

HUNCOTE VILLAGE NEWS

ISSUE 73 – SUMMER 2020

BROUGHT TO YOU BY HUNCOTE PARISH COUNCIL



Update on grass mowing around the village

While everybody is on lockdown at home, apart from key workers and those who must go to work, we have received a number of complaints in recent weeks about grass mowing. Grass mowing is always a contentious issue and doesn't get any easier during the current lockdown.

The difficulty with mowing is that it's carried out by so many different organisations throughout the village:

- Aggregate Industries - Nature Walk around Croft Quarry and Croft Hill
- Blaby DC - Brook House Gardens
- County Council - The Green, verges in front of houses and 1m swathe of all roads, plus junction visibility splays
- EMH - Memorial garden opposite St James Church and Quarry View Close
- Everyone Active (Huncote Leisure Centre) - Field around the Leisure Centre and BMX track (these currently use same mowing contractor as we do)
- Hello Homes - Spence Lane (including the drainage ponds)
- Huncote Parish Council - Denman Lane/Critchlow Road recreation ground, sports field and cemetery.
- Jelson - Peers Way/Preston Way open space (which will transfer to the parish council when legal paperwork is completed) and the drainage pond (which we believe will be transferred to the County Council)
- Severn Trent Water - Area around the pumping station
- St James church - Area around the church
- Suez - Large verge near hanging stone on Narborough Road and the quarry
- Various farmers - All fields around the village

Despite public belief, The Green doesn't actually belong to the parish council, it belongs to the county council, and falls to them to keep maintained.

The countywide mowing schedule for County Highways began on 4th May and unfortunately Huncote sat near the bottom of the list for the first cut. More details on the county council's mowing schedule can normally be found on their website, which is expected to be updated soon - <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-maintenance/grass-cutting>.

Huncote Parish Council are hoping to improve the mowing situation around the village, but as we're sure you will understand, with so many different groups involved it does take time to get people together and get the necessary permissions and will cost the parish council more, meaning it could have an impact on the precept residents pay as part of their council tax.

Parish Council Meetings relocate to Zoom

In light of the restrictions posed by the lockdown as a result of the national response to coronavirus, the government published [The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#).

This Statutory Instrument will give most local authorities greater flexibility in the conduct of meetings, including allowing members to attend remotely, and for public and press access to those meetings. This SI was issued on 2 April and is effective from 4 April 2020, until 6 May 2021, and means that Parish Council meetings will not return to St James church hall until restrictions allow.

Details of all forthcoming parish council meetings and associated meeting papers will be published on the council website's meeting calendar, via our social media and on the three parish council notice boards around the village.

Should you wish to view the meeting or ask questions during parishioners time, you are always welcomed to do so. You will just need to click on the link on the agenda or enter the meeting ID and password into your Zoom account.

If you don't already have Zoom on one of your devices, you can download it free from www.zoom.us or via your chosen app store.

Council says thank you to two departing parish councillors

The parish council would like to place on record our thanks to Cllr Fay Pittam, who has had to resign as a parish councillor.

Cllr Pittam became a member of the council in November 2016, bringing insight from a variety of local groups she was a part of. Her contributions will be missed.

Cllr Matt Jones has also had to resign due to work commitments, having only joined the council in September last year. We would like to thank Cllr Jones for the youthful energy he brought to the council.

Parish Council

Chairman re-elected

As part of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, Cllr Alec Knight was re-elected as Chairman of the council for the next year, and Cllr Jill Cheesman was re-elected Vice-Chair.

Clearing litter

We would like to remind everyone that it is even more imperative than ever that people clear their own litter when out for your daily exercise.

We've noticed an increase in litter being abandoned around the village by various people when out for their daily walks.

Unfortunately, due to the significant reductions in staffing capacity due to coronavirus health restrictions and added unknown risks of whether or not litter is carrying germs from those who didn't dispose of it correctly, the litter hasn't been collected.

We would like to ask everyone to take your rubbish home with you and not leave rubbish and abandoned BBQ's behind.

Chairman's Report - May 2020

Hello Everyone, fellow councillors and residents of Huncote,

I would like to start by saying how very proud I am of the way our village is responding during these very strange times. The Corona virus/COVID-19 pandemic is affecting everyone in a way unimaginable at Christmas. The links on our website www.huncote-pc.gov.uk links you to the relevant websites and access for any support you may need during this pandemic, including the Blaby District Council Community Hub website.

