

HALTON WITH AUGHTON

MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Wednesday 10th May 2023 7:15pm at The Centre @ Halton

Chair: C Slinger

Present: N Turner, A Lamb, J Sewell, C Coates, C Buntin, plus 6 other members of the public

Minutes: L Mills

1. Welcome from the Chair

2. Confirmation of the minutes of meeting held on 11th May 2022

It was resolved: that the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish held on 11th May 2022 subject to the date correction be accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3. Annual Report of the Parish Council by the Chair

April saw review of bins within the parish with 5 new bins purchased and some being relocated.

The Centre has had new entrance signs installed, painting of the play equipment at the far end of the field by volunteers from the British Thoroughbred Retraining centre in Aughton.

There have been a number of incidents of anti-social behaviour over the year the most alarming being the vandalism on the allotments and our condolences go to the allotment holders.

The football shelter has been refurbished and new car park markers installed. Work on pitch improvements is due to start shortly to include a ball fence along the Low Road.

The planned refurbishment to the play areas has been put on hold due to the current cost of living crisis but is hoped that this will restart later in the year.

The Centre is an asset to the village, and I would like to thank the staff and volunteers for their dedication.

Planning

The proposed development of Haverbreaks Farm field has prompted the resurrection of the Neighbourhood Plan with the area of separation between the motorway bridge and Carus Farm being a major concern. Consultations were carried out in the parish, and it was evident that parishioners felt that this area was an important green space. A grant has been received to proceed with the plan which will give the parish a say in future developments.

Work has started on the 63 homes on High Road and the CLT have completed the build of a mixture of affordable housing on Forge Lane.

The closure of URC church and Lancaster has resulted in both of these properties being put up for sale.

The PC were unsuccessful in their tender to purchase Town End Farm field but hopefully will have a say through the Neighbourhood plan on any plans for its development.

Queens Jubilee saw the planting of a commemorative Oak Tree in May and further planting for the Queens Canopy project in November.

The Gardening Group have done an amazing job throughout the year in the Parish and the grand reopening of the New War Memorial in September with its pictorial map installed was a huge success. Thanks to everyone involved.

Trevor Green a local historian carried out valuable research into those named on the War Memorial and can be found on the PC website. Thanks to Trevor for his sterling work.

The closure of Church Brow in December following the collapse of a building caused major disruption with the road being closed for several weeks.

The Flood action group continue to work on behalf of residents behind the scenes and a vote of thanks for their hard work is well deserved.

Castle Hill Project to provide public access continues and grants have been received for initial archaeological work. Thanks to Chris and his team for all their hard work on this project.

Brian Jefferson left the PC having moved outside the parish and having served on the parish council for over 20 years and been involved with Halton Hydro for over 5 years. Thanks for the enormous amount of time, effort and commitment he has put into the village over the years and we wish him all the best for the future.

Finally, I would like to thank Luke our Parish Clerk and fellow Councillors for their support for which I am most grateful.

4. Reports from local organisations:

a. Halton Community Association

Over the last year The Centre has continued to enhance its services with a new Gentle Exercise Class and Soup and a Song starting and going well. Plenty of new regular user groups and one-off events are hiring the space. It was great to be able to hold the New Year's Eve Ceilidh again after 2 years with no event.

The Coffee Shop has increased its offerings and hot food choices are proving popular. Our listing as a Warm Space saw an increase in the number of people visiting and staying longer. Unfortunately, the recent increase in utilities rates has caused considerable strain and so staffing changes, increased Coffee Shop pricing and hire charges have been implemented.

Grant funding for new group startups has had an allocation towards heating costs and room hire. There are plans for an energy audit and remedial work to help make the building more sustainable, both financially and environmentally. Going forward we are seeking funding for our Youth Provision programme which we hope to start in the autumn with a dedicated Youth Worker to lead the sessions.

We recently received grant funding to host the Coronation Party which was a great success bringing many people in the community together. We also received funding to celebrate the Luncheon Club's 10-year anniversary, the event to mark the occasion will happen later this month.

We invite members of our community to get involved in the various groups, events and fundraising to continue the valuable services The Centre provides.

b. Halton Gardening Group

Halton Gardening Group (HGG) has enjoyed another good year, as we work to achieve our aims of raising funds for our community planting projects in the village, to promote interest and participation in gardening and to develop a harmonious social network among the local gardening community.

In December 2022 members attended a Christmas lunch at the Red Door Cafe. A buffet, a Christmas quiz and general socialising were very much enjoyed. In Summer 2022, we arranged a visit to RHS Bridgewater, and in Spring 2023 we visited RHS Harlow Carr. On all occasions we were pleased to be able to welcome non-HGG friends and family to join us. We are now affiliated to the RHS, which makes entry to their gardens free, but also enables us to access their expertise when we need it.

