

HALSALL PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on
Wednesday 20th March 2024 at 7.30 p.m. at Memorial Hall, Halsall Road, Halsall**

1. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th May 2023
Minutes approved at regular Council Meeting 14th June 2023
2. Report from Chair of Halsall Parish Council.
See attached Chair's Report
3. Parish Council Financial Statement 2023-2024.
See attached Financial Report
4. Other Parish Reports
 - a) Halsall Proud & Tidy – see attached.
 - b) Bees & Butterflies – see attached.
 - c) St Cuthbert's School – see attached.
 - d) Friends of Village Green

Councillor Lyons gave a report on behalf of the Friends of the Village Green (FROG).

The Group would like to thank the Parish Council for supporting them with grants for a new raised border, sponsoring the Christmas Tree lights and paying for green waste disposal. The Group would also like to thank the many members of the community who have also donated time and gifts. The donation of a wooden shed for storage and shelter has been especially useful with this wet winter season.

The very wet weather has softened the ground considerably and 3 trees have been uprooted. The raised shrub bed will hopefully provide a better environment for planting as this area is prone to flooding.

The donated Christmas tree and lights was celebrated with a switch-on event which over 70 people attended. The Group have planted more bulbs and installed bird boxes in the wooded areas.

The Village Green won the Best Open Space award in the Lancashire Best Kept Village competition.

- e) Shirdley Hill Community Association

Councillor McCarthy-Thomason gave a report on behalf of the Shirdley Hill Community Association. This new group has many members in the village supporting activities at St Aidan's Village Hall and on the Village Green. The work done by volunteers on refurbishing St Aidan's Hall has been very successful with an increase in the number of hires.

There was a small flood over Christmas/New Year period due to a frozen pipe. Volunteers quickly fixed this. There was damage to the carpet and laminate floor, but these were

already scheduled for replacement. The brickwork has been repaired, new cupboards and a kitchen extractor fan have been fitted. It is planned to install some garden planters at the hall and enter it into Best Kept Village competition.

f) Halsall News

Councillor McCarthy-Thomason is the Editor of Halsall News magazine. He reported that the magazine is popular with advertisers with three new full-page adverts, but paper and printing costs are increasing. Recent magazines have included extra pages, but this increases costs, the magazine needs to balance content pages with adverts within a fixed limit of 36 pages. The Church and Parish Council subsidise the magazine and we need to do more to reduce the costs in the short and long term.

5. Open Forum

A question was asked about St Cuthbert's School Admissions Policy

The Parish Council has been corresponding with the School Governors regarding concerns from local residents about the priorities of school admissions policy. There appears to be more priority for active churchgoers than residents. This leads to children and parents travelling in from the surrounding area which contributes to car parking problems at school times.

It is important for the viability of the school to maintain its admission numbers due to the declining number of local school age children. The School's admission's policy has to go out for consultation periodically (believe that is in September this year) . This would be the time for all interested parties to engage with the School Governors and the consultation process.

A question was asked about the noticeboard on the field.

This noticeboard has been replaced by the window display noticeboards and is now considered redundant. The next meeting of the Parish Council can consider dismantling it. It was suggested the window displays would benefit from a title banner in the top windows and to encourage people to post double-sided posters so that the content can be read from inside the hall too.

6. Meeting Closed at 20:50

Halsall Parish Council

Chair's report on 2023/24 activities (01/04/2023-20/03/2024)

Halsall Parish is blessed with so many volunteers in various groups doing their bit. There are;

- **Halsall Proud and Tidy**, who tirelessly maintain, broadly, the area around the Memorial Hall and the centre of the village.
- **FROGS (Friends of Shirdley Hill Village Green)**, who maintain the Village Green and surrounding area.
- Newly formed **Shirdley Hill Community Association**, which replaced Shirdley Hill Residents' Association. The newly formed Community Association provide luncheons on a fortnightly basis at St Aidan's Hall, and organise many other events.
- **Many local volunteers** have also stepped forward and assisted with the redecoration and refurbishment of St Aidan's Hall.
- Newly formed **Bees and Butterflies Brigade** whose aim is to involve all ages in providing habitats for nature to thrive and enhancing the flora and fauna in the Village.
- **Parish Councillors** who under the Warm Spaces initiative, have been organising coffee mornings monthly at the Memorial Hall.

Also, HPC Councillors are volunteers too and we support hands on and if it can, HPC supports the various activities, to the best of our financial abilities.

Our employee, Chris Pyne, the Parish Clerk is the Council's Responsible Finance Officer and administrator, who ensures all Council financial and other matters comply with legislation, prepares accounts, submits returns and acts as bookings manager/ advisor to the residents of Halsall / makes referrals to WLBC and LCC/ and is the first point of contact in local government matters.

