# HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Borough Cllr C Russell and four members of the public were in attendance. PC Maskell and PC Head were in attendance until Item 7.2

**1. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence as all Members were present.
Borough Cllr G Couch had sent her apologies.

**2. FILMING, RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHING**

No members of the public wished 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 20TH JULY 2026**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2026 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 9.8 – Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) have confirmed that the only parish asset held by MBC is the green on Bensted Close.
Item 10.1 – The Parish Council's response was submitted for the MBC Polling Districts & Places Review. The review was publicised to residents.
Item 12.3 – Discrepancies in the Maidstone Borough Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan documents were sent to MBC Planning.

**6. PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCIES**

Two casual vacancies have arisen due to the resignations of Annette Trought and Tony Stanbridge since the last Parish Council meeting.
The MBC Democratic & Electoral Services Team has been notified and a Notice of Casual Vacancy was placed on the notice boards and website on 9th September, giving electors the opportunity to request an election. If such a request is not received by MBC by at least 10 electors within 14 days, the Parish Council is free to co-opt. Interest has already been shown in the vacancies.
Members **Agreed** that, if MBC advises that an election is not required, the vacancies should be advertised on notice boards within the parish and on the parish website for a minimum of four weeks.

ACTION: CLERK

**7. POLICE**

**7.1 Police**

The following crime has been logged on the e-watch website since the last Parish Council meeting:
01–02/09/26 - West Street - Somebody damaged a gate chain, then drove over the grounds of a residential property.
PC Maskell and PC Head belong to the Neighbourhood Policing Team (previously known as the Community Safety Unit). PC Maskell informed Members that PC Head is moving and he will introduce his replacement at the Parish Council meeting in November. There has been very little crime in Hunton. The police are recommending the use of My Community Voice for residents as reports made by residents

through it are received directly by PC Maskell. Huntonwatch members have previously been asked to report incidents directly to the police rather than just 'reporting' on Facebook but Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should recommend the use of My Community Voice to Huntonwatch members. ACTION: CLERK
Cllr Heaton asked whether Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are still around; they are but have a very different role now working with the Neighbourhood Task Force on specific issues in villages. One PCSO works with PC Maskell and PC Head, but she is often taken away to work in other areas.
Cllr Heaton advised that there has been some antisocial behaviour in Hunton; people trespassing on private land with lurcher style dogs. PC Maskell urged residents to call 999 if any crime is being committed (such as poaching or hare coursing) or 101 if it looks as though a crime could take place. Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should also remind Huntonwatch members to do this. ACTION: CLERK
Cllr Webb stated that the police should reassure the community in terms of visibility as some residents were negative about the lack of police presence at the last Annual Parish Meeting. Cllr Maskell advised that they hear this from many parishes, but they cover 12 parishes from Nettlestead to Ulcombe and, although they would like to be visible in all villages, it is not possible. This summer they have been unable to spend any time south of Maidstone as they have been answering 999 calls in the town, but they should be able to do more community-based work in the winter and as more police officers are employed.
Policing is in a transition phase currently. Cllr Summersgill advised that the policing work in Marden, Yalding and Staplehurst was discussed positively at the last Ward Cluster meeting,
Cllr Simmons advised that the Hunton Herald is delivered to all Hunton properties if the police ever wanted to use it to publicise initiatives (such as My Community Voice) or provide updates.

**7.2 Huntonwatch**

An article was published in the Hunton Herald to inform residents that the Parish Council has taken Huntonwatch on; no new members have signed up since. Several residents have said they are glad that Huntonwatch is continuing.
At the end of August, children on a bicycle and electric scooter caused damage in a resident's garden and were seen in another yard as well as riding around the playing field. They also gave female members of the Bowls Club verbal abuse. The Bowls Club has subsequently boarded up the gate to the club to prevent people from looking in and will keep the gate shut while playing.
A Honda 4x4 vehicle has recently been seen in fields at the end of Grove Lane, containing three young men and three dogs. Reports of a similar vehicle and occupants have been received from residents on Hunton Hill and Buston Manor.

