

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9TH MAY 2022 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Cllr D Heaton in the Chair, Cllrs J Fuller, M Summersgill and J Goddard, and Mrs S Goodwin, Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: County/Borough Cllr S Webb and Borough Cllr L Parfitt-Reid were in attendance until Item 14.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Goddard proposed, and Cllr Summersgill seconded, that Cllr Heaton be elected as Chairman for the forthcoming year. All councillors were in agreement and Cllr Heaton completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Proper Officer.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Summersgill proposed, and Cllr Fuller seconded, that Cllr Trought be elected as Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year. All councillors were in agreement. As Cllr Trought was unable to attend the meeting, the Clerk will confirm that she is willing to stand as Vice Chairman again and complete the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. ACTION: CLERK

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr T Stanbridge, Cllr Simmons and Cllr Trought.

4. FILMING AND RECORDING

Those in attendance did not wish to film, record or photograph the meeting.

5. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

5.1 Declaration of Interests

Cllr Heaton declared an interest in Item 15.11, as a trustee of the Hunton Village Hall Committee.

5.2 Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

6. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 21ST MARCH 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2022 had been previously distributed. The Chairman signed the official copy of the minutes.

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

Item 5 – Cllr Fuller’s ‘Notification of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests’ form has been submitted to MBC.
Item 11.2 – A response was submitted for the Maidstone Ward Boundaries consultation.

8. POLICE

8.1 Police

One crime has been logged on the e-watch website since the last Parish Council meeting:
21/04/22 – East Street - Somebody forced a farm gate and broke into three containers. The police have a vehicle registration and are continuing their enquiries.
Cllr Heaton commented on the lack of PCSO in the parish, which is the situation for a number of parishes as the police are struggling to recruit.

8.2 Huntonwatch

Steve and Sue Wyles from Huntonwatch have provided the following report:
We have received reports of antisocial behaviour involving vehicles in the Redwall Lane area.
We have received fewer reports of scams than usual (maybe fewer scams, or people may be more scam-wise).

Dog fouling is on the increase again. We have been in touch with MBC's dog warden who advised that they have a zero tolerance to any reported failure to clear up after your dog and in any case where a witness statement is provided with sufficient evidence, there is a borough-wide fixed penalty notice of £100 and offenders could be taken to court.

We have made contact with the new Community Warden (James Watson) and will be setting up a meeting to discuss ways we can work together. Initial impressions are positive.

Cllr Heaton confirmed that he has erected signs to encourage owners to clear up after their dogs.

Members **Agreed** that the Clerk should contact Martyn Jeynes in Community Protection about the antisocial behaviour on Redwall Lane.

ACTION: CLERK

9. LOCAL COMMUNITY

9.1 King George V Playing Field Committee

The Chairman of the Committee, Steve Jones, had nothing to report as the Committee has not met since the last Parish Council meeting.

The electrical work has been completed in the Football Club changing rooms.

The Football Club have been offered a preferential discount from a local building company and intends to use this to obtain a new front entrance door and frame, and exterior/internal paints and materials. The labour will be supplied by the Football Club. The Parish Council has agreed to pay for the cost of the front door and frame to ensure the building is secure. The Club also plan to recommission the boiler and upgrade the shower area.

9.2 Traffic & Road Safety Working Party/Highways

9.2.1 Highways

Cllr Goddard reported that:

- KCC Highways are to erect and pay for signs on the fast bend on Redwall Lane.
- Jennie Watson of KCC Highways has queried the location of one of the Speed Indicator Devices. Residents' views on the SIDs will be sought at the upcoming Annual Parish Meeting.
- Jennie Watson needs to speak to Claire Chewter about the kerbing outside the school.

Cllr Summersgill reported that a sign on East Street has been taken away by KCC Highways but has not been moved to the correct location yet. The register of HGVs passing through the village illegally has been lost and will need to be started from scratch. The next Traffic & Road Safety Working Party (T&RSWP) meeting will be held in June.

9.2.2 Bensted Close

A resident of Bensted Close has raised the issue of parked cars at school drop off and pick up times. It is difficult to get out of Bensted Close due to the parked cars restricting visibility. The resident has suggested installing a mirror on the verge opposite the end of Bensted Close for visibility and bollards around the end of the road to prevent people parking there.

