

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 18TH NOVEMBER 2024 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Borough Cllr C Russell.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr T Stanbridge. Borough Cllr G Couch had also sent her 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

Cllr Summersgill declared that he is now one of the Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) representatives on the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board, although this does not affect Hunton. Cllr Heaton declared an interest in Item 13.2.1 as he submitted an objection to the original planning application.

3.2 Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16TH SEPTEMBER 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2024 had been previously distributed and were agreed as an accurate record. The Chairman signed the official copies of the minutes.

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

Item 11.6 – The insurance was renewed with Zurich Municipal for the year ending 30th September 2025.

Item 11.7 – The new defibrillator has been installed outside the Village Hall.

Item 11.8 – A second quotation was requested by the Village Hall Committee for the external work on the Village Hall, but the contractor did not return a quotation.

Item 11.9 – The Clerk informed Hunton CEP School that the grant application was unsuccessful.

6. POLICE

6.1 Police

The following crime has been logged on the e-watch website since the last Parish Council meeting: 11/11/24 – Bishops Lane – Somebody stole the front number plate from a car parked in the road.

6.2 Huntonwatch

Huntonwatch had one confidential item to report which could not be included in the minutes.

7. LOCAL COMMUNITY

7.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The Chairman of the Playing Field Committee, Colin Slattery, was unable to attend the meeting. The following is a summary of the last Committee meeting on 13th November 2024:

A new gate has been fitted near the cricket pavilion and a new bench has been installed in the infants play area.

Work to be undertaken includes remedial work on the multiplay and fixing the Community Orchard gate. The Playing Field Committee currently has funds of £5,071. Non-discretionary expenditure was reviewed; it accounts for most of the annual grant from the Parish Council. Reserves were also considered.

The Landscape Services quotation for the grounds maintenance in 2025/26 is an increase of 30% on the previous year; other quotations will be obtained.

The walls at the entrance to the car park will need repairing in the spring.

The Annual Return has been submitted to the Charity Commission for the year ending 31st March 2024.

7.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

7.2.1 Update

Cllr Goddard was pleased to note that KCC Highways are installing two signs at the top of Hunton Hill – one to warn lorries not to turn left at the top of the hill from and another to direct traffic to Maidstone through Coxheath. KCC Highways will pay for both signs. There are no items on the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) at the current time.

Cllr Summersgill reported that a Traffic & Road Safety Working Group (T&RSWP) meeting was held on 1st November:

- Cllr Summersgill is progressing two new salt bins.
- Cllr Summersgill will be following up on drain/culvert blockages on George Street, East Street and West Street.
- Cllr Summersgill followed up on two noisy tractors with Clock House Farm, who responded to say they have bought new tractors which may sound different.
- Traffic calming is better on West Street now there is a new lollipop lady.
- Cllr Summersgill has some ‘no idling’ signs from MBC to place near schools; he will check if Hunton CEP School would like the signs erected.
- The roads seem to be in a better state of repair as there are not too many potholes, apart from Bishops Lane and Water Lane, where they have been marked up with some already repaired.

The next T&RSWP meeting will be held in February 2025.

7.2.2 Hunton Safer Streets & Lanes Steering Group

Cllr Simmons had previously submitted the Terms of Reference to the Parish Council. It is good practice to have representatives from different organisations on the Steering Group to consider proposals for submission to the Parish Council for a decision. Not all information has been gathered yet as businesses and school parents have not been consulted; this needs to be done before any proposals can be developed. Cllr Webb asked what the Steering Group is aiming to do. Cllr Simmons advised that there are no specific proposals, which is deliberate, as the aim is to obtain evidence and then form proposals, starting from a broad base. Cllr Webb advised that the person most likely to have the greatest impact on behalf of KCC would be the elected County Member and that it would be beneficial to contact him/her to ensure KCC Highways are involved at an early stage. Cllr Simmons will ensure that he does this when proposals are developing and will also involve KCC Highways officers. Cllr Summersgill advised that the Steering Group was formed because of an informal community consultation; face to face engagement has been more effective than an article in the Hunton Herald.

Members **Agreed** the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group.

7.3 Tree & Pond Wardens

The Tree Warden, Sam Andrews, was unable to attend the meeting but had provided the following report: The turkey oak tree inspection report has been received from Hood’s Tree Services. As predicted, the report recommends no action.