**8. LOCAL COMMUNITY**

**8.1 King George V Playing Field Committee**

**8.1.1 Update**

The following is a summary of the Playing Field Committee (PFC) meeting on 16th September 2026:
The poles and safety netting between the cricket outfield and the Bowls Club need replacing. Scaffolding poles will be erected this year to replace the existing hop poles and the replacement netting will be hung from the poles in the spring of 2027.
The PFC is waiting for a quote to repair the wall at the entrance to the car park.
The Tree Warden has removed the low-hanging branches on the turkey oak tree and one other oak tree. A branch from one of the conifers is touching the cricket pavilion roof and another is close. The PFC would like these to be removed/cut back to prevent damage to the pavilion.
Wooden batons have been fitted to the backs of the benches on one picnic table to strengthen them; they still need to be fitted on the other table.
There have been some issues with bin emptying and littering on the field which is being addressed.
The PFC currently has funds of £6,923.
Members **Agreed** that Hunton Engineering should be asked to cut back the overhanging conifers in the first instance. ACTION: CLERK
Tony Stanbridge was one of the two Parish Council representatives on the PFC before his resignation, so there is now a vacancy for a parish councillor to become a trustee (two are required according to the constitution). Cllr Banks was suggested; Members will consider whether they wish to volunteer.

**8.1.2 Play Equipment**

Cllr Webb has researched new play equipment for older children and proposed a specific piece of wooden climbing equipment costing £13,618. The equipment is relatively low and sturdy, aimed at children

between 8 and 12 years old. The dexterity required to move around the equipment is quite high. Three quotes need to be obtained for installation and for a rubberised surface underneath, possibly 7 metres x 6 metres in area (half a metre wider than the equipment). ACTION: CLLR WEBB
Cllr Webb attended the last PFC meeting to discuss the equipment with the trustees, who were happy with the proposal and suggested location (north of the trim trail), but advised that installation would need to be in the next financial year to prevent damage to the field in the wet winter months. Cllr Summersgill asked whether there would be an issue with overhanging trees; this would need to be considered.
Members **Agreed** to the proposal for the new climbing equipment.

**8.1.3 Replacement Paving Slabs**

Hunton Football Club would like the cracked paving slabs outside the changing rooms to be replaced. The football club is happy to lay them if the Parish Council can fund the cost of the slabs. A quote has not been provided yet.
Members **Agreed** to the proposal to replace the slabs but would need to know the cost. ACTION: CLERK

**8.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways**

Cllr Summersgill advised that Kent County Council (KCC) have surfaced Hunton Hill and East Street. Before the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) can be submitted to KCC, a report needs to be completed on the consultation work undertaken on speed limits, which Cllr Simmons **Agreed** to do.
ACTION: CLLR SIMMONS
Cllr Summersgill has checked Bishops Lane; there is an 'elderly people' sign in place but an item will be included in the HIP for a 'Slow' sign to be painted on the road. ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL
Cllr Webb noted that a speed limit sign between the Village Hall and Bensted Closed is not straight. There is also a 30mph sign on West Street, on the left hand side driving north towards Grove Lane which cannot be seen due to an overgrown hedge. Cllr Summersgill has reported this as Speedwatch sessions cannot be undertaken if the signs are not visible. It is the responsibility of KCC to keep the signs visible and also to keep them clean. Members **Agreed** that the landowner or agent should be contacted to request that the hedge is cut. ACTION: CLERK
Members noted that a resident has done an excellent job of clearing gullies in the village and another resident cut substantial vegetation over the footpath through Church Wood which should have been carried out by the landowner.

**8.3 Tree & Pond Wardens**

**8.3.1 Update**

The Tree Warden has dealt with dead trees on Lughorse Lane.
Cllr Summersgill reported that ponds and ditches are still dry.

**8.3.2 Visual Tree Assessment Fee Proposal**

Silva Arboriculture Ltd have provided a fee proposal of £695 for the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA). The cost was £685 when the last VTA was undertaken in May 2025. Members **Agreed** the fee proposal.
ACTION: CLERK

**9. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS**

**9.1 County Councillor**

County Cllr Ford was unable to attend the meeting.

**9.2 Borough Councillors**

Cllr Summersgill and Cllr Couch have provided a combined written report and Cllr Russell has also provided a report since the last full council meeting. The reports are available on the parish website.
Cllr Couch was unable to attend the meeting.
Cllr Russell advised that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) has been paused for at least 12 months, likely longer. It has taken up a lot of staff time at MBC and it is unfortunate it took the government so long to put it on hold. It has not affected staff at KCC to the same extent.
Cllr Summersgill noted that parish councils will have elections in 2028. If there are shadow elections in 2028, the current borough councillors will need to serve another year. The Call For Sites for housing is underway, including Gypsy and Traveller sites, in preparation for the new Local Plan. Cllr Russell advised that a lot of sites have been put forward for housing.

