

Halberton Parish Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council
held at Halberton Village Hall on Tuesday 9 January 2024 at 7.00pm

Present

Councillors Batchelor (Chairman), Ayre, Browse, Campbell, Furmedge, Graham and Saunders 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.

222-1 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillor E Slade.

222-2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

222-3 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:

- Red Linhay AD Plant

222-4 To approve the minutes of the Council meeting on 12 December 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.

222-5 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman wished everyone a Happy New Year and looked forward to moving projects forward in 2024.

222-6 Mid Devon District Council matters

a. To receive a report from the MDDC Council Member

Councillor DuChesne wished everyone a Happy New Year and had submitted a report that had been circulated with the agenda.

Councillor DuChesne advised that she was in contact with Planning Officers over a number of applications including those relating to Red Linhay, Greenway and the Hartnoll Farm Judicial Review. It was noted that if an application for a Non Material Amendment was refused then the applicant could only seek a Judicial Review.

Councillor DuChesne also advised that the senior head count at MDDC had been reduced in order to trim back the budget.

Councillor DuChesne had also been asked to join the Polie Councillor Advocate Scheme by MDDC.

b. Grand Western Canal

Mid Devon District Council had reduced the amount in their budget for the Grand Western Canal Park. It was considered a non-essential activity and currently rested in Tier 2. Councillor DuChesne was lobbying for it to be changed to Tier 1.

Devon County Council's standpoint was that there was a contracted agreement in place between MDDC and DCC to share the costs equally and it was not regarded as a grant. Inland Waterways considered the reduction in funding would have an impact on tourism given that some 200,000 visitors attended the site each year. The 15% cut from £45,000 to £37,000 gave a reduction of £8,000.

The Canal Manager would be responsible for adjusting the budget to reflect the funds received and this could affect the programme of works planned for 2024.

The Joint Advisory Committee was not involved in the budgetary process.

It was noted that the Parish Council may consider grant requests from the Grand Western Canal.

222-7 Devon County Council matters

Councillor C Slade had submitted a report which formed part of the agenda for this meeting and advised that DCC was currently involved in setting its budgets for 2024/25.

Councillor Slade had advised that the Clerk that the latest round of applications for a 20mph limit had been opened and he would support a submission from Halberton Parish Council and suggested that the submission include photographs and the option to visit Lower Town during school drop off or pick up.

222-8 Police Matters

Councillor Browse advised that the Councillor Advocate Scheme had just circulated their list of dates for 2024 and there was a traffic workshop coming up which he hoped to attend.

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

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

222-9 Vacancies on the Parish Council

There had been one expression of interest and the Clerk had circulated the candidate's CV and awaited the completed application form.

Action: Clerk to follow up

Vacancies would continue to be published in the Newsletter.

Action: Clerk

222-10 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.

23/01866/FULL

Proposal: Expansion of compound

Location: Land at NGR 305194 112185 (GXO) Hitchcocks Business Park Uffculme

Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 305276 / 112128

Parish: Halberton 25

This application was to increase the hard standing at the site and the Parish Council RESOLVED that they had no objection to this application and to the work being carried out.

23/01718/FULL

Proposal: Erection of extension to an agricultural building to provide two biomass boilers and a timber store

Location: Land at NGR 299678 112796 (Red Linhay) Crown Hill Halberton Devon

Grid Ref: 299621 : 112764

Parish: Halberton 25

The Parish Council considered that additional information provided by the applicant which included a design and access statement and a statement on need.

The Parish Council considered that the additional information did not provide the answers/clarifications they had been seeking in their comments submitted to the Planning Portal.

In particular that relating to need and the output and throughput of the boilers which would have a direct impact on traffic movements, noise, odour and the risks associated with their operation and whether this was an agricultural or industrial facility. It appeared that the applicant would be using woodchip to dry woodchip within the surrounding building and this would require pipework which was not present on the plans.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to reiterate their strong objection to the application and once again list the questions that they felt needed to be addressed before the application could be properly assessed.

The Clerk would circulate a response to the Parish Council before its submission on the Planning Portal.

