

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20TH MARCH 2023 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

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

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence as all Members present. County/Borough Cllr S Webb and Borough Cllr L Parfitt-Reid had sent their 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 16TH JANUARY 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2023 had been previously distributed. The Chairman signed the official copy of the minutes.

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

Item 7.2 – The Clerk has replied to the letter from the school.

Item 9.6 – Cllr Trought has submitted details of the style and wording for the remembrance figure, which is in the village awaiting installation.

Item 10.1 – The Clerk has responded to the MBC Community Governance Review.

Item 11.7 – The Parish Precept Requirement 2023/24 form has been submitted to MBC.

6. POLICE

6.1 Police

One crime has been logged on the e-watch website since the last Parish Council meeting:
13/03/23 – Foremans Barn Road - Somebody broke into a residential property, stole jewellery, took the keys of a van and then stole the van.

6.2 Huntonwatch

Huntonwatch have provided the following report:

We have received several reports of scam emails over the last two to three weeks. Even the Huntonwatch phone has been targeted.

Fly tipping has also been reported on Upper Barn Hill and Bishops Lane.

A number of trees and shrubs were stolen from a property in the George Street/Redwall Lane area.

There have been two reports of cars being seen in strange circumstances - one parked in Bishops Lane with the driver just sat in the car for over two hours from 6:45am until he was challenged. A second, left empty overnight on Barn Hill.

The potholes on West Street between Grove Lane and the mill are getting worse and two in particular (around drains) are positively dangerous. The road surface in that area is also very bad after the flooding and water from the fields seems to pour onto the road constantly. Huntonwatch would like the Parish Council to push KCC Highways to make repairs as a matter of urgency if possible.

7. LOCAL COMMUNITY

7.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The Chairman of the Committee, Simon Taylor, provided the following report:

The Committee has continued to meet on a two-monthly basis through the winter months, although due to the difficulty in undertaking remedial or development work during the winter weather, very little activity has been undertaken on the field since October 2022. Items worth mentioning are:

- The beech hedge between the Bowls and Cricket Clubs has been cut back.
- A quotation has been obtained to install a post and rail fence between the orchard fence and the cricket roller shed, as well as a close-boarded fence between the old Cricket Club changing rooms and the new pavilion. These are designed to improve safety and security in the area, as well as improve visual amenity and will both go ahead shortly with a view to completing by the end of May.
- The Committee has purchased a new piece of play equipment – a tractor on a spring for infants and small children. This will be installed in the play area during the Spring once the weather improves a bit.
- Minor lighting repairs have been carried out in the Football Club changing rooms.
- Rabbits continue to cause problems for both the Bowls and Cricket clubs. A quotation for control measures has been obtained but this appears unaffordable so alternative control companies will be approached to see what they have to offer.
- In an effort to monitor consumption more efficiently and to reduce bills, the electricity supply that jointly feeds the Bowls and Cricket clubs has been moved to a smart meter and a fixed tariff on a direct debit basis. Both clubs are monitoring carefully how this is going.
- Money has been gratefully received from the South East Water Compensation Fund via the Parish Council. This has contributed to a new irrigation water pump for the Bowls Club, a new scarifier for the Cricket Club and a new boiler in the Football Club changing rooms. Many thanks to the Parish Council and particularly the Clerk for facilitating this.
- Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) will be ceasing their monthly safety inspections of the play equipment from 1st April 2023 – presumably as part of a cost saving exercise. These are largely visual inspections looking for major defects and safety risks and will be undertaken by the Committee using a checklist from now on. The annual independent inspection, which is mandatory, will continue to take place. It is worth noting that the MBC inspections have been questionable in their accuracy in recent months, so the change is not necessarily viewed as a disadvantage.
- Future minor projects still to be undertaken are the fitting of racking to one of the containers in the village hall car park, the fitting of a new gate post at the rear of the Community Orchard, replacing a missing post on the activity trail, the purchase and fitting of a Little Owl nesting box and the rolling of the football pitch.