Members questions/comments:
*Is the previous Local Plan still in place?*
Yes, it is still valid until 2038.
*The Gypsy & Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD) has been ongoing for 15 years.*
This has been withdrawn and will now be included within the Local Plan. The timescale for the new Local Plan is 2½ years.
*Hunton parish has the highest percentage of gypsies and travellers to the local community of all other parishes.*
Those figures include Coxheath as well as Hunton.
*Why was the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for catapults not enacted?*
The police and MBC Community Safety did not agree with enacting a PSPO as it would require a lot of resources to issue fines and many perpetrators are under 16 years of age. It was agreed that the current partnership approach between the police and Community Safety would be more effective, but it will be reviewed after a year.
*Is the Maidstone Town Council going ahead?*
The decision has been made to form a Town Council, which cannot be reversed, but MBC is awaiting legal advice to see if it can be delayed.
Cllr Summersgill advised that Cllr Russell and another councillor brought forward a motion to tackle littering in rural communities; there will be more communication with parishes. Data has been produced about litter hotspots. Marden & Yalding is in the top third. The hotspot in Hunton is Hilltop, where 11 people have been caught littering on camera.
Cllr Summersgill advised that no further information has been received following the consultation on polling stations. The MBC Cabinet does not have a say; it is the decision of the Returning Officer.

## 10. PARISH MATTERS

### 10.1 Parish Councillors
Nothing to report.

### 10.2 Flooding
There has not been any flooding.
Cllr Summersgill has sampled the River Beult for nitrates and phosphates (which he does every six months); the water is completely green but the readings were lower than the last two sampling sessions.

### 10.3 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainability
Cllr Heaton has seen comments on the Marden Cluster regarding the People's Emergency Briefing, a film to raise awareness of climate and environmental risks. Cllr Summersgill has attended screenings in Bearsted and Maidstone. A Hunton resident screened it two weeks ago at Loddington Farm which 40 people attended and it will be shown in Staplehurst (24th October), Lamberhurst (1st November) and Goudhurst (13th November) as well as other local areas. It may also be broadcast nationally. Members did not feel it was worth holding a screening in Hunton due to it being shown elsewhere.

### 10.4 Speedwatch
Cllr Summersgill reported that no Speedwatch sessions have been held since the last meeting. More volunteers are needed.

### 10.5 Broadband Services
Cllr Stanbridge produced a Broadband Provision Report prior to leaving the Parish Council, which includes the Broadband For Rural Kent (B4RK) signal viability report commissioned by the Parish Council as an appendix.
Members were thankful for the report which provides information on options available and **Agreed** that a formal letter of thanks should be written to Tony Stanbridge. ACTION: CLERK / CLLR HEATON
Members **Agreed** that the report should be printed on good quality paper so the images are clear and included as an insert to the November Hunton Herald, for distribution to all households. It will also be added to the website. Members **Agreed** the Hadlum Print & Design printing cost of £390.
ACTION: CLERK
Cllr Summersgill noted that Trooli provided a map showing where fibre would be rolled out, started the process, but did not finish and there is no sign of any further activity. Cllr Stanbridge visited the Trooli offices and spoke with the officers which is where the map in the report originated from, but if the fibre roll

out is not proceeding as planned, Trooli need to provide clarification. At least two residents on East Street have received letters from Trooli advising that their broadband service will cease in October. Those residents should be able to use BT as other residents on East Street are able to use it, but one of the residents has been told by BT that it is not possible. The government introduced the Broadband Universal Service Obligation, to give people the right to request a decent and affordable broadband connection, although eligibility has to be assessed against the services available at the specific address.
Members **Agreed** that the Broadband Provision Report should be emailed to the East Street residents who have been informed that their Trooli service will be removed. ACTION: CLERK

**10.6 Parish Consultation**

The table listing actions to take from the consultation responses has been updated.
Three quotes have been received to replace the Village Hall doors, but the Village Hall Committee needs to view samples. Members **Agreed** that they only wish to have the side door replaced as the wooden front door is in good condition and in keeping with the building.
One quote has been received to paint the village gateways. Members **Agreed** that another quote should be received due to the cost; a resident present at the meeting offered to provide a quote. ACTION: CLERK
Members **Agreed** that the cost of bin emptying should be established from MBC if a bin was to be installed on West Street. ACTION: CLERK
Cllr Webb suggested that, when most of the consultation actions have been completed, residents should be informed prior to the Annual Parish Meeting. Further suggestions can then be obtained from residents.

