

HALSALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Halsall Parish Council held on Wednesday 14th February at 7.30 p.m. at St Aidan's Hall, Renacres Lane, Halsall

PRESENT: , Cllr E Wright (Chair) , Cllr M Lyons(Vice Chair), Cllr K Wright, Cllr R Brookfield, Cllr N McCarthy-Thomason, Cllr J Ferguson, Cllr M Schofield, Cllr J Ridley, Cllr B Roberts and Cllr A Timon, C Pyne (Clerk), and 5 visitors.

1. Introductions and Apologies for absence

No apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Open Forum for 15 minutes for matters raised by members of the public

3.1 West Lancs Borough Councillors

WLBC Cllr M Westley spoke about the WLBC Budget process and stated that nothing (in particular charges for Green Waste or Car Parking) had been decided yet, it is just speculation. There is more concern that the Borough might not have a new Local Plan (that regulates planning and developments) until late 2025 and this may increase opportunities for developers to submit controversial planning applications.

There is a lot of local concern about HGV business traffic on Station Road (in Downholland Parish) and this is causing serious damage to the road. Our similar rural lanes are not suitable for heavy traffic and the poor state of the road infrastructure is evident everywhere.

3.2 Open Forum

A question was asked about potholes on Northmoor Lane. Cllr Timon will visit and create entries on the Love Clean Streets app. He has found that reports can be overlooked and then “drop-off” the system, so it is important to keep reporting them if no action has been taken.

Another question was asked about potholes on Gregory Lane roundabout . This issue has been escalated by Parish Council and LCC highways have responded (Item 23) with a diagram showing those areas of Halsall Road/Gregory Lane that have been identified as Grade 5 - “severe surface failure where full depth resurfacing or full reconstruction is required”. Until this is scheduled then LCC will fill any potholes as a temporary fix.

There is no further news on a potential planning application for a glamping site.

Item 7.7 Mr Ferguson as a member of the Biodiversity Working Party was then asked to report on attendance at LCC Local Nature Recovery Strategy workshop at Leyland. The Chair thanked Mr Ferguson for attending the event and for his report, attached to the minutes.

4. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 10th January 2024 as a correct record.

The minutes were **agreed** and signed.

5. Discuss and agree on any matters arising from Parish Clerk's Report

Cllrs A Timon and K Wright volunteered to assist the Clerk with the next major project, restoration of the War Memorial - identify appropriate specialised contractors with experience of working on listed monuments.

The National Lottery request for a new solar-assisted heating system was not approved,

An opportunity arose to purchase a 2nd hand metal storage cupboard to use for COSHH and the cost of £115 was approved as a business expense, together with purchases of the appropriate legal safety notices to fix to the cabinet.

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

6.1 Lancashire Association of Local Councils (LALC)

- Cllrs R Brookfield, J Ridley, E Wright

No recent meetings.

6.2 Ormskirk School

- Cllr A Timon

Last meeting raised issues of banking (a lot of local councils and voluntary organisations are having problems with new terms & conditions of high street banks) . Cllr Timon gave a positive recommendation on our use of Unity Trust, a specialist bank in this sector. Next meeting is in March.

6.3 Shirdley Hill Community Association

- Cllr McCarthy-Thomason

The SHCA held its first meeting. The event was well attended, the vacant committee positions were filled, the audience had a lot of positive suggestions for new events and fundraising. The Lunchtime Club is very popular and residents welcomed the improved sense of community.

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

7.1 Finance - Cllrs. E Wright, A Timon, M Schofield and K Wright

The Clerk was asked to chase the Internal Auditors about an interim inspection, if they had now completed their recruitment of additional staff.

7.2 Human Resources – Cllrs. A Timon, K Wright, M Lyons, M Schofield

Positive response to the advertised vacancies for Cleaner and Trust Secretary. The group will meet to consider setting up the interviews.

7.3 Traffic and Road Safety – Cllrs. N McCarthy-Thomason, R Brookfield, B Roberts and M Schofield

There has been a serious accident, multiple ambulances, at Plex Moss Lane crossroads. There are no specific details available. And another minor collision as traffic was diverted down unfamiliar lanes causing more disruption.

7.4 Flooding – Cllrs. E Wright and A Timon

WLBC Cllr Westley reported earlier on a lack of interest among all parties to the proposal from the Environment Agency to transfer their responsibility for managing the Banks Pumping Station to a replacement Internal Drainage Board.

7.5 Healthy Halsall – Cllrs. M Schofield, J Ridley, M Lyons, B Roberts

Cllr McCarthy-Thomason reported that the Headmaster was publishing a response, in the next edition of Halsall News, on the concerns raised by residents, about the school's admissions policy. The School Governors will also reply formally to the Council. There was a serious exchange of views and a conclusion was reached that residents, if they believe the school's admission policy needs changing, have to become involved with the school's governing body.

7.6 Planning & Development – Cllrs M Schofield and B Roberts

Nothing to report.

