



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 22nd JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr Cleary, Cllr Brown, Cllr Healey, Cllr Anderson, Cllr Trevaskis,
Cllr Williams, Cllr Roberts, Cllr Lewis, Cllr McNamara

In attendance: The Clerk, PCSO Steve Marnick and Twenty Eight members of public
were also present

- 1. Election of Chairman** – Due to the resignation of the Chairman the deputy chairman prepared to chair the meeting as directed by the current standing orders. It was noted by Cllr Trevaskis that the election of a new Chairman should now take place and be overseen by the deputy. On that basis he proposed that the agenda be followed and a vote to install a new chairman should take place. This was seconded by Cllr Roberts.

The Deputy Chairman did not agree and would not accept the opinion of Cllr Trevaskis. He insisted that he was following the standing orders of Hale Parish Council and would continue to chair the meeting. Cllr Trevaskis informed the meeting that this was not a matter to be decided by standing orders, that it was in fact a legal matter covered by legislation and that the deputy Chairman was acting illegally.

Cllr Cleary refused to hear the voices of members and continued to Chair the meeting

- 2. Apologies** - There were no Apologies received by the Clerk
- 3. Declarations of Interest** – No Declarations of interest were received
- 4. Public Participation** – The Chair advised participants that he would be adhering strictly to the allotted time (3mins) permitted for each contributor.
 - i. A local resident enquired about the letter which was agreed at the previous meeting apologising to the Clerk for his suspension and advising him of his re-instatement. She said that it was her belief that residents should also be fully advised about the allegations made against the Clerk as there are residents who do not know the true facts and may have drawn wrong conclusions.

The chair said that he would write the letter of apology and send it to the Clerk. The matter will be addressed further in item 18 of this agenda

The resident went on to enquire about eight cancelled meetings in the previous year and stated that legally, meetings should be arranged and attended by the Clerk & members until they are found to be non-quorate by absence. At this point such a meeting can be cancelled by the Clerk.

- ii. A second resident made a statement regarding the Budget & Precept for 2024-25. He noted that a larger than usual budget would be required due to the cutbacks made in 2023-24 and highlighted the fact that the finance committee had “decimated” the precept in 2022/23 and as a result assisted funding of the Village Hall will be needed to replenish reserves to meet practitioners guidance. He insisted that the Hall cannot currently run on the hire income alone but that it needed to continue to have the infrastructure to provide a credible facility for the use of residents and hirers.

Cllr Cleary cited a number of what he called “vanity Projects” which he believed had been prioritised in previous years at considerable expense.

The resident noted that a saving of £14 (.26p per wk for band D property) per year had been achieved in 2023-24 but that it had contributed to the shortfall in the current years funding. In addition an increase in inflation of up to 11% had been experienced nationally and as a result the hall could face the prospect of closure. He went on to say that the three current staff had been diligent in their contribution and had worked, unpaid during the current difficulties. He asked that the staff be respected and considered when the budget is set.

Cllr Cleary stated that he believed that the Village Hall had received over £34 000 worth of funding since its opening and that it was unrealistic to continue supporting it. He stated that an attempt to employ outside advisors on a consultancy basis to assist with the management of the Hall had been resisted by members of the Council.

It was noted by another resident that prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic the Village Hall was close to balancing its finances but that the closure and reduced usage had impacted the situation severely

- iii. A request was made by a local shop keeper for the Parish Council to contact the landlord of the shops in Town Lane and ask him to arrange to clear the rubbish which has built up at the rear of the shopping area. It was estimated that it could cost up to £1000 if done by the current tenants which is unreasonable.

PCSO Steve Marnick was present at the meeting and announced that he would contact Halton Borough Council and ask for assistance with this matter.

5. **Minutes.** - The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of 20th November 2023 were amended to record current bank signatories and the fact that jubilee funds had been re-allocated to purchase picnic benches for Hale Park and not for signage as previously thought. They were then approved as a true and accurate account.

Proposed by Cllr Lewis, seconded by Cllr McNamara

The Motion was approved

6. **Payments & Receipts** – Cllr Healey proposed that all payments and receipts for the period 8th September 2023 – 30th November 2023 are a true and accurate record. This was seconded by Cllr Lewis.

Cllr Cleary enquired about Payment ref: 35. The Clerk confirmed that an invoice had been received and that the payment had been processed.

The Motion was approved

7. **Accounts** – The reconciled bank statement and summary of receipts and payments for the period 8th September 2023 – 30th November 2023 were accepted as a true and accurate record and comparison against budget.

