

HALSE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17th APRIL 2024 at 7:30 pm AT HALSE VILLAGE HALL

Present:	Mr I Walker	Chair
	Mrs S Haselock	
	Mr D Huxtable	
In attendance	Mrs C Windeatt	Clerk to the Council
In attendance for part of the meeting	Mr G Wren	Somerset Councillor

	<p>Public Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 						
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs K Robinson Burge 						
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 						
3.	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting be approved 						
4.	<p>Actions from Previous Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. 						
5.	<p>Roads and footpaths</p> <p>5.1 Highways Monthly Report</p> <p>A highways report was circulated prior to the meeting. The salient points are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whitmoor Lane – SC Highways have inspected and agreed to repair potholes. Milverton Road – Leaking water jets; currently SC Highways do not believe this currently presents a safety issue. No action proposed. Halse Water Bridge – Damage to the bridge has been passed to Structures for action. Sunnyside & New Cottage – the subsiding bank has been deemed by SC as the responsibility of the owner. Stoford Lane – Water leak – SC have found the source of the water leak and are looking at means to divert water to a drain to stop surface water and erosion in the future. Telephone box – drain below the telephone box causes flooding – if there is sufficient money in the budget they may dig out the drain to improve the culvert to reduce flooding. Heathfield Road – Gulleys are due to be dug out on either side to remove surface water and then potholes will be repaired <p>5.2 Footpaths Monthly Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 						
6.	<p>Planning</p> <p>6.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of the three planning visits were signed by the Chair Arrangements for a site visit to Garden Cottage, Halse, planning application no 18/24/0008/T to be organised by the clerk. 						
7.	<p>Finance</p> <p>7.1 Schedule of Payments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following contractual payments were made on 2 April 2024: <table> <tr> <td>Clerk’s Fee</td> <td>£169.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Clerk’s expenses</td> <td>£34.19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Website costs</td> <td>£90.97</td> </tr> </table>	Clerk’s Fee	£169.99	Clerk’s expenses	£34.19	Website costs	£90.97
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	<p>VAT payable £19.19</p> <p>The following payment was approved:</p> <p>Reimbursement to Halse Village Hall relating to EV Charging Points £81.17</p>
8.	<p>Unitary Authority Update – <i>This item was discussed at the beginning of the meeting when Cllr Gwil Wren was in attendance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Wren brief the meeting on the current Somerset Council position. The Council balanced the budget agreeing a 2% increase, and have avoided declaring bankruptcy under Section 114. SC are taking steps to reduce the deficit. The Government have agreed that SC can use the Capitalisation Directive which enables a council to use capital assets to assist with their finances. SC are currently selling properties to help with this year’s finances. Cllr Wren confirmed that the Highways £600,000 budget has been preserved for this financial year, but other areas of the budget will experience cost cuts. SC have appointed Keir as their new highways subcontractor. Cllr Wren confirmed the major council costs are children’s social care and adult social care. • The Chair advised Cllr Wren of the early stages discussions between Ash Priors Parish representatives and himself, and sought advice regarding the legal process for a village without a Parish Council wishing to join an established Parish Council. The best resource will be SALC. • <i>Cllr Wren left the meeting following these discussions.</i> • The Chair updated the meeting on the LCN meetings. Due to the cost to SC of facilitating these meetings it is likely that they will be cancelled under the current SC cost saving exercise.
9.	<p>Grants</p> <p>9.1 Grant Form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisions to the draft grant form were discussed. It was agreed to adopt this grant application system once the grant form has been revised. <p>9.2 Grants to be made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed no grants to be made at the present time
10.	<p>Risk Assessment</p> <p>The Risk Assessment form was reviewed. The Electrical Charging Points were added under the ‘Theft’ heading.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to contact insurers and add the EVP at a value of £3300 to the policy</p>
11.	<p>Co-option to fill vacancy on Parish Council</p> <p>The following action was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk to contact Electoral Services to advise of the vacancy and agree the terms of the Casual Vacancy advert • Clerk to follow the process for filling this vacancy and keep the Council advised.
12.	<p>Preston Solar Farm</p> <p>The Chair confirmed he had received the draft Community Benefit Fund Agreement from Novus, and has entered discussion regarding the terms of this agreement. The Chair to keep the Council advised of progress.</p>
13.	<p>Clerk’s Report</p> <p>The clerk had circulated her report prior to the meeting. The salient points are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is anticipated access to the NatWest bank account will be resolved shortly. • Draft year end accounts will be finalised shortly for discussion with the Chair. • Statutory Documents – These need reviewing prior to the Annual Meeting, and adopted at that meeting. Clerk to revise using latest recommended NALC templates and liaise with the Chair.
14.	<p>Matters of Report</p> <p>14.1 Village Hall Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The solar panels and batteries have now been installed. A new energy contract including SEG payments are currently being negotiated.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hallmark Scheme – the committee are currently preparing for an inspection by the Hallmark Scheme assessors. • The governing document has been revised to reflect representatives of the current organisations active within the village. This will be discussed at the village hall AGM on 15 May. • Accounts for the year end to 31/03/2024 have been prepared and are awaiting examination by the Independent Examiner, prior to the AGM. • Insurance – this is due for renewal in June 2024, and it is anticipated there will be a large increase in the annual premium. <p>14.2 Police Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No report received. <p>14.3 Other</p> <p>None</p>
15	<p>Items for Next Meeting</p> <p>None</p>
16	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next Ordinary meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 5 June 2024 at 7:30 pm with the Annual Meeting scheduled for Wednesday 15 May 6:30 pm</p>

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