I would like to say a huge "Thank You!" to all NHS workers, carers and essential workers for maintaining our services and keeping us all safe. The Thursday evening 8 o'clock clap gives us all a chance to show our gratitude for essential workers also it helps neighbours to maintain a connection. If you require assistance, please contact any of your parish councillors and they will endeavour to respond as soon as they can.

The Parish Council held its election process in May 2019 and 4 councillors were elected. Huncote Parish should have 8 Councillors. During last year 2 parishioners came forward to offer their services as councillor and it was decided to co-opt Liam McEntee and Matt Jones onto the Council. If any parishioner would be interested in joining our current team of 5 they would be made most welcome. Please feel free to contact either myself or Stuart Bacon if you would like any information on how to do this.

You may be aware of a planning application to extend the works at Croft Quarry. Within this application is a proposal to construct a footpath from the new Jelson estate off Narborough Road towards the existing nature walk, with a footbridge crossing Thurlaston Brook. This work would be carried out within the first 2 years of approval. The plan includes improvements to the deteriorating embankment steps and the existing nature walks. It is also proposed to upgrade the current path, Footpath V57 running around Croft Hill, to a width of 3 metres. The plans are available on line at Leicestershire County Council's website www.leics.gov.uk. Huncote Parish Council has a paper copy of the plans, available via the Parish Council Clerk should anyone wish to examine them. Most of the quarried stone is to be removed by the existing rail network so it should not involve an increase in lorry movements.

Acresford Quarry was due to close and stop all work by the end of 2020. This may need to be extended due to the current lockdown restrictions.

One of the planning conditions for the new development at the top of Denman Lane was to improve the standard of the footway that runs from Narborough Road, Huncote to Huncote Road, Narborough. The local highways authority said it is not possible to widen this to the current regulatory width. This was debated at a site meeting with our local MP, Alberto Costa; District and County Councillor, Maggie Wright; Huncote Parish Council Chairman and Parish Clerk and an officer from the Countryside housing development. We offered an alternative of the installation of a vehicle activated speed signs. Countryside's response has been they will only carry out their legal responsibilities. MP, Alberto Costa and the attending Councillors were not impressed with this attitude and we will continue to press for this as a reasonable alternative.

Junction improvements at Huncote Road and B4114 Coventry Road are due to commence week ending 30 May 2020. This will include the construction of a right-hand filter lane on Huncote Road for those vehicles exiting right at the junction.

The Fosse Village Neighbourhood plan should have been put forward to a referendum this month. Due to the current restrictions all elections and referendums have been cancelled. A bit of good news; the Government have stated that existing neighbourhood plans ready to put to referendum should now be regarded as significant and carry maximum weight relevant to any planning applications within the local area. However, the plan may still have to be put to a referendum.

All households were delivered a letter from Alberto Costa surveying opinions on the Hinckley National Rail Freight Hub, currently in its early planning stages. The response from his questionnaire concluded that this was not the right location for this hub and this was also debated in Westminster Hall. We need to be aware that the company still intend to put forward plans later this year. The company are required to be fully consultative and will be holding various open days around the affected villages. We will keep you fully informed of these as they come up.

I am pleased to say that the Parish Council supplied a grant to the library this year to enable them to continue with this valuable resource. Any group within the village can apply for grants from Huncote Parish Council, unfortunately individuals cannot apply for this type of grant. Access to grant applications can be found on Huncote Parish Council's website.

The park has suffered with ponding and soggy ground conditions during the heavy rainfall experienced over the winter months. Thankfully the area is beginning to dry out and becoming usable again.

Croft Junior Football club are currently leasing the sports field adjacent to Huncote Leisure Centre. They have just purchased new goal posts which are taken down for safe keeping when not in use. Numerous children are members of the club which is growing to become one of the largest football clubs in the area. We wish them well in their ventures.

Huncote Hornets are due to be hosting the British BMX Championships on weekend, 28 August 2020 at the BMX course at Huncote Leisure Centre. We wish them luck with this brilliant event and hope it successfully goes ahead.

The Parish Council has just completed the process of setting up a village emergency plan to comply with government legislation. We are intending to gather a local register of essential contacts for volunteers with any essential emergency skills. The register would be kept within the emergency plan by the Parish Council to be used for any grave, emergency situation. Fortunately, we have never had to utilise such a plan.

