



HALE PARISH COUNCIL

OF THE HALTON BOROUGH IN THE COUNTY OF CHESHIRE



MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF HALE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN HALE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 17th JANUARY 2022 AT 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Williams, Cllr Healey, Cllr Mitchell, Cllr Wright, Cllr Spargo, Cllr Cleary, Cllr Anderson, Cllr McNamara, Cllr Trevaskis, Cllr Brown

In attendance: The Clerk and five Members of the public were present

1. **Apologies** – No apologies were received by the Clerk
2. **Declarations of Interest** – No Interests were declared
3. **Public Participation** – To adjourn the meeting for a period of public participation

The Chair allowed the Lord Mayor to speak about a number of upcoming events and projects.

- i. **The Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebration** - 2nd June 2022 – The Lord Mayor has registered with the Queens guide and a proposed lighting time for Hale beacon is 8.45pm.

Permission to position the beacon on the land adjacent to the Freemans field has been approved by local farmers, the bonfire wood has been arranged and the local Fire Brigade have been notified.

A section of land will be cleared and it is proposed that entertainment in the form of music, children's football, and an archery demonstration will take place. A bar will be available and visitors will be encouraged to bring their own picnic.

It is proposed that to mark the closure of the event a firework display will take place. The relevant authorities have been contacted to ensure that there will be no negative impact on the local environment or wildlife.

Entrance to the event is expected to be through the main entrance to Hale Park and will be confirmed in due course.

- ii. Lighthouse Painting** – Cllr Spargo has been in negotiations with a paint company who are interested in helping to re-paint the Iconic lighthouse at Hale head. This is now a private residence but the occupants are happy to be involved in the improvements proposed. It is hoped that in addition to painting the lighthouse some temporary lighting can be installed to create a focal point throughout the duration of the events planned. It is also proposed that a Union flag can be installed at the top of the building throughout the period.
 - iii. Canon installation** – It is proposed that the installation of the Fawcett canon (circa 1700) currently being renovated by The Lord Mayor will take place on the Village green. It is propose that this will be a lasting monument to mark the Queens Jubilee and a credit installed on it to that affect.
 - iv. Traffic Issues** – It was noted by a resident that there is an “accident waiting to happen” at Town lane near the junction with Cocklade lane due to the vehicles parked on the main road. This is a “pinch point” and it is felt that a resolution needs to be found before any accident might occur. The Clerk will send the concerns of the resident to the Highways dept. at Halton BC.
- 4. Minutes** – Cllr Spargo proposed that the minutes for Hale Parish Council Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 15th November 2021 should be approved as a true record. Cllr McNamara seconded the proposal.

The Motion was approved

- 5. Matters Arising From previous Parish Council Meetings** – The actions taken and an update of progress on outstanding matters was noted and accepted.
- i.** The Clerk noted that the invitations for the proposed Civic Service on 24th April 2022 have not yet been sent out due to concerns about the current Covid-19 pandemic and the wellbeing of potential attendees.

Cllr Spargo proposed that a plaque recognising the efforts of those councillors and residents who were involved in the installation of the current Village Hall should be commissioned. An official opening ceremony has never taken place and he feels that it is appropriate to acknowledge their input.
- 6. Ward Councillor’s Report** – Cllr Wharton reminded the Clerk that a new planning application has been submitted to Halton BC for a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) on behalf of Liverpool John Lennon Airport. The Clerk advised that this will require a separate extra ordinary meeting to discuss as it is an important issue which needs proper consideration before a resolution can be made.

7. **Payments** – A proposal by Cllr Williams to accept all payments made between 9th November 2021 – 8th January 2022 as recorded in the cash book record which has been reconciled against the Bank statements to these dates, all payments having been made under Financial Regulation 6.4 as detailed was received and seconded by Cllr Spargo

The Motion was approved

8. **Accounts** – Approval of the reconciled bank statement and summary of receipts for the Third quarter of 2021 (October 1st 2021 – December 31st 2021) presented by the Clerk was proposed by Cllr Healey and seconded by Cllr Anderson

The Motion was approved

9. Budget & Precept 2022 – 2023

The Clerk gave an introduction and highlighted the fact that the comprehensive document supplied for discussion is intended to be all-inclusive in its detail giving members and residents all the information required to make balanced opinions

The Chair of the Village Hall Committee gave a summary of the past years Village Hall activities and expressed his pleasure that the Village Hall has operated successfully and viably under extremely difficult circumstances. He went on to praise the work of current staff and to thank the outgoing Bookings Officer for her excellent work. The Village Hall is moving forwards and it is the aim of all concerned to reduce the level of support required from the Parish Council to keep the operation sustainable. Cllr Wright explained that bookings were better than projected and that the annual estimated income had been achieved with 3 months remaining in the current year.

Concerns about the sustainability of the Village Hall and the level of support required to keep it operational were expressed by a small number of members. Their concerns were addressed by the Chair and he explained his interpretation of the current situation. He expressed a belief that budgets need to increase so that program's which improve the area and infrastructure for the benefit of all residents can be undertaken. He reminded members that all money budgeted goes back to the local area in one form or another and that this year he feels attention needs to be directed towards maintaining & improving open spaces and green areas, along with consideration for residents who are experiencing stress or strain as a result of the Covid-19 situation. He feels that the proposed minimal increase in the budget and precept is appropriate and that a substantial part of the demographic will appreciate and support the increase. It is expected that the latest proposals will add value and provide additional support for local groups and volunteers while maintaining current services and safeguarding against degradation.

One resident from the floor warned about the danger of using allotted budget money for projects outside the actual scope of the budget allocation.

- i. It was proposed by Cllr Williams to reduce the proposed Environmental Budget Line from £10000 to £8000.
Seconded by Cllr Anderson

The Motion was rejected

- ii. A proposal by Cllr Cleary to remove the Environmental Budget line at £10000 was seconded by Cllr McNamara. In a tied vote the Chair used his casting vote to overturn the motion

The Motion was rejected

A small number of councillors were concerned about not being included in the pre-council meeting which took place at the request of the Clerk. It was explained that the meeting was arranged to establish a “starting point” for the discussions to take place at the meeting of the full council. A report was distributed by the Clerk 6 days prior to the actual meeting for consideration by members and no matters of concern were registered.

Cllr Wright confirmed that the same process for budgeting and precept has been adopted in all of the eight years he has been a councillor.

A motion to reduce the proposed Grants budget line from £3000 to £1500 was proposed by Cllr Spargo and seconded by Cllr Anderson.

The Motion was approved

- i. The Budget report for 2022 – 2023 was considered by members
With the relevant amendments listed above a figure of **£59,636** was proposed. Cllr McNamara resolved that this should be accepted and Cllr Spargo seconded the motion.

The Motion was approved

- ii. The Precept report for 2022 – 2023 was considered by members
Cllr Cleary proposed that the precept should be accepted at **£47,500** and Cllr Spargo seconded the motion

The Motion was approved

- 10. Civic Service** – Cllr Spargo agreed to contact the Vicar Rev Harvey and confirm that the Civic Service will take place on the proposed date of 24th April at 2pm. Cllr Mitchell agreed to help administer the event and will liaise with Cllr Spargo going forwards.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 10.00pm