leave. The Clerk will contact the Secretary when he is back and will find out the cost of the Pre-school defibrillator.

ACTION: CLERK

9.9 **Clerk's Report**

A letter has been received from Npower, provider of electricity for the street light on Bensted Close. The tariff is increasing on 1st September 2023 from 33.80p/kWh to 50.188p/kWh.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 **National Highways & Transport Network - Public Satisfaction Surveys**

Kent County Council is taking part in six web-based surveys on specific issues: highway maintenance; accessibility; walking and cycling; public transport; road safety; and tackling congestion.

Members **Agreed** not to respond to the consultation but the Clerk will put it on the parish website.

ACTION: CLERK

10.2 **Kent County Council - Draft Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 and Draft Kent Mineral Sites Plan - Regulation 18 Public Consultation**

KCC is currently undertaking a statutory five-year review of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan as amended by the Early Partial Review (2020).

Cllr Summersgill has reviewed the documentation. The consultation does not affect Hunton and is the initial stage in a long process.

Members **Agreed** not to respond to the consultation.

10.3 **Maidstone Borough Council - Dog Control Public Space Protection Order Consultation**

Every three years Maidstone Borough Council is required to review its Public Space Protection Orders. The current Dog Control PSPO is under review and the measures proposed to continue or introduce, are explained within the consultation.

Cllr Summersgill noted that the proposed changes enhance current measures.

Members **Agreed** not to respond to the consultation but the Clerk will put it on the parish website.

10.4 Maidstone Borough Council – Parish Charter Review Survey

The current Parish Charter was agreed in September 2015. Since then there have been a number of operational changes in terms of Officers and Councillors which are not reflected in the current document. This was highlighted at the Quarterly Parish Liaison in December 2022 and it was felt that this was an opportune time to revisit the document with involvement from the Parish Councils. Members **Agreed** that the Clerk could complete the survey.

ACTION: CLERK

11. FINANCE**11.1 Budget Monitoring Report**

The Budget Monitoring Report to 30th June 2023 was **Noted**.

11.2 Income Received

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

HMRC – VAT recovered 2022/23	£875.72
Maidstone Borough Council – Parish Services Scheme grant (1 st half)	£863.96

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 – April	£508.95
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – May	£508.95
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – June	£508.95
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge	£18.00

The following payments were authorised at the Planning Committee meeting on 3rd July 2023:

KCC – Design fee for West Street bend improvements	£326.00
KCC – Medway Valley Countryside Partnership fee for pond surveys	£499.20

11.4 Electronic Payments

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

Npower – Street light electricity	£19.95
CPRE – Annual membership subscription	£36.00
Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses / Stationery / Food for Annual Parish Meeting	£127.02
Lionel Robbins – Internal audit	£90.00

11.5 Internal Audit Report

The Internal Auditor, Lionel Robbins, has provided his report from the internal audit visit on 10th May 2023. No issues were raised other than amendment of the Financial Regulations when they are next reviewed (March 2024) to remove obsolete references which NALC had included in its model set on which the Parish Council's Financial Regulations are based.

Members considered and **Approved** the report of the Internal Auditor.

11.6 CIL Neighbourhood Receipts

CIL reporting regulations require that the Parish Council reports to Maidstone Borough Council on how the received CIL monies have been allocated and spent during the previous financial year. The report, which shows that nothing was spent in the year, was submitted before the 30th June 2023 deadline. The report will be placed on the Parish Council website once the website provider has added another heading to accommodate it on the website.

Members **Noted** the report.

11.7 Village Hall Insurance

The Village Hall Committee has paid the Village Hall buildings insurance premium, to which the Parish Council has contributed 80% in previous years. The premium this year is £303.99, but this is only for the period 1st June to 25th November 2023, due to the buildings and contents insurance now being covered by the same insurer, rather than two separate insurers. The contents insurance is due for renewal on 25th November, so the buildings insurance will be renewed on the same date. An 80% contribution calculates as £243.19.

Members **Agreed** to contribute £243.19 and will contribute 80% of the additional buildings insurance amount following the renewal in November. The Clerk will set up an online payment for Cllrs Summersgill and Stanbridge to authorise.

ACTION: CLERK / CLLR SUMMERSGILL / CLLR STANBRIDGE

11.8 Risk Assessment

The Parish Council last reviewed the risk assessment on 18th July 2022. The Clerk has re-examined the risk assessment and made some changes. The Parish Council now has over £85k in the bank account, but only £85k is covered in any one bank by the Financial Services Authority compensation scheme. Members **Agreed** that up to £50,000 could be transferred to a savings account elsewhere so that all funds are covered by the FSA and also to earn interest. The Clerk will research savings accounts for the next meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

There was some discussion on how the risks on the risk assessment could be scored following mitigation. Members reviewed the risk assessment and **Agreed** to adopt it. Cllr Heaton signed the document.

12. PLANNING

12.1 Planning Decisions

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

12.1.1 Cock House, Lughorse Lane - 23/501862/FULL

Erection of a single storey annexe, ancillary to the main dwelling, including an attached 2 bay garage and workshop.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Refused.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Parish Council meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 18th September 2023 at Hunton Village Hall.

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