During the lockdown the government requires all parish councils to carry out parish meetings via virtual communication methods. Huncote will be using 'Zoom' and will publicise each parish meeting, including details on how to link to the meetings, via the parish website. You can also 'dial up' using your phone – again details are on the website link and this method may have to continue well into 2021. Technology is wonderful and we must all be getting very used to communicating with friends and family this way. I am amazed at how quickly we are all adjusting to this, especially me as I'm such a techno-dinosaur.

I would like to thank the Council Clerk, Stuart who is having to filter through all this information regarding COVID-19. You would not believe the amount of emails he has to sift through from each government department. The rules and regulations of what we should or should not be doing are very strict and constantly changing which leads us having to alter arrangements at the last minute.

I would like to thank everybody for all their hard work they provide to the Council. Parish Council work is purely voluntary. Maggie Wright, County & District Councillor has an outstanding attitude to her parishioners and constituents and always promptly follows up any enquiries that are put to her. Maggie will be with us for at least another year as elections have been postponed until May 2021. Bruce and Dave, our local handymen, give excellent service and work above and beyond any of our expectations.

Although the Post Office is temporarily closed, I am anticipating it will re-open very soon. I would like to thank everyone in Huncote for their positive input and kindness during this pandemic. Thank you to the Facebook groups; for the art work in various windows; the bunting and pompoms brightening the village; for the sculptures scattered around the village; the nature videos; to the school children for staying at home and missing out contact with their friends, family and teachers; to those delivering medication to Huncote residents; to CSB Timber Merchants for enabling people to carry out their DIY tasks; to all our local shops for remaining open and for their food deliveries to those requesting their service.

I would like to give you all a virtual hug.

Finally, I would like to add "Stay Safe" everyone.

Alec Knight, Chairman of Huncote Parish Council

Written 25th April 2020



Parish Councillor Vacancies - We Need You

Every four years, you as the local electorate are asked to vote for who will represent you on the Parish Council.

The last such election was due to be held in May 2019, when insufficient people came forward for consideration for the eight available seats to be contested in Huncote. As there were only four candidates for the eight parish council seats, all candidates were elected uncontested—meaning no election, but still elected.

Existing Parish Councillors all get along well, and numbers have only changed due to health and work issues.

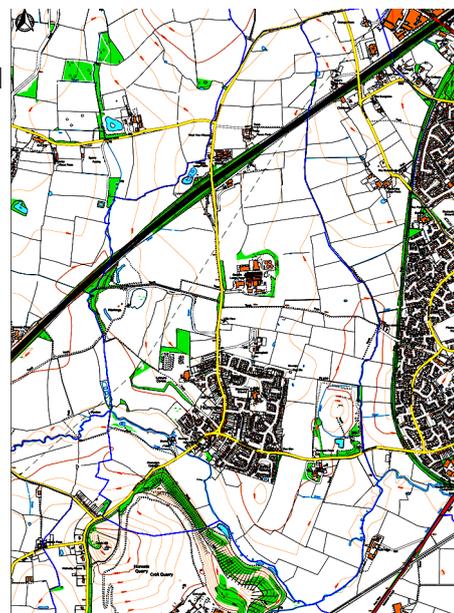
Parish Councillors in Huncote are elected/co-opted to the council to represent the interests and expectations of all parishioners who live and work within the Huncote parish boundary (shown by the blue line in the map below).

Parish Councillors have three main components to their role:

- ◆ **Decision Making** – Through meetings and attending committees with other elected members, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented. Including improving services and facilities which are insufficient for community needs.
- ◆ **Monitoring** – Councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.
- ◆ **Getting involved locally** - as local representatives, Councillors have responsibilities towards their parishioners and local organisations. These responsibilities and duties often depend on what the Councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available, and may include:
 - Going to meetings of local organisations
 - Going to meetings of bodies affecting the wider community
 - Bringing issues to the council on behalf of members of the public
 - Running a surgery for residents to bring up issues

If you would like to learn more about parish councils, what is involved as a parish councillor or if you wish to become a parish councillor and help support Huncote and drive the community forward, then please speak to any of the existing Councillors or contact the Clerk and they will be happy to speak with you and give you more information.

Alternatively, more information can be found in the [About Your Council](#) and [Become a Councillor](#) sections of our website.