The school has been approached about having a tree planting day for the pupils. A reply has not been received yet.

The hedges have been cut around the car park, the play area, the east side of the field, and the north side as far as the beginning of the brambles. They have not been cut further than this as there is still evidence of the young trees that Cllr Summersgill planted a couple of years ago. Some branches have been taken off the walnut tree near the play area.

Members **Agreed** that the report from Hood’s Tree Services is comprehensive, and the turkey oak tree will not need to be reduced. Cllr Summersgill will provide the report to the assessor before the next Visual Tree Assessment is undertaken,

Cllr Summersgill noted that the Tree Warden has done a good job of clearing the area at the far end of the recreation ground for tree planting by the school children.

Cllr Trought advised that the Community Orchard Group has cleared the orchard recently.

Cllr Summersgill reported that two ponds in the village have been found to contain Yellow Bellied Newts.

8. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

8.1 County Councillor

County Cllr Simon Webb had provided a written report prior to the meeting.

Cllr Webb added that he has received a huge quantity of queries about roadworks. The KCC roadworks are known in advance but emergency road closures for work by utility companies are not.

8.2 Borough Councillors

Borough Cllrs Summersgill and Russell had both provided written reports prior to the meeting.

Cllr Russell was asked what an SPD is, relating to larger allocations in the Local Plan. SPD stands for Supplementary Planning Document. SPDs are important as there is more infrastructure with larger settlements and the infrastructure is provided through SPDs rather than s106 agreements.

Cllr Webb asked why the new garden bin permit system is being implemented as it will cost taxpayers £40,000 and asked how much would be saved. Cllr Summersgill advised that with the current system, approximately 20% of bin collections are unpaid collections as people have taken their own bin when they have moved and there is no tracking of bins, so every garden bin put out is collected. With the permit system, the collection cost will be lower because bins will be registered and only those bins will be collected. Cllr Russell added that the new contractor is not managing to collect all the garden waste and when residents have complained, it has been found that some had not paid for their bins. The previous contractor collected all garden bins, whether they had been paid for or not. Cllr Webb could not see where the saving would be as there will still be a cost incurred in collecting the bins with permits. Cllr Summersgill advised that less rounds may be needed if 20% less bins are collected. There is a document online which explains it.

Cllr Summersgill advised that the two week Eco Hub at The Mall in Maidstone was a very successful event. There was a separate 'Sustainability in Farming and Business' evening at Mid Kent College which was useful. The Hub is now a Christmas donation hub for a month.

9. PARISH MATTERS

9.1 Parish Councillors

Cllr Summersgill advised that there will be an East Street road closure on 22nd November and the power will be off so the telegraph poles can be cleared of vegetation. A notice will be placed on the Hunton Facebook page.

Residents on Redwall Lane have contacted Clock House Farm about noise on the land opposite and have also informed MBC.

Velux windows have been installed in an uninhabited barn roof (Elm Barn).

Bull Oast on East Street is a six piece oast which is split into two. Behind it, the driveway continues to another building called The Laurels which does not appear to be on the MBC planning portal. The Clerk will make an enquiry.

ACTION: CLERK

9.2 Flooding

Cllr Summersgill reported that flooding caused by heavy rain in October went away swiftly on West Street, although some mud was left behind. Cllr Goddard noted that the water cleared quickly on Grove Lane. Cllr Summersgill advised that Marden has now been included in the flood prevention area for Yalding, Collier Street and Hunton. Cllr Summersgill will be attending the Kent-wide flood prevention event at KCC on 20th November.

The Environment Agency updates its flood zone maps every five years; the update is due in January/February 2025. When they were last updated, Cllr Summersgill also updated the list of Hunton properties on the flood zone map, which were double the amount on the previous map. He will check it again when the maps have been released.

Cllr Heaton noted that increasing organic matter in soil by 1% increases the water holding capacity by 14%, which prevents water from running off fields.

9.3 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainability

Cllr Summersgill reported that Hunton Village Club hosted the Parish Councils Environment Network (PCEN). Yalding has now joined PCEN. Marden has started a plastic-free zone which residents have taken the lead on. Yalding is to have a repair hub in the new year. Positive action is being taken by local people.