**10.7 Barn Hill Finger Post**

A quote has been received to repaint the finger post and add the black lettering but does not include the replacement of the fingers on the post. A resident present at the meeting offered to look at the post and provide a quote. ACTION: CLERK

**10.8 Permissive Footpath on West Street – Hedge and Verges Maintenance Contract**

The two-year contract for the maintenance of the hedge and verges near the permissive footpath on West Street is at an end. Members reviewed the specification for the next two-year contract. Cllr Simmons noted that there is nothing in the specification about the maintenance of the path surface. Cllr Heaton advised that he has laid self-levelling gravel previously and sprayed it (as he is licensed to spray). KCC Public Rights of Way should ideally maintain the path surface, but Cllr Heaton is happy to continue this in future. Members therefore **Agreed** to the specification without making any amendments.
Members **Agreed** to ask Robert Cox for a quote as he has completed the work previously to a good standard. The quote will be considered at the next Parish Council meeting in November.
ACTION: CLERK

**10.9 Clerk's Report**

Members were reminded to set up their .gov.uk email addresses and set up the app to view the mobile CCTV camera if not already done.
The Clerk attended the Parish Conference on 16th September 2026. The presentations have been emailed to Members. The following are notes made not included in the presentations:
Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – Now that LGR has been paused some attendees queried whether the creation of a town council should be stopped. MBC responded to say that it would be difficult to reverse as an order has been issued. Legal advice is being obtained to see if it can be paused but MBC has been all the way through the process now and a town clerk is being recruited.
Finance – the Parish Services Scheme grant is likely to increase by 3% in 2027/28.
Asset transfers – the legal costs for parishes for each asset transfer are in the region of £4,000 to £6,000.
Emergency planning – a large template document was provided but simpler plans have been submitted to MBC.
Members **Agreed** that a simple emergency planning template should be requested from MBC.
ACTION: CLERK

**11. FINANCE**

**11.1 Budget Monitoring Report**

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31st August 2026 was **Noted**.
Cllr Webb reiterated the need to spend some of the reserves. Cllr Simmons advised that highways work could use a significant amount.

**11.2 Income Received**

Members **Noted** that the following income has been received between 1st July and 31st August 2026:

| | |
|---|---|
| MBC – Parish Services Scheme grant (1st half) | £878.00 |
| Redwood Bank – Bank interest | £972.09 |
| Hunton Parish Hall – Feed-in tariff | £1,044.06 |

The bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed by Cllr Webb.

**11.3 Payments Made**

Members **Approved** the following payments made between 1st July and 31st August 2026:

| | |
|---|---|
| DD – ICO – Data protection fee | £47.00 |
| SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – July | £941.74 |
| Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – June | £7.00 |
| Unity Trust Bank – Service charge – July | £7.00 |

**11.4 Electronic Payments**

Members **Approved** the following payments:

| | |
|---|---|
| HMRC – July to August PAYE | £157.42 |
| Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses / Stationery & office expenses | £32.25 |
| David Heaton – Fuel for mower | £19.00 |

Cllr Summersgill and Cllr Heaton will authorise the payments set up in Unity Trust Bank using online banking.

**11.5 CIL Neighbourhood Receipts**

Nothing to report.

**11.6 Village Hall Centenary**

A spreadsheet has been produced showing the money received and paid out for the Track Dogs gig for the Village Hall Centenary.
The result is that the following payments need to be paid by the Parish Council (from the Entertainment Fund reserve):
Friends of St Mary's – provision of food – £550.00
Hunton Parish Hall – remaining hall hire fee – £102.80
A total of £652.80.
Members **Approved** the expenditure. ACTION: CLERK / CLLR SUMMERSGILL / CLLR HEATON
Cllr Simmons added that it was a very successful event and thanked those who helped to organise it, particularly Cllr Summersgill.