Community Emergency Response Plan Prepared

Earlier this year Huncote Parish Council began work on a Community Emergency Response Plan, to be able to deal with some of the issues communities more frequently face, such as flooding (for the lower parts of Brook Street and Main Street), severe weather, major traffic incidents, sustained power cuts, and natural disasters. Hopefully none that the community will face, but something we need to plan for nonetheless.

As a result of preparing the initial plan, we would like to look at increasing the number of people we can call on in an emergency, with appropriate skills and equipment.

If you are a doctor, nurse, or firefighter who lives in the village and may be able to offer your services (when not required elsewhere) in the case of a significant local emergency affecting the community, we would very much like to hear from you so we can include you in our planning.

If this is you, please contact the Clerk. Details below.

Sign up to the Citizens' Panel and help improve local health services

People in Huncote are invited to sign up to a new online network to share their experiences of NHS services and help shape the future of local NHS services.



Better care together

Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland health and social care

The NHS Citizens' Panel has been set up by local NHS organisations to gather public views and opinions on a wide variety of health topics, which will be used to help us to understand peoples' experiences and what matters most to them.

Evan Rees, a local patient and Chair of the Public and Patient Involvement Assurance Group said: "As patients this is our opportunity to help improve the healthcare services that thousands of people in the area use every single day. This could be in the large hospitals in Leicester, the community hospitals, care at home or in your GP practice or local clinics.

"The NHS wants to know what is done well, what could be improved, and what we all think of any future plans to change services. The feedback we all give will be used to make meaningful improvements that affect our lives for the better. In the uncertain times of the COVID-19 pandemic it is a great way to get involved. The NHS Citizens' Panel is also a great place to network online with local people across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland."

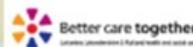
It's really easy to get involved as the Citizens' Panel will mostly take place online. You could simply spend a few minutes each month taking part in surveys, polls and questionnaires. You can do these on your mobile at a time that suits you, in the comfort of your home or out and about. If you want to get more involved, you'll also have the opportunity to take part in online focus groups on a health topic that interests you. If you don't have an opinion on a topic or you're too busy to help, you don't have to. It's designed to fit around you."

Evan continued: "It's vital that the voice of local people is at the heart of the NHS.

"What makes the NHS Citizens' Panel different is the number of conversations that will take place online; in this way we hope to reach out to people who perhaps wouldn't normally join a patient group, because they are busy."



Anyone can sign up and members will receive a regular newsletter with information about health and social care and be asked for their views on health topics. To find out more about the Citizens' Panel and to sign up go to www.healthcarereviewsllr.co.uk.



Citizens' Panel

We want you to help shape the future of NHS services locally. [Click here to find out more](#)

How to Contact Your Local Councillors

If you or someone you know is struggling within the village and would like some help, please don't hesitate to contact the Clerk or one of your local Councillors for help, support and advice.

Cllr ALEC KNIGHT (Chairman) - (0116) 284 1285 or a.knight.hpc@gmail.com;

Cllr JILL CHEESMAN - (0116) 319 3991 or jcheesman.hpc@gmail.com;

Cllr ROY BAILEY - (0116) 286 6773 or rbailey.hpc@gmail.com;

Cllr LIAM McENTEE - l.mcentee.hpc@gmail.com;

4x vacancies for parish councillors

8x PARISH COUNCILLOR SEATS TOTAL - Anyone interested in becoming a parish councillor can put themselves forward for consideration to be co-opted. See existing Parish Councillors, the Parish Clerk or the ['Become a Councillor'](#) page on our website for details of what's involved and how to apply.

Cllr MAGGIE WRIGHT (County Councillor) - 07815 450 031 or maggie.wright@leics.gov.uk;

Cllr MAGGIE WRIGHT (District Councillor) - (01455) 888 306 or cllr.m.wright@blaby.gov.uk;

Contact the PARISH CLERK (STUART BACON) on (01455) 844 539, 07875 291 366

or clerk@huncote-pc.gov.uk. Find us on the web at www.huncote-pc.gov.uk.

Would you like to know more about what is happening locally? Have you been keeping up to date with the Parish Council and what's happening in the village on Twitter or Facebook? Why not look us up and 'Like' / 'Follow' us to be kept up to date with the latest news and info from the Parish Council and links to other helpful, informative and important news from our partners.



Twitter - [@HuncotePC](https://twitter.com/HuncotePC)

Facebook - facebook.com/Huncote

Facebook - facebook.com/HuncoteParishCouncil