



HALE PARISH COUNCIL
OF THE HALTON BOROUGH IN
THE COUNTY OF CHESHIRE



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HALE PARISH COUNCIL Hale Village Hall
Friday 29 May 2026 7:00 pm

PRESENT

Cllr J McNamara, Cllr P Lewis, Cllr P Healey, P Turton, M Fisher

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Brian Hargreaves (Proper Officer) and 11 members of the public

1. INTRODUCTION

Cllr J McNamara chaired the meeting and read a statement prepared by the Chairman, who had submitted his apologies for absence. The key points outlined in the statement were as follows:

Financial and Community Successes

Significant community involvement and strong financial performance were highlighted. In particular, the Village Hall had raised nearly £10,000 above its projected budget, attributed to increased usage and the efforts of staff and volunteers. Thanks were extended to Jannine French, Peter Lewis, Kath Barnett, and volunteer Vicky Hargreaves for their contributions.

Maintenance and Sustainability

Concerns regarding village maintenance, including the standard of gardening and litter levels, were discussed. Several sustainability initiatives were noted, including a STEM Ambassador programme operating at a local school. The Parish Council is considering a proposal to allocate funds for high-visibility vests and litter-picking equipment, to be made available to local pupils as part of Health Education and Environmental Improvement activities.

Traffic and Infrastructure

The Council is continuing to address parking issues arising from the operation of Liverpool John Lennon Airport; Liverpool City Council is currently commissioning a report to identify potential solutions. Concerns were also raised regarding speeding

traffic through the village, and the need for traffic calming measures and greater community engagement on this issue was emphasised.

Looking Ahead

A call was made for additional volunteers to support community projects, and all residents were encouraged to take an active interest in caring for the village. It was noted that the Parish Council hold meetings monthly, which have very little resident attendance.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Lord Mayor Bill Webb, Cllr M Roberts, Cllr A Hutchinson, Cllr C Anderson, N Thompson, PC Mo Rahman.

3. MINUTES - The draft minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 30 May 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

- Proposed by: Cllr P Lewis
- Seconded by: Cllr P Healey

Decision: Motion carried

4. ANNUAL REPORTS

i. Report of the Clerk, Hale Parish Council

The Clerk distributed a written report summarising the achievements of the 2025–2026 year. He expressed pleasure in being able to present a positive update on activities and financial performance.

The Village Hall continues to thrive, having finished the year almost £10,000 above the previous year's projected income. While increased popularity has brought challenges—particularly regarding parking availability and noise management—steps are being taken to address these matters, ensuring the Hall remains a welcoming and sustainable hub whilst continuing to respect the concerns of nearby residents.

Council finances remain healthy. As the financial year has now ended, the annual review process is nearing completion; detailed accounts will be published on the Council website and notice boards as soon as the external audit had been finalised.

The year's successes were credited to the strength of the staff & local volunteers of the community. Special thanks are given to both Jannine French and Peter Lewis for their organisation of major events, and to Kath Barnett for her tireless work in maintaining parish facilities. Gratitude was also expressed to all volunteers, whose combined contribution is central to the range of activities available in the parish.

Looking ahead, the future of Hale is considered bright. Residents were invited to contact the Clerk with any questions or suggestions.

Minutes of all Parish Council and Village Hall meetings are available online; enquiries can also be made by telephone on 07803 611222 or by email to: clerk@haleparishcouncil.gov.uk.

ii. Hale Village Art Group

Representatives David Hines (Chair) and Norma Roe (Secretary) presented a report. Mr Hines confirmed that the group continued to flourish with 16 members, and acknowledged the ongoing support received from the Parish Council and the Carnival Committee.

He noted that the group was fortunate to have retained the services of a qualified tutor, who supported members in developing skills across a range of techniques including tonal drawing, oil and acrylic painting, and colour mixing. Mr Hines concluded by stating he was very pleased to report that the group remained in a “healthy and active” position.

iii. Merseybeats Majorettes

Christine, representing the Merseybeats Majorettes, gave an overview of the group, which provides dance and performance opportunities for ages 2 to 30. She emphasised that the organisation was run entirely by volunteers, and thanked the local police and schools for their continued assistance.

As the group continues to grow, Christine requested that the Parish Council might consider providing support in the form of free hire of the Village Hall or funding towards new uniforms. She highlighted recent success, with the 9–11 years section having won a national competition in Blackpool; members compete in up to 22 events each year.

The Clerk agreed to provide an application form for community grant funding. Christine also offered a performance by the group at the Hale Village Carnival in early June; the Clerk agreed to pass this offer to the event organiser, Sarah Heron.

iv. Mersey Wave Choir

Alderman Paul Turton, Chairman of Mersey Wave Choir, reported that the group had now been in existence for 13 years. During that time it has developed significantly, and had recently held a number of charity performances which raised approximately £500. These funds are donated annually to a chosen cause; this year’s recipient will be the North West Air Ambulance, as an organisation entirely dependent on voluntary donations.

Alderman Turton expressed sadness at the loss of several members due to ill health, but welcomed new joiners to the choir. The group would shortly take part in the Halton Choir Festival, and he encouraged all present to attend if possible.

v. Table Tennis Group

Paul Turton reported that the group, now in its 14th year, was open to all ages and not exclusively for older residents. Membership included several pupils from the local school, and the standard of play remained high. However, the group's equipment was ageing, and the main table was now in need of repair or replacement.

As with previous requests for assistance, the Clerk agreed to issue a grant application form to the group.

vi. Defibrillator Provision and Training

Paul Turton updated the meeting regarding the village defibrillator scheme. He outlined current challenges and noted that the Parish Council had contributed funding towards the maintenance of equipment located across the Parish.

