

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 21ST JULY 2025 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: A resident to be considered for co-option on to the Parish Council and Borough Cllr C Russell.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr I Simmons.
Apologies were also received from County Cllr R Ford.

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

There were no declarations of interests.

3.2 Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12TH MAY 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th May 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 11.8 (10th March 2025 meeting) – The new showers have been installed in the Football Club changing rooms.

Item 16.1 – Cllr Summersgill has not made any progress with the parish survey as the Collier Street Parish Council contact has now left.

Item 18.5 – The Annual Governance and Accountability Return was submitted to Forvis Mazars before the deadline and displayed on the notice boards for the correct amount of time.

6. PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY

A casual vacancy arose due to the resignation of Cllr Goddard. A Notice of Casual Vacancy was placed on the notice boards and website, giving electors the opportunity to request an election. The Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Democratic & Electoral Services Team subsequently gave notification that 10 electors did not request a by-election and the Parish Council could now co-opt. The vacancy was advertised on notice boards within the parish, on the parish website, in the Hunton Herald and at the Annual Parish Meeting.

One resident has expressed an interest in the role. Cllr Heaton proposed that Stephen Banks should be co-opted on to the Parish Council, which was seconded by Cllr Webb and agreed by all remaining councillors. Mr Banks signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form, witnessed by the Clerk, and joined the rest of the meeting as a Member. Cllr Banks was given a Disposable Pecuniary Interests form to complete and return to MBC within 28 days, as well as an MBC Co-option form. **ACTION: CLLR BANKS / CLERK**

7. POLICE

7.1 Police

The following crime has been logged on the e-watch website since the last Parish Council meeting:
22/06/25 - Lughorse Lane - Somebody stole BT underground cables.

Cllr Webb asked if an email could be sent to request that the police officers who cover Hunton attend the

next meeting, as the police have not attended a Parish Council meeting for a long time.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

7.2 Huntonwatch

Huntonwatch have not submitted a report.

8. LOCAL COMMUNITY

8.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The Chairman of the Playing Field Committee (PFC), Colin Slattery, was unable to attend the meeting. The following is a summary of the AGM and Committee meeting on 16th July 2025:

The Committee held its AGM after the annual walk around the field to look at its general condition and identify any areas for improvement. No work is required in addition to that identified already.

At the AGM, all present confirmed that they were happy to continue standing as trustees. Colin Slattery will continue to stand as chairman and Sharon Goodwin will continue as the secretary.

Several companies were asked to look at the wooden posts which support the platform on the multiplay equipment to determine the work required and supply a quote. Three quotes have been received, with all three companies recommending that six posts are replaced. The posts will support the new metal boxwork fabricated by Yalding Forge. The fenced play area remains closed until the repair work is completed.

The Community Orchard gate has been reattached.

Other work to do includes:

- fixing signs to ask that dog walkers clear up after their dogs;
- repainting the wall at the entrance to the car park;
- additional support to two of the posts which hold the netting between the cricket pitch and bowls green.

The PFC currently has funds of £7,131.

8.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

8.2.1 Update

Cllr Summersgill advised that a Traffic & Road Safety Working Party (T&RSWP) meeting was held on 18th July:

The finger post at the bottom of Barn Hill needs reinstating. One of the bollards has also been run over. It has been difficult to get confirmation from Kent County Council (KCC) that they will fill the salt bins that the Parish Council wants to purchase but Cllr Summersgill has been told to reapply and include a message to say that the Parish Council will pay for the salt bins. The new salt bins would be located at the bottom of Hunton Hill and East Street.

The boundary stones need to be removed from the ditch on George Street.

The main contact at KCC has left and has not been replaced yet. Cllr Summersgill will progress the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) to include: a deer sign on Hunton Hill, protection of the verge and hedge on the sharp corner near Scotts Farm (Cllr Banks declared an interest as Scotts Farm is his property) and raise the rockfalls on Hunton Hill. Cllr Summersgill will update the HIP and agree it with Members so there are no delays to the process.

Drainage has not been too much of an issue lately. There is a blocked gulley in West Street, opposite the Grove Lane exit which Cllr Summersgill has reported. What was thought to be a culvert blockage on George Street is a water leak. There is still a blockage in Redwall Lane at the gulley where the newer pipe meets the original culvert. Cllr Heaton has noticed that water is coming out of the telecommunications area; Cllr Summersgill will report it.