7.7 Environment & Biodiversity Working Group - Cllrs M Lyons and J Ferguson Report from the Leyland Event

Covered at start of the meeting in the public forum,

8. Planning Applications

No comments were raised on ;

8.1 Applications - to discuss whether the Parish Council should comment on:

T/2024/003/TCA , White Lodge, The Runnel, Tree pruning
2024/0008/FUL, Gesterfield Barn, Halsall Road, Removal of conditions
2023/1152/FUL, Sport Pavilion, Placement of storage container

8.2 To Note Recent Planning Decisions - all granted

2023/1092/FUL, Renacres Hall Farm, Renacres lane, Steel framed building
T/2023/0179/TPO, Halsall Farm Grove, Pruning trees over Carr Moss Lane

8.3 Planning Appeals

2022/0328/FUL Leckwith Contracts Ltd Land To The Rear Of 84 And 86, New Street, Halsall, Erection of a one and a half storey high detached house on land to the rear of 86 New Street, Halsall

9 Finance

a) WLBC have confirmed receipt of our Precept of £29,436 and confirmed the Band D calculation at £33.56, a reduction of 9.5%

b) **Agreed**, no changes to the regular schedule of payments for February.

c) To approve Financial Statement for January and sign Bank Reconciliation

d) To confirm that bank balances in the accounts agree with the balances at the bank **Agreed** and signed. Bank balances independently confirmed as correctly reported in the accounts.

e) To note a report on St Aidan's Income and Expenditure

Noted. Specific expenditure on St Aidan's Hall to date is £6335.40 and income from St Aidan's is £4363.50. This reflects both the cost of significant improvements and a significant increase in the number of hiring events. It is a general observation that very few village halls make a profit, they are provided as a public service.

f) To transfer the 2022 and 2023 total Wayleaves payments of £130.70 to Halsall War Memorial Playing Field & Hall charity, and any historical payments?

The payments will not be transferred, these are for the landowner. The Council provides financial support to the charity e.g. Item 18, so this money is indirectly provided to the charity.

g) To approve purchase of new recycling waste bins in the kitchen at a cost of £36
Agreed.

h) To consider payment of Salaries and HMRC Tax by Direct Debit.
Agreed. To reduce monthly administration on salaries through the use of Direct Debits payments which would only need amending annually.

i) To consider applying for a Unity Bank Charge Card at an initial cost of £50 plus £36 p.a.
Agreed. To constrain spending on minor items to the Clerk only.

j) To consider publishing the £100 transaction list
([Smaller Authorities Transparency Regulations 2015 s7.10](#))
Agreed. Although not legally required, as Halsall Parish Council turnover is in excess of the £25,000 limit, it is considered best practices in the sector to follow these regulations. If this information was sought through an FOI request then it would have to be released and the Information Commissioner's Office is in favour of proactive publication of information.

k) To approve quarterly payment to Bluesock for Parish Council Website at a cost of £60.
Agreed. Continue with quarterly payments so that the Council has more flexibility to respond to changing legislation and the need to migrate to a .gov.uk website.

10. To Consider Hire Agreement Conditions and Hire Charges for St Aidan's Hall
Deferred to a subsequent meeting due to time constraints.

11. To defer approval of a new version of Financial Regulations
Started the annual review of Financial Regulations at January meeting but NALC have since advised that a new version will be published in March 2024 , so we will wait to adopt this latest version.

12. To Consider providing a community skip.
Agreed. We will liaise with WLBC on arranging a Community skip day. (supervised waste collection, rather than an unsupervised domestic electrical drop-off container) at the Memorial Hall car park.

13. To Agree arrangements for an employed Cleaner
As reported at Item 7.2 the HR group of councillors will meet to organise the interviews.

14. To Consider an upgrade to St Aidan's CCTV at a cost of £1990 + VAT
Cllr Timon explained how an upgrade of St Aidan's CCTV to a digital system is linked to the Memorial Hall CCTV system with interchangeable cameras and servers but it was decided to obtain further quotes to ensure best value.

15. A review of the Parish Plan
Deferred to a subsequent meeting due to time constraints.

16. Update on Plex Lane Bus Shelter
In contact with Halsall Estates Land Agents (in Carlisle) to query the expired lease - was the land sold to new owners? Arrange for the shelter to be surveyed by a builder to ensure it is safe / worth retaining while land ownership is investigated.

17. Discuss a Resident's Offer to fund a Pedestrian Crossing on New Street for the School

A major road safety project is outside the scope and powers of both the Parish Council and the Borough Council. These matters are dealt with by the Lancashire County Council. Best to put these parties in touch with each other.

18. To Consider s19 Purchases for Memorial Hall Trust from CIL Fund

[\[Local Government Act \(Miscellaneous Provisions \) 1976\]](#)

- a) £450 + VAT for groundwork behind Snooker Club building
- b) £1750 + VAT for Felling Dead Trees & Pruning
- c) £200.44 to install Emergency Alarm in Disabled Toilet
- d) £789 + VAT for two additional CCTV Cameras
- e) £286.10 + VAT for external fire alarm siren

Agreed to meet the requests from Memorial Hall Trust to fund these projects from the CIL budget - except Item (d) - which is now subject to further CCTV quotes from more suppliers.