7.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

Cllr Goddard reported the following:

- The mirrors have been fitted on West Street, opposite the end of Bensted Close.
- KCC will be clearing the drains and ditches on West Street on 4th/5th April.
- A large pothole on West Street has been reported.
- Extension of the 40mph speed limit up Hunton Hill and a 'Road Narrows' sign have been added to the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP), but no action has been taken yet. A new road surface on West Street will be added to the HIP.

A Traffic & Road Safety Working Party meeting was held on 1st March 2023. Cllr Summersgill reported the following:

- Another parish has been told by KCC that the HIP is for work the parish may wish to fund. The parish replied to state that this is not the purpose of the HIP.
- Wares Farm do not want to put signs on the highway to warn lorry drivers that there is a 7.5T weight restriction one mile ahead. Both companies at Wares Farm believe that telling the drivers is adequate. Linton Parish Council will not put signs up as it is in Hunton parish. Members **Agreed** that the signage should be included on the Hunton HIP. **ACTION: CLLR GODDARD**
- The owner of the hedge which encroaches on Redwall Lane believes it is a good traffic calming device, but it has been trimmed.
- There are now 5-6 SpeedWatch volunteers. Cllr Summersgill attended the SpeedWatch Annual Conference and learned more. He has also written an article for the Hunton Herald.

- Cllr Summersgill will consider where salt bins should be located in the parish and advise at a future meeting.
- There are a number of safety issues:
 - Church Cottage – speeding nearby.
 - Elm Corner – concerns about damage to the property. The owners would like fencing erected and signage on the road to warn drivers, but there is already a ‘Slow’ sign there. It has been raised and refused by KCC already.
 - Redwall Lane – concerns about mud on the road from the Clock House Farm gateway. It has been reported more than once to KCC. The vehicles’ wheels could be washed before they exit on to Redwall Lane which would prevent the problem from occurring.
 - A resident has complained about mud at the top of Barn Hill. She was advised to speak to the contractor causing the issue and report it to KCC.
- There are blocked culverts on Redwall Lane, East Street, George Street and West Street which is causing the road to break up.
- Linton Parish Council have asked the Parish Council if it will support a crossing on Heath Road outside the Greensands doctors’ surgery. Members **Agreed** that a letter of support should be sent.

ACTION: CLERK

A request has been made for double yellow lines at the end of Bensted Close and Grove Lane. Cllr Goddard advised that KCC have previously been supportive in principle. Members agreed that as there is no one to police it, double yellow lines would not make a difference.

Cllr Simmons will be speaking to residents near the school as they have been parking their vehicles on the pavement. Members agreed that a letter should be written from the Parish Council if it continues.

7.3 **Tree & Pond Warden**

Trees: There have been a couple of planting schemes, including Kent Men of Trees and Maidstone Borough Council but the Parish Council does not own a large enough area on which to plant trees, although the trees do not have to be planted on public land. MBC would like areas the size of a tennis court to be planted but the initiative has finished now; other parishes have taken up the initiative. Hunton already has plenty of trees. Cllr Summersgill will be involved with the school in planting saplings in the autumn (which can be obtained from Wilkins Corner).

Ponds: Cllr Summersgill has found out more information about pond ownership in the parish.

8. **COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS**

8.1 **County Councillor**

County Cllr S Webb was unable to attend the meeting.

8.2 **Borough Councillors**

Borough Cllrs S Webb, R Webb and L Parfitt-Reid were unable to attend the meeting.

9. **PARISH MATTERS**

9.1 **Parish Councillors**

Cllr Heaton has been contacted by the Burford Farm architect and will be attending the appeal hearing on 18th April for the whole site and MBC Planning Committee on 20th April for The Granary planning application.

Cllr Heaton reported that a resident has looked through the church records and found a map and other documentation which shows common land near Clapper Bridge belonging to the parish. Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should speak to the resident and investigate further to find out if the area is registered as common land.

ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Summersgill reported that Linton Parish Council (LPC) have spoken to MBC Planning Enforcement again as the polytunnels were not taken down again last winter. Rankins Farm have agreed to remove those that cause glare to drivers and leave the others. Yalding Parish Council have written a formal letter to the Head of Planning complaining about Planning Enforcement.