There has been one Lorrywatch report of a HGV.

Cllr Summersgill has spoken to Clock House Farm about damage to verges.

A resident has raised an issue about safety on Barn Hill when riding horses, due to the frequency and size of Clock House Farm tractors; Cllr Summersgill has raised this with Clock House Farm.

The Clerk advised that she has reported the dead trees overhanging West Street to KCC Highways.

The KCC Road Safety and Active Travel Team successfully bid for funding to investigate build outs to improve the crossing location outside of the school. However, it was identified that street lighting would need to be installed to ensure the bollard and build out were visible at night. This has made the scheme cost prohibitive and the Clerk has been advised that no further improvements have been identified.

Cllr Webb suggested that a Finance Working Party meeting should be held to consider use of funds for highways and other projects.

ACTION: CLLR WEBB

8.2.2 Hunton Safer Streets & Lanes Steering Group

Cllr Simmons was unable to attend the meeting.

8.3 Tree & Pond Wardens

The Tree Warden, Sam Andrews, had reported that Hood's Tree Services will be pollarding a poplar tree in the southwest corner of the field and cutting down/back several crack willow trees on the Clapper Green site towards the end of August. This work was recommended in the Visual Tree Assessment, which was considered at the Planning Committee meeting on 7th July, together with the quote from Hood's Tree Services.

The Tree Warden has cut back the leylandii behind the cricket pavilion and felled a small sycamore tree in the northeast corner of the field.

Cllr Summersgill reported that the pond surveys' report has been received from Medway Valley Countryside Partnership. A number of species were found in an artificial pond, including all three types of newts, nymphs of damselflies, dragonfly, pond skaters, etc. The Wilsons Yard attenuation pond has already attracted Great Crested Newts.

9. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

9.1 County Councillor

County Cllr Robert Ford was unable to attend the meeting.

Cllr Webb asked that Cllr Ford is contacted to ask that he attends the next meeting as there are issues which Members would like to discuss, such as the Hunton Hill road surface, responding to residents and county councillor funding.

ACTION: CLERK

Borough Cllr Russell advised that the county councillor grant pot has increased to £5,900.

9.2 Borough Councillors

Borough Cllr Russell had provided a written report and Borough Cllrs Summersgill and Couch had provided a combined written report.

Cllr Russell is not in favour of £7.7million being spent to refurbish Maidstone House and believes there are other ways to achieve carbon savings, such as spreading it out over individual homes.

The 5-year land housing supply was reported in June. Anyone can put a site forward for planning, whether it is included in the Local Plan or not. Central government introduced a 5% buffer when they brought out the new National Planning Policy Framework, and although the Planning Inspector agreed to a stepped trajectory in the MBC Local Plan, it is now not allowed by central government. MBC will have to look at sites from year 6 onwards to see if they can be brought forward. Developments not included in the Local Plan will have to be considered. When the call for sites process was undertaken, 300 sites were put forward of which 130 were selected for the Local Plan, so the rejected sites could be reconsidered.

The MBC consultation on the budget is open.

Some parish councils are looking at assets run by KCC with a view to taking them over. Cllr Summersgill will look at the spreadsheet received from MBC to see if there is anything relating to Hunton. The grass on Bensted Close is cut by MBC for instance. MBC are not waiting for deregulation, they want to decide what to do with assets in advance. There are also discussions underway about parished and unparished areas and whether there will be a town council. Hunton would not be affected.

Cllr Webb does not understand why £7.7million is being spent on Maidstone House when the building is worth much less. Cllr Summersgill advised that the building has six floors, MBC occupy one and a half floors and two and a half are rented out. If a better environmental rating is not received for the building, MBC will not be able to rent it out. Cllr Webb felt that the £7.7million would be better spent on providing houses for those without homes and putting air heat source pumps into new homes. Cllr Summersgill advised that the money has already been budgeted for Maidstone House and additional money is being spent on other housing and new housing sites. When there was a heat wave, the IT failed and staff had to go home. It is a risk and at risk of getting worse.

10. PARISH MATTERS

10.1 Parish Councillors

Cllr Trought informed Members that she would be giving up her place on the Parish Council at some point, when she moves house.