Members felt that bollards would be stolen but **Agreed** that the Parish Council could pay for a mirror, provided that KCC Highways and local residents do not have any objection. Residents will be consulted at the Annual Parish Meeting.

ACTION: CLLR GODDARD

9.3 Tree & Pond Warden

Cllr Summersgill reported that a Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) was undertaken by Silva Arboriculture on 8th April. The report will be issued soon, but the result is that four trees require work within three to six months, involving the removal of limbs from storm-damaged trees and removal of deadwood. Nothing to report on ponds.

10. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

Members **Agreed** to the following Committee and Working Party arrangements for the forthcoming year:

- Planning Committee – a minimum of three Councillors is required for the Committee to be quorate. All Councillors are members of the Planning Committee.
- Planning Traffic & Road Safety Working Party – a minimum of two Councillors and one member of the public is required for the Working Party to be quorate. Cllrs Goddard, Summersgill and Simmons are members of Traffic & Road Safety Working Party.

11. COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Members **Agreed** to the following appointments for the forthcoming year:

- KCC Highways – Cllr Goddard and Cllr Simmons
- KALC Area Committee – Cllr Summersgill
- Policing matters – Cllr Trought and Cllr Heaton
- Hunton Primary School – Cllr Simmons
- Representative Trustees of the King George V Playing Field - Cllr Heaton and Cllr Stanbridge
- Trustees of Hunton Village Hall Committee – Cllr Trought and Cllr Heaton
- Parish Plan Steering Committee (*on hold*)

Members **Agreed** to the following Parish Council responsibilities:

- Footpaths and ditches – Cllr Heaton (primary) and Cllr Goddard (secondary)
- Road conditions and speed limits – Cllr Goddard (primary) and Cllr Simmons (secondary)
- Events and communications – Cllr Trought
- Planning issues and consultations – Cllr Summersgill
- Liaison with KALC, MBC and other external bodies – Cllr Summersgill (primary) and Cllr Heaton (secondary)
- Utilities (broadband, water, electricity) – Cllr Stanbridge (primary) and Cllr Summersgill (secondary)
- Speedwatch (*on hold*) – N/A
 - Hunton Parish Plan/Neighbourhood Plan (*on hold*) – N/A

12. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Members **Agreed** to appoint Lionel Robbins as the Internal Auditor for the forthcoming year.

13. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

13.1 County Councillor

County Cllr Simon Webb reported that a Conservative Group meeting had been held about Ukraine. In Kent, 2,647 Ukrainians have been matched from 1,058 offers of residents' homes. Kent has awarded the highest number of visas of all the shire counties in England. Maidstone is taking in the second highest number of Ukrainians. 4,600 children are expected to arrive in Kent from Ukraine and 36% of children are of primary school age. There are 8 children in Coxheath – the rules have been relaxed so Coxheath Primary School can exceed its PAN. Cllr Webb has visited Coxheath and Hunton primary schools and is impressed with both. He will be giving a Members' grant to Hunton CEP School.

Cllr Heaton asked about the mismatch of visas, but according to Cllr Parfitt-Reid the issue is with the permit to travel. Some family members can travel, but others cannot.

Cllr Summersgill asked whether the Ukrainians receive free bus travel, but Cllr Webb and Cllr Parfitt-Reid did not know.

13.2 Borough Councillors

Borough Cllr Parfitt-Reid was congratulated on her recent re-election.

Cllr Parfitt-Reid reported that the governance arrangements at Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) are changing from a committee to a cabinet system, which she prefers as there is more accountability and decisions can be made quickly. The new system will be a hybrid system, unique to Maidstone, consisting of a cabinet and policy advisory committees. The new constitution will be adopted on 21st May at the next full council meeting.

MBC is also changing to whole council elections every four years, from the current elections by thirds.

MBC submitted a response to the boundary change consultation and is awaiting a response from the Local Government Boundary Commission.

MBC submitted the Local Plan Review to the Planning Inspector on 30th March. Cllrs Parfitt-Reid and Webb have fought hard against more developments to the south of Maidstone as many houses have already been built in the area. MBC is looking at borrowing money over 60 years to provide affordable housing. Cllr Parfitt-Reid has been fighting against the Chainhurst egg farm as it is the wrong location for it but is unsure when it will be referred to MBC Planning Committee.

Cllr Webb confirmed that the Conservative Party have a slight majority following the election.

