

Halberton Parish Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council
held at Halberton Village Hall on Tuesday 12 December 2023 at 7.00pm

Present

Councillors Batchelor (Chairman), Campbell, Furmedge, Graham, Saunders and E Slade together with Councillor DuChesne (MDDC) and Councillor C Slade (DCC). The Clerk, Mrs S McGeever, was also present.

Councillor Batchelor opened the meeting at 7pm and thanked everyone for their attendance.

221-1 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillor Ayre and Browse.

221-2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

221-3 Public Forum

The following items were raised during the Public Forum and would be discussed under the relevant agenda items or placed on the agenda of the next meeting:

- a member of the public thanked the Parish Council for their work over the past twelve months given the number of difficult topics that had been raised
- the Parish Council was asked to continue its strong objection to the proposed 4 dwellings at Pethertons given that the new application was very similar. The Conservation Officer had recommended refusal on the basis that this was a visually important space part of which fell in the conservation area and lack of information. The location of the properties and the proposed access which would have limited visibility splay was on a dangerous part of the road.
- the Parish Council was asked to strongly object to the application for the Red Linhay AD plant to double its production and extend the area feedstocks could be transported. The plant lay closer than the recommended 200m from residential properties and the impact on residents would be immense in terms of noise, odour and dust. Complaints about noise had been lodged with the Public Health Officer. The resulting increase in traffic would have an impact on all surrounding roads and affect road safety. The general feeling was that the conditions in the 2017 decision notice were not being adhered to.
- concern was expressed at the time given to planning applications and decision making processes at the MDDC Planning Committee meeting which decided the Solar Farm application. The resident was grateful that Councillor DuChesne had spoken on their behalf.
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221-4 To approve the minutes of the Council meeting on 14 November 2023

It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting and for the Chairman to initial each page and sign the final page given the Chairman had not been present at the meeting.

221-5 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman thanked the Clerk, councillors, volunteers and members of the public for their hard work in moving projects forward and wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

The Chairman advised that he would be moving Finance and the discussion on the budget and precept forward on the agenda to after planning.

221-6 Mid Devon District Council matters

a. To receive a report from the MDDC Council Member

Councillor DuChesne had submitted a report that had been circulated with the agenda.

In response to the comments raised in the Public Forum, Councillor DuChesne advised that Planning Officers and the Planning Committee needed to have valid planning reasons to turn down an application.

With regard to Red Linhay, the applicant was appealing the last decision notice relating to the variation to the noise condition and MDDC would defend their decision. Planning considered that any variation to the production levels would require a new planning application and not an amendment. Enforcement were also investigating pellet production.

The briefing on the Battery Storage Unit at J27 was due on 13 December.

Consultations were ongoing on the Culm Village Garden and this included infrastructure and the by-pass and railway station. There would be a meeting on Transport Infrastructure throughout Mid Devon.

Work was also ongoing with regard to 3 Rivers.

Councillor DuChesne was looking to organise for a member of the police to talk at one of the meetings.

A correction was required to the Newsletter – Deputy Chairman not Deputy Mayor.

b. Grand Western Canal

The Grand Western Canal Park would be celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2024.

221-7 Devon County Council matters

Councillor C Slade had submitted a report which formed part of the agenda for this meeting and had nothing to add.

There was no update on the Greenway application and any new information received would be circulated for consultation.

There had been an email exchange with DCC on road safety in Lower Town. A response was awaited and further action was required - photographs and videos were available. The burden of traffic in Halberton could also be raised with MDDC at their proposed meeting on Traffic Infrastructure.

221-8 Police Matters

Councillor Browse advised that the Police Commissioner had commissioned a large survey and that he would write the response on behalf of the Parish Council.

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

The Clerk advised that a meeting would be scheduled for mid-January.

221-9 Vacancies on the Parish Council

There had been no applications to join the Parish Council but more councillors were needed to move projects forward.

Vacancies would continue to be published in the Newsletter.

Action: Clerk

221-10 Consideration of Mid Devon District Council's planning applications

Councillor Furmedge had put together details of each application so that they could be viewed on screen during the meeting.

New applications:**23/01090/LBC**

Proposal: Listed Building Consent to re-point joints, replace areas of brickwork and remove vegetation

Location: Manley Railway Bridge (2717) Manley Lane Tiverton

Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 298751 / 112343

The Parish Council RESOLVED that they had no objection to this application. The work outlined in the application was required.