Cllr Simmons advised that a booklet published in 1981 about Hunton village history needs updating. It contains a lot of interesting information. Members **Agreed** that it would be beneficial as an information resource and that Cllr Simmons should liaise with the resident interested in updating the booklet with a view to printing copies for the village

ACTION: CLLR SIMMONS

Cllr Summersgill mentioned a 1961 WI document on Hunton and Cllr Goddard has a map which contains

the names of the fields which may be useful.

Cllr Trought advised that a Village Club meeting is being held on 21st March.

9.2 **Flooding**

Cllr Summersgill advised that there are now three Flood Wardens; two are trained and one is still to undertake the training.

Cllr Heaton asked whether Betts are still farming at Cheveney. Cllr Goddard advised that it is coming to an end. This should mean less problems with mud flooding on the road.

9.3 **Climate Change and Sustainability**

Cllr Summersgill advised that the Parish Environmental Group is meeting on 21st March.

The Assistant Clerk at Marden produced a Carbon Footprint report last month which caused some concern as it is a heavy footprint. Cllr Summersgill will find out at the meeting if any other parishes have calculated their footprint. Cllr Summersgill attended the KALC Climate Change Conference.

Cllr Heaton advised that Marden Wildlife Group obtained funding from County/Borough Cllr Simon Webb for three moth traps. Two moth traps have now been installed in the parish.

9.4 **Coronation of King Charles III**

Cllr Heaton has put an article in the Hunton Herald advertising the Coronation Tea. The text will be sent to Cllr Trought to put on Facebook and the Clerk to put on the website.

Tickets will not be issued but those wishing to attend will need to contact councillors or the Clerk.

Sandwiches will be pre-ordered from a supermarket. The Clerk will obtain options.

The Bowls Club will open for people to try bowls and the Cricket Club may set up some cricket games.

The school children, who are welcome to attend the event, may provide a display.

Cllr Simmons advised that there will be a church service at 9:30am so there will be a gap between that and the tea, which will commence at 3pm.

9.5 **South East Water Community Fund Grant**

The Parish Council applied for grants totalling £12,039.99 on behalf of the sports clubs and village hall as follows:

Cricket Club - £391.99 - petrol scarifier

Football Club - £800.00 - refurbishment work in the changing rooms

Bowls Club - £2,100.00 - new water pump

Village Hall - £8,748.00 - new double-glazed windows

South East Water granted £10,185.40, which represents 84.6% of the total requested.

Members **Agreed** to provide each recipient with 84.6% of their requested amount. ACTION: CLERK

9.6 **Annual Parish Meeting**

Members **Agreed** the invitation list and format of the Annual Parish Meeting (APM), to be held on 22nd May 2023. Cllr Summersgill will try to find a speaker for the meeting. Cllr Heaton will include an article in the Hunton Herald to publicise the APM. ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL / CLLR HEATON

9.7 **Clerk's Report**

Following the article Cllr Simmons submitted for the Hunton Herald on the KALC Community Award, several nominations were received from parishioners. The nominations were circulated to Members and a decision was made to nominate Sue Pinks. Sue has accepted the award, which will be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Members **Agreed** that the Clerk could attend a KALC 'Year End & Audit' Zoom workshop on 28th March at a cost of £40 plus VAT. ACTION: CLERK

The NNDR Demand Notice has been received from MBC for the cricket pavilion. The amount due is £0 due to 100% Small Business Rate Relief.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 **Kent County Council – Community Services Consultation**

The consultation proposes changes to the way Kent County Council uses its buildings to deliver some of the community services. Services included in the proposals are: Children's Centres and Youth Hubs, Public Health Services for Children and Families, Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities, Community Learning and Skills, and Gateways.

Cllr Summersgill advised that KCC want to close a number of Children's Centres and Adult Education places around Kent to sell off the buildings. It does not affect Hunton directly, but community facilities would be taken away. Members **Agreed** that Cllr Summersgill should submit a comment.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

10.2 **Maidstone Borough Council – Maidstone Borough Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan Document Consultation and Call For Sites**

Maidstone Borough Council has published the Regulation 18 version of its Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan Document (DPD), which will consider the scope and key issues that the DPD will need to address. Alongside this, the Council is seeking to identify potential sites which could be suitable for future Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople accommodation development through a targeted Call for Sites exercise. The exercise enables land to be nominated for this purpose.

