



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



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF HALE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN HALE VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 30th MAY 2024 AT 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs Anderson, Wright, Williams, Roberts

In attendance: Mr. Brian Hargreaves (Proper Officer) and 15 Members of the public

- 1. Introduction** – Cllr Roberts chaired the meeting and gave a brief introduction welcoming attendees and outlining the fact that it is not a Parish Council Meeting and that its purpose is to hear updates from local groups and stakeholders. He stated that the meeting would be more relaxed than a traditional PC meeting but that this and all other Council meetings rely upon attendance by residents who are willing to give their opinion and express their views.
- 2. Apologies** – Cllrs Trevaskis, Lewis, McNamara, PCSO Steve Marnick and Jim Ross (Friends of Hale Village) registered their apologies
- 3. Minutes** – The minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting on 30th May 2023 were deferred due to an absence of attendees from the previous meeting to verify their accuracy.

proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Anderson

The Motion was approved

4. Annual Reports –

The Chairman of Hale Parish Council announced that although he has only been in post for a short space in time, he feels that the Parish Council is in a state of positive change. In addition to a change in personnel and leaders there is a marked change in attitude and outlook. We now have a group of people who are committed to working together and while there is not always 100% agreement the democratic process is observed and respected. As Trustee of the Village Hall the Parish Council is directly and indirectly committed to maintaining and improving this amazing facility. The Chair urged all members and volunteers to continue with their input and stated that it is easy to forget the amount of work which goes on behind the scenes.

The Chair stated that he had specifically asked Alderman Mal Sutton along to the meeting to personally thank him and everyone who had recently worked on the repairs to the front of Hale Village Hall. He stated that people like Mal are what Hale Village is all about. What he has done for Hale is amazing and

we are lucky to have such a public-spirited resident. A toast was proposed by the Chair to recognise Mal's contribution.

In addition, there was a mention for all the volunteers who contribute to the events staged by the Parish Council such as the easter egg hunt and the Christmas Grotto.

It was noted that On 6th June 2024 there is a commemoration of the 80yr anniversary of the D-Day landings. A proclamation will be made by the Town Crier at Hale War Memorial at 8.00am which will be supported by the Parish Council and refreshments will be available at the Village Hall after a short service at 11.00am. The Chair noted that many people will have work commitments but he encouraged all those who can to attend this important event.

Hale Carnival will take place on Saturday 8th June in Hale Park but the Parish Council will also be supporting an exhibition of historical pictures, an art display by the art class, music by Joe McNabb and refreshments in Hale Village Hall. The Chair encouraged everyone to support this if possible.

In closing, the Chair urged residents to attend meetings of the Parish Council so that all opinions and views can be heard and considered. All bodies need to work together and the contention of previous years can hopefully be overcome for good.

- i. **Freemen of Hale - The Lord Mayor** announced that although he had only recently taken over, he was learning quickly whilst on the job. His belief before he took over was that the role only entailed dressing up in the Mayoral robe and chains and then shaking hands with people. That belief has changed now he's settling in and it is a lot more involved requiring quite extensive input.

He said that he believed that the role of Lord Mayor essentially had 3 main aims.

Firstly, to retain 700 years of history and to ensure its continuation by observing the obligations, annual events and occasions, whilst promoting Hale Village in a positive way at every opportunity.

Secondly to distribute any money raised through the charity events staged to local organisations or bodies who need support

And thirdly to have a great time doing all of the above. The Lord Mayor stated that it is essential that the events staged are fun and enjoyable so that the continuity is retained and people are encouraged to keep attending.

The Freemen often gather for annual meetings and a meal to celebrate events such as St George's night and Lancashire Day. During these social events there can be some quirky traditions observed such as awarding fines through the bailiffs for not observing the rules of the Freemen. These are a reflection on the very real fines which were applied many years ago for the illegal offences of cutting wood for fires without permission and for working on a Sunday which was considered a day of rest and exempt from paid working.

The Lord Mayor summed up in thanking villagers for their continued support and gave an open invitation to all villagers to attend the imminent Barn Dance social planned for the 22nd June 2024.

- ii. **Mersey Wave Choir** – Alderman (Ald.) Paul Turton gave a summary of the history & considerable progress made by Hale's Mersey Wave Choir. From modest beginnings the addition of a lady's section saw the choir grow to 64 members, now a four-part harmony unit whose credibility was confirmed recently by an invitation to sing at a prestigious event at St Georges Hall in Liverpool. It was noted that not all members like to perform but are happy to be members and attend from as far away as Warrington, Runcorn and the Wirral.

On Wednesday 5th June the Choir are holding an open rehearsal night in the Village Hall when all visitors are welcome to come along and sing Hymns and war songs in a relaxed setting.

- iii. **Defibrillator Training & Bleed Kits** – In addition to his membership of Mersey Wave Choir. Ald. Turton has a history of working as one of the original Merseyside paramedics. He moved into teaching & training and has been instrumental in ensuring that Hale Village now has four registered defibrillators. Paul has also provided training with the support of Hale Parish Council and his aim is to add a further defibrillator unit at the Speke end of the Village to compliment our provision.