23/01788/FULL

Proposal: Erection of 4 dwellings and associated works

Location: Land at NGR 300380 112580 (R/o Pethertons) Lower Town Halberton

Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 300377 / 112563

The Parish Council noted the comments in the forum and their previous objection to the application.

Whilst the new layout was acknowledged, the Parish Council did not believe that this allayed their concerns of impact on the conservation area, overlooking and road safety. In particular, the visibility splays given the proposed entrance/exit was on a bend and the need for a swept path analysis for tractors and trailers. This had been noted by Highways who again were unable to make a recommendation due to lack of information.

The Tree Officer had highlighted the amenity value and impact on TPOs and there were also comments from the Arboricultural Officer whilst the Conservation Officer had recommended a straight forward refusal based on lack of information.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to object to the application and cite their earlier objections.

23/01798/FULL

Proposal: Variation of Condition 9 to allow alternative feedstock types and quantity and Condition 20 to allow the anaerobic digester plant to produce and export 1.1 megawatts of renewable energy of planning permission 17/01142/FULL

Location: Land at NGR 299621 112764 (Red Linhay) Crown Hill Halberton Devon

The Parish Council noted that the proposal regarding Condition 9 would provide for 2 ½ times the current amount of feedstock being delivered to the site. Whilst Condition 20 would require that amount or feedstock or more to increase the capacity of the anaerobic digester plant. The Parish Council believed that both conditions which had been re-stated in the last decision notice for the site were essential and that any variation to Condition 9 and Condition 20 should be a new full planning application and not a variation.

The weight of fully laden tractors and trailers was causing problems both with the road structure and water pipes cracking underneath.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to object to the application and, if MDDC were mindful to approve the application, ask their Ward Councillor to call the application in. Traffic, noise, odour and dust together with the impact on residents and the Grand Western Canal would be cited in the comments submitted.

23/01825/CAT

Proposal: Notification of intention to fell 1 conifer tree in a Conservation Area

Location: Journeys End Greenway Halberton

Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 300799 / 113194

Parish: Halberton 25

The Parish Council RESOLVED that they had no objection to this application given the location of the tree close to the house.

23/01838/MFUL

Proposal: Installation of ground mounted solar PV panels to generate up to 5MW, comprising photovoltaic panels and associated infrastructure and works (Site Area 6.30ha)

Location: Land at NGR 300681 107829 (East of Wells Park) Cullompton Devon

Grid Ref: 300681 / 107829

Parish: Cullompton 21

The Parish Council noted that the site was on the side of a hill coming out of the village of Cullompton and would be clearly visible and would cover good agricultural land.

The proposed access route from Tiverton to Cullompton was not suitable for HGVs and the turning into the road at Cullompton was very unsuitable.

It was noted that Southwest Water had no problem with run-off water from the site but the Historic Environmental Team considered that there might be significant ancient works in the area and required a working scheme of investigation.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to object to the application on the grounds of access and visual impact.

It was felt the number of solar panel farms in the area was reaching saturation point.

Existing applications:**Ref: ABX/DCC/4358/2023**

County Matter Planning Application

Retention of existing deposition and temporary landfill site for the deposition of additional inert waste and a construction waste recycling facility with associated works including temporary buildings, access and landscaping, at Land at Greenway, Upplowman, Tiverton

No further information had been provided by the applicant and a further consultation period was awaited.

22/00665/MFUL

Retention of silage clamp and erection of roof over

Land at NGR 299554 112915 (Red Linhay) Crown Hill Halberton Devon

A meeting has not yet been set with the Parish Council and Red Linhay to discuss tractor movements.

Other planning matters:**22/02374/MFUL**

Proposal: Construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm together with associated works, equipment and infrastructure

Location: Land at NGR 301974 110937 Dean Hill Road Willand

23/01141/FULL

Variation to the noise condition at Red Linhay

The Parish Council noted that the recent variation to Condition 13 was being taken to Appeal. The Parish Council would submit a comment but there was no Public Appeal process in this instance.

The Orchard

Further information had been received from MDDC and negotiations were ongoing between Officers and the Clerk. Councillor Furmedge had written a framework for the decision making process but without further key information regarding the space that had been sold and access to the car parking spaces, it was not felt that a decision could be made.

