

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 19TH JANUARY 2026 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: One member of the public was in attendance; he left after Item 12.1.

1. APOLOGIES

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

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 17TH NOVEMBER 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 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 9.4 – Defibrillator training has been organised.

Item 9.5 – An informal meeting was held with Clock House Farm to discuss their plans for polytunnels and drainage.

Item 9.6 – A letter was written to Hunton Court to request clearance of the ditches near Bishops Lane. The ditches were reported to Kent County Council (KCC) Highways.

6. POLICE

6.1 Police

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

Between 19/10/25 and 19/11/25 - West Street - Somebody stole cables from an electrical substation.

24/12/25 - West Street - Somebody damaged the wall of a residential property.

PC Charley Maskell and PC George Head were invited to attend the meeting and they have been provided with the list of Parish Council meeting dates for 2026.

Inspector Steve Kent has replied to Cllr Heaton about the officers' lack of attendance at Parish Council meetings. The reason given is that the officers have a large area to cover and are too busy, but Inspector Kent agreed to speak to their sergeant about it. Cllr Heaton will point out that the officers attend Marden Parish Council meetings and have been given notice of all the meetings. ACTION: CLLR HEATON

6.2 Huntonwatch

Huntonwatch have provided the following report:

November 2025: Received two reports of a young man who was knocking on doors late at night (around 11pm) asking for directions to Tovil. There was nothing in these reports to arise suspicion other than the lateness of the hour and an email to members revealed no new sightings or concerns.

November 2025 to present day: A couple in a white VW Polo park on a regular basis at the very end of Bishops Lane or by the field gates for Petty Hoo at various times of the day and night. This has been reported to police as a precaution and the vehicle details have revealed it is fully legal and provided the address of the owners.

NatWest/Primark scam: Huntonwatch have been targeted by a scam where ‘NatWest Bank’ had to refuse a payment of around £130 to Primark and asked that a number is called to help resolve the matter. This was sent around to act as a reminder for members to remain alert and to look out for others who are more vulnerable than themselves.

Floods and other road closures: We have been busy providing members with updates on the flood situation following Storm Goretta and the subsequent heavy rain. We would like the Parish Council to note how grateful we are to a number of members who have assisted us by providing regular updates on road conditions in their part of the village.

Copper theft: We have been made aware of the theft in January of copper earth wire from the sub-station near the church. We believe aluminium has been used to replace the stolen material as this is apparently less attractive to thieves.

Bishops Lane has suffered several days and nights of MTS tankers going backwards and forwards to the pumping station to clear water that had overwhelmed the system. This has left the lane very muddy and there is significant damage to verges on both side of the road. Some residents are in discussion with MTS regarding compensation for the damage caused but we are formally requesting the Parish Council, on behalf of the residents of Bishops Lane, to approach KCC to get the lane swept. We had asked this in a previous year after a similar issue, but KCC did nothing and we hope this time that Highways will be a little more supportive. Yalding Parish Council is also asking KCC to have their roads swept.

Cllr Webb noted that Huntonwatch have been very helpful in sending out information about flood waters. Members **Agreed** that KCC Highways should be contacted to request that Bishops Lane is swept.

ACTION: CLERK

7. LOCAL COMMUNITY

7.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The Chairman of the Playing Field Committee (PFC), Colin Slattery, is unable to attend the meeting. The following is a summary of the Committee meeting held on 14th January 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; and obtaining advice on how to improve the condition of the field.

The annual play area inspection will be conducted by The Play Inspection Company in January.

The PFC currently has funds of £3,733. The PFC has requested a £8,000 annual grant from the Parish Council for 2026/27.

7.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

7.2.1 Update

Cllr Banks reported that flooding has been an issue recently. Two drains towards Mill House on West Street were reported to KCC Highways in November. Highways officers have visited but have not taken any action. Scheduled maintenance is infrequent.

Cllr Summersgill has provided the following update in his absence:

There has not been a Traffic & Road Safety Working Party meeting since the last Parish Council meeting; the next one is due in February. The Highways Improvement Plan is proceeding slowly. Cllr Summersgill needs to involve the KCC Councillor in applying for two new salt bins. They will be paid for by the Parish Council but need to be KCC registered to get them filled. The missing salt bin on Hunton Hill has been followed up. The bin at the Amsbury Road 'fork' has not been replaced since it was stolen but it was not on the KCC map, so it could not be reported online (may not be in Hunton parish).

