

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 26TH MAY 2026 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

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

IN ATTENDANCE: One member of the public was in attendance until Item 9.

OPEN SESSION:

Cllr Heaton informed Members that a previous parish councillor, Mark Ensoll, had sadly passed away the previous weekend. Members expressed their condolences.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs I Simmons, S Banks and M Summersgill.

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 PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12TH JANUARY 2026

The minutes of the meeting had been previously distributed and were agreed to be an accurate record. Cllr Heaton signed off the official copy of the minutes.

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

5.1 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.

6. REPORTED PLANNING DECISIONS

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

7. TABLES FOR EVENTS

Members **Agreed** that ten 6 foot tables and ten 4 foot tables should be purchased from Amazon at a total cost of £579.45 for events held in the village, using the Entertainment Fund. They will be stored in the Village Hall.

ACTION: CLERK

8. BROADBAND SERVICES

Discussed after Item 4.

Cllr Stanbridge has corresponded with Tim Higgs of Broadband For Rural Kent (B4RK) regarding a signal viability survey across the village, as discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting. Taking into account that Hunton is a spread out village and the topography (such as the Greensand Way to the north), a proposal has been made to survey six locations for signal strength (4G and 5G). These are: Lughorse Lane, Barn Hill, Hunton Hill, East Street, West Street and Bishops Lane/Water Lane. Members **Agreed** to accept the B4RK quote of £250 plus VAT for the survey (which will be s137 expenditure). ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE

Once the survey results have been received, Cllr Stanbridge will publish them in the Hunton Herald and on the parish website together with an indicative price range, an explanation as to why the Parish Council is doing this work and actions residents may wish to consider. ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE

The survey will give residents an idea of signal strengths, which they may wish to follow up with an individual survey for their property.

Broadband speeds are variable in the village. Some households use the mobile network system and obtain up to 150 Mbps. Starlink is another option.

CityFibre has been awarded the Project Gigabit contract in Kent to enable rural areas to access gigabit-capable broadband. Entering a postcode on the CityFibre website should produce details of when this capability will be available. Cllr Stanbridge entered his own postcode but a date was not given. Cllr Stanbridge will enter 20 postcodes in the parish, to see if a date is provided.

ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE

CityFibre have 55,000 households to connect and have completed 490 so far. Cllr Heaton advised that questions have been asked to the government minister responsible by Kent MPs and at Kent County Council level due to the slow pace of delivery.

9. HUNTONWATCH

The Clerk met with the previous administrators of Huntonwatch to find out more about the work involved and subsequently produced an actions list which was **Agreed** by Members. ACTION: CLERK

Members **Agreed** that a separate email address should be set up for Huntonwatch work at a cost of approximately £25 and an inexpensive mobile phone should be purchased at a cost of £24 plus top up costs.

ACTION: CLERK

10. PAYMENTS

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

Sharon Goodwin – Food, drink and stationery for the Annual Parish Meeting £55.98

11. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was not necessary to resolve that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of Item 12 as there was no one present at the meeting other than Members and the Clerk.

12. STAFFING MATTERS

The Clerk left the meeting while Members considered the Clerk's appraisal, held on 15th May.

The Clerk returned to the meeting.

Members advised that they would like to increase the Clerk's hours to 14 per week, due to the increase in responsibilities over the years, as well as taking on the administration of Huntonwatch, to be backdated to 1st April 2026.

The Clerk thanked Members and accepted the increase in hours. She will circulate the revised monthly salary, back pay due and set up an amended standing order for authorisation. The budget will also be amended to take into account the increase.

ACTION: CLERK

The situation will be reviewed in six months to ensure the increased number of hours is reasonable.

13. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 – RE-ADMITTANCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was not necessary to resolve that members of the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting as there was no one present at the meeting other than Members and the Clerk.

There being no further planning matters to be discussed, the meeting closed at 8:39pm.