10.2 Flooding

Cllr Summersgill has produced a spreadsheet of properties at risk of flooding, including homeowners the Environment Agency (EA) had spoken to and those which have flood protection installations. The EA flood risk mapping is more accurate now. They produce two maps – flooding risk with no date and flooding risk 2036 to 2069, so both the current flood risk and flood risk for the next 33 years is identified. Cllr Summersgill compared the properties on the spreadsheet to the two maps and found that several properties have changed from no risk now to low risk in later years and vice versa. Of the 39 properties on the list, six could be taken off the list but two have been added. The EA has also updated the surface water risk map; Cllr Summersgill has checked the Hunton properties at surface water risk and will add them to the spreadsheet.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

The EA have been looking at the flood protection installations at properties in Yalding and Collier Street, to see if they are still fit for purpose, and is planning to introduce a maintenance contract for homeowners to pay for installations to be checked and repaired. Cllr Summersgill will check with the owners of those properties in Hunton which have installations to see if they have been visited. The installations include pumps, gates and non-return valves.

The Leigh Barrier is due to be finished this year, so the risk to Yalding, the River Beult and River Teise should be reduced.

10.3 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainability

Cllr Summersgill reported that MBC has a Biodiversity and Climate Change plan and a Nature Recovery Fund will be coming out in September. The Clapper Green site could be considered if the Parish Council wants to increase biodiversity.

10.4 Speedwatch

Cllr Summersgill reported that there has only been one Speedwatch session.

A Marden Parish Council session on Pattenden Lane in Marden caught 47 speeding vehicles in one hour.

10.5 Broadband Services

Cllr Stanbridge needs to map local area services to find out who has which service. He will also email consultants specialising in rural internet provision to see if they can provide support.

ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE

Members **Agreed** in principle that money could be spent on a consultant, but quotes would need to be received.

Cllr Heaton was due to write a letter to BT, but another council that he was in contact with has been told by BT that more information needed to be gathered, so the same will need to be done in Hunton. It has been found that not all areas of Hunton have poor broadband, as previously thought. The Village Club, for example, has very good speeds.

Cllr Stanbridge advised that Trooli (previously CallFlow) had written to customers to say that they would be cut off after 60 days but have now extended their service until the end of next year.

10.6 The Square

A resident has raised concerns about the safety of vehicles exiting The Square onto West Street due to the narrow exit, obstruction of visibility by parked cars and BT Openreach vans frequently stationed outside the telephone exchange. The resident has suggested measures such as double yellow lines over the entrance to The Square and at least one metre either side to prevent parked cars from blocking visibility at the exit, a reflective traffic mirror in the hedge opposite The Square's exit and parking restrictions during peak times.

Members **Agreed** that the Parish Council could fund safety mirrors, but the hedge would need cutting back and residents would need to keep vegetation cut back and clean the mirrors. The Clerk will obtain prices for the next Parish Council meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

Members **Agreed** that Cllr Summersgill should add double yellow lines to the HIP for KCC Highways to consider, although parking on double yellow lines is unlikely to be enforced.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

Cllr Trought asked if residents have given their opinions on the mirrors opposite the entrance to Bensted Close; several residents have told Cllr Summersgill that the mirrors are beneficial.

10.7 Annual Parish Meeting

Members discussed the Annual Parish Meeting which took place on 19th May, to determine whether any changes need to be made to the format. Members agreed that a speaker should continue to be invited as

this works well and Cllr Webb asked that the headteacher is invited to speak about the school. Otherwise, no changes need to be made to the format unless anyone has any suggestions prior to the next meeting.

10.8 Defibrillator Training

At the Annual Parish Meeting, the chairman of Hunton Bowls Club mentioned that the Club had received training on the use of the defibrillator. It was a two hour session, for which they gave a donation. Members **Agreed** that the Parish Council should organise defibrillator training. The Clerk will find out more information and the details will be agreed at the next full council meeting in September.

ACTION: CLERK

10.9 Clerk's Report

Members were reminded to set up their .gov.uk email addresses if they have not done so already. Members **Agreed** that they and the Clerk should meet at the village hall prior to the next Planning Committee meeting to set them up.

ACTION: CLERK / COUNCILLORS

The contract to transfer the telephone kiosk from The Community Heartbeat Trust (CHT) to the Parish Council has been received. CHT have advised that a Hunton resident who lives near to the kiosk has called to complain about its state. Cllr Trought advised that it does have graffiti on it and needs tidying up. Cllr Heaton and Cllr Webb **Agreed** to look at it to determine what needs doing.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON / CLLR WEBB

The interest rate on the Redwood Bank 95-Day Notice Account is reducing from 4.25% to 4% on 13th September 2025.