Cllr Summersgill will find out what the KALC Maidstone Committee says about the consultation when he attends a meeting next week and will report back at the next Parish Council Planning Committee.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

10.3 **Office of Environmental Protection - Call for evidence on protected nature sites laws**

The Office of Environmental Protection (OEP) has launched a call for evidence seeking evidence and views to inform its review of protected nature sites laws in England and Northern Ireland.

The focus is on laws for the designation and management of Areas of Special Scientific Interest in Northern Ireland, Sites of Special Scientific Interest in England, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

Cllr Heaton noted that the River Bault, which runs through Hunton, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), but the SSSI only affects the river and not the area either side. Cllr Summersgill advised that Natural England has defined Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) for SSSIs, so although the SSSI only covers the river, Natural England also consider the area around it. Members **Agreed** that the SSSI should include the IRZ and Cllrs Heaton and Summersgill agreed to look into it further.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON / CLLR SUMMERSGILL

11. **POLICIES**

11.1 **Standing Orders**

The Parish Council last reviewed its Standing Orders on 21st March 2022. The NALC Model Standing Orders, on which the Parish Council's Standing Orders are based, were amended in April 2022. The only change is to standing order 18. Revised Standing Orders were drafted by the Clerk and circulated prior to the meeting.

Members reviewed the updated Standing Orders and **Agreed** to adopt them.

11.2 **Financial Regulations**

The Parish Council last reviewed its Financial Regulations on 21st March 2022. The NALC Model Financial Regulations, on which the Parish Council's Financial Regulations are based, have not changed since that time.

Members reviewed the existing Financial Regulations and **Agreed** to adopt them with no changes.

12. **FINANCE**

12.1 **Budget Monitoring Report**

The Budget Monitoring Report to 28th February 2023 was **Noted**.

12.2 **Income Received**

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

Hunton Parish Hall Committee – FIT	£438.98
South East Water – Community Fund grant	£10,185.40

The 2023/24 precept of £26,338 has been agreed by MBC and will be paid into the Parish Council bank account on 7th April.

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 – January	£508.95
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – February	£508.95

12.4 Electronic Payments

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

Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Reimbursement for defibrillator pads	£47.94
Hunton Wanderers Cricket Club – Payment of South East Water Community Fund grant	£331.62
Hunton Football Club – Payment of South East Water Community Fund grant	£676.80
Hunton Bowls Club – Payment of South East Water Community Fund grant	£1,776.60
Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Payment of South East Water Community Fund grant	£7,400.38
Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses / Postage / Huntonwatch mobile phone top up	£70.00

12.5 CIL Neighbourhood Receipts

Cllr Summersgill reported on the newt survey proposal:

The purpose of the project is to find out more about the natural environment. Cllr Summersgill wanted to survey six ponds but Clock House Farm have not given permission for ponds on their land to be surveyed (they undertake their own surveys) so it will now be two or three ponds. There are two ponds on Redwall Lane; one landowner has given permission but the other has unknown ownership. There is another very seasonal pond. The proposal is to survey these ponds. Great Crested Newts (GCNs) have been found in a pond on East Street. Medway Valley Countryside Project (MVCP) charge £290 for a two-person survey. Two of the ponds could be surveyed twice, and the third once. Cllr Summersgill will also take the MCVP officer to look at other ponds in the parish to obtain her opinion. Members **Agreed** that the surveys should be undertaken using CIL Neighbourhood Receipts to a limit of £1,450. Cllr Simmons asked whether there would be value in understanding the quality of standing water and consideration of ecosystems in the water. Cllr Summersgill will ask the Marden Cluster.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

13. PLANNING

13.1 Planning Decisions

13.1.1 Scotts Farm, West Street - 22/506004/FULL

Proposed change of use of outbuilding to holiday let.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

13.1.2 Wealden Hall House, East Street - 23/500276/LBC

Listed Building Consent for external and internal alterations including replace doors on the south elevation of the conservatory and door and frame on the north elevation of the house. Repair north elevation roof gable and replace associated rendered infill panels. Repaint softwood joinery and repaint the rendered infill panels to all elevations.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Parish Council meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 15th May 2023 at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:25pm.