23/01548/FULL

Proposal: Erection of a slurry storage tank (997 sqm)

Location: Land at NGR 299384 112863 (Red Linhay) Crown Hill Halberton

Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 299384 / 112863

Parish: Halberton 25

The Parish Council noted objection comments made by residents in relation to this application via email communication and during the public forum.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to object to the erection of the slurry storage tank for the following material planning conditions:

- Scale and size – given the applicant's stated number of cattle (156 and the way they were kept on straw), it was felt the slurry tank was overly large for the agricultural purpose specified
- Previous Planning Applications
- Noise, traffic and odour and the subsequent impact on the health and welfare of the local community given its location close to residential premises
- Detrimental effect on the Grand Western Canal which is a heritage asset and well-used by tourists

The Parish Council noted that the slurry tank would be adjacent to the silage clamp which, once roofed as specified in the approved planning application, would only be producing clean water.

The Parish Council would raise the question as to whether the slurry tank was purely for agricultural purposes or related to the input and output of the AD plant which under previous planning decisions had an approved quantity of slurry of 2,000 tonnes.

The Clerk would circulate a response to the Parish Council before its submission on the Planning Portal.

24/00014/CAT

Proposal: Notification of intention to reduce the height of a hedge, consisting of Laurel, Hazel, Holly and Elder to approximately 2.4m within the Conservation Area

Location: Glebe House Lower Town Halberton

Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 300468 / 112826

Parish: Halberton 25

The Parish Council RESOLVED that they had no objection to this application and to the work being carried out.

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 been set up between the owner of Red Linhay and the Parish Council. It was hoped that this would lead to a public meeting.

Other planning matters:

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 been set up between the Parish Council and Red Linhay on 16 January 2024. Those in attendance would be Councillors Batchelor, Ayre, Campbell, Furmedge and Graham together with Councillor DuChesne (MDDC) and the Clerk.

The Clerk would draw up an agenda and circulate to councillors. The Terms of Reference for the AD Liaison Group would be the starting point.

Action: Clerk

Other planning matters:

23/01798/FULL

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

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

This application is on the portal as 'awaiting decision'.

A subsequent application under 23/01952/NMA seeking to change the wording of the original application was being considered by Planning Officers and was not open to public or Parish Council comment.

22/00868/MFUL - APPEAL

23/01141/FULL for the variation of Condition 13 of planning permission as given in 22/00868/MFUL

The Parish Council has submitted a response on the Appeal Portal and the outcome of the Appeal is awaited.

The Orchard – This item would be moved to amenities for future meetings.

The Clerk has continued to gather information and keep the Parish Council informed on issues such as shared access. Further information was still required before a decision on how best to take on the parking spaces at The Orchard could be made. MDDC attendance at the Parish Council meeting has been requested once all information has been gathered.

Pleasant Streams with Enforcement

Heron's Bank with Enforcement

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

It was agreed that the Enforcement issues would come off the agenda until an update was received.

222-11 Consideration of Mid Devon District Council's Planning Decisions

The following decisions were noted:

23/01721/CAT - APPROVED

Proposal: Notification of intention to pollard 1 Walnut tree within the Conservation Area

Location: Springfield Lodge High Street Halberton Tiverton

23/00727/HOUSE - APPROVED

Proposal: Erection of single storey side extensions

Location: Old School House Ash Thomas Tiverton Devon

23/01825/CAT - APPROVED

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

Location: Journeys End Greenway Halberton Tiverton

222-12 Highways matters and the Road and Snow Warden Schemes

a. Potholes

Potholes continue to be reported online to Devon County Council and work was ongoing around the parish.

Action: Clerk

b. Herne Bridge

First half term of 2024 – exact dates awaited but the bridge should not be closed.

c. Road Warden Scheme

Training

Councillor Furmedge was awaiting a strimming course.

Councillor Browse had sufficient tarmac bins to continue filling in small potholes.

d. Snow Warden Scheme

A call for volunteers had been included in the December/January Newsletter.

Councillor Batchelor advised that there was sufficient salt stocks at Halberton Farm and it was not necessary to move it at this time.

Salt bins were being checked.

There had been ice at the Crosslands turning.

Action: Councillor Batchelor/Campbell

The matter of hedges was also raised and Councillor Browse undertook to get the hedges along side the permissive path leading to the canal cut by a contractor.

Farmers used to undertake the work but the new red diesel laws prevented this. The Clerk had raised the issue with Devon County Council who did not have the funds to carry out the work.

222-13 Amenity matters

a. Platinum Jubilee Car Park

A tree had fallen down in the car park and the Clerk would prioritise completion of the planning application required by MDDC to undertake the tree works.

Action: Clerk

The Clerk had received confirmation that the application form for EV charging points had been received by DCC.