However, the unit at St Mary's Church requires replacement parts, and it was hoped that residents would be able to assist with this work. Concern was also raised that this unit was only accessible when the church was open. There is a clear need for at least one further unit available 24 hours a day; this matter would be placed before the Council for formal discussion. Alderman Turton expressed a longer-term aim to ensure full coverage of the parish, with defibrillators located at key points throughout the village.

vii. St Mary's Church

The meeting welcomed the Vicar, Reverend Michelle Goodwin, who spoke about her forthcoming departure from the parish. She explained that as a result of wider structural changes and resource sharing within both the Church of England and the Catholic Church, her role would change and she would be moving to work within the Widnes Deanery. Hale would in future form part of the South Liverpool area, with ministry provided by clergy working across that region.

Reverend Goodwin reported that the church had grown in recent years, with new families having joined the congregation. She had particularly valued the opportunity to visit the local primary school and lead assemblies each week. Challenges were faced, however, including the recent loss of the church treasurer and a shortage of churchwardens, meaning significant administrative and governance work fell largely to the clergy.

viii. Hale Ladies

Four representatives presented an account of the group's activities. Meetings are held monthly, and typically featured a guest speaker on topics ranging from wildlife and local charities to technology and historical subjects; a forthcoming talk will explore the origins of nursery rhymes.

The group operates in a similar manner to a Women's Institute, and membership numbers have recently increased. It is hoped that in future the group might also attract and admit male members.

ix. Royal British Legion – Hale Branch

Marie Fisher, Vice-Chair, presented the report on behalf of the branch.

The Hale Branch had been formed on 6 June 2004 – chosen for its significance as the 60th anniversary of D-Day. The founding President was the late Eric Goldrein, and the initial committee included the late Jim Flanagan (chairman) and the late George Pointon (secretary); They were succeeded by Bill Sargent, a retired Chief Superintendent of Merseyside Police and former Head of Special Branch. Mr Sargent, who lives locally in Allerton, brought considerable legal knowledge and experience, and continued to provide support despite recent serious health issues.

Following Mr Goldrein's death, David Hudson had become President until his own passing. The current President is Ben Jackson, who takes a visible role in community events in military-style uniform – though it was noted he has no service background and his involvement is through personal interest.

Over time the Secretary role has changed hands; Marie Fisher stepped down for a period and was succeeded by Sheila Deakin, before returning to the post and subsequently becoming Vice-Chair. Leslie Jackson took over as Secretary in October 2025.

Branch meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 8:00 pm in the Child of Hale public house, made available free of charge by landlords Alan and Donna, to whom thanks were extended. The branch supports the pub by holding social functions there wherever possible.

Annual membership subscription is £24, paid to the national organisation to fund welfare work for serving personnel, veterans and their families. Support ranges from assistance with household costs to specialist advice; requests are handled locally where possible, and referred to county or national level for larger or more complex cases.

The branch organises annual visits to war cemeteries and memorials in France and Belgium. These are highly emotional and popular events, attended by families of those lost in conflict. The trips provide an opportunity for remembrance, and for new friendships to be formed within the community.

x. The Guildswomen of Hale

The Guildswomen of Hale were inaugurated in 1995 by then Parish Council Chairman Colin Naylor, to formally recognise women in the village for their voluntary contribution over a sustained period. Originally, eligibility required 10 years' residency; this was later reduced to five years.

Since its establishment, recipients of the award had continued to play an active role in the community, supporting groups including the Freeman of Hale and the Carnival Committee.

Nominations were open to all residents. Forms could be obtained from Val Borlase or Thelma Antrobus, or from existing members. Criteria included length of residency and evidence of ongoing contribution – or significant past contribution where health or age now prevented active involvement. Nominations were reviewed by a small panel.

This year five new members have been approved, all of whom have accepted the honour. They will receive their awards from the Parish Council during Civic Sunday celebrations. Unsuccessful nominations were retained and might be reconsidered in future years.

A recent Valentines event raised almost £2000 to secure the finances of the Guildswomen in the short term.

xi. Hale Park Estate Gardening Group

A representative reported that the volunteer group had been established nine years earlier. Originally numbering around ten, membership had declined over time due to age, health issues and family commitments; currently only three people remained active.

The group maintained several large communal gardens on the Estate. Work was physically demanding, with sessions often lasting three to four hours, and the age profile of members made it increasingly difficult to sustain the level of work required. Financial support from the Parish Council had been appreciated, but appeals for new volunteers had so far met with little success.

Concern was expressed regarding the general appearance of the village. Areas such as Church Road and the junction with Ramsbrook Lane had become neglected, and it was felt that standards had declined over recent years. Hale had previously regularly entered the Best Kept Village competition, but would not be in a position to do so at present. Even simple measures – such as watering hanging baskets – had not been maintained in the past.

A plea was made for greater community pride and involvement. The group did not require experienced gardeners, only residents willing to give an hour or two occasionally to help care for the local environment.

The Clerk has written to all the shopkeepers in Ivy Court to ask them to concentrate on keeping the area around the shops in a clean and litter free state.

xii. Knit and Natter Group

Dot and Maggie outlined the work of the group, which currently had 22 members and met each Wednesday. Activities included knitting and crochet, both for pleasure and for community projects.

In previous years the group had created seasonal covers for the village post box, to mark occasions such as Remembrance Sunday and Easter. However, recent modifications to the box had made this no longer possible. The group remained a valued social and creative outlet for women in the parish.

4. CLOSURE

The Vice-Chair thanked all attendees and contributors for their time and input. The meeting closed at **9:50 pm**.