**11.7 Maidstone Borough Council Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel**

The Independent Remuneration Panel has issued a report which details recommendations for allowances for town and parish councils. These do not apply to co-opted councillors.
Members **Agreed** that they did not wish to receive an allowance, which will be publicised on the website with the report. ACTION: CLERK

**11.8 Maidstone & Weald Samaritans**

The Maidstone & Weald Samaritans have submitted a request for support.
Members **Agreed** not to provide support on this occasion.

**11.9 KCC Safer Road Users Mature Drivers & Passengers Course**

The KCC Safer Road Users Officer would like to run a Mature Drivers & Passenger Course for residents in Hunton. The Clerk suggested the village hall as a potential venue and outlined the availability constraints. The KCC officer felt it would be a suitable venue, which would be required for around three hours, but has asked whether the Parish Council might be willing to support the course by funding the venue hire costs as, due to budget constraints, the KCC funding is used to only deliver the Mature Drivers Programme itself.
Cllr Summersgill attended the course at Yalding, which was well attended and useful.

Members **Agreed** to fund the hall hire costs but the Village Hall Committee will be asked if the hall can be provided for free as it is a community event. ACTION: CLERK
Members **Agreed** that the course would need to be publicised once arranged. ACTION: CLERK

**11.10 Annual Review of Insurance**

The Parish Council's insurance policy is due for renewal on 1st October 2026 for the year to 30th September 2027. The current insurance provider, Zurich, has provided a quote of £1184.93 (2025: £1,298.05), an 8.7% decrease from last year. CAS Insurance, Gallagher and Clear Councils have all been contacted for additional quotes. CAS Insurance and Gallagher have requested information to provide a quote but Clear Councils have not responded at all. Members **Agreed** that the Zurich Municipal quote should be accepted as the other companies have not replied in time. ACTION: CLERK
The Clerk will set up an online payment for the premium.
ACTION: CLERK / CLLR SUMMERSGILL / CLLR HEATON

**11.11 Authorised Signatories**

Following the resignations of Annette Trought and Tony Stanbridge, the authorised signatories need to be amended as follows:

- Unity Trust Bank – remove Annette Trought and Tony Stanbridge – two councillors to authorise the 'Mandate changes' online. The Clerk has changed the Parish Council email address for Unity Trust Bank which requires two Members to sign an 'Account management: submission form'.
- Redwood Bank – remove Annette Trought and Jonny Goddard (who is still a signatory) and add two more signatories. The bank requires the signature of all existing authorised users including any users who have left. As this is not possible, they will accept the minutes of the meetings which show the users have left the Parish Council. The minutes of the meeting on 21st September will not be signed until 16th November (regarding Annette Trought's resignation), so it will be necessary to wait until then to sign the form. Members **Agreed** that Cllr Webb and Cllr Banks should be the new authorised signatories.
- The Cambridge Building Society – as for Redwood Bank.

Cllr Heaton and Cllr Banks signed the Unity Trust Bank 'Account management: submission form' to change the email address held by the bank.
Members **Agreed** to authorise the mandate changes online with Unity Trust Bank to remove Annette Trought and Tony Stanbridge as signatories. ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL / CLLR HEATON

**11.12 Nest Pension**

The Clerk set up the Nest pension scheme on behalf of Hunton Parish Council due to the Clerk exceeding the threshold for auto enrolment. A letter was sent to the Clerk from Nest to confirm she had been enrolled. The Clerk then opted out of the pension scheme, so neither the Clerk nor the Parish Council will make any payments into the pension scheme. A direct debit for pension payments from the Parish Council needs to be in place as the Clerk will need to be enrolled again in three years. Cllr Heaton and Cllr Banks signed the direct debit form. ACTION: CLERK

**11.13 Review of Clerk's Salary**

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has agreed new pay scales applicable from 1st April 2026. Members **Approved** the increase in the Clerk's salary (at SCP 12) in line with the NJC pay scales. Members **Approved** the Clerk's back pay of £123.18 for the five months from April to August 2026 and **Agreed** to authorise the standing order mandate to increase the Clerk's monthly salary payments from September 2026. ACTION: CLERK / CLLR SUMMERSGILL / CLLR HEATON

**12. PLANNING**

**12.1 Planning Enforcement**

- The Laurels, East Street (26/500351/BOC) – holiday let – MBC Planning Enforcement have asked for proof that a motor vehicle business is being run from the site in the form of diary sheets but it has not been possible to obtain further information. The planning consent is for six weeks of the year with a maximum of 28 days per resident, so it should not be a holiday let. Three residents have been on the electoral roll for the last three years, which Planning Enforcement have been informed of. Members **Agreed** that Cllr Summersgill should respond to Planning Enforcement.