14. PARISH MATTERS

14.1 Parish Councillors

Cllr Summersgill advised that other parishes include 'Climate Change & Sustainability' on their agendas. Members **Agreed** that it should be included on the agenda in future. ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Heaton has asked that the Village Club be opened after the Annual Parish Meeting on 23rd May.

Members **Agreed** to increase the budget for the Chairman's Allowance budget by £100 to contribute towards drinks. ACTION: CLERK

14.2 Flooding

Cllr Summersgill reported that Yalding are revising the Emergency Flooding Plan, to include pluvial as well as fluvial flooding. Linton Growers have been clearing ditches.

Cllr Heaton noticed that Betts have turned the field on Lughorse Lane and have also left an uncultivated strip in the field near the Village Hall, which will help prevent mud flow from the fields.

Cllr Fuller noted that there is a thin tree hanging over West Street, balanced on trees on the other side of the road. Cllr Summersgill recommended reporting it on the KCC Highways Portal.

14.3 Neighbourhood Plan

Members **Agreed** to defer this item to the next full council meeting in July.

14.4 Clerk's Report

Kent Fire & Rescue Service carried out a fire safety audit on the village hall and Football Club changing rooms on 1st April 2022 (it was not possible to access the cricket pavilion). The premises were found to be low scoring, so there is no schedule of works. Advisory notes have been provided to help maintain sufficient fire safety, but none of the notes relate to the changing rooms. The Village Hall Committee will be informed of the notes relating to the hall at the next committee meeting.

The litter picking group have asked if the Parish Council will fund the purchase of rubbish sacks (and possibly gloves and litter pickers) for village litter picks – costs have not been provided yet. The rubbish will be disposed of by Clock House Farm. The litter pickers will be independent of the Parish Council and will pick the litter at their own risk. Cllr Summersgill suggested that litter picking sticks could be borrowed from Linton Parish Council. Members **Agreed** to fund the cost of rubbish sacks and other necessary materials.

15. FINANCE

15.1 Statement of Internal Control

The Council needs to review the effectiveness of the system of internal control for the Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Governance & Accountability Return. A Statement of Internal Control was prepared by the Clerk to assist in this review. Members reviewed the Statement and **Agreed** that it could be signed and included with the year-end accounts. The Statement was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

15.2 Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit

In carrying out the Council's annual review of Internal Audit, Members **Agreed** that:

- the Internal Auditor is independent of the Council and has no involvement or responsibility in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council;
- the Internal Auditor is competent to carry out an effective audit of the Council's system of internal control;
- the review and scope of the internal audit adequately assesses the Council's internal controls, governance processes and management of risk;
- they understand the importance of the relationship between the Internal Auditor and the Council;
- adequate preparations are made for the audit procedure to facilitate the work of the Internal Auditor, including making available all relevant documents and records and supplying any information or explanations required; and
- reports received from the Internal and External Auditor are actioned when necessary.

15.3 Internal Audit Report

The Internal Auditor, Lionel Robbins, carried out the internal audit on 4th May 2022. He has completed the Annual Internal Audit Report on page 3 of the 2021/22 Annual Governance & Accountability Return and provided a separate internal audit report.

Members considered and **Approved** the report of the Internal Auditor.

15.4 Accounts 2021/22

Members reviewed the Council's Statement of Accounts, year-end Financial Book and Fixed Asset Register. The Accounts were signed by the Chairman and the Clerk, and the Chairman also signed the Financial Book.

15.5 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021/22

15.5.1 Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement

Members considered the Annual Governance Statement contained in Section 1 on page 4 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR), consisting of 9 assertions. To properly consider the assertions, the Clerk provided Members with a table comparing the Parish Council's practices to proper practices.

Members **Agreed** that statements 1 to 8 could all be answered "Yes" and statement 9 should be answered "N/A". Members **Resolved** that the Annual Governance Statement be approved and page 4 of the AGAR was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

15.5.2 Section 2 – Accounting Statements

Members considered the Accounting Statements contained in Section 2 on page 5 of the AGAR and **Resolved** that they be approved. The Clerk had already signed page 5 of the AGAR according to the requirements of the external auditor. The Accounting Statements were signed by the Chairman. The period for the exercise of public rights will be 13th June to 22nd July 2022.

15.6 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 30th April 2022 was **Noted**.