The Parish Council maintains St Aidan's Hall and supports many issues around Halsall Parish directly from revenue Precept received, such as four bus shelters, grounds maintenance at Shirdley Hill, notice boards, benches, Spids and so on but also indirectly supports the Memorial Hall, which is a charity, via capital grants for infrastructure projects and repairs. The Parish Council is sole Trustee of the War Memorial Playing Fields and Hall Trust.

The Parish Council has had significant changes and activities in the previous 12 months to 20/03/2024, including: -

Administration

- Resignation of Dave Bond as Parish Clerk on 30/11/2022 in the previous financial year
- Appointment of Chris Pyne into the role at 01/05/2023 in this current 2023/24 financial year.
- I have occupied the Chair for two years now and during his time have witnessed considerable changes. Of the 10 Councillors, only Cllr Brookfield and I remain as

elected 2021 Councillors and we have eight new Councillors co-opted since then. Also, as stated earlier, our Parish Clerk, Chris, joined us in May 2023. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks for the extremely hard and effective work put in by Chris during this transition and to the new Councillors whose enthusiasm, new ideas and initiatives, enabled administratively by Chris have lifted our Council to greater heights of efficiency and service to the Public. We have a great team and follow a good long tradition.

- I would also like to express my appreciation for the outgoing Councillors and Clerk for their long service and diligence, over many previous years.
- At this point, I also would like to state that I do not wish to put my name forward as Chair for 2024/25, should I be elected as a Councillor for this year. Thank you all for your support over the last two years.
- HPC welcomed Cllrs Beth Roberts and Julie Ferguson who were co-opted in 2023/24.
- Banking change from RBS to Unity Bank enabling dual online payment authorisation.
- More user-friendly accounting system developed by Chris - enables clearer information presentation.
- Projectors and Wi-Fi were installed at St Aidan's Hall and the Memorial Hall to enable paperless meetings to take place as Agendas, Minutes and other information is projected on screens from the intranet for all to see. Speakers are also installed.
- Intranet further developed, for Cllr's to access HPC history and ongoing matters.
- Funded 50% of Halsall News costs not covered by adverts receipts.
- Made donations to support various voluntary groups.

St Aidan's Hall, Shirdley Hill Village Green and various HPC matters.

- Memorial Coronation rose bushes purchased and planted at SH Village Green
- Coronation Event held at Shirdley Hill Village Green funded by local volunteers.
- Leaking gutters fixed at St A, cleaned out and drains unblocked by Councillors, local residents and an employed contractor.
- Contractors are hired to maintain the car park, hedges at St Aidan's and also the Shirdley Hill Village Green.
- Spids are maintained by a hired contractor, batteries charged and rotated around Halsall's various locations.
- New signs for St A donated and installed by a local resident.
- Electric upgrade, new lights, a projector screen, and new kitchen flooring installed at St Aidan's, funded by a local resident FOC to the Parish Council.
- Hand driers have been installed in the toilets.
- St A decorated inside and out -joint voluntary effort by Councillors and residents.
- New enlarged storage cupboards have been installed on the platform, following a water leak which has also been repaired.
- The kitchen has been decorated, upgraded and a new fridge purchased.
- Much greater use of St A by dance groups and other hirers has increased regular receipts.
- Fortnightly luncheon club has become established. This is run by Shirdley Hill Community Association.

- HPC is considering helping to fund an information notice board about Halsall.
- Entering LBKV for 24/25. Shirdley Hill Village Green came first in their class in 23/24.
- HPC and the Trust each received 2x donations of £1k from West Lancs Heritage Association which has helped towards our improvements.
- An 80th Anniversary of D-day Event is planned at the Village Green, organised by Shirdley Hill Community Association and funded by Cllr O'Toole's discretionary grant.

MH related matters (HPC is the sole Trustee of MH)-partly funded by HPC revenue a/c, CIL funding, grants received or hire and rental receipts.

- Memorial Hall hosted a Coronation Event funded by Cllr O'Toole's discretionary grant.
- Memorial Hall hosted Remembrance Day refreshments **funded by HPC.**
- WWII plaques at the Memorial Gates cleaned and re-lettered. **funded by HPC.**
- Refurbishment of the monument plaques and fixing chains. Ongoing to be **funded by HPC**
- New projector and wi-fi installed at MH, **funded by CIL via HPC**
- Completed new path in the field to the Memorial gates, replaced wire netting along the hedgerow adjoining the road for child safety. **Funded by CIL via HPC**
- Access Gate provided next to the Memorial Gates **funded by CIL via HPC**
- New saplings to thicken road hedgerow awarded **FOC** by Woodland Trust being grown on by FROGS and awaiting planting in 2024, along the roadside edge of the MH.
- Grants received for 2 Coronation Events one at MH and one at Shirdley Hill Village Green on 6/5/2023 and 07/05/2023 from LCC via Cllr O'Toole's discretionary scheme, as well as Go Fund me initiated by Cllr McCarthy Thomason Joint effort Trust/Church/School/ residents of Shirdley Hill area
- Gazebos purchased for each event.
- Coronation memorial plaque to be made to place adjacent to 1911 one in wall opposite War Memorial under consideration. Oak Tree to be planted or possibly a Christmas Tree in the MH grounds.
- Snooker Hut – new windows installed, **funded by CIL via HPC.**
- Car Park partly resurfaced thanks to a generous donation by a resident.
- Flood and muddy area behind the Snooker Hut resurfaced – **funded by CIL via HPC**
- Trees pruned along Cross Lane - **funded by CIL via HPC**
- Diseased cherry tree felled MH grounds - **funded by CIL via HPC**
- Gutters were repaired and anti-leaf hedgehogs installed.
- Long standing underground water leak at the MH hall was traced and repaired leading to lower water charges.
- Football has not been played this season due to boggy ground. Land drains have be flushed and further drainage work is needed and planned. There will be a container