Work renovating the Memorial Jubilee Garden continued apace during 2002. We constructed gabion baskets filled with glaciated stones to act as a seating area and completed the planting of perennials. More recently we have

installed a Maggie Howarth mosaic - a beautiful butterfly - in this previously gloomy corner of the garden. We were able to do this thanks to the Anne Snowden remembrance fund.

It was with great sadness that we received the news that Anne Snowden, our dedicated Secretary, passed away suddenly in July. She will be forever remembered for her planting design in the Memorial Jubilee Garden and elsewhere.

The renovated and restored garden was opened on 23rd September 2022 by fellow villager Joan Richards. We were pleased to be able to welcome representatives from all our funding bodies and the Parish Council. On the grassy area in the garden, we have placed a pictorial map, designed by another villager, Helen Thompson. By using the QR code on the map, visitors can link to the PC website, which will include more detailed information about the plants and wildlife to be seen there. Thanks to our County Councillor Matthew Maxwell Scott who gave us a member's grant towards the commission of the artwork.

This is our busiest time of year. On May 20th we will be holding our annual Plant Sale on the field at the centre. We are hoping to build on the success of last year's sale which raised a record amount of money. On July 1st and 2nd, we will be holding a village Garden Safari. We will have 19 open gardens, not all of which belong to HGG members. All funds raised go towards planting projects in the village.

Meanwhile, we continue to work on the community planting projects in the village. These include the wildflower bank and the terrace by the centre. We are hoping that two of the planters in the playground will have a beautiful show of wildflowers again in the summer, and the middle one will be given over to growing herbs. Our work to maintain the lovely borders in the burial ground is much appreciated. The planters throughout the village will soon be refreshed with summer planting.

We do face the challenge of an ageing membership, although we are very pleased to have been able to welcome several new and younger members this year! We have many areas to maintain now, and for this reason we have agreed not to start any new projects, nor add to our planting areas for the foreseeable future.

We are pleased to be a partner in the Halton with Aughton Heritage Group's project to excavate and open Castle Hill, and we enjoy the opportunities provided by working with other groups in the parish, such as the Centre, the WI and the Lune Valley Verges Project. We would like to thank visitors, villagers and the parish council for their support in our various projects and look forward to it continuing.

c. Halton Lune Hydro

I am pleased to report that 2022 and 2023 so far, have been good - especially as no serious flooding experienced and the often quite long dry spells are being well compensated by the increase in revenue for generated electricity. This means that the proceeds going to the Halton Lune Trust will increase through 2023, hence more funds will be available for worthy local causes.

Hydro revenue of course depends greatly on operating for as long as possible in a 24hr period, and so thanks to our volunteer Duty Officers, who enjoy a walk and call in to record some figures on a given day. We need more Duty Officers, so offers of assistance will be most welcome, and training will be given, so just a matter of contacting Secretary@haltonlunehydro.org.

Otherwise, reporting of water abstraction and fish counting according to Environment Agency requirements continues, and we await further instructions on resuming fish health checks during trapping.

d. Halton Lune Trust

Charity set up to distribute grants from revenue raised by the Halton Hydro company who donate their profits to the Trust to be distributed according to the criteria of the Trust.

Three grants were awarded in 2022:

- £630 to Aughton Verge Project to purchase a scythe and training for volunteers who are now lovingly caring for the verges in the village.
- Halton with Aughton Heritage Group were awarded £900 towards a total cost of £4025 to help fund a short documentary film bringing to life the remarkable story of Luneside Engineering how a group of polish refugees built a new life and a thriving business in Halton.
- Hermitage Community Meadow were awarded £2650 towards a £4020 project to help maintain and upkeep Hermitage field for the benefit of the local community and wildlife. Leaflets have been printed to educate people about the biodiversity within the meadow to compliment the recently erected interpretation boards.

Further information on all these projects is available on the HLT and Hydro websites.

e. Burton & Rigby Educational Foundation

Set up with the proceeds of the sale of the old Schoolhouse in Aughton which raises approx. £4K in interest each year which in 2022 was distributed between 9 Aughton and 8 Halton children aged between 11-18 in education to help with school expenses.

1. Matters of interest raised by electors

Halton Gardening Group

They have experienced vandalism to flower beds and planters. There was discussion of how to liaise with local children or the school to increase understanding.

New Resident to village

Curious about the plans for the boardwalk. Wondered if the signage for the Remembrance Garden could be improved. Some of the play equipment is looking a little worn. Worried that the average speed limit on the Caton road might encourage increased traffic through the village.

Discussion about the need for pedestrian crossings, traffic calming and parking issues on Low Road and High Road.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20:01. Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date