15.7 Income Received

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

Hunton Parish Hall Committee – FIT receipts	£215.78
Maidstone Borough Council – Precept for 2022/23	£26,338.00

The bank reconciliation was reviewed and signed by Cllr Summersgill.

15.8 Payments Made

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

SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – March	£472.10
Unity Trust Bank – Service charge	£18.00

Members **Agreed** that Npower invoices (for street light electricity) could be paid between meetings, if necessary, due to the short payment terms.

15.9 Electronic Payments

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

KALC – Training workshops x 3	£162.00
KALC – Annual membership subscription	£346.49
Lionel Robbins – Internal audit	£90.00
King George's Field, Hunton – Contribution for 2022/23 less £250 towards the hedge	£5,750.00
Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Contribution towards running costs (1 st half)	£500.00
Hunton Village Club – Queen's Platinum Jubilee costs	£400.00
Sharon Goodwin – Phone top up	£30.00

15.10 Queen’s Platinum Jubilee

Members considered whether to provide a Queen’s Platinum Jubilee mug to children in the parish but decided not to.

15.11 Hunton Village Hall

The Village Hall is having renovation work done on the toilets in the summer, which will cost just over £17,213. Members **Agreed** to provide a grant of £4,000 towards the cost of the work.

15.12 Victim Support

An email has been received from Victim Support, seeking a donation. Members **Agreed** not to contribute.

16. PLANNING**16.1 Planning Applications****16.1.1 The Forge, Hunton Hill - 22/501691/FULL**

Installation of PV solar panels to roof.
Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

16.1.2 The Forge, Hunton Hill - 22/501692/LBC

Listed Building Consent for installation of PV solar panels to roof.
Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

16.1.3 Hilltop Farm, Shingle Barn Lane, West Farleigh - 22/501811/FULL

The erection of a single storey dwelling and detached plant room (following the approval of 20/503182/FULL and 19/505751/PNQCLA).
Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

16.1.4 The Chances, Lughorse Lane - 21/502279/FULL

Item discussed prior to Item 14.

Erection of an amenity building (day room) for ancillary gypsy use with associated works.
The Parish Council objected to the planning application at the Planning Committee meeting on 14th June 2021 and requested that the application be considered by MBC Planning Committee if the case officer decides to permit it. The case officer has asked that Members reconsider the call-in request and suggest any appropriate conditions to resolve any remaining concerns. The case officer has forwarded a letter received from the applicant addressing Members’ concerns and a justification letter.
Parish Council recommendation: Object and request call-in. Members do not understand why a travellers’ site would require a permanent building. Cllrs Webb and Parfitt-Reid advised Members to object as it is important that the parish has a voice, and advised Cllr Heaton to call the Head of Planning, Rob Jarman about the emails from the case officer. **ACTION: CLLR HEATON**
The Clerk agreed to forward the case officer’s emails to Cllrs Webb and Parfitt-Reid. **ACTION: CLERK**

16.2 Planning Decisions

Members **Noted** the following planning decisions, made by Maidstone Borough Council since the last Full Council meeting:

16.2.1 Wilsons Yard, George Street - 21/506545/FULL

Six dwellings with associated allotments, landscaping, parking, communal landscaped areas, and other associated works (part retrospective).
Parish Council recommendation: No objection.
Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

16.2.2 North Park Farm, Hunton Hill - 21/506658/FULL

Creation of new vehicular access.
Parish Council recommendation: Object.
Maidstone Borough Council decision: Refused.

16.2.3 The Green Barn, Water Lane - 21/505627/FULL

Permission is sought for extra capacity on an existing Gypsy site to include, 4 no. additional static caravans, 3 no. additional touring caravans, with parking, a dayroom and infrastructure (part retrospective).

Parish Council recommendation: Object.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

16.2.4 The Old Forge, Barn Hill - 22/500908/FULL

Erection of a new double garage with 2 no. roof windows.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

16.2.5 Martins Bungalow, George Street - 22/500713/FULL

Retrospective application for conversion of outbuilding from a forge to an annexe for use ancillary to the main dwelling.

Parish Council recommendation: Inadequate information provided on which to base a decision.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

Cllr Summersgill also advised that Rankins Farm (not in the parish) have been forbidden from keeping polytunnels up in the winter.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Parish Council meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Monday 18th July 2022 at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 9:30pm.