

HALSE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20th NOVEMBER 2024 at 6:30 pm AT HALSE VILLAGE HALL

Present:	Mr I Walker	Chair
	Mrs K Robinson Burge	Vice-Chair
	Mr L Morris	Footpaths
	Cllr Gwil Wren	Somerset Councillor
	Mrs C Windeatt	Clerk to the Council
Members of the Public in attendance:	Mr C Kinch	

	<p>Reports from County Councillors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cllr Gwil Wren addressed the meeting. Please see item 10.1 giving details of Cllr Wren's update from Somerset Council. The Chair advised Cllr Wren that no action had been taken regarding the bridge over Halse Water as discussed at the previous meeting. Cllr Wren left the meeting at 8:00 pm <p>Public Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">None
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mrs S HaselockCllr Dave Mansell
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">None
3.	<p>Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 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">It was confirmed that all actions from the previous meeting have been executed. Any outstanding matters will be discussed at this meeting.
5. 5.1 5.2	<p>Statutory Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Publication Scheme – This statutory document was adopted by CouncillorsReserves Policy – This document was adopted by Councillors <p>Action: Clerk to upload above documents on parish council website.</p>
6. 6.1	<p>Preston Solar Farm – Community Benefit Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Chair wrote to Innova accepting their offer in respect of the Community Benefit Fund. To date no response has been received. The Chair advised that he had received notice from Innova that a planning application in respect of the electricity cable route will be submitted to Somerset Council in the very near future. This application does not relate to any land within the Halse PC boundary.

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7. 7.1	<p>Roads and footpaths</p> <p>Highways September Report</p> <p>There are 2 issues to report on at this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The continuing deterioration of Halse Water Bridge. No progress has been made by Somerset Council towards the repair of the bridge. The issue has now been shown to a representative of Wessex Conservation, a building company with proven experience of wall repairs and road closures. They are due to prepare a quotation and the intent is to send this to the Structures Officer SC and ask if he wishes to employ Wessex Conservation to conduct the work or complete it themselves. The bank below Sunnyside Cottage (opposite Willow Cottage) on Halse Road is gradually slipping into the road. The owner contests that this is the responsibility of Highways but Highways say it is the owner's issue. I have written to Highways requesting they make clear their argument with the owner so that she takes onboard the problem and addresses it. As it stands the owners tenants are being extremely patient, diverting the footpath to their door further back from the edge to avoid risk to their four children. Unless the slip is addressed the fear is that a period of bad weather could result in further subsidence and a potential road block. <p>Footpaths Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Morris fed back to the meeting following the litter pick and footpath clearance work which took place on 21 September. 16 volunteers joined the working party; two black sacks of rubbish were collected. Cllr Morris reported that seven footpath signposts were missing. One footpath was not accessible. Cllr Morris has contacted the landowner regarding this, but has not received a response. The footpath adjacent to Tugwell farm is overgrown. One of the volunteers will be liaising with the owner of that property and will undertake clearance work with her permission. It was agreed that this was a very successful venture and will be repeated on an annual basis. Action: Cllr Morris to obtain quote for the purchase of footpath posts as noted above 								
8. 8.1	<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One planning application has been received in respect of Little Paddocks Action: Clerk to arrange site visit with the applicants 								
9. 9.1	<p>Finance</p> <p>Schedule of payments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payments approved at the previous meeting in the sum of £718.81 were actioned. Since that date the following payments have been made: <table> <tr> <td>1. Grant to St James the Lesser Church approved at Sept meeting</td><td>£1,200.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>2. SALC re training course for the clerk</td><td>£40.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>3. Halse Village hall re hall hire</td><td>£84.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>£1,324.00</td></tr> </table> <p>Monies received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Infrastructure Levy monies received £3,144.57 <p>Bank account reconciled 28/10/2024 = £20,880.50</p>	1. Grant to St James the Lesser Church approved at Sept meeting	£1,200.00	2. SALC re training course for the clerk	£40.00	3. Halse Village hall re hall hire	£84.00	Total	£1,324.00
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Total	£1,324.00								
9.2	<p>Budget planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The clerk had issued a budget planning sheet for the 2025/26 financial year for discussion purposes and in readiness for setting the precept at the next meeting. As a result of implementing the Reserves Policy, a Reserve Account will be set up with Nat West 								

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9.3	<p>to accrue interest on the General Reserve, Earmarked Reserves and CIL monies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The clerk's salary had been reviewed using the SLCC Job Evaluation Advice Note, and the recommendation for incremental pay increases on 01 April 2025 and 01 April 2026 were agreed, bringing the clerk's salary in line with national guidelines. <p>Action: Cllrs to feedback their 2025/26 budget proposals to the clerk prior to the next meeting.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to contact Nat West bank regarding Reserve Account.</p> <p>Payments approved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two payments were approved: (1) Electric Vehicle Charging Point signage; (2) Christmas Tree <p>Action: Chair to arrange for the above purchases</p>
10. 10.1	<p>Co-option to fill vacancy on Parish Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A vacancy has arisen due to the resignation of Cllr Huxtable on 31 October 2024. The Clerk advised that Electoral Services have been advised of this casual vacancy and the appropriate notice has been posted on the Parish Council noticeboard with a closing date of 6 December 2024.
11. 11.1	<p>Unitary Authority Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Wren updated the meeting on the continued discussions within Somerset Council and actions being taken regarding the financial state of the council, which is under severe strain due to budget shortfall. Cllr Wren reported that 200 voluntary redundancies have been implemented, with further redundancies anticipated over the next few months. It is a difficult and sensitive time for council employees. More detailed information concerning the 2025/26 budget will be disseminated shortly. The Chair reiterated again that parish councils are still unaware of the services which are going to be devolved to local parishes, which causes problems at a local level in respect of budgeting for unforeseen and unknown costs with particular reference to gulley clearances. Cllr Wren referred to the Local Plan, which parish councils have been asked to feed into. The Clerk advised that Halse Parish Council has not received this survey. Cllr Wren to arrange for this to be forwarded to the clerk. Cllr Wren also advised of the Parish On Line website which a number of parishes are signed up to. Clerk to investigate. The Chair raised the issue once again of the damage to the bridge over Halse Water, which is on the repair list with Structures, but as yet no notification of when this repair will be carried out has been received. <p>Actions: As noted above</p>
12. 12.1	<p>Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The clerk had circulated the grant request Halse Village Hall in respect of a retrospective payment for the insurance of the hall in the sum of £985 for the 2024/25 year. After general discussion this was approved. <p>Action: Clerk to action this payment.</p>
13. 13.1	<p>Clerk's Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FUUSE EV Chargers <p>The Clerk advised the meeting that Halse Village Hall had approved the reduction in the payment for EV electricity usage from 50pKWH to 40p KWH at their recent meeting.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to action.</p>

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14.	Matters of Report
14.1	Village Hall Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All village hall events continued to be well attended.
14.2	Police Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The October report had been received from Brianna Whelan, and circulated prior to the meeting. Cllrs requested more detailed information in respect of the police report. Action: Clerk to liaise with PCSO Brianna Whelan.
14.3	Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
15.	Date of Next Meeting : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items for Next Meeting (a) Co-option of Councillor (b) Precept 2025/26 <p>Date of next meeting: Wednesday 29th January 2025 6:30 pm at Halse Village Hall</p> <p>Provisional dates for future Ordinary meetings were scheduled as follows: Wednesday 26th March 2025</p>

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