The Parish Council would be kept up-to-date with all information received.

Pleasant Streams with Enforcement

Heron's Bank with Enforcement

No further information has been received regarding Selgar's Mill.

221-11 Consideration of Mid Devon District Council's Planning Decisions

The following decisions were noted:

23/01349/FULL - APPROVED

Proposal: Erection of extension to existing farm shop to include dining area and timber decking

Location: Halberton Court Farm

23/01447/FULL - APPROVED

Proposal: Erection of two agricultural storage buildings and formation of hardstanding and access track

Location: Land at NGR 300766 110224 (Nethercott) Brithem Bottom Cullompton Devon

23/01608/PNCOU - APPROVED

Proposal: Prior notification for the change of use of an agricultural building to 3 dwellings under Class Q

Location: Land and Buildings at NGR 298968 111747 Manley Farm Tiverton Devon

23/01141/FULL - APPROVED

Proposal: Variation of condition 13 of planning permission 22/00868/MFUL (Removal of condition 13 of planning permission 17/01142/FULL - further noise assessments) relating to the submission of a noise assessment

Location: Land at NGR 299621 112764 (Red Linhay) Crown Hill Halberton Devon

22/02374/MFUL - APPROVED

Proposal: Construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm together with associated works, equipment and infrastructure

Location: Land at NGR 301974 110937 Dean Hill Road Willand

The Parish Council noted that a letter of intent had been received from Low Carbon with regard to the community benefit prior to the application being approved despite their objection. They had also requested further ideas on how the solar panel farm could assist the community through educational visits etc. and this was referred to the Recreation and Amenities Working Group. Maintaining a direct line of contact with the company going forward was essential and the Clerk was the main point of contact.

It was hoped that MDDC would provide a toolkit for their Parish Council's to use when negotiating community benefits from renewable energy sites.

221-12 Highways matters and the Road and Snow Warden Schemes

a. Potholes

Potholes continue to be reported online to Devon County Council.

It was agreed that letters would be sent to residents in Lower Town where the hedges protruded well into the road.

Action: Councillor Batchelor/Clerk

b. Herne Bridge

First half term of 2024.

c. Road Warden Scheme

Training

Councillor Campbell had completed his initial training.

Councillor Furmedge had completed his Chapter 8 training and was awaiting a strimming course.

d. Snow Warden Scheme

A call for volunteers would be included in the December/January Newsletter.

Councillor Batchelor would report on grit bins and salt stocks to the next meeting.

Action: Councillor Batchelor/Campbell

221-13 Amenity matters

a. Platinum Jubilee Car Park

Councillor Batchelor advised that he had undertaken the work to put the gravel base under the noticeboard.

The Clerk was working on the planning application required by MDDC to undertake the tree works.

Action: Clerk

The Clerk advised that an application form had been completed for DCC call for sites for EV charging points.

Action: Clerk

b. Footpaths

Councillor Furmedge reported as follows:

Existing paths

- no updates
- Awaiting DCC PRoW team to respond ref QR Codes to footpath signs

DMR

- Awaiting DCC draft report.
- Note also existing Footpath 7 may be proposed to extend along Corner Lane as this is not an adopted road.

c. Cemetery

The following actions were outstanding from the original meeting:

- a) Councillor Batchelor would examine the contents of the shed.
- b) Scrap the moss of the path by the shed
- c) Spray moss in other areas
The Parish Council RESOLVED to purchase moss killer to be used at a suitable time by Councillor Batchelor to remove the moss.
It was noted that moss also needed to be removed from the Pond Hill seating area.
- d) Additional signs on the bins to prevent the wrong items being placed in them (Clerk)
Councillor Slade reported that use of the bins had improved considerably.
- e) Clean/repair benches
It was noted the benches were deteriorating
- f) Next year cut a path through the wildflower area and put down more wildflower seeds

Tasks in hand

- i) Grave lowering to take place in the Spring.

Action: Clerk to contact EROB holders and the grave digger

- ii) safety inspection of the gravestones completed.

Action: Clerk to contact EROB holders

iii) Noticeboard

The noticeboard proof had been approved and delivery was awaited.

Action: Clerk

iv) Quotes for courtyard

Quotes had been obtained and further quotes were being obtained. Once a definitive cost was known, discussion would be required to establish a budget and obtain funding for the work.

