

HALSE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14TH MAY 2025 at 7:00 pm IN HALSE VILLAGE HALL

Present:	Mr I Walker	Chair
	Mrs S Haselock	
	Mr L Morris	Footpaths
	Mr C Kinch	Footpaths
	Cllr Gwil Wren	Somerset Councillor
	Mrs C Windeatt	Clerk to the Council
Members of the Public in attendance:	None	

	Report from County Councillor: Cllr Wren briefed the meeting on the current situation within Somerset Council following the redundancies and reorganisation within the Council. Six directives have been reduced to four; staff numbers stand at 4,400, and 555 redundancies have been actioned. The capital costs of this restructuring plan amounted to £5.7m, less that projected. Somerset Council balanced the budget for the current financial year, but are looking at a projected £100m deficit in the 2026/27 financial year. Reserves are down to the minimum permitted. Cllr Wren reported that this is a sector wide problem mainly due to the increasing costs for adult and children's social services, and special educational needs costs. The only way to resolve will be additional government funding for local authorities. Cllr Wren explained that Parish Council's do not have the power to commission highways repairs. It is anticipated that the plan will be for Parish Council's to advise Somerset Council of the work required within the Parish, Somerset Council will then commission Kier (the nominated contractor) to carry out the work, and then Somerset Council will invoice the Parish Council. This process has not as yet been formalised. Cllr Wren advised that the local plan for Somerset is due to be finalised in 2028. There has been a call for sites from builders with their proposals for the sites. Action: Cllr Wren to send through to the Chair the highways repair costs list and the information covering how often gulleys are cleared. Action: Cllr Wren to supply contact details for the Somerset Council person responsible for footpaths for Cllr Morris to order a supply of yellow footpath signs. Public Questions • None
1.	Apologies for Absence • Cllr Kathryn Robinson Burge
2.	Declarations of Interest • None

Signed.....Date

3.	Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2025 It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting be approved, proposed by Cllr Morris and seconded by Cllr S Haselock.
4.	Actions from Previous Meetings - It was confirmed that actions from the previous meeting have been executed. - The Chair advised that he has contacted Wessex Water in connection with the 5m high structure constructed in the field adjacent to Greedy's Orchard by the filtration bed, requesting information regarding whether or not planning permission is required for this structure. The Wessex Water representative advised that he will investigate, and Wessex Water have offered to paint the structure green. Wessex Water advised this structure was required for health and safety reasons to facilitate maintenance of the site.
5. 5.1 5.1.1 5.1.2 5.1.3 5.1.4	Finance Annual Audit and submission of AGAR FORMS Internal Audit Report was presented to the meeting, which was signed by Keith Hunt, the internal auditor on 28 th April 2025. The Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 was presented to the meeting, and signed by the Chair and the Clerk. The Accounting Statements 2024/25 was presented to the meeting and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer and the Chair. Certificate of Exemption 2024/25 was presented to the meeting and signed by the Responsible Officer and the Chair. Action: Clerk to forward forms to External Auditors and post
5.2	Schedule of Payments Following the last meeting £490 has been paid out of the account, £12.06 received in interest on the savings account. The balance as at 14 th May 2025 stands at £25,755.10. Approval was given to pay Halse Village Hall hire invoice in the sum of £62.50. Approval was given to renew the annual insurance policy with Zurich Insurance Company in the sum of £264. The clerk advised that she has requested clarification from Zurich Insurance Company regarding insurance cover of the Parish Council laptop.
6. 6.1	Risk Assessment Annual review of documentation – This document had been circulated prior to the meeting and approved, with the addition of the council asset of a laptop for use by the clerk to the Parish Council.
7. 7.1	Preston Solar Farm Update on Community Benefit Fund – The Chair advised that the joint agreement between Halse Parish Council and Milverton Parish Council and Innova has now been signed by Milverton Parish Council. It is anticipated that construction work will commence between August and October 2025. No payments will be received by the two Parish Councils until the site is generating electricity.
8. 8.1	Roads and Footpaths Highways Report The Chair had nothing to report this month. He continues to pursue Somerset Council Structures Department to ascertain a date when Halse Water Bridge will be prepared. Footpaths Report

Signed.....Date

	Cllr Morris confirmed the new finger posts have been ordered from Wadham Fencing Ltd, with deliver organised to go to Halse Farm. Cllr Morris to order a supply of yellow footpath signs, once details of the footpath contact within Somerset Council has been received.
9. 9.1	Planning Report on planning and related matters No site visits took place. One visit is schedule for Saturday 17th May 2025 9:00 am at Knights Barton. A site visit was arranged for Saturday 24 th May at 9:30 am at Little Paddocks.
10. 10.1	Grants Grant requests - No applications had been received.
11.1	Clerk's Report The clerk had circulated her report prior to the meeting. Financial position, payments for approval and annual insurance covered above. The CIL Report for 2024/25 was discussed and finalised. Action: Clerk to forward the CIL Report to Somerset Council.
12. 12.1	Matters of Report including: Village Hall Report – Halse Village Hall held its AGM on 6 th May, which was well attended by villagers. Two new people have agreed to join the committee. The trustees have been successful in securing a £10,000 grant from Somerset Community Foundation following their application for a decarbonisation grant. This money will allow the trustees to improve the loft insulation within the building, replace the side door plus other decarbonisation projects.
12.2	Police Report – The PCSO's report had been circulated prior to the meeting. PCSO Whelan confirmed there were no incidents with the Halse PC vicinity to report.
12.3	Other – No other reports.
13.	Date of Next Meeting : Wednesday 16th July 2025 6:30 pm Revised meeting date: Friday 18th July 2025 6:30 pm Venue : Halse Village Hall <i>Cllr S Haselock has sent her apologies in advance.</i>
14..	Items for the next meeting : • Revision of Model Standing Orders

Signed.....Date