

A meeting of the Newsletter Working Group of Halberton Parish Council
will be held in the Committee Room at Village Hall, Halberton
on Tuesday, 3 September 2024 at 7.30pm

All Members of the Working Group are summonsed to attend for the purpose of transacting the business specified in the Agenda below.

Susan McGeever
Clerk, Halberton Parish Council
23 July 2024

AGENDA

ITEM		REPORT PAGE
1	Apologies	N/A
2	Declaration of Interest	N/A
3	Public Forum	N/A
4	Approval of the Minutes dated 2 July 2024	2-7
5	Matters arising from the aforementioned Minutes - reader's survey – analysis of additional forms received	N/A
6	Working Group Membership/Secretary/Recruitment and distribution of workload for Issue 175	N/A
7	Comments about the previous edition of the Newsletter	N/A
8	Business Directory	N/A
9	Consideration of contents for the next edition of the Newsletter	N/A
10	Important Dates for Newsletter production and mailing	N/A
11	Local distribution and distribution coverage	N/A
12	Date of next meeting	N/A

ITEM		Report Page
4	Approval of the Minutes dated 2 July 2024	2 to 7

Halberton Parish Council

Minutes of the Newsletter Working Group Meeting on 2nd July 2024

Present: The Clerk, together with Councillor Graham (Chair), D Charles, J Wooding, C Jobson

D Charles recorded the minutes

1. Apologies

None

2. Declarations of interest

None

3. Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

4. Approval of Minutes dated 5 March 2024

The minutes were approved as accurate.

5. Matters arising from the aforementioned Minutes

5.1 Readers survey

a) DC outlined his paper detailing the results of the readers survey (copy attached to these minutes);

Although the number of completed forms received was very low (18 in total, 12 from the village and 6 from Brithem Bottom) it is important to note that (a) the results are very consistent in themselves (i.e. people are all saying the same things) and (b) the results are very consistent with the results of similar surveys undertaken by Banwell Parish (Somerset) and Great Notley (Essex). The information now to hand enables us to produce some general norms for parish magazines, which are:

The readership of parish magazines is high (78% in Halberton)

“What’s on” and “Parish Council News” will be among the three most read articles (88% and 83% in Halberton read these articles regularly)

Articles from religious organisations will be the least read (22% regularly read them in Halberton)

The idea of distributing a Parish magazine by email is not popular (71% against in Halberton)

The frequency of publication should be left as it is (89% don't want it changed in Halberton)

Summing up, DC said that the good news is that the newsletter is being read (despite rumours to the contrary) and appreciated. In the words of one respondent "Everyone I spoke to said they read all or some of it. People like to feel part of a community and they like to know what's going on".

b) Discussion – how best to present forthcoming events in the magazine

A calendar of events has been published in the newsletter in the past but there had been problems with obtaining information from organisations and the calendar mostly consisted of church services etc. which duplicated what was published elsewhere in the magazine.

There are relatively few events in Halberton (Duck Race, Annual Parish meeting, Carols at Christmas and Apple pressing were mentioned), which doesn't warrant production of a separate calendar within the magazine.

The Noticeboard page that was tried in the magazine had been useful but was not well used

We charge for adverts by organisations from outside the parish

The magazine is in competition with social media (Facebook) which carries frequent and up to date advertisements for forthcoming events (Willand Matters Facebook was cited as an example)

Because there is nothing obvious that can be done to improve the presentation of forthcoming events within the Halberton magazine it was **resolved** to leave things as they are.

Action – all note

c) Discussion – the most and least popular pages

Following discussion it was felt that the number of pages within the Halberton magazine being taken by religious groups is excessive when readership is taken into consideration.

Action – Editor to see if content can be compressed

d) Discussion – What does Halberton All Together mean?

It was noted that the "About" statement on the Halberton All Together Facebook page (a 'closed' group which has 400 followers) reads; "To build a communal information network for Halberton and a Parish that is as inclusive as possible. Enjoy sharing information and generating ideas to improve our neighbourhood. Join for updates on what's happening in our Parish, events news activities and maybe make some friends".

By way of contrast the "About" statement on the Upplowman Community Hub on Facebook (a 'public' group which has 1,200 followers) says "For all Upplowman residents to share experience and local information".

Following a lengthy discussion the Working Group concluded that the number of Facebook pages covering Halberton (there are at least four; Halberton All Together,

Halberton Community Association, Halberton Village Hall and the Parish Council page, which is still live) is confusing.

It was **resolved**

a) To change the name of the magazine from “Halberton All Together Newsletter” to “Halberton Community Newsletter” with immediate effect.

Action – all note and Clerk to report to the Parish Council

b) The Parish Council be requested to examine ways in which the Facebook pages could be amalgamated to produce an integrated “Halberton Community” Facebook page.

Action- Clerk

6. Working Group Membership / Recruitment and distribution of workload

No volunteers have come forward to fill the vacant roles on the Working Group itself.

7. Comments about the previous edition of the Newsletter

None.

8. Business Directory

a) CJ reported that the outstanding payment had been resolved and asked if it would be appropriate to ask for an up-front payment from the advertiser at renewal. This was agreed.