9.4 **Speedwatch**

Cllr Summersgill reported that there has been no Speedwatch activity as more volunteers are needed. He will put an article in the Hunton Herald.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

9.5 **Broadband Services**

Cllr Stanbridge was unable to attend the meeting; this item will be deferred to the next meeting.

9.6 **Parish Council Meeting Dates 2025**

Members **Agreed** to the following meeting dates for 2025:

Monday 20th January 2025

Monday 17th March 2025

Monday 12th May 2025 (Annual Meeting)

Monday 19th May 2025 (Annual Parish Meeting)

Monday 21st July 2025

Monday 15th September 2025

Monday 17th November 2025

All meetings to be held at 7:30pm.

9.7 **Clerk's Report**

The Parish Council will need to pay employers' national insurance from 6th April 2025 due to the reduction of the threshold in the recent Budget. Cllr Heaton asked whether the Employment Allowance relates to parish councils; the Clerk will check.

ACTION: CLERK

The interest rate on the Redwood Bank Business Savings 95 Day Notice Account is reducing from 4.75% gross (annual) to 4.60% gross (annual) on 11th January 2025 due to the Bank of England reduced base rate from 5.25% to 5.00% at the beginning of August.

10. **CONSULTATION**

10.1 **Maidstone Borough Council - Maidstone Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan Document – Preferred Approaches (Regulation 18b) Consultation**

Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) has published the Regulation 18b version of its Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan Document (DPD), which sets out the preferred policy approaches to meeting accommodation needs and the reasonable alternatives being considered through the DPD.

Members **Agreed** that a meeting should be held on 9th December to give full consideration to the consultation document and response.

ACTION: CLERK

11. **POLICIES**

11.1 **Freedom of Information Model Publication Scheme**

The Parish Council last reviewed the Freedom of Information Model Publication Scheme on 15th November 2021. The Scheme is the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Model Publication Scheme; the ICO has not made any changes to the Scheme since the last review. Members cannot change the Model Publication Scheme as it must stay in the ICO format.

Members **Agreed** to adopt the ICO Freedom of Information Model Publication Scheme.

11.2 **Freedom of Information – Information Available**

The Parish Council last reviewed the Freedom of Information Information Available on 15th November 2021. The Information Available is based on the ICO template for parish councils.

Members reviewed the Freedom of Information Information Available and **Agreed** to adopt it.

12. **FINANCE**

12.1 **Budget Monitoring Report**

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31st October 2024 was **Noted**.

12.2 Income Received

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

S Heaton – Use of gazebos	£20.00
Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Feed-In Tariff	£940.22

The bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed by Cllr Trought.

12.3 Payments Made

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

SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – September	£545.81
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge	£18.00
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – October	£545.81
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge	£5.40

The following payments were authorised at the Planning Committee meeting on 14th October 2024:

VCS Websites Ltd – Web hosting	£100.00
Robert Cox – Maintenance of permissive footpath hedges and verges	£510.00
KCPFA – Annual membership grant	£20.00
Q-Tec Solutions Ltd – Disconnecting old defibrillator cabinet / connecting new one	£240.00

12.4 Electronic Payments

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

Npower – Street light electricity	£27.72
Hood's Tree Services – Tree inspection	£180.00
Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses / Stationery / Mobile phone top up	£90.19

12.5 CIL Neighbourhood Receipts

Members suggested the following ideas for spending CIL funds:

- EV charging points
- Roads/traffic
- Environmental
- Grant towards Marden Farming Cluster work
- QR codes on footpaths

Cllr Summersgill noted that MBC has provided a report which lists the uses of CIL funds by parish councils which might provide ideas.

Cllr Webb suggested that a Working Party is created to consider what the Parish Council can spend its money on, including CIL, and provide a strategic direction on finance. Cllr Webb would be happy to chair the Working Party. Members **Agreed**, and Cllrs Simmons, Heaton and Trought also agreed to be members.

ACTION: CLLR WEBB

12.6 Defibrillator

Cllr Trought reported that Hunton Village Club has agreed, in principle, for a defibrillator to be installed on the outside of the Club. Cllr Trought will speak to the Club Committee further.

ACTION: CLLR TROUGHT

The Parish Council has already paid Community Heartbeat Trust for a defibrillator and cabinet (still in their possession) which was due to be installed in the telephone box. The Clerk will check that the defibrillator/cabinet can be installed at the Club instead of the telephone box.

