

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 17TH NOVEMBER 2025 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: County Councillor R Ford was in attendance until Item 8.2. Three members of the public were in attendance; one left after Item 9.2 and two left after Item 9.5.

OPEN SESSION:

Although he has not heard anything official yet, a resident of Barn Hill expressed concerns about the likely installation of polytunnels in the area. He is a keen walker with great appreciation of the Greensand Way and its views and feels the landscape will be ruined by the plastic and metal of the polytunnels which will cover it.

A second resident is also aware of this potential development on Buston Manor land and is increasingly concerned about polytunnels in and around the outskirts of Hunton. Tracks have also been laid, some made of tarmac, and there are a lot of building materials around. The resident has concerns about the impact on wildlife, such as birds of prey and deer, as their feeding ground will disappear. In addition, the proliferation of lakes and drainage ponds are likely to have some effect on the River Beult. The amount of traffic will also increase. The resident asked if the Parish Council has any powers to prevent the polytunnels.

Cllr Webb suggested that County Cllr Ford could correspond with Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to outline the issues. Cllr Ford agreed to speak with the Leader, Cllr Stewart Jeffery. If a planning application is submitted to MBC and it is called in to the MBC Planning Committee, members of the public can speak to object to it.

Planning permission has not been sought for the polytunnels yet, but Cllr Heaton is unsure about whether it is required, he is trying to find out the planning law. Permission is required if the polythene is kept on the metal structures all year round and a lake would need planning permission. Attenuation ponds do improve diversity and clean the water. The Greensand Way is not categorised as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but is designated as a landscape of local value in the MBC Local Plan.

The only power the Parish Council has is to object if a planning permission is submitted or comment if there are implications to Public Rights of Way (PROW). One area of the land has been marked out to cross over a footpath. Members of the public who have concerns may wish to lobby the Ramblers Association. One of the residents asked how the issue can be communicated more widely. Avenues could include Facebook, an article in the Hunton Herald, lobbying MBC and Kent County Council (KCC) and the local press. The Parish Council could invite representatives from Clock House Farm to a Parish Council meeting to outline their plans, which residents would be able to attend.

Members to consider the issue at Item 9.5 on the agenda.

A member of the public asked about progress on improving the broadband provision in the village. Cllr Stanbridge to provide an update in a presentation at Item 9.2.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr M Summersgill.

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 Heaton stated that he is a resident of Barn Hill with reference to the issue to be discussed at Item 9.5.

3.2 Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15TH SEPTEMBER 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th September 2025 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 10.1 – A response was submitted to the MBC Community Governance Review Survey.

Item 11.6 – Two traffic mirrors have been purchased and installed opposite the exit from The Square.

Item 11.7 – A second quotation was received for the insurance from Ansvar via Community Action Suffolk. It was significantly higher than the Zurich Municipal quotation, so it was agreed that the insurance should be renewed with Zurich Municipal, and payment was made.

Item 11.9 – Cllr Banks is now an authorised signatory for the Unity Trust Bank account.

6. POLICE

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

Between 15th and 17th September 2025 – Redwall Lane - Somebody stole an auger from an excavator at a residential property.

PC Charley Maskell and PC George Head were invited to the meeting but did not attend.

Cllr Heaton will contact the Inspector about the lack of police presence at Parish Council meetings.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON

7. LOCAL COMMUNITY

7.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The following is a summary of the Playing Field Committee (PFC) meeting held on 12th November 2025:

The repairs have been made to the multiplay equipment and the fenced play area has been reopened.

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;
- obtaining advice on how to improve the condition of the field.

The PFC currently has funds of £4,438.

The Annual Report for the year ending 31st March 2025 has been submitted to the Charity Commission.

7.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

7.2.1 Update

Cllr Banks reported on the last Traffic & Road Safety Working Party (T&RSWP) meeting held on 28th October 2025:

Cllr Summersgill has updated the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) and asked KCC Highways for data to support concerns about Hunton Hill, which they should have, more needs to be added about future risks. Drainage on East Street and West Street coped well in recent heavy rain.

Cllr Banks reported some blocked drains on West Street recently.

A stolen salt bin has been replaced on Barn Hill.

Polytunnels were discussed and the T&RSWP advise meeting with Clock House Farm.

7.2.2 Hunton Safer Streets & Lanes Steering Group

Cllr Simmons apologised for the lack of action recently but will progress the project in the new year.

