

HALSALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Halsall Parish Council meeting held on
Wednesday 11th December at 7:30 pm at St Aidan's Hall, Renacres Lane, Halsall.

PRESENT: Cllr M Lyons (Chair), Cllr R Brookfield, Cllr N McCarthy-Thomason,
Cllr J Ferguson, Cllr D Adams, C Pyne (Clerk) and C Smith (Asst. Clerk)

1. **Introductions and Apologies for Absence**

Cllr E Wright (Vice Chair), Cllr K Wright, Cllr M Schofield, Cllr A Timon and Cllr B Roberts.

Cathy Smith was introduced as the new Assistant Parish Clerk.

Meeting was relocated from Memorial Hall to St Aidan's Hall due to damage from Storm Darragh.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

None.

3. **Open Forum**

3.1 **West Lancs Borough Councillors**

The Clerk reported on replies from Borough Councillors. They are working on several issues and concerns from residents, but these are confidential. Borough Councillors are always willing to attend parish council meetings to advise on any specific issues which the Parish Council wishes to raise. The Councillors read the agenda and will attend if they think they can assist with any issue.

3.2 **Open Public Forum**

No questions

4. **To confirm and sign the [Minutes of the meeting held on 13th November](#)**

Agreed and signed at the end of the meeting.

5. **Discuss and agree on any matters arising from [Parish Clerk's Report](#)**

5.1 **Update on Remembrance Sunday**

Reviewed at the December Trust meeting, it was agreed that we should order more healthy and vegetarian food options next year.

5.2 **DHSC Defibrillator Grant (c. £750)**

Further details of this scheme reveal that we must pay more than the commercial cost of an older model defibrillator to obtain a "free" external cabinet. This might cost more in the longer term due to difficulties in obtaining spare parts, replacement batteries and consumable pads. The Council will not apply for the grant.

Signed Chair Date

5.3 The Clerk thanked all councillors for their various contributions to the incidents at the Memorial Hall due to Storm Darragh on 7th December. The Council agreed to send Thank You letters to the residents who also assisted with the 3 fallen trees. Dealing with all these incidents (Insurance Claim for Memorial Hall roof, finding contractors, emergency repairs etc) has disrupted planned activities, we will defer these to the January meeting.

The Council agreed to pay overtime for the Clerk for additional hours worked between 7th and 9th December. Details to be agreed.

5.4 With reference to item 5.6 in November, it was urgent to install the additional power sockets in the main hall before the new floor was fitted. Expenditure of £160 was noted.

6. To receive reports from Representatives to outside Bodies and discuss and agree upon any actions arising;

6.1 Lancashire Association of Local Councils (LALC)

Cllrs R Brookfield, M Lyons

No meetings.

6.2 Ormskirk Foundation Trust

Cllr A Timon

No meetings.

6.3 Shirdley Hill Community Association

Cllrs N McCarthy-Thomason & J Ferguson

The contractors have fitted the new flooring in St Aidan's Hall. The Council agreed to pay an extra cost of £280 + VAT for waste disposal which had not been included in the quote.

The switching on ceremony for the Christmas Lights incurred some last-minute expenditure. Cllr McCarthy-Thomason had to purchase a replacement electrical connector and tea urn. Noted for Cllr Expenses claim.

6.4 St Cuthbert's Church Committee

Cllr M Schofield

No meetings

7. To receive reports from Working Groups and agree upon any actions arising;

7.1 Finance

Cllrs. M Lyons, E Wright, A Timon, and K Wright

a) **To Review [Draft Budget 2025/26 and Precept Calculation](#)**

The Clerk explained the process for building a budget and the Precept calculation. Councillors asked questions about the proposed reductions in some budget lines. The final figure for the Precept is linked to the end of year outturn, currently expected to be £1000 to £2000 surplus, we will review again in January. This leads to a 7-10% increase in the Precept (£3 - 4,000)

Signed Chair Date

in the context that we reduced the Precept by 10% last year. Increased wage costs, including National Insurance and a higher allocation for repairs and maintenance are the major budget line increases.

- b) **To approve the [2023/24 CIL Return to WLBC](#)**
Agreed.

7.2 Human Resources

Cllrs. A Timon, K Wright, M Lyons, and M Schofield
Interviews for the post of Assistant Parish Clerk have been completed and Cathy Smith will start in January/February.

7.3 Traffic and Road Safety

Cllrs. N McCarthy-Thomason, R Brookfield, M Schofield and B Roberts
Construction lorries have been observed using the shortcut through the village. Cllr McCarthy-Thomason has already spoken to the site manager, but it is going to require a 2nd visit.

A resident fell on Heathey Lane. Cllr McCarthy-Thomason sent pictures of his injuries to LCC Cllr O'Toole, as additional support for our request for resurfacing of the Heathey Lane footpath/pavement.

Clerk to investigate whether there are official warning signs for Farm Vehicles but if so, we would need permission from LCC Highways to install them.

Clerk to contact LCC Parking Enforcement to discuss obstructions on Summerwood Lane.

7.4 Flooding

Cllrs. E Wright, R Brookfield and A Timon
No business.