Action: Clerk

b. Footpaths

Councillor Furmedge reported as follows:

Existing paths

- DCC PRow team have responded that QR Codes on footpath signs will be OK.

Next steps:

- Create QR Code prototype sign
- Setup framework for website that using the QR Codes will reference

Councillor Browse advised that he had two volunteers for walking the footpaths.

Action: Councillor Furmedge to set up spreadsheet and co-ordinate

DMR

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

The Clerk advised that she hoped further completed forms would be available shortly.

c. Cemetery

In the absence of Councillor E Slade, the Clerk reported that the following actions were outstanding from the original meeting:

- a) Councillor Batchelor would examine the contents of the shed.
- b) Scrape 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)
The use of the bins had improved considerably.
- e) Clean/repair benches
It was noted the benches were deteriorating and this would be actioned in the spring.
- f) Next year cut a path through the wildflower area and put down more wildflower seeds
Add to grass cutting specification

The Clerk reported that correspondence with Upcott Maintenance had also highlighted the need to cut the cemetery hedges.

Councillor Graham advised that the hedge near the pond also needed cutting along with other works.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to ask Upcott Maintenance to carry out the work at the cemetery and pond and to accept a revised quote from them for the 2024/25 season bearing in mind that consistency was required in carrying out the grass cutting contract. Their suggestions to improve the contract and the work required would be incorporated into the specification.

Action: Clerk

Tasks in hand

i) Grave lowering to take place in the Spring.

Action: Clerk is contacting EROB holders and the grave digger

ii) safety inspection of the gravestones completed.

Action: Clerk is contacting EROB holders

iii) Noticeboard

Councillor Batchelor had the noticeboard and it was RESOLVED to appoint the Parish Council handyman to put install it.

Action: Clerk to arrange

iv) Quotes for courtyard

The Clerk was awaiting further quotes.

Action: Clerk to follow up

d. Defibrillators

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

Action: Councillor Graham/Clerk

e. Landmark Tree

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

Action: Clerk to purchase

222-20 Recreation and Amenities Working Group

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

a. The Mead

The Clerk was working with Tozers to set up the account so that work could commence on the contract for the Mead.

Action: Clerk to monitor

b. Community Growing Area

The Clerk would contact DCC regarding the signing of the lease. A response was still awaited regarding the tree report that had been submitted.

S106 funding totalling £1205.00 was available and Councillor Batchelor advised that a working group was being set up to carry out the fencing. Three quotes would need to be submitted to secure the S106 monies for the fencing. The Parish Council RESOLVED unanimously that this would be a good use of S106 funds.

c. Halberton Children's Recreation Ground

i) update on installation of new equipment and financing (Councillor Campbell)

The S106 application has been submitted.

The Community Growing Fund application is in the process of being submitted and work was ongoing on other funding sources.

ii) the monthly safety reports were being carried out

d. Fund raising

See above

e. Mid Devon Wildlife Warden Scheme

No action had been taken.

f. Ideas for solar farm cooperation

No action had been taken.

Councillor Furmedge had written to DALC to see if they were able to assist with a Tool Kit to assist Parish Councils to negotiate Community Benefit Funds.

222-15 Community items

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

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

- Website accessibility being discussed with vendor (Eyelid Productions)
- Some small changes being made for further usage of mailing lists
- Facebook posts now all on "Halberton All Together"

Next steps:

- Hand over additions of Minutes and Agendas to Clerk.
- Collaboration tools - complete final councillor migration

The Parish Council RESOLVED to hold a Google docs training session at 6.15pm on Tuesday, 13 February for 30 minutes, before the start of the Parish Council meeting.

b. Internet connectivity Working Group

Report from Councillor Furmedge

Internet

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

c. Anaerobic Digester Liaison Committee

A meeting has been set up.

Action: Clerk

d. D-Day 80

The Clerk reported that only the History Group had responded.

Action: Clerk to follow-up

It was felt important to bring the community together and this could be at the Annual Parish Meeting or later in the year. It was felt the Annual Parish Meeting was a business meeting and not a community event. The Duck Race was well attended but had a specific fundraising remit. A community event where the Parish Council could talk about a plan for 2024-2034 was preferable and this could take place as a BBQ or similar.

Councillor DuChesne would speak to the owners of the Horse Drawn Barge.

e. Mid Devon Walking Festival

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

f. Flies in Halberton

The Clerk was monitoring the situation.