ACTION: CLLR SUMMERSGILL

- Yoga retreat on East Street – advertising as a business which has a website and offers three tents. Members **Agreed** to report it to Planning Enforcement to determine if planning permission is required. ACTION: CLERK
- Vineyard – advertised for grape picking and vineyard walks. The building that visitors are directed to has permission for storage of apples and an office. Members **Agreed** that this should not be reported to Planning Enforcement until more information is obtained.
- A resident has provided emails about removal of established roadside hedgerow on East Street, which were distributed to Members. Cllr Heaton understood from a land agent that up to 10 metres of hedgerow can be removed without planning permission. The resident has advised that the Kent Police Rural Task Force is investigating it in relation to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Cllr Simmons advised that approval is required from the Highways Authority to create a new access on to the public highway. The purpose of the hedge removal is not clear and whether it would be a temporary or permanent access. Members **Agreed** that the KCC Highways Steward should be contacted to determine the approval required for the access. ACTION: CLERK
  Members **Agreed** to not report it to Planning Enforcement.

**12.2 Planning Decisions**

The following planning decisions have been made by Maidstone Borough Council since the last full council meeting:

**12.2.1 1 West Street** - 26/501660/FULL
Retrospective planning application for change of use from formal garden area to parking area for 2 cars.
Parish Council recommendation: Wish to see the application refused for the following reasons but do not request the application is reported to the Planning Committee:
- Would not wish to see change of use from formal garden land to hardstanding.
- Risk of damage to a mature oak tree on the site which is a prominent feature of The Square.
Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

**12.2.2 Thatched Cottage, East Street** - 26/501670/FULL
Erection of a stable block and tack room, and creation of a sand school and pervious hardstanding.
Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object to the buildings or sand school, but query whether there needs to be a change of land use from agricultural to equestrian as horses will be stabled on the site.
Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

**12.2.3 Wealden Hall House, East Street** - 26/502457/FULL
Installation of an electric vehicle (EV) charging point mounted on a free-standing timber post.
Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object.
Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

**12.2.4 Wealden Hall House, East Street** - 26/502458/LBC
Listed Building Consent for replacement of failed glazing to existing conservatory with clear 'Slimlite' doubleglazing.
Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object.
Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

**12.2.5 3 The Square** - 26/502482/FULL
Demolish existing porch and replace with erection of a single storey front extension.
Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object.
Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

Cllr Summersgill advised that MBC has submitted a response to the Reed Court planning appeal. Cllr Summersgill has also submitted a response as borough councillor.

**12.3 New Planning Committee Regulations**

Cllr Summersgill advised that national changes to planning committee decisions take effect from 31st October 2026 to speed up decision-making and leave more technical decisions to planning officers. There will be a maximum of 13 borough councillors on the MBC Planning Committee, as it is now, who will be trained and certified.

The new national scheme of delegation has two schedules. Schedule 1 items must be determined under delegated powers by officers and cannot go to Planning Committee. Schedule 2 items should also be determined under delegated powers by officers unless the nominated officer (Head of Planning) and the nominated councillor (Chair of Planning) agree that it needs to go to Planning Committee. If they do not agree, the power rests with the Head of Planning to decide.
Schedule 1 examples are householder developments, minor commercial developments, minor residential developments up to nine dwellings and all certificates of lawful development.
Schedule 2 examples are applications for outline planning permission for a large multi-phased residential development allocated in the Local Plan, change of use for a community shop in a rural area and changes to a notable listed building in the town centre.
Most planning decisions will be delegated to officers and, in theory, less planning applications will be considered by Planning Committee. Call in powers have been removed so parish councils and borough councillors will not be able to ask for applications to be considered by Planning Committee. Parish councils can still submit comments but they should be more detailed and specific. The government will review the process in two years. Supplementary Plans are now replacing DPDs. More than 10% Biodiversity Net Gain cannot be required now unless justifiable, so the previous Local Plan requirement of 20% will have to revert to 10%. Local plans will change from 15 years to 10 years duration.
Cllr Simmons noted that, when the Parish Council considers planning applications in future, they will need to make responses as specific as possible and reference the National Planning Policy Framework.

**13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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

**There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:45pm.**