Action: Clerk to contact Kenford Tarmac

d. Noticeboards

i) The Village Hall committee had installed the second noticeboard at the Village Hall

ii) access to the noticeboard at Brithem Bottom

Councillor Batchelor had also improved the access to the noticeboard at Brithem Bottom.

It was important to keep the noticeboards up-to-date.

Councillor Graham – Village Hall

Councillor Slade – Jubilee Car Park

Councillor Furmedge – Ash Thomas

Clerk – Brithem Bottom

e. Defibrillators

Councillor Graham asked the Clerk to organise a training session. This would be held at Ash Thomas.

Action: Councillor Graham/Clerk

f. Landmark Tree

The tree for the Pigeons (Ash Thomas) will be purchased and planted in the autumn.

Action: Clerk to purchase

221-20 Recreation and Amenities Working Group

Members of the working group and the Clerk reported as follows:

a. The Mead

The Clerk had contacted all the solicitors and appointed Tozers to carry out the work.

Action: Clerk to monitor

b. Community Growing Area

The Clerk had sent the Tree Report to DCC for agreement on the actions to be taken to improve the light to the growing area and a response was awaited.

Action: Clerk

Councillor Campbell advised that a meeting had taken place on 9 December with one member of the public attending and several others registering their interest.

It was felt that the S106 monies available would purchase the materials for the required fencing and this would be undertaken by a working party. There might also be sufficient funds to purchase a small shed to be located in the amenity area of the Jubilee Car Park.

DCC and the farmer would be approached to see if rain water could be captured from the barn roof.

Local businesses would be approached for their support by donating seeds etc and it was hoped that the scouts and school children would assist with the planting.

Action: Councillor Campbell and Councillor Browse

c. Halberton Children's Recreation Ground

i) Work was going to fund the new equipment for the Recreation Ground. The S106 application would be submitted and a request for a grant to DCC's Growing Communities Fund. A grant of £1000 had already been received from the Locality Budget.

Action: Councillor Campbell/Clerk

ii) the monthly safety reports were being carried out.

d. Fund raising

See c. above.

e. Mid Devon Wildlife Warden Scheme

On hold.

The Clerk was sending a copy of the Grass Specification contract to Councillor Batchelor who would look to see what items remained outstanding. A meeting would then be arranged with the contractor.

Action: Councillor Batchelor/Clerk

221-15 Community items

a. Council IT tools Working Group to include Facebook page/Website/Communicating with Parishioners
Report from Councillor Furmedge

Website etc

Ongoing content being created as required. No structural changes taking place.

Facebook (item for decision, see appendix)

Next steps:

- Hand over additions of Minutes and Agendas to Clerk.
- Collaboration tools - complete final councillor migration
- Complete the website accessibility fixes (verbal update)
- Facebook change/no-change based on decision

Facebook

Councillor Furmedge advised that there were two Facebook "pages", the Halberton Parish Council and Halberton All Together (HAT).

Councillor Furmedge put forward the proposal is to discontinue using the Halberton Parish Council page and use the HAT group page and this was seconded by Councillor Batchelor and unanimously agreed.

b. Internet connectivity Working Group

Report from Councillor Furmedge

Internet

Further areas of the Airband fibre network have been made live and an increasing number of people are taking the service.

Still some "pole" work is taking place to complete the network.

There is also a voice (VoIP) system called Talk on offer from Airband. Using this option or using a mobile phone could enable residents to discontinue "landline" phone service.

It was understood that BT would be removing all copper within the next two years.

c. Anaerobic Digester Liaison Committee

The owners of Red Linhay had requested a meeting with the Parish Council and the Clerk had contacted them and was awaiting a response.

Action: Clerk to monitor

d. D-Day 80

All local groups have been emailed for dates in the New Year and a notice put in the Newsletter.

e. Mid Devon Walking Festival

Parish involvement in the Mid Devon Walking Festival has been confirmed (14-19 September 2024).

f. Flies in Halberton

No further update since the last meeting.

221-16 Traffic Committee

The Parish Council was working on the following initiatives:

- Flashing lights at the school
- 20mph speed limits
- Community Speedwatch
- Installation of the VAS units

Simmons signs had indicated that solar panel lights would not work given the location of the poles.

Negotiations were ongoing with DCC Highways and Lighting to see if signs could be fitted to existing lampposts and use that electricity supply.

