



HALE PARISH COUNCIL

of the Halton Borough in the County of
Cheshire



MINUTES of the **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** held on Monday the 23rd September 2019 at **HALE VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, HALE VILLAGE, L24 4AE COMMENCING AT 7.30PM**

Present: Cllrs Trevaskis, Williams, Spargo, Healey, Hunter, Cleary and Mitchell
There were 28 members of the public present

1. To receive Apologies

Cllrs Wright, Anderson and Kierman

2. To consider and approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 11th July 29th August and 2nd September 2019 enclosed

It was resolved that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 11th July, 29th August and 2nd September 2019 should be approved and that the Chairman should be authorised to sign them as a true and accurate record

3. To receive Declarations of Interest

None

4. To receive and note (if available) the police report on crime statistics

No police report was presented

5. To receive an update with regard to the Village Hall.

No Village Hall report was presented

6. To adjourn the meeting for a period of public participation

The meeting was adjourned

A question was asked as to whether the recent dismissal of the VH Manager and the Audit query regarding Vat might have an affect on next year's Precept. The Clerk responded that appropriate professional advice had or was being taken on both issues. A professional consultant was dealing with the employment issue and responses had been received from two professional organisations regarding the Vat which at first glance looked favourable, however until each issue had been completed it was not possible to advise further.

Several comments and objections were passed concerning the proposed Local Plan and the policies relating the expansion of Liverpool Airport. Residents were advised that this Council had discussed the issues at a recent extra ordinary meeting and were in process of writing an objection letter which supported the points being raised again this evening. This letter of objection will be circulated to members and made available to the public shortly.

The meeting was reconvened

7. To receive and ratify the list of payments enclosed made between 4th June 2019 and 3rd September 2019 being payment numbers 32 to 73 recorded in the Cash Book Record which has been reconciled to the Bank Statements to that date all payments having been made under Financial Regulation 6.4

It was resolved that the payments detailed on the list attached to the agenda and as described above were received and ratified.

8. To receive and approve a summary of expenditure to the 3rd September 2019 against original budget headings and consider the proposed revised budget drawn up by the RFO which negates the deficit position by re-aligning expenditure headings and will if approved provide a small reserve position of £2455.

It was resolved that the summary of expenditure against original budget headings was approved

It was resolved that the revised budget should be approved.

9. To approve the Contract of Employment terms for the Clerk agreed at the meeting on the 29th August 2019 which have already been circulated to members.

It was resolved that the Contract of Employment referred to above should be approved and signed by the Chairman on behalf of this Council

10. To approve renewal of the current insurance policy which expires on the 30th September 2019 at a cost of £2615.93 for one year.

It must be noted that it is essential that the Asset Register is now completed as a matter of urgency so that insurance cover can be reviewed to ensure it is adequate but not excessive.

It was resolved that the current insurance policy as detailed above should be renewed and that a full review of cover against the Asset Register (which was still to be finalised) should be undertaken as a matter of urgency.

11. To consider whether this Council is agreeable to the Childe of Hale walking stick being displayed in the Village Hall and that insurance cover should be provided as an addition to the existing policy at a figure of £2000 (see attached request)

It was resolved that the Child of Hale walking stick should be displayed in the Village Hall and included on the Parish Council's insurance policy

12. To consider whether the existing VH cleaner, caretaker and grounds person should now be offered a permanent contract since his temporary contract will expire at the end of this month.

Please note that there is no lawful requirement to advertise any job position.

The above item was withdrawn

13. To receive an update following a recent meeting with ACRE concerning the legal position in respect of the management of the Village Hall

Please note that this item is for update only and no lawful decisions may be made at this meeting

It was noted that meetings had taken place with Cheshire Community Action and that two possible options were available which included the Parish Council acting as Sole Trustee to manage the VH through a Committee which would also involve some local residents and users or alternatively that the VHMC might be re-established, in which case the management would be handed to those new Trustees who would take liability as Trustees for all aspects of the management of the VH and the Parish Council would have no further involvement therein. It was noted that the

two existing Trustees of the VH remained responsible for the VH management since no documentation had been prepared or submitted to the Charity Commission to change previous arrangements although there might have been an intention to appoint the Parish Council as Sole Managing Trustee. This had not happened. Any future arrangements must conform to Charity law. The Parish Council are only the Custodian Trustee in law at this point and should not be managing the VH themselves. The National Lottery however provided funding to the Parish Council on the understanding that management was to be through the Parish Council, a point that remains to be resolved before any further action may be taken. The likely outcome may be that a new VHMC will need to be set up provided there are enough local residents prepared to become Trustees, but this will depend on the response from the National Lottery. If this is the case a suitable meeting will be arranged and CCA will make a presentation to set out to residents what becoming a Trustee actually means. It is now hoped that this long-standing issue will be finalised within the next few months.

14. (1) To approve that all Committees should now be disbanded (apart from the Village Hall Committee) and replaced with working group arrangements thereby saving a significant amount of time and resource in compiling agenda and minutes which are not currently undertaken lawfully.

The new ways of working will mean more flexibility in the meeting arrangements that can be undertaken by the working groups without any need for published agenda or minutes. The working groups whilst being allocated financial resources will not however be able to commit that funding without the formal agreement of the full council or the RFO (under delegated authority up to an agreed limit suggested at £500 per project, item or event)

It was resolved that the Committee system should be disbanded as detailed above and that the new ways of working introduced with the RFO given delegated authority to approve expenditure under allocated budgets up to a limit of £500 per project.

- (2) To approve that the Village Hall Committee continue in its present format awaiting the outcome of the investigations into future management arrangements except that all future meeting agenda and minutes must be compiled by the Clerk to the Parish Council, the meetings conducted in a lawful manner and major items of expenditure referred to the full Council before implementation.

It was resolved that the Village Hall Committee continue in its present format except as detailed above until a final decision is made concerning future management as detailed in item 13 above.

15. To note that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday the 28th October 2019

It was noted that the next ordinary meeting is scheduled for the 28th October 2019