placed to store nets and equipment and JN Sports will start their training and playing in due course.

- Cricket will resume after Easter. We thank the cricketers for keeping the playing fields so immaculate.
- The application for a Car park adjacent to Cross Lane has stalled and is on hold pending further considerations.
- A supervised community skip is to be installed in the MH car park.
- Jointly BH and Trust funded electricity upgrade in the Bakehouse. **Grant from HPC**
- An 80th Anniversary of DDay is planned at the MH. This will likely be funded by HPC s137 grant.
- Play equipment has been cleaned and maintained. Thank you, ladies, and Gentlemen
-

Liz Wright Chair HPC and Trust.

20/03/2024

DRAFT

2023/2024 Financial Summary for Parish Meeting (20th March 2024)		
Predicted Receipts		
WLBC	£35,977	Parish Precept and other WLBC payments
Donations & Other	£1,994	£1000 Donation and £800 LCC grants
VAT Refund	£2,623	Thorough reclaim on all VAT paid previous year
St Aidans Hall	£3,645	Set zero expectation due to poor state of repair
Bank Interest	£829	Changed bank to better rate of interest
Total	£45,067	
Budget	£35,977	Expected Income
Surplus Income	£9,090	C/Fwd to next year
Predicted Expenditure		
to 31st March 2024	£33,687	
Budget	£35,977	
Underspend	£2,290	Some savings, some unfinished projects C/Fwd to next year
Reserves		
Current Reserves	£9,664	Was 21% (should be 25-100%)
Potential C/Fwd	£11,380	Extra income plus savings on spending
Reduced Precept	£3,200	Spend reserves to reduce Precept by 10%
Add to Reserves	£8,180	
Predicted Reserves	£17,844	Will be 42%

Halsall Proud & Tidy Group
Report to Parish Council 2024

Our group of volunteers have sorted out many grot spots over the years and the village is looking better and better. but one area was looking in need of not just some TLC but a major overhaul, so our main focus this year has been on Bishops Walk

Very pleased to report that our plea for help was met with enthusiasm from a quite a number of new recruits. Over a few Saturday mornings an army of up to 17 volunteers came along and cleared the path edges, pruned lots of overgrown shrubs and recycled the offcuts to make a dead hedge along the field boundary. Areas have been prepared for planting more shrubs and herbaceous plants along the sides of both entrances, The aim is to give a more structured look on entering the area, keep the path edges trimmed and leave the very centre to grow wild. We are trying to attract more wildlife and have put up 8 birdboxes purchased with grant money via the Parish Council and are preparing bee boxes and an owl box to install shortly.

As always Brian Lloyd has been very active all year around the village mowing, pruning, brushing up, repairing and painting. Other volunteers regularly pick litter in their own time We will be planting up the many troughs around the village in May to give lots of summer colour and installing the hanging baskets as usual.

Our entry to Lancashire Best Kept Village has been lodged and we have chosen 4 special areas around the village in the Outstanding Features class. These are the Churchyard, the Bakery (which was runner up in last years competition) Bishops Walk and the Cricket Grounds (which also was a runner up in last years competition)

We are very grateful for the annual contribution from the Parish Council to help us carry out our work and we have supplemented this with some fund raising activities ourselves Enid & I have been a part of this for many years and are hoping the interest of some new younger people will enable us to take a gradual step back in the future.

The Bees and Butterflies Brigade

Report to The Halsall Parish Council – March 2024

To All Our Councillors,

Thank you for your invitation to your open forum. I'm sorry that I cannot be with you in person. However, I wanted to thank you whole-heartedly for allocating some funds to "The Bees and Butterflies Brigade". We have used the money to buy alpine plants and native wildflower seed for St. Cuthbert's Churchyard. The alpine planting is due to proceed this Sunday afternoon, 24th March, and the seed will be sown during our April meeting on the 21st of that month. We have set up hosepipes to allow us to water the new planting, so it should have every chance of success. My plan is to look after the plants myself initially, but to teach others how to do so as time progresses – some of our sessions this summer will be focused on maintenance.

