

HALSE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18th SEPTEMBER 2024 at 7:30 pm AT HALSE VILLAGE HALL

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

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| | <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 on the unitary authority. Information was given to Cllr Wren regarding the state of the bridge over Halse Water on the road out of the village towards Bishop's Lydeard. This has been reported numerous times to Highways by the Chair. Cllr Wren will take this up with the Highways Dept on behalf of the council. Cllr Wren left the meeting at 8:00 pm <p>Public Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mr T Payne attended the meeting in his capacity as the treasurer for St James the Lesser Church and addressed the meeting in connection with the grant application submitted by the church for funds to assist with the grounds maintenance of the churchyard. Please see item 11 for more information.Mr T Payne was also in attendance in connection with his role as Clerk to Milverton Parish Council and addressed the meeting in connection with the discussions between Milverton PC and Halse PC in relation to the Community Benefit Fund contract between both PC's and Innova the developer of the Preston Bowyer Solar Farm. Councillors agreed to take into consideration the views he expressed when discussing the draft contract issued by Innova to Halse Parish Council which is item 6 on the agenda. Mr Payne left the meeting at 8:30 pm. |
| 1. | <p>Apologies for Absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mrs S HaselockMr D HuxtableCllr 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 3rd July 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 | <p>Statutory Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Publication Scheme – adoption of this statutory document was deferred until the next meeting. |

Signed..... Date.....

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| 6. 6.1 | Preston Solar Farm – Community Benefit Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair has been in ongoing discussions with Innova the developer of the Preston Bowyer Solar Farm following the last meeting. Innova has issued a draft contract offering Halse PC a payment of £125 per megawatt as the council's entitlement to the Community Benefit Fund with is linked to this project. This equates to £3000 per year and is indexed linked. After a general discussion amongst the councillors, acceptance of this offer was approved by a majority vote. Action: The Chair to liaise direct with Innova accepting their offer on behalf of Halse PC. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. 7.1 | Roads and footpaths Highways September Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halse Water Bridge. There has been no progress by "Structures" on the issue of damage to the bridge and stones crumbling into the road since the last meeting. Robyn, the resident of Halse Water has recently reported the problem again to Paul Tucker of Somerset Council and had the same response as previously. Which is that they are aware of it and will get round to it eventually. Angela, the resident of Stackstones, Halse Road, reported water seeping out of the road and running down the surface outside her property. As it was close to a stop tap, I reported it to Wessex Water. Their response was very quick both to investigate the problem and then to make a repair. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.2 | Footpaths Monthly Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since the previous meeting Cllr Morris and Cllr Robinson-Burge have identified all the footpaths in the Halse Parish and have devised a plan to record the current state of all the footpaths with a working party of volunteers. Volunteers have been asked to take part in a litter pick and footpath clearance on Saturday 21 September, with Cllr Morris co-ordinating and leading the project. <p>The Chair thanked Cllr Morris for his work in leading this project with Cllr Robinson-Burge.</p> <p>Action: Cllr Morris to feedback the results at the next meeting identifying areas where outside contractors may need to be employed for heavy clearance work, and also identify missing footpath signs.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. | Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No planning applications received. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. 9.1 | Finance Schedule of payments Payments approved by Chair and actioned 13/09/2024: <table> <tr> <td>1. SALC – payment for the National Association of Local Councils</td><td>£91.39</td></tr> <tr> <td>2. Clerk's expenses to 13/09/2024</td><td>£57.05</td></tr> <tr> <td>3. Clerk's salary (July, Aug, Sept 2024)</td><td>£372.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>4. HMRC payment re clerk's salary</td><td>£93.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>5. Louis Morris expenses re footpaths</td><td>£49.99</td></tr> <tr> <td>6. Halse Village Hall – reimbursement of EV usage</td><td>£55.38</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>£718.81</td></tr> </table> Bank account reconciled 16/09/2024 = £19,059.93 | 1. SALC – payment for the National Association of Local Councils | £91.39 | 2. Clerk's expenses to 13/09/2024 | £57.05 | 3. Clerk's salary (July, Aug, Sept 2024) | £372.00 | 4. HMRC payment re clerk's salary | £93.00 | 5. Louis Morris expenses re footpaths | £49.99 | 6. Halse Village Hall – reimbursement of EV usage | £55.38 | Total | £718.81 |
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| 10. | Unitary Authority Update |
| 10.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Wren updated the meeting on the financial state of Somerset Council, which is under severe strain, highlighting that 60% of the council's more is spent on social care. Somerset Council is undergoing a restructuring process, and it is anticipated this will be in place by 1 February 2025. The main emphasis is to move all services on line, although Cllr Wren acknowledges that this may not be possible in all scenarios. As a result of the restructuring plan there will be major job cuts, as the current workforce of 4,500 will be reduced to 3,500. This cost saving exercise will result in a £43m saving in costs. The Chair highlighted 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. |
| 10.2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The second part of the discussions involved the LCN network which the Chair. The Chair had fed back to the new LCN administrator his concerns about this network, as very few parishes are currently engaging with the network, and it appears no decisions or progress are made. Cllr Wren was sympathetic to the Chair's point of view, but is hopeful that this network continues as it will be the link between local people through their parish council and Somerset Council. |
| 11. | Grants |
| 11.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clerk had circulate the grant request from St James the Lesser Church prior to the meeting. This grant requested a £1200 grant towards churchyard maintenance for the year 2024/25. The grant was submitted as a result of the cessation of the annual grant in the sum of £680 from Taunton Deane Council. After general discussion, the councillors unanimously approved this payment. Action: The clerk to liaise with Mr T Payne, Treasurer to the church to organise this payment. |
| 12. | Clerk's Report |
| 12.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FUUSE EV Chargers The council have received payments from FUUSE as the chargers are now being used more. The Chair has requested a reduction in the KW payment originally agreed with Halse Village Hall from 50p per KW to 40 per KW, to take into account the reduction in electricity costs and the installation of solar panels on the village hall. Approval of this reduction will be discussed at the next village hall committee meeting, and reimbursement payments for the current financial year adjusted accordingly once agreed. Money generated by the solar panels is paid annually to the village hall; first payment due June 2025. Action: Clerk to liaise with Halse Village Hall committee regarding the above. |
| 12.2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLERK'S TRAINING The clerk has attended SALC on line training covering Finance, which included budgets and audit forms. The clerk reported that these on line training sessions have been very beneficial, particularly highlighting the on line resource offered by SALC covering any queries the clerk may have on procedures and governance. |
| 13. | Matters of Report |
| 13.1 | Village Hall Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All village hall events continued to be well attended. The outside of the hall has recently been painted along with the kitchen. |
| 13.2 | Police Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The August report had been received from Brianna Whelan, and circulated prior to the meeting. |
| 13.3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed that the item on 'Nottingham Knockers' should be circulated via Halse News and |

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| | <p>the newsletters to residents.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to liaise with Halse News and editor of the Newsletter as above.</p> <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None |
| 14. | <p>Date of Next Meeting :</p> <p>Wednesday 20th November 2024 6:30 pm – Halse Village Hall</p> <p>Item for Next Meeting - ‘Publication Policy - Information available from Halse Parish Council’</p> <p>policy</p> <p>Provisional dates for future Ordinary meetings were scheduled as follows:</p> <p>Wednesday 22nd January 2025</p> <p>Wednesday 26th March 2025</p> |

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