11. FINANCE

11.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 30th June 2025 was **Noted**.

Cllr Webb noted that the Parish Council is holding too much money and needs to decide how to spend it.

11.2 Income Received

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

Hunton PTA / S Heaton – Gazebo hires	£85.00
Maidstone Borough Council – Parish Services Scheme grant (1 st half)	£852.54

A Feed-in Tariff payment of £1,172.61 will also be received in July.

The bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed by Cllr Webb.

11.3 Payments Made

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

SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – May	£570.50
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – April	£6.00
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – June	£570.50
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – May	£6.00

The following payments were authorised at the Planning Committee meeting on 7th July 2025:

Q-Tec Solutions Ltd – Installation of showers and necessary upgrade of electrics in Football Club changing rooms	£3,528.00
CPRE – Annual membership subscription	£36.00

11.4 Electronic Payments

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

KCC – Pond surveys	£558.00
Robert Cox – Permissive footpath maintenance	£520.00
J Forster – Grant for litter picking equipment	£78.99
Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses / Stationery / Tablecloth material / Key cutting / Annual	

Cllr Banks will be set up as an authorised bank signatory at the next full council meeting in September.

11.5 CIL Neighbourhood Receipts

The Clerk has submitted the CIL Annual Report to MBC and uploaded it to the Parish Council website. Use of CIL funds will be considered at the Finance Working Party meeting.

11.6 Mobile CCTV Camera

Q-Tec Solutions Ltd have provided a quote of £715 plus VAT for the supply, installation, commissioning and training of a remote camera accessible via the mobile phone network. There would be an additional charge of £180 plus VAT for relocation, installation and verification at a new site.

The Clerk contacted the Information Commissioner's Office to ask if signage was required for monitoring an area with a view to obtaining information about fly tipping. If it is covert surveillance, for a short period of time to collect information for a prosecution, then signage is not required. A Data Protection Impact Assessment would need to be completed.

Members raised several questions:

What will happen if there are issues with the signal if the mobile network is patchy?

Would CCTV footage be enough to prosecute fly tippers?

How big is the solar panel as it should not be too obvious?

How long would the power last?

Cllr Stanbridge will contact KCC Waste to find out more about prosecuting fly tippers and Cllr Heaton will ask Huntonwatch if they have any contacts.

ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE / CLLR HEATON

Members agreed in principle to purchasing a camera but would need answers to the questions and possibly a meeting with Q-Tec Solutions to discuss the camera further.

ACTION: CLERK

11.7 Defibrillator Installation

The Community Heartbeat Trust (CHT) have been paid to supply and install a defibrillator and cabinet on the wall of the Village Club. After several months of requesting the installation, they are no nearer to providing an installation date so Q-Tec Solutions have been asked for a quote to install the cabinet. The quote is £380 plus VAT to install a 240v RCD protected supply and the cabinet. CHT charged £275 plus VAT for the installation, which they are happy to refund if the Parish Council wishes to use another electrician.

Members **Agreed** that CHT should be asked to refund the installation charge and the quote from Q-Tec Solutions should be accepted.

ACTION: CLERK

11.8 Risk Assessment

The Parish Council last reviewed its risk assessment on 16th September 2024. The Clerk has re-examined the risk assessment and made some minor changes.

Members reviewed the risk assessment and **Agreed** to adopt it. Cllr Heaton signed the document.

11.9 King George's Field

The Playing Field Committee (PFC) has obtained three quotes for the replacement of six wooden posts on the multiplay equipment:

Playscape: £2,843.80 + VAT

Everyday Play: £3,515 + VAT

Safeplay: £3,570

The PFC has agreed to appoint Playscape to carry out the work. Playscape have confirmed that the work can be undertaken in the week commencing 28th July and they will work with Yalding Forge to ensure the posts and metal boxwork fit together accurately.

The PFC has requested a grant from the Parish Council for the work.

Members **Agreed** that, rather than a grant, the Parish Council will use its own funds to pay for the work, thereby gifting it to the PFC.

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 15th September 2025 at Hunton Village Hall.

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