7.2.2 Hunton Safer Streets & Lanes Steering Group

Cllr Simmons did not have anything to report.

7.3 Tree & Pond Wardens

The Tree Warden, Sam Andrews, has provided the following report:

It is a quiet time of year. The trees and bushes around the car park and playing fields have been cut back, and the epiphytic growth at the base of the lime trees by the village hall has been reduced.

The council has responded regarding the dangerous trees on West Street and these have been cut back.

A complaint has been received about the lime trees at the front of the village hall and how these block the gutters of the hall in the autumn and have caused damage to the woodwork. The gutters could just be cleaned out regularly, but a case could be made for cutting back the lime trees at that side and pollarding

them as they are getting quite big now. Hood's Tree Services can be contacted if the Parish Council feel this is appropriate.

Members **Agreed** that the lime trees can be cut back when other tree work is undertaken in future.

The Clerk will ask the village hall window cleaner to clear the gutters if they are full when he cleans the windows.

ACTION: CLERK

8. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

8.1 County Councillor

County Cllr Robert Ford was unable to attend the meeting.

Members **Agreed** that Cllr Ford should be thanked for his prompt response to issues raised by the Parish Council.

ACTION: CLERK

8.2 Borough Councillors

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

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

9. PARISH MATTERS

9.1 Parish Councillors

An email has been received from the organisers of the afternoon tea boxes for vulnerable and elderly residents in the area, asking for financial support. Although it is a worthy cause, Members agreed that the email does not provide information on how much money the organisers need and the costs involved.

Members **Agreed** that the organisers should be contacted to find out how much money is required. A maximum of £100 would be considered.

ACTION: CLERK

9.2 Flooding

Cllr Summersgill has provided the following update in his absence:

The 'properties at risk' spreadsheet has not been updated yet with new Environment Agency mapping, but recent high waters will mean checks can be made next month to see if anyone in risk categories was affected in the last week. The blocked culvert outside The Old Bull House needs KCC attention, as does the outlet beyond Bridge House.

Cllr Banks asked if the culvert near The Beast House on West Street could be cleared manually; Cllr Heaton advised that an air hose is usually required.

9.3 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainability

Cllr Summersgill has provided the following update in his absence:

An application has been submitted for funding of £5,000 through the Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Nature Recovery Fund, for a Clapper Green biodiversity assessment by an expert ecologist and (perhaps) fencing. The application will be assessed after 31st March. Meanwhile, costs will be obtained for a survey from ecologist firms that MBC and the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board use. If MBC do not provide the funding, CIL monies could possibly be used for actions needed to 'clear' the pocket of land, which does not seem to adjoin the river bank directly.

Members **Agreed** that potential use of CIL monies would need to be discussed as it depends on what the village green will be used for in future and whether the CIL funds are needed elsewhere.

9.4 Speedwatch

Cllr Summersgill has provided the following update in his absence:

Unfortunately, no Speedwatch sessions have taken place since November. Icy roads precluded a session from going ahead earlier in the month as the police do not allow Speedwatch in such weather conditions.

9.5 Broadband Services

Cllr Stanbridge was unable to attend the meeting.

Cllr Heaton has not received a response from Katie Lam MP to his letter about broadband concerns.

Members **Agreed** that the letter should be forwarded to Katie Lam by email. ACTION: CLLR WEBB

Members **Agreed** that Building Digital UK (BDUK) should be contacted to advise that a letter has been sent to Katie Lam.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON

A presentation on broadband options will be given when the Parish Council holds an open day.

9.6 Parish Consultation

Cllr Heaton thanked Cllr Webb for his work on the questionnaire in conjunction with a resident. Members **Agreed** that they were all happy with the questionnaire and covering letter to be distributed to residents, other than an amendment to include details of how to complete the form electronically. The Clerk will make the amendment and compile the electronic form. ACTION: CLERK
Cllr Heaton will sign the covering letter and provide the letter and questionnaire to Hadlum Design & Print, to print the same number of copies as the Hunton Herald. ACTION: CLLR HEATON
The letter/questionnaire will be delivered with the next edition of the Hunton Herald.

9.7 Road Markings

Members **Approved** a letter to residents to consult on safety measures for the exit from The Square to West Street. Members **Agreed** that the letter should be delivered to all residents who live on The Square, and on West Street/Bensted Close between Grove Lane and the permissive footpath at the end of Bensted Close. The Clerk will print and deliver the letters. ACTION: CLERK

9.8 KALC Community Awards Scheme 2026

(Discussed after Item 12.1)

At the last full council meeting on 17th November 2025, Members agreed to adopt the 2026 KALC Community Awards Scheme in Hunton.