Recently Paul has made enquiries about adding bleed kits to the defibrillator sites so another essential resource is available for residents to access if necessary. The kits are based upon the recent increase in knife crime but its fair to say that any serious injury may require such equipment.

- iv. **Hale Royal British Legion** – A representative of Hale Royal British Legion, Marie Fisher gave an account of the recent activities of the organisation.

Formed in May 1921 as a support for the victims & survivors of the Great War the organisation received its Royal Charter in 1925. This meant that it was presented with a Royal Standard (Flag) and that any changes could only be made at Royal level. The patronage of the Legion has recently been re-established after King Charles III took office from the previous patron HRH Elizabeth II

It was noted that On 6th June there will be 3 anniversaries to acknowledge

It is the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings,

It is the 20th Anniversary of the formation of the Hale Branch of the British Legion

And it is the anniversary of the refurbishment of the War Memorial

There have been two Presidents since its formation, namely Ald. Eric Goldrein and Ald. David Hudson and two Chairmen namely Freeman Jim Flanagan and the present Chairman Freeman Bill Sergeant.

The British Legion are planning to have their usual team of volunteers at Hale carnival on 8th June 2024 and have a visit to the National Arboretum planned for June details of which will be available at the Carnival stand.

- v. **The Guildswomen of Hale** – As an active guildswoman Marie Fisher continued to give a summary of this organisation.

In 1995 the Chairman of the Parish Council realised the fact that although the Freemen of the Village were being recognised there was no provision to formally acknowledge the work delivered by the ladies of the Village. On that basis several women were invited to form the Guildswomen. The condition was that anybody can be nominated provided they had lived in the village for 10 years (later amended to 5yrs) and that they had worked on a voluntary basis with no personal reward or gain for the benefit of the Village. All nominations would be reviewed by the Parish Council and a decision about acceptance made. The actual award would take place at an annual Civic Service reception. It was noted that recently the guildswomen had been involved in supporting the families of local residents who were receiving hospital care with transport assistance. A Rota for residents was created to assist..

- vi. **Hale Ladies** – Local resident Val Borlase gave an account of the Hale Ladies group who were formed 40 years ago primarily as a church group. However, there are no restrictions on membership now and they have settled to meeting every second Thursday of the month. Membership costs £20 for the year and an additional subscription is taken to pay for speakers and specialist guests. Recently a visit by the local comedian Ken Dodd's widow Lady Dodd was well received and future presentations include one by a local magistrate and other demonstrations are planned. Regular, annual events include the afternoon Strawberry Tea event in June and the festive Christmas lunch at one of our local hostelrys.

Previous coach trips are fondly remembered but it is now acknowledged that the membership is becoming more elderly and the cost is becoming more prohibitive. A request for "new blood" to increase the younger membership was expressed to ensure the organisation's longevity

- vii. **Hale Voluntary Gardeners** – Val Borlase informed the meeting that there are 6 pieces of land (gardens) and shrub areas around the village which are not funded and which have been tended by the group of volunteers who started by using their own time and tools. A dozen volunteers established a working group and a good relationship with Halton Borough Council's green spaces section was established. The Parish Council have assisted with funding tools and supplies and it is felt that huge improvements have been made. Unfortunately, a number of the volunteers who started the project have had to stop working due to illness, disability or old age and the task which has been described as being like "painting the Forth Bridge" has become markedly more difficult. Any additional volunteers would be greatly appreciated to swell the numbers and to continue the good work going forwards.

- viii. **Hale Arts Class** – A representative of the Hale Art Class, Norma who is the treasurer expressed her thanks to Hale Parish Council and to Hale Carnival Committee for their previous support which has enabled them to continue to a point where they are now able to fund themselves and secure their future. Two thirds of the membership are residents of Hale with the remainder being from Westbank, Woolton and surrounding areas. Norma was delighted to say that the class has been able to retain the class tutor who it was noted is accomplished and able to focus on the class individually or in a wider sense.

The Art group will contribute to the Village Carnival this year and in particular to the exhibition being planned for the Village Hall along with the photo exhibition and the musical offering.

There are currently eighteen members of the class and it is believed to be a wonderful group with a friendly, welcoming atmosphere.

A member of the public enquired about the availability of supplies and equipment for the group. It was established that members provide their own equipment and the Lord Mayor stated that if there was a requirement for additional equipment that he should be contacted for assistance. A second member of the public enquired about pieces of the class artwork being available for sale. Norma stated that most of the group preferred to keep their own work and aren't really interested in producing work for sale.

- ix. **PCSO Marnick Police Report** – A report by PCSO Marnick was acknowledged by the meeting.

5. Other Contributions –

- i. A member of the public expressed a view that it was disappointing that Halton Borough Council do not contribute to additional work required around the Village such as the landscaping/gardening mentioned earlier by the voluntary group. Also that the local ward councillors do not attend Hale Parish Council meetings or any of the associated events organised by the Parish Council. The Chair maintained that he would continue to encourage involvement by members of HBC.
- ii. Val Borlase thanked the meeting for the contributions of everyone and stated that she felt that a corner has been turned at last. People don't always have to agree but they do have to express their views respectfully

The Chair Closed the Meeting at 8.50pm