222-16 Traffic

The Clerk reported that all issues associated with traffic and road safety were ongoing. The Christmas break had meant many individuals were not available. The listed items would be followed up after the meeting.

1. Flashing lights at the school in Lower Town
Confirmation of Vision Zero funds from James Anstee has been received. Discussion is still ongoing with DCC and Simmons signs to acquire the correct equipment and link to the street lighting.
2. The pavement at Church Lane
Ongoing with DCC
3. The Mead Playing Field to Jubilee Car Park
Can be actioned when the new lease is signed and Councillor Browse would seek quotes.
4. Signage through Vision Zero grant
It was noted a number of new signs had appeared in the parish

5. VAS units
Councillor Browse advised that the posts would be installed on 10 January 2024.
6. Flooding at the Farm Shop
The re-surfacing had made the left side of the road better but flooding was still occurring on the right side.
7. Pedestrian Crossing at the Village Hall
On hold
8. Railings at the pond
Mended (come off the list)
9. Potential pavement at The Hickory Inn
Dependent on The Orchard car parking situation
10. Lorries on the Halberton to Willand road
Report from PC Tim Walsh sent to DCC and is being followed up – potential site visit
11. Rose Cottage Bridge
Priority signs as and when re-surfaced
12. Lorries between Halberton and Brithem Bottom
Nothing to report

20 is plenty for Devon

So far three residents have put themselves forward for Community Speedwatch and confirmed they are happy to undertake the online training.

The Clerk is also looking into the cost of a parish council funded 20mph limit for Lower Town – response awaited from Devon County Council.

As reported earlier, the Clerk would write a new submission for the DCC funded 20mph application.

Purchase of portable Air Quality Monitor

Councillor Furmedge reported that there had been no further progress.

Next:

- First deployment being planned.

It was noted that the signage at the bottom of Greenway had still not been repaired.

222-17 Newsletter Working Group

Issue 171 was currently being actioned.

In response to the working group's questions, the Parish Council felt it was a clear community benefit and worth utilising the precept, if required, to ensure its continued production. Ideally, it would cover its costs but with no volunteer to undertake the editing there was a cost associated with the Clerk's time in putting each Newsletter together.

Taking into account production, delivery and printing costs, there was likely to be a shortfall of around £550 per year. It was felt this might be covered by additional advertising.

The Clerk was investigating whether or not the paper used was recycled paper and if the newsletter could be recycled.

Quotes from other printing firms would be obtained.

The Parish Council felt it was a good product that went out to the whole community. Further ideas for raising funds to meet costs would be considered and the possibility of local companies providing a voucher.

222-18 Financial accounts 2023/24

a. Financial reports 2023/24

The information for December had been input and the reports forwarded to Chair and Vice-Chair prior to the meeting.

b. Provisional budget for 2024/25

The Parish Council considered the variations on the budget prepared by the Clerk and felt that advice should be sought from the Devon Association of Local Councils before making a final decision given that the increases in costs and the additional projects taken on by the council would require a rise in the precept for 2024/25.

Councillor Batchelor asked the Clerk to once again contact MDDC regarding the rates for the car park given no charges were raised for parking on the site.

It was agreed that a Finance meeting would be held on Thursday, 18 January 2024 at 7pm to finalise the budget. The Clerk undertook to prepare further budget variations and circulate to the Parish Council prior to the meeting.

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
CWH Trees (tree report)	£ 100.00
HMRC	£ 305.78
S McGeever (wages plus NALC increase)	£1108.51
S McGeever (expenses – flowers for LM)	£ 35.00
S McGeever (expenses - Fasthosts)	£ 4.30
S McGeever (expenses – Halberton.org)	£ 83.56
Halberton Village Hall (meeting rooms)	£ 316.00

DD Utility Warehouse (December)	£ 5.43
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e. Clerk's hours

Time sheet for December (15 hours per week) have been sent to the Chair and Vice-Chair.

f. Bank signatories/change of bank

All information has now been received from councillors to complete the switch to the Unity Bank. Application form in the process of being completed.

Action: Clerk

222-19 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

222-20 Items for next meeting

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

Next meeting: Thursday, 18 January 2024 at 7pm

- Finance Meeting of the Parish Council at Halberton Village Hall

Tuesday, 13 February 2024 at 7pm

- Meeting of the Parish Council at Halberton Village Hall

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____