ACTION: CLLR SIMMONS

8. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

8.1 County Councillor

(Discussed after Item 9.5)

County Cllr Robert Ford will contact Paul King at KCC about the broadband issues in Hunton, to start the communication. He will also contact KCC Highways about Hunton Hill issues and the MBC Leader about the polytunnels.

Cllr Simmons noted that a presentation on local government reorganisation was sent out by MBC recently; all Kent authorities must make a proposal to central government by 28th November. Cllr Simmons asked whether parish councils will still exist and there was nothing in the presentation about education; he had heard that all schools will become academies.

Parish councils will still exist. Cllr Webb advised that KCC have their view on the reorganisation and the borough councils have different views. It will be a case of waiting until after 28th November to see what the government decides, then a consultation will follow, but it is unlikely that all schools will become academies.

8.2 Borough Councillors

Cllr Summersgill and Cllr Couch have provided two combined written reports since the last meeting, and Cllr Russell has also provided two reports.

None of the borough councillors were able to attend the meeting.

9. PARISH MATTERS

9.1 Parish Councillors

Cllr Summersgill was unable to attend the meeting but had reported that Planning Enforcement had contacted him to say that they will be flying a drone, to check on the building in a field near Bull Oast on East Street.

9.2 Broadband Services

(Discussed after Item 5)

Cllr Stanbridge distributed handouts to all present and gave a presentation on the broadband assessment for Hunton.

Cllr Simmons asked whether ducts are the only method of getting fibre into houses; Cllr Stanbridge advised that it is. Poles can be used, but BT Openreach must give permission.

Cllr Heaton advised that an open morning has been discussed for early 2026 which would be an opportunity to provide information to residents. Broadband for Rural Kent (B4RK) could also be invited.

Cllr Heaton has sent a letter to MP Katie Lam but has not sent a letter to City Fibre and KCC yet as he wanted to see if she contacts them herself. Cllr Heaton will send the letters out once time has elapsed for Katie Lam to ask questions of them as they will need to reply to her.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON

KALC Maidstone Area Committee could also be used to apply pressure; Cllr Summersgill is the Parish Council representative on the committee.

Cllr Simmons suggested that the situation will get worse if no action is taken. He asked if there is anything the Parish Council can do collectively. There is a lack of mobile phone signal at the school and church, so if anything happened it would be difficult to get help. Cllr Heaton advised that an issue is that the level of service varies a lot in the village as some areas have poor service, but other areas do have good service. Members thanked Cllr Stanbridge for his presentation.

9.3 Barn Hill Finger Post

Cllr Heaton has the post, steel sleeve and fingers of the Barn Hill finger post, but it needs repainting, new letters and reinstalling on the triangle at the bottom of Barn Hill.

The Clerk contacted the Yalding Parish Council Clerk about a source for new letters but a response has not been received from the suggested contact. Cllr Heaton will be able to source the letters.

Cllr Webb is aware of someone who could fix the post. He will arrange for him to meet with Cllr Heaton and subsequently provide a quote.

ACTION: CLLR WEBB / CLLR HEATON

9.4 Defibrillator Training

The trainer who provided defibrillator training to Hunton Bowls Club has contacted the Clerk with details of when she can provide the training, the group size, duration and cost. The cost will be £50 for up to 14 people.

Members **Agreed** to the cost and suggested a Tuesday evening in January 2026, preferably at the Village Club. The sports clubs and Village Club will be invited initially, along with the parish councillors.

ACTION: CLERK

9.5 Polytunnels Near the Greensand Way

(Discussed before Item 9.2)

Cllr Heaton advised that the land has been marked out for polytunnels; the markings cross a footpath. An application may need to be submitted for a diversion of the footpath if Clock House Farm wish to cross the current footpath; applications can take up to two years. A kissing gate has been installed, where there was no gate previously, which is not permitted as there is no livestock on the land.

Cllr Heaton advised that Cllr Summersgill has sent photographs of the land markings to KCC PROW, who have replied, but there is nothing to act on currently as polytunnels have not been installed. Cllr Heaton

will contact Cllr Summersgill in his capacity as borough councillor to establish the MBC policy on polytunnels. ACTION: CLLR HEATON

Members **Agreed** that an informal fact finding meeting should be requested with Clock House Farm. Cllr Heaton will contact the Farms Director. ACTION: CLLR HEATON

9.6 Ditch Clearance on Bishops Lane

A resident has advised that, on Bishops Lane, long sections of the ditch run adjacent to the land owned by Hunton Court and the ditch has not been cleared. Bishops Lane is prone to flooding from the ditches and drains which run adjacent to the lane.