As a group we now have over 20 members and I hope we can add to that number as the year progresses. We are trying to supplement Parish Council funding with some of our own and we've just run a successful "Afternoon Tea" event in The Memorial Hall. We are planning a plant sale in the churchyard in May, furnished with home-grown, bee-friendly plants and supported by green-fingered members of the community.

I was lucky enough to attend Lancashire's meeting on their "Local Nature Recovery Strategy" in January. I met lots of people keen to give nature a helping hand but it was particularly productive to meet an ecologist from The Canal and River Trust. She helped me explore the idea of "adopting" a small canal-side area in Halsall, to which plants for pollinators might be added. We have a meeting in place next week to explore which area this might be and to discuss what could be done; I'm really hoping that this will be another opportunity to bring the community together to enhance our village and help pollinators too. There is no time-scale for this project as yet but it is possible some canal-side planting might take place during the summer months.

In the autumn the group will return to the churchyard to start planting parts of the Memorial Garden. This area has been opened up significantly as a result of the hard work of Colin Throp and his loyal volunteers; the area is light enough now to support low-growing, woodland-style planting. We will have to bring in some extra top-soil to be able to plant amongst the tree-roots but I think it can be done. I'm planning a carpet of native and garden plants to create a soft, natural feel, particularly in the spring. We won't be able to do the whole area at once - the Memorial Garden will be developed gradually, one area at a time, depending on the available time and funding.

Finally, we would love to help The Village Bakehouse and The Memorial Trust add bee-friendly planting to the grassy areas around the buildings if such a plan became desirable to you all.

Thank you once again for your support – it really is appreciated. A special "thank you" to Chris Pyne, who has smoothed the way for me these last few months. Thank you to all those people involved in the running of St. Cuthbert's who decided to give me a chance. Thank

you, too, to “Halsall Proud and Tidy Group” for helping me get “The Bees and Butterflies Brigade” up and running – I am indebted to their local knowledge and kindness.

Clare Edwards

DRAFT

Report for the Parish Council : Halsall St Cuthbert's Primary School

Halsall St Cuthbert's continues to be a thriving school within the local area. It provides an excellent education for local children within the village and also for those from further afield in Southport, Birkdale, Ainsdale, Scarisbrick and Ormskirk etc.

The present Number on Roll (NOR) is 177 and there are 6 class bases.

There is a strong and healthy budget and this is maintained by ensuring a consistent NOR each year. The school employs around 30 people including teachers, teaching assistants, admin staff, cleaners and welfare.

Standards at the school continue to be high.

Over the years, the Key stage 2 results (Reading, Writing, Grammar/Punctuation and Mathematics) have been significantly above both the National Average and the LEA average. Staff do an amazing job in helping children prepare well and achieve their very best in the Year 6 SATS. This certainly helps them greatly as they move on to secondary school.

The school invests a great deal of time organising sporting activities and opportunities for inter-school competition. At a local level (West Lancashire) the school regularly wins trophies in netball, swimming, dancing, athletics, football, cross country and benchball, etc.

On several occasions over the past few years, the school has represented West Lancashire in the Lancashire County Finals in Blackpool. (athletics, dance, football)

The school has fabulous grounds and facilities. Only recently, the playground drainage system had to be overhauled and the Activity Trail Equipment underwent a major refurbishment. This involved a huge financial investment.

The school continues to work closely with the local church and Reverend Susan. Reverend Susan regularly visits school to take worship. The children are also invited into church for special services/occasions within the Christian calendar.

Outside the classroom curriculum, the school is constantly trying to enrich the lives of children, by organizing a wide range of wonderful experiences and opportunities.

As well as the PGL residential for both the Year 4 and the Year 5 children, there is also the Year 6 Llandudno holiday and a multitude of educational visits to venues such as Martin Mere, Lancaster Castle, Blackpool Zoo, Knowsley Safari Park, the Chill Factory, Ainsdale Beach, Rock and River Outdoor Centre. There is the Strawberry Teas afternoon, the Harvest Service, the Mothers' Day Service, the Sports Day, the Leavers' Service, the Christmas Concerts and Nativities, Confirmation classes and the Confirmation Service with the Bishop. Then there's the Rock Steady Music Initiative, the Summer Carnival Performances, Family Fun Night, various PTFA events such as Bingo Night, Bonfire Night, Art Competitions, Book Fairs, the Christmas Pantomime and Christmas parties. There is also a good breadth of non-sporting after-school activities. There are clubs for chess and art, and one based on fruit and vegetable garden.

We want their time spent at Halsall St Cuthbert's, to be as memorable as possible.

Doug Scholes (Head Teacher)