Action: Clerk to report to next meeting

Work was ongoing to identify the costs of a Parish Council sponsored application for a 20mph speed limit in Lower Town.

Action: Clerk

Work was ongoing to set up the Community Speedwatch initiative.

Action: Councillor Browse/Clerk

Work was ongoing to ensure that the posts could be erected safely and without impediment from underground cables or drains.

Action: Councillor Browse/Clerk

Purchase of portable Air Quality Monitor

Ready to start initial trials.

Next:

- First deployment being planned but not possible during the wet weather.

It was noted that the signage at the bottom of Greenway required action. The light at Jubilee Corner had been repaired.

221-17 Newsletter Working Group

Issue 170 had been completed, printed and circulated and feedback had been good.

Councillor Batchelor would attend the next working group meeting in January 2024.

No-one has come forward to edit the Newsletter.

221-18 Financial accounts 2023/24

a. Financial reports 2023/24

The information for November has been input and the reports forwarded to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting.

b. Provisional budget for 2024/25

1. Budgets

Councillors Batchelor and Furmedge had met with the Clerk and looked at the finances of the Parish Council.

It was noted that over the past two to three years, the Parish Council had undertaken more works and spent reserves to do so. Insurance costs had also increased as projects had been completed and there would be another increase relating to the community growing area, new equipment at the Recreation Ground and the Mead. The Parish Council also wished to undertake work at the cemetery and there was the potential of costs involved with regard to parking spaces at The Orchard.

A major increase had been the clerk's hours and this was in response to a larger workload particularly relating to planning and projects that had been held in abeyance because of Covid.

The Clerk had prepared a provisional budget which looked to meet the additional costs and set monies aside into reserves for key projects (cemetery) and known long term expenditure (four-yearly elections) as well as keeping a sufficient General Fund in place to cover between 6-12 months running costs in line with good accounting practices.

The Parish Council would need to decide how monies would be allocated based on 'Must do's', 'Wish to do's' and 'Highly desirable'.

The precept needed to cover all the day to day running of the Parish Council and its assets – the must do's.

The Clerk would allocate her hours per month on the basis of 55 hours to carry out all council business, 5 hours to complete the Cilca qualification (one year) and 5 hours for the newsletter.

Income from sources such as the cemetery had been lower in 2023/24.

Councillor Batchelor and Furmedge had asked the Clerk to prepare two budgets – one to cover all the known potential costs over the coming year together with allocating funds to reserves for items such as the next election and the second more streamlined with the Parish Council holding back on some projects.

In both instances, the precept would need to increase because of the increased costs associated with running the council and all its assets together with funding for maintenance.

The budget and precept would need to be voted on and agreed at the next meeting as precept calculations had to be submitted by 24 January 2024.

2. Approval of the Annual P3/Prow Clearance quote for 2024 Season

The Parish Council RESOLVED to accept the increased quote for the Annual P3/Prow Clearance.

c. Setting of the 2024/25 precept

See item b. above, to be voted on at the next meeting.

d. Payments to approve (Council):

The Parish Council RESOLVED to make the following payments:

Google workspace (monthly cost)	£ 36.80
Source for Business	£ 7.84
Nicholas Page	£350.00
C Graham (newsletter)	£ 30.00

HMRC	£118.52
S McGeever (wage)	£665.25
S McGeever (expenses - Microsoft)	£ 59.99
S McGeever (expenses - Fasthosts)	£ 4.30
Brightsea (newsletter printing)	£926.00

e. Clerk's hours

Time sheets for November (15 hours per week – 65 hours per month) had been sent to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

f. NALC pay award

The Parish Council RESOLVED to implement the NALC pay award for the Clerk with effect from the recommended date of 1 April 2023. The payment would be made within the December PAYE submission.

g. Bank signatories/change of bank

The application form in the process of being completed.

Action: Clerk

221-19 Members business including meetings attended, and miscellaneous matters (not for decision)

Devon Council Climate Network

Nothing to report

Connecting the Culm/Catchment Visioning Workshop

Nothing to report

Cullompton Health and Wellbeing

Nothing to report

221-20 Items for next meeting

No items for the next meeting other than those detailed in the minutes were put forward.

Next meeting: Tuesday, 9 January 2024 at 7pm - Meeting of the Parish Council at Halberton Village Hall

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____