Members **Agreed** that a letter should be written to Hunton Court to request that the ditch is cleared and it should be reported to KCC Highways. ACTION: CLERK

9.7 Parish Consultation and Parish Council Action Plan

Covered under Item 10.6.

9.8 KALC Community Awards Scheme 2026

KALC has launched the 2026 KALC Community Awards Scheme, with member councils having the option of adopting the Scheme in their local area.

Member councils that adopt the Scheme will make their own decisions about how they want to identify a person or group (who must live/work within the parish boundary) that has made a significant contribution to the local community or can formally invite nominations from the community. The nomination must be made to KALC by 30th January 2026.

Members **Agreed** to adopt the Scheme.

Members **Agreed** to defer the decision on the recipient of the award to the January Full Council meeting.

9.9 Parish Council Meeting Dates 2026

Members **Agreed** to the following meeting dates for 2026:

Monday 19th January 2026

Monday 16th March 2026

Monday 11th May 2026 (Annual Meeting)

Monday 18th May 2026 (Annual Parish Meeting)

Monday 20th July 2026

Monday 21st September 2026

Monday 16th November 2026

All meetings to be held at 7:30pm.

9.10 Clerk's Report

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

A date needs to be arranged to meet Q-Tec Solutions on site to discuss the mobile CCTV camera in more detail, see a demonstration on how it works and determine whether it fits the Parish Council's requirements. Members **Agreed** to a Monday morning from 8am to meet with Q-Tec Solutions.

ACTION: CLERK

10. FINANCE

10.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31st October 2025 was **Noted**.

10.2 Income Received

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

The Community Heartbeat Trust – Refund of defibrillator installation cost	£330.00
Maidstone Borough Council – Parish Services Scheme grant (2 nd half)	£852.54
Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Feed-in tariff	£977.84

The bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed by Cllr Trought.

10.3 Payments Made

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

SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – August	£570.50
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – September	£587.58
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – August	£6.00
DD – HMRC – Employer National Insurance – September	£38.31
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – October	£587.58
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – September	£6.00

The following payments were authorised at the Planning Committee meeting on 13th October 2025:

Lewis Baines Ltd – Multiplay remedial work	£3,412.56
VCS Websites Ltd – Web hosting	£151.50
Npower – Street light electricity	£28.14

10.4 Electronic Payments

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

Q-Tec Solutions Ltd – Installation of cabinet/defibrillator at Hunton Village Club	£456.00
Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses / Stationery / Traffic mirrors	£91.63
Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Contribution towards running costs (2 nd half)	£750.00

10.5 CIL Neighbourhood Receipts

Covered under Item 10.6.

10.6 Finance Working Party

Cllr Webb handed out notes from the Finance Working Party meeting held on 29th October 2025.

The aim of the meeting was to consider likely funds available for 2026/27 and how some of the reserves can be used within the parish for the benefit of the majority of residents. The different earmarked reserves were also reviewed.

Suggestions for use of the monies included:

- Improving the broadband network (depending on feasibility).
- Insulating the roof of the Village Hall.
- Adding more play equipment to the existing stock.
- Enhancing sports facilities for residents.
- Highways projects.

However, it is necessary to consult residents to establish what they want. Cllr Webb is meeting with a resident who has agreed to assist with the compilation of a questionnaire. The draft questionnaire will be available for Members to discuss at the January Full Council meeting. **ACTION: CLLR WEBB**

The questionnaire will be distributed with the Hunton Herald in February and be available to complete online. Once responses have been received and analysed, an additional Parish Council will be organised before the March Full Council meeting to discuss the outcomes and consider an action plan.

Members **Agreed** to the process for consulting residents.

10.7 Age UK

An email has been received from Age UK to enquire whether the Parish Council would be open to receiving a funding application to support the purchase of new vehicles for Age UK Maidstone, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge's local transport service.

Members **Agreed** not to contribute.

11. PLANNING

11.1 Planning Application

11.1.1 5 The Square - 25/504170/FULL

Demolition of existing single detached garage and erection of replacement single pitched roof detached

garage.

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object.

11.2 Planning Decisions

The following planning decision has been made by Maidstone Borough Council since the last Planning Committee meeting:

11.2.1 Elphicks Barn, Water Lane – 25/503210/FULL

Erection of a detached residential annexe.

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to comment.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 19th January 2026 at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:33pm.