19. To Consider purchasing £150 Parish Hedgehog Pack from LCC Biodiversity Fund

Not approved. Good idea but there are craftsmen in the village that could manufacture similar sustainable items from wood at little or no cost. To be investigated further.

20. To Consider external maintenance of St Aidan's car park, hedging, gutters & drains at a cost of £100 per month.

Agreed.

21. To write a letter to LCC Councillor in support of British Farmers

Agreed. Cllr Schofield to contact Young Farmers Association for a copy of their template letter.

22. To consider a request for Grants from Bees & Butterflies Brigade

- a) £80 for Wildflower Planting (suggest LCC Biodiversity Fund)

Agreed.

- b) £220 for Spring Flowers in Churchyard area (suggest S137 Grant)

Agreed by majority decision.

23. Notice of Information-Only Items

Demonstration of changes to Halsall Parish Council website was deferred to a subsequent meeting due to time constraints.

Noted that St Aidan's will be a Polling Station for 2024 May Local and later General Elections.

Noted that the condition of Trees at entrance to Renacres Lane was reported to LCC Highways following road blockages in October and December, and LCC will investigate.

Written to the Head of Highways regarding the approach to fixing potholes on Gregory's Lane. LCC have responded with a diagram on the condition of road surface at Gregory's Lane roundabout and the need for a resurfacing project.

It was decided that the request from St Cuthbert's Church for a Councillor representative

on their new committee to investigate the need for repairs, grants and future use of the buildings should be a substantive agenda item at the next meeting so that councillors can volunteer and the request can be voted on.

An FOI request from the church was noted and will be published on council websites as recommended as best practice by ICO.

Correspondence with Open Spaces Society on footpaths was noted and a meeting will be arranged.

24. Date and time of next meeting:

2nd Wednesday would be 13th March 2024 at 7.30 pm Memorial Hall.

Meeting finished at 9.10 pm.

Draft

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Report to: Halsall Parish Council

February 2024

By: John Ferguson

I attended the Lancashire Mapping Nature & Communities Road Show at Leyland Council HQ on behalf of the Parish Council. This was to inform interested parties of the DEFRA driven strategy by local authorities and its agency Natural England that will span twenty-five years.

This is web page link on the Lancashire County Council site detailing its plans

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/environmental/local-nature-recovery-strategy/>

The meeting commenced with briefing on planned actions on the following points

v Developing habitats, reserves.

v Mapping valuable habitats.

v LNRS can provide support and co-benefits that should reflect local priorities.

v Encourage health and well being by aiming to have green space within fifteen minutes of people's doorsteps.

Target strategies that will include:

v Locally led and co-produced evidence-based actions to achieve bio-diverse net gains.

v Drawing together to fund opportunities.

v Grants for tree planting.

It's Lancashire's ambition to reverse the decline in nature across the county.

How:

v Having an open approach.

v The use of experts.

v Stake Holder mapping.

v Engagement strategy live plan.

v Website information (link at top)

v Seeking opportunities and challenges

v Land Manager engagement

v Community map for self refers and link workers

Final Points:

v The road show leaders took lots of feedback notes from the delegates and will feedback via email.

v I requested a copy of the presentation and info regarding free resources.

v There is a new system to pay subsidies to Farmers to support Nature called ELMs that has replaced the Countryside Stewardship scheme. This rewards Farmers for working with neighbouring farms and landowners to support climate and Nature aims.

The LCC web page on LNRS indicates that the county local divisions, in our case West Lancs, will take a lead on implementing the Environment Act across its area.

At a local level there may be opportunities to enhance natural habitats in spots across the Parish. We have the Bees and Butterfly group who are keen seed/plant wildflowers that will encourage insects which in turn will help encourage wildlife. Even rewilding little corners on public space all helps towards improving our natural environmental habitats.

The Halsall Canyon on the canal is a diverse nature corridor and is worthy of some investment for local residents to enjoy green space.

The small wood adjacent to Halsall Hall is now under the auspices of Halsall Estates would make a green space for residents by making a circular track through it accessed by the bridge. Halsall Estates might be persuaded to agree to this.

The in your area app was suggested for information on climate and nature support through the link below for Social Farms and Gardens.

<https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/>




Further information was promised via email which I will forward when received

John Ferguson

10/02/24

Lancashire County Council Highways report on road surface conditions



	<p>Grade 3 - Serviceable</p>	<p>although these should not have a significant impact on road users. Damages may be limited to the surface or they may indicate structural issues that could cause more rapid deterioration. As with Grade 2, risk factors are also identified within these grades, such as patching or re-instatements</p>
	<p>Grade 4 - Functional impairment</p>	<p>This grade refers to levels and types of damage that affect the functionality of the asset and that have a noticeable impact on users. The damage can usually be rectified by surface treatments, but there may also be signs of structural damage.</p>
	<p>Grade 5 - Structural or severe surface impairment</p>	<p>This grade indicates severe surface failure and/or structural impairment, where full-depth resurfacing, or partial or full reconstruction is required to rectify the problems.</p>