Proposed by Cllr McNamara, seconded by Cllr Healey

The Motion was approved

8. Committee's

- i. It was noted that the current Finance Committee which was formed in May 2022 has been ineffective and has not fulfilled its remit. It has not achieved any of the objectives set in overseeing finances and making recommendations to the full Council. It was agreed that there was no benefit having a separate committee and that it would be more appropriate to set up individual specific Parish Council meetings to address any financial issues.

It was proposed in a named vote to disband the Finance committee
Proposed by Cllr Healey and seconded by Cllr McNamara

In favour of dissolving the Finance Committee were Cllrs, McNamara, Brown, Cleary, Healey, Lewis

Against the proposal – Cllr Trevaskis, Cllr Roberts, Cllr Anderson

The Motion was approved

- ii. It was proposed to adopt the model terms of reference supplied by NALC for the staffing committee with two minor amendments

Cllr Trevaskis enquired about the availability of a handover file with any outstanding issues, such as grievances etc.

- iii. Members of the committee were agreed as follows - Cllrs. Lewis, Roberts, Anderson, Williams, Trevaskis, and McNamara

Proposed by Cllr Roberts and Seconded by Cllr Cleary

The Motions were approved

- iv. Cllr McNamara volunteered to represent the Parish Council at Liverpool John Lennon Airport consultative committee. The Clerk volunteered to accompany him when available.

9. Budget & Precept – The Clerk presented a Budget statement and accompanying figures for discussion. The presentation was challenged by some members of the Council and it was proposed that the deputy chair produce a comparable budget to discuss at a meeting in the next fortnight. The Clerk agreed to send over his templates for Cllr Cleary to use

10. Insurance Policy – The Clerk informed the meeting that during his absence through suspension the Parish council insurance policy had been automatically renewed by the broker to ensure continuity of insurance cover for the PC. It was proposed to ratify the policy renewal and continue cover.

Proposed by Cllr McNamara and seconded by Cllr Lewis

The Motion was approved

11. Remembrance Sign – It was resolved to permit installation of an additional silhouette sign on the memorial green as requested by HRBL.

Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Lewis

The Motion was approved

12. D-Day 80th Anniversary Celebrations 6th June 2024 – Cllr Roberts explained that he didn't currently have an update due to his workload. He agreed to prepare one for the PC meeting in February 2024.

13. Town Lane Development – It was noted that Cllr Trevaskis had submitted a representation on behalf of Hale Parish Council regarding the planning application in Town Lane.

14. Request from Halebank Parish Council – It was noted that it was now too late to support Halebank by submitting the draft objection letter to the proposed planning development 22/00423/OUTEIA written by Cllr Roberts as the development had already been approved

15. Bank Signatories

- i. It was noted that ex-Cllrs Mitchell and Wright have been removed from both of the Unity Trust bank accounts for the Parish Council and Village Hall
- ii. It was noted that Cllr Lewis has been approved as a signatory on both of the current Unity Trust Bank accounts for the Parish Council and Village Hall
- iii. It was noted that Cllr Roberts has been approved as a signatory on both of the current Unity Trust Bank accounts for the Parish Council and Village Hall
- iv. It was resolved to add Cllr McNamara to the list of approved signatories for both of the Unity Trust Bank accounts for both the Parish council and the Village Hall

Proposed by Cllr Anderson and seconded by Cllr Roberts

The Motion was approved

It was further agreed that the Clerk would enquire about putting Salary payments to all employees of Hale Parish Council and Hale Village Hall on standing orders.

16. Current Councillors terms of Office – the terms of office recorded on the Agenda were noted by the meeting.

17. Guildswomen – Cllr Williams announced that she currently has two nominees for consideration to receive the honour of Guildswoman of Hale Village. She apologised for not bringing the nomination forms with her and agreed to submit them to the Council as soon as possible.

18. Notification to Clerk – It was resolved that The deputy Chairman will write to the Clerk notifying him of the decisions made at the Parish Council meeting on 20th November 2023. The deputy Chairman said he hadn't been asked to undertake this task and that although he doesn't agree with the outcome of the decisions made at the meeting he would write to the Clerk

The deputy Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.10 pm.

ACTION LIST

- 1. PCSO Marnick to contact HBC regarding rubbish at the rear of the shops in Town Lane**
- 2. Update TOR for Staffing Committee**
- 3. Cllr Cleary to produce Budget comparison**
- 4. Cllr McNamara to complete application forms for becoming a signatory for each bank account**
- 5. Cllr Roberts to update D-Day Commemorations**
- 6. Cllr Williams to supply nominees for Guildswomen award**