7.5 Healthy Halsall

Cllrs. M Schofield, M Lyons and B Roberts
No business.

7.6 Planning & Development

Cllrs M Schofield and B Roberts
No business.

7.7 Environment & Biodiversity Working Group

Cllrs M Lyons, J Ferguson and Mr J Ferguson
No business.

8. [Planning Applications](#)

8.1 Applications

2024/1020/NMA, Grainstore, Plex Lane, Alterations to finishes

Signed Chair Date

8.2 Recent planning applications/decisions received since the agenda was published. (for planning news published on day of the meeting)

2024/0715/FUL 1 Halsall Farm Grove, children's play area - Approved

2024/1015/PNP Gorse Hill Farm, new access and farm track

Not appropriate to comment on PNP permission application. Wait until WLBC determines if a Planning Application is required.

8.3 To Note Recent Planning Decisions

2024/0080/TP. Hollybrooks Farm, Moss Road, Fell TPO tree, Refused

9. Finance

9.1 To approve the [Schedule of Payments for December](#) Agreed.

9.2 To review the [Spend to Date for November](#) (Dec Meeting) Agreed.

9.3 To approve the [Monthly Bank Reconciliation](#) (Dec Meeting) Agreed.

9.4 To confirm the bank balances on accounts & sign bank statements

Later confirmed by Cllr Timon who was unable to attend the meeting but has access to the bank account balances.

9.5 To agree that HPC will voluntarily pay pension scheme contributions. Either;

- a Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) at £1531 p.a.
- b NEST Company scheme at £364.57 p.a.

Option B Agreed. Halsall Parish Council will join the NEST Pension scheme if an employee requests membership of a pension scheme.

9.6 To agree the 2025/6 cross charging for admin & cleaning services to the Trust.

Comparison - if Trust still employed a Secretary

2024 Position with Trust Secretary (August 2024)	£719 p.m.
2025 Position with Trust Secretary (April 2025 + pay rise + NI)	£775 p.m.
2025 Position with Trust Secretary (April +1 hour)	£820 p.m.

2025/6 using Council Staff - Cross Charge amounts

- a 40% of gross salaries (inc new NI) £796 p.m.
- b 40% of full on-cost (+ Pension go to £826 or £924)
- c some other option

Reorganisation is £24 p.m. cheaper than status quo because Assistant Clerk costs less per hour than Trust Secretary (inc an extra hour per week) but slightly more expensive (£6) if we pay into NEST pension.

Even without the reorganisation, the Trust faces a significant increase of £100

Signed Chair Date

p.m. in wage costs.

Option B agreed. The cross-charging amount for 2025/26.

For further discussion in January. Should the Memorial Hall be required to cover all its costs? - the Council subsidises the cost of St Aidan's Hall?

10. Update on EV Car Parking Spaces
Deferred to January meeting

11. Update on proposal to provide CPR Training from Heartbeat UK
HPC asked to guarantee a minimum donation of £100 from course attendees.

Agreed.

1972 LGA s137 Donations to UK Charity

12. Update on Footpath 28. To agree on sending a letter to LCC.

[Draft letter from OSS to LCC](#)

[Draft letter from HPC to LCC](#)

Agreed. Clerk to adapt to Council Letterhead and send letter to LCC.

13. To agree s137 grant request from Halsall Proud & Tidy for £500

[Grant application](#)

Agreed.

1972 LGA s137 Donations to local voluntary groups of benefit to the community

14. To approve annual review of council policies & documents

a) [Standing Orders](#) - last reviewed Nov 23

b) [Financial Regulations](#) - last reviewed Jun 24

c) Asset Register - last reviewed Mar 24.

[Changes Required](#)

Agreed variations in Insurance values proposed by new Aviva Insurance, all in excess of previous insured values with Zurich.

Added details of insured property held in Trust which are included within the Policy.

d) [Financial Reserves](#) - last reviewed July 23

e) [Health & Safety Policy](#)- last reviewed Dec 23

f) [Complaints Policy](#) - last reviewed Jun 24

g) [Data Protection Policy](#) - last reviewed July 24

h) [Risk Register & Policy](#) - last reviewed Sep 24

i) [Codes of Conduct](#) - last reviewed Dec 23 (WLBC document)

j) (FR 1.7) Direct Debits and Delegated Expenditure - reviewed monthly

k) (FR 3.7) J.O'Donoghue will be Internal Auditor for 2024/25

l) (FR 6.1) Halsall Parish Council will bank with Unity Trust Bank

Signed Chair Date

No changes required to other Council documents.

Annual procedures in Financial Regulations confirmed.

- 15. Demonstration from Easywebsites, Parish Council website**
Need to upgrade to a WCAG 2.2 compliant website.

Deferred to January

Equality Act 2010

- 16. Notice of Information-Only Items**
Parish Clerk is on A/L w/c 16th December for 1 week
Cleaner is on A/L w/c 23rd December for 2 weeks

- 17. Date and time of next meeting**
Next meeting date will be 8th January 2025 at St Aidan's Hall

Meeting closed 20:48