Action - CJ

b) A possible advertiser for the back page of the next edition is being sought.

c) If all the expected advertisers come back for the next edition income will be £953 for that issue. (previous issue was £1,003)

d) “Drop box”

Action - Clerk

9. Consideration of the contents for the next edition of the newsletter

a) Teddy bear zip wire photographs are available

b) July 13th celebrations to mark 50th anniversary of the barge, DC to obtain photographs DC

c) Traffic News, Neighbourhood Watch DC

d) Date of apple pressing event, if available CG

e) Defibrillator training CG

f) Maize harvest traffic, expected dates if known CG

g) History Group (Dunkeswell, U3A visit, forthcoming events) JW

h) Mid Devon Walking Festival Clerk

i) Ash Thomas fete Clerk

j) Church bells bingo Clerk

k) State of the Halberton Stream & SWW to be included in Parish Council report Clerk

10 Important dates for Newsletter production and mailing

• Deadline for articles 12th July

• Newsletter to Brightsea 22nd July

• Delivery to Village Hall 29th July

11 Local distribution and coverage

No issues reported

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Working Group will take place on Tuesday 2nd September 2024

Newsletter survey findings

1. Not one respondent said they never read our newsletter and 78% of all those who responded said they read every issue.
2. The newsletter is currently produced six times per year. 89% said they were happy with that.
3. The newsletter articles are listed below in order of readership:

Article type	Regularly read	Sometimes read	Hardly ever read
Forthcoming events	88%	12%	-
Parish Council news	83%	6%	11%
Neighbourhood watch, traffic news etc.	72%	28%	-
Community Groups (HHG, WI etc.)	72%	22%	6%
Voluntary + charitable, including village halls	67%	33%	-
Public services (NHS etc)	41%	53%	6%
District and County Councillors	41%	47%	12%
Charities (e.g. CAB)	28%	50%	22%
Schools news	39%	33%	28%
Religious organisations	22%	33%	45%

5. A very high proportion, 94%, said they have contacted a supplier advertising in the Business Directory
6. Over half (61%) of the respondents have used the list of local contact numbers
7. Responses were against the possibility of receiving the newsletter by email. (71% no, 29% yes).
8. The table below sets out where else people said they find out what is going on in Halberton.

	Yes	No
Notices on local lamp posts	94%	6%
Word of mouth	79%	21%
Local media (Devon Live, Tiverton Gazette etc.)	63%	37%
The Parish noticeboards	62%	38%
Other Council websites (Devon CC, Mid Devon DC etc.)	60%	40%
Facebook; Halberton All Together (400 followers)	47%	53%
The Parish Council website	31%	69%
Facebook; Halberton Community Association (584 followers)	31%	69%
Facebook; Parish Council (79 followers)	29%	71%
Facebook; Village Hall (240 followers)	29%	71%
By subscribing to the Parish Council website update	12%	88%

Note regarding Facebook. People either do use Facebook or they don't. The similar results for the various Facebook pages are probably because most of those people that do use it have looked at our local community pages at some time or another. We should not conclude that they keep on looking at them.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

There were a few responses:

From the over 65's

"Can't think of anything"
"Nothing offhand"
"I find it very good"
"May be a few more photos"

From age group 40 to 64

"Include information from surrounding parishes that will affect Halberton"

From age group 20 to 39

"Include good news stories locally, charities"
"Not sure"

OTHER COMMENTS

From the over 65's

"Other Facebook community pages, specifically Upplowman and Willand, are a very good source of local information".

"Everyone I spoke to said they read all or some of it. People like to feel part of a community and they like to know what's going on"

CHECKING THE FINDINGS

Even though the number of responses we obtained is very small (Total 18; under 20 = 0, 20-39=3, 40-64=9, Over 65 = 6) the results are very consistent.

To fact check our results I returned to the two similar surveys undertaken by Parish Councils. These were by Banwell, Somerset (192 responses) and Great Notley, Essex (number of responses unknown). The results of our survey can be checked for reasonableness against the findings of the other surveys where the same (or very similar) questions have been asked.

	Banwell	Great Notley	Halberton
Readership of every issue	90%	77%	78%
Most popular article type	What's on locally	Parish Council news	Forthcoming events
Second most popular article type	Banwell history	Events	Parish Council news
Third most popular article type	Parish Council news	Community Groups	N W, Traffic news
Least popular article type	Church services	Charitable bodies (e.g. food bank)	Religious organisations
Distribution by email?	About 47% said no.	About 60% said no.	71% said no.
How often should it be published?	12 times a year, 92% (as existing)	4 times a year, 50% (as existing). 2 times a year 18%.	6 times a year, 89% (as existing)

These results suggest our own findings are broadly in line with the other surveys and that Halberton is not an exception to some general norms, which seem to be;

- a) Readership of Parish magazines is high
- b) 'What's on' and 'Parish Council news' (highlighted in red in the table above) will be among the three most read articles
- c) Articles from religious organisations will be the least read.
- d) The idea of distributing a Parish magazine by email is not popular (and in Halberton it seems it is not at all popular!)
- e) Whatever the current frequency of the publication is, it should be left as it is. (Note. Great Notley was less clear cut, which may be because that magazine is already being produced less frequently than the other two).