ACTION: CLERK

12.7 Authorised Signatories

Members **Agreed** that Cllr Webb should be added to the list of authorised signatories for the Council's bank account and any councillors who no longer serve on the Parish Council should be removed. Cllr

Webb signed the Unity Trust Bank account management form which was authorised by Cllrs Heaton and Summersgill.
ACTION: CLERK

12.8 Website Domain and Email Addresses

Members **Agreed** to the following costs obtained from VCS Websites (the Parish Council's website provider) to move to a .gov.uk website domain and email addresses:

- .gov.uk website - £196 plus VAT (lasts for a 10 year period)
 - Set up and move current website over - £25
 - Set up of Clerk and 7 councillors' email addresses - £65
 - Annual increase in hosting costs - £83 (current hosting = £200 per annum)
- ACTION: CLERK

12.9 Permissive Footpath on West Street – Hedge and Verges Maintenance Contract

The specification for the two-year contract for the maintenance of the hedge and verges near the permissive path on West Street was sent to Robert Cox and Crispin Tregoning. Robert Cox returned a quotation of £1,560 before the deadline and Crispin Tregoning was unable to quote this time.

Members **Agreed** to accept the quotation from Robert Cox, with a specification that the hedge is cut in October.
ACTION: CLERK

12.10 Review of Clerk's Salary

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has agreed new pay scales applicable from 1st April 2024. Members **Approved** the increase in the Clerk's salary (at SCP 12) in line with the NJC pay scales from 1st April 2024. Members **Approved** the Clerk's back pay of £172.83 for the 7 months from April to October 2024 and **Agreed** to authorise the standing order mandate to increase the Clerk's monthly salary payment from November 2024. The back pay and standing order mandate will be authorised online.
ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL / CLLR SIMMONS

13. PLANNING

13.1 Planning Applications

13.1.1 Wheelwrights, Hunton Hill - 24/504268/FULL

Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of a single storey extension with balcony and external staircase.

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to comment.

13.1.2 Old Savage Farm, East Street - 24/504153/FULL

Erection of a single storey extension to 2no. existing agricultural worker accommodation units, together with a change of use of land to additional garden amenity, parking including EV charging points and erection of timber post and rail fence. Removal of static caravan.

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object.

13.1.3 Reed Court Farm, Hunton Road, Marden - 20/505751/EIFUL

Erection of a new free range egg farm consisting of 2 no. hen houses with extensive outdoor ranges and fencing, formal vehicle access from Hunton Road and associated parking, landscaping, woodland and tree planting, drainage and other associated works. Revised details.

Parish Council recommendation: Wish to see the application refused. Previously submitted objections still stand.

Points noted:

- The number of sheds has been reduced from three to two.
- The applicant has not provided all the reports required – they have only addressed the Natural England points and not others.
- The applicant has acknowledged that the site is in Flood Zone 3b but has concentrated on the access being only 75m under water and not mentioned the 2km of fencing at the bottom end of the site which is also within Flood Zone 3b. The Environment Agency does not like fencing in flood zones.
- The KCC Footpaths Officer is still not happy about certain items.
- The second shed has been moved which is positive but there is no mention that the ammonia which drops on the shed roofs, would go into the holding ponds and then the river without treatment.

13.1.4 The Barn, The Bothy, Lughorse Lane - 24/504489/PNQCLA

Prior notification for the change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from agricultural to 2 no. dwellinghouse and associated operation development. For its prior approval to: - Transport and Highways impacts of the development. - Noise impacts of the development. Contamination risks on the site.- Flooding risks on the site. - Whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the use of the building to change from agricultural use to C3 (dwellinghouses). - Design and external appearance impacts on the building. - Provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses.

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to comment.

13.2 Planning Appeal

Cllr Summersgill took over as Chairman from Cllr Heaton, due to Cllr Heaton declaring an interest.

13.2.1 Land at Barn Hill – 24/501390/FULL

Members **Agreed** that they did not wish to make any comments on appeal APP/U2235/W/24/3352982 in addition to those already made regarding the planning application.

Cllr Heaton resumed as Chairman.

13.3 Planning Decisions

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

13.3.1 Old Savage Farm, East Street - 24/503848/SUB

Submission of details pursuant to Condition 7 (foul water drainage) in relation to planning permission 21/502567/FULL.

Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to comment.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Parish Council meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 20th January 2025 at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:38pm.