



HALE PARISH COUNCIL

OF THE HALTON BOROUGH IN THE COUNTY OF CHESHIRE



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
OF HALE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN HALE VILLAGE HALL
ON MONDAY 27th FEBRUARY 2023 AT 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr Cleary, Cllr Brown, Cllr Healey, Cllr King, Cllr Spargo, Cllr Anderson,
Cllr Mitchell

In attendance: The Clerk and Twelve members of public were also present

1. **Apologies** –Apologies from Cllr Trevaskis and Cllr McNamara were received by the Clerk
2. **Declarations of Interest** – No declarations of interest were recorded by the Clerk
3. **Public Participation**

- i. A local Resident informed the meeting that he had been in contact with the Monitoring Officer at Halton Borough Council to seek clarification regarding a number of complaints regarding alleged bullying by a member of Hale Parish Council. He explained that he has made a formal complaint and that up until 2019 there were no complaints against Hale Parish Council or its members whatsoever. Subsequently there have been 16 recorded complaints. He went on to say that nine of the complaints have been dealt with by the Monitoring Officer but that the other 7 in his opinion have not been addressed. He stressed that the complaints were registered before many of the current Council became members and before the current Clerk was employed. The resident went on to say that he believes that he has been “fobbed off” for three and a half years and he would like the outstanding complaints which he believes involve the bullying of a number of local ladies, investigated further. The Chair advised that these matters will be addressed as a Part II Item at the next Parish Council personnel meeting.
- ii. A current member of Hale Village Hall Management Committee expressed a wish that in considering the setting of this year’s Precept, the Parish Council will contemplate a request for a similar contribution for 2023-2024 as that of 2022-2023. He explained that reducing the figure would be detrimental to the success of the Hall going forward and will use up all of the current reserve which has been built up by careful management in previous years.

iii. The Lord Mayor expressed a wish to meet with the Village Hall Committee to establish a site for the Village Christmas Crib which will be moved to the forecourt of the Village Hall for 2023. The Chair asked that all fire risk considerations are examined before approval. It was noted that the Fire Evacuation assembly point is on the Village Hall Concourse area near to the Notice board

iv. A different member of Hale Village Hall Committee noted that the use of a third party Risk Management Company accounted for what he believed to be a £1200 contribution by Hale Parish Council to the running of the Village Hall. The Chair explained that the company do not work solely on behalf of the Village Hall and are active in producing documentation for external Parish Council events and Interests.

4. **Minutes** – The minutes from the Ordinary meeting of Hale Parish Council on 16th January 2023 were approved as a true and accurate account.

Proposed by Cllr Spargo and seconded by Cllr Healey

The Motion was approved

5. **Payments & Receipts** – Cllrs Brown & Mitchell questioned the payment of the allocated Budget contribution from the Parish Council into the Village Hall account by the Clerk. The Clerk explained that this was part of the annual financial consideration for the Village Hall and that the latest budget considerations for 2023/2024 relied on the contribution. He also said he was not aware of any reason for there to be further approval required for the payment into the Village Hall account.

Cllr Spargo proposed that all payments and receipts for the period 7th January 2023 and 13th February 2023 are a true and accurate record. This was seconded by Cllr Anderson.

The Motion was approved

6. **Accounts** – Cllr Healey proposed that the accounts presented for the period 7th January 2023 and 13th February 2023 are a true and accurate record and Cllr Anderson seconded the proposal.

The Motion was approved

- **Cllr King left the meeting at 8.03pm for personal reasons.**

7. **Annual Budget & Precept 2023 - 2024** – The Clerk explained to the gathering that at a recent meeting of the Trustees the Parish Council had examined the requirements of the Village Hall and concluded that provided current Income levels of £27,718 are sustained a balanced budget is achievable without a contribution from the Parish Council precept. However he stressed that this year there is a healthy carryover of approximately £20,000 which will be used to finance the Hall over the next 12 Months. There is no consideration for a reserve and the Clerk warned against that eventuality. Cllr Spargo also attempted to remind members that a proposed reduction in support for the Village Hall will result in serious financial issues during the coming year given the considerable maintenance & refurbishment issues which have been recorded. He also said that he felt that the proposed reduction in funding was naïve, short sighted and misguided. Cllr Cleary indicated that he feels like he has been “steamrollered” into accepting a “vanity” budget each previous year and said he wants it to stop.

It was resolved to accept the budget for the Parish Council at £48,345

And also to set the Precept for 2023 – 2024 at £37,000

Proposed by Cllr Brown and seconded by Cllr Cleary

In a named Vote Cllrs Cleary, Mitchell, Brown, and Healey were in favour of the motion

Cllr Spargo was against the proposal and Cllr Anderson abstained.

The Motion was approved

8. **Standing Orders and Financial Regulations** – It was resolved to defer this item until the March meeting when members will have proposed any amendments or additions to the current documents.

Proposed by Cllr Cleary and Seconded by Cllr Brown

The Motion was approved

9. **Risk Management Scheme & Policy** - It was resolved to defer this item until the March meeting when members will have proposed any amendments or additions to the current documents.

Proposed by Cllr Cleary and Seconded by Cllr Healey

The Motion was approved

10. **Code of Conduct** - It was resolved to defer this item until the March meeting when members will have proposed any amendments or additions to the current documents.

Proposed by Cllr Brown and Seconded by Cllr Cleary

The Motion was approved

- **The Clerk agreed to send out a “Register of Interest” form to each of the Members**

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.40pm