Members agreed in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting due to discussion of attributes relating to members of the public.

The recipients of the award were agreed.

The meeting was reopened to members of the press and public.

Members **Agreed** that the recipients of the award should be Kerry and Kevin Larkin. Cllr Webb will check that they are happy to receive the award. ACTION: CLLR WEBB / CLERK

9.9 Barn Hill Finger Post

Cllr Heaton has spoken with someone who could refurbish and fix the post and had been waiting for him to call back; he will make contact again. ACTION: CLLR HEATON

9.10 Mobile CCTV Camera

Cllrs Heaton, Banks and Summersgill attended a demonstration of the mobile CCTV camera by Q-Tec Solutions. It uses a roving signal, so signal should not be an issue, and is powered by a solar panel or batteries. The camera would be used to capture fly tipping or other anti-social behaviour. As it is for surveillance, a sign is not required according to the Information Commissioner's Office. Members **Agreed** that the camera should be purchased through Q-Tec Solutions at a cost of £715 plus VAT, per the quote agreed at the 21st July 2025 full council meeting (subject to any increase in cost since then).

ACTION: CLERK

Members **Agreed** that Huntonwatch should be notified when the camera is available for use.

ACTION: CLERK

9.11 Clerk's Report

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

VCS Websites are increasing their costs by 15% from 1st April 2026.

Unity Trust Bank are increasing the monthly service charge from £6 to £7 from 1st February 2026.

The interest rate on the Redwood Bank 95-Day Notice Account is reducing from 3.75% to 3.5% on 29th March 2026.

MBC has agreed to provide a Strategically Important Play Areas (SIPA) grant for £2,843.80 to reimburse the Parish Council for the replacement of six wooden posts on the multiplay equipment. They may also provide a further grant for work required on the play equipment.

10. POLICY

10.1 IT Policy

Parish councils need to have an IT Policy in place to conform with new Assertion 10 in the Annual Governance Statement of the 2025/26 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR). A policy has been created using the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) template and consideration

of several other parish councils' IT policies, adapted to fit Hunton Parish Council. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) template was not used as it is 15 pages long and more relevant to larger councils.

Members **Agreed** to adopt the IT Policy.

11. FINANCE

11.1 Budget Monitoring Report

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

11.2 Income Received

Members **Noted** that the following income has been received between 1st November and 31st December 2025:

Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Feed-in tariff	£344.16
Cambridge Building Society – Building society interest	£1,005.41

The bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed by Cllr Trought.

11.3 Payments Made

Members **Approved** the following payments made between 1st November and 31st December 2025:

Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – October	£6.00
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – November	£587.48
David Heaton - Chairman's Allowance - Reimbursement for cost of food for Christmas event	£600.00
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – December	£587.48
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – November	£6.00

The following payments were authorised at the Planning Committee meeting on 8th December 2025:

KCPFA – Annual membership subscription	£20.00
Hunton Village Club – Chairman's Allowance – Drinks for Christmas event	£184.15
David Heaton – Container keys	£18.00
Sharon Goodwin – Chairman's Allowance – Food for Christmas event	£25.45

11.4 Electronic Payments

Members **Approved** the following payment:

Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses / Postage	£49.60
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Cllr Heaton and Cllr Banks 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 received.

11.6 Memorial Bench

Members considered a grant request from the Friends of St Mary's towards a memorial bench in memory of Gilly Devas. The oak bench will cost approximately £1,250 and will be located in St Mary's churchyard, for use by anyone who visits. Members **Agreed** to provide a grant of £750 under s137 expenditure towards the bench as Gilly was very generous to the village and the bench can be enjoyed by many. The grant will be paid into the Friends of St Mary's bank account when the bench is purchased.

ACTION: CLERK

11.7 Budget and Parish Precept 2026/27

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

Members **Agreed** the budget for 2026/27.

Members **Agreed** that the precept should be set at £26,865, a 2% increase on last year's precept. The precept has not been increased for the previous six years. This creates a tax of £80.72 per 'equivalent Band

D' property, an increase of £0.31 on last year. The Chairman and Clerk signed the Parish Precept Requirement 2026/27 form for submission to MBC.

ACTION: CLERK

12. PLANNING

12.1 Planning Decisions

No planning decisions have been made by Maidstone Borough Council since the last Planning Committee meeting.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 16th March 2026 at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:22pm.