

**HALTON WITH AUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL****MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday 12th June 2024 7:15pm @ The Centre, Halton**

Chair: Cllr Slinger
Present: Cllr Turner, Cllr Rigby, Cllr Coates
Clerk: Luke Mills

24/06/01 To receive apologies for absence and to approve the reasons given
Cllr Sewell, Cllr Lamb, Cllr Buntin

24/06/02 To consider and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8th May 2024
It was resolved: that the minutes be accepted as a true record and to be signed by the Chair.

24/06/03 To receive declarations of interests and dispensations
Cllr Slinger declared an interest in 24/06/11.

24/06/04 Suspension of Standing Orders
None.

24/06/05 To consider and approve reports:
a) District Councillor Report
Nothing to report.

b) Open Spaces, allotments & burial ground

Open SpacesCompleted/In Progress

- New fence panel for the burial ground.
- Army Camp path strimmed.
- **It was resolved:** to hire an enclosed 8yd skip to be placed near the playing field.

Planned

- Replacement of rotten fence posts around the paddock

Ground Staff Hours

- May 63 hrs (excl. of holidays)

Open Spaces

- Playdale will inspect the play areas sometime in July.
- Drain on the entrance to the Centre car park has been cleared; it had been completely blocked

Burial Ground

- A new green bin and subscription has been ordered for the Burial Ground.

Allotments

- The allotments were inspected at the beginning of June:
 - 4 plots were very overgrown with little signs of work; the tenants have been asked to significantly improve them by the end of June.
 - 3 plots were below the expected standard, so these tenants have been sent a reminder.
 - Various fence posts around the paddock are rotten and need replacing.

c) HCA

- Nearly new sale made about £300 which is less than normal, so they will consider whether to hold another.
- Enough volunteers currently.
- Private donation of £10,000 towards the outside toilet and accessible lift.

d) Finance Report

- The Internal Audit was completed mid-May; see item 13 (a).
- The unspent grant of £2,520 for the Neighbourhood Plan supplied by Groundworks UK must be repaid.

Financial Statement - June 2024				Balance b/f 1st April 2024			
Budget	PAYMENTS	Actual	Forecast Remaining	Budget	RECEIPTS	Actual	Forecast Remaining
8,320	Salary - Clerk	2,015	6,305	49,132	Precept	49,132	-
18,252	Salary - Groundstaff	2,784	15,468	990	Allotments	-	990
6,654	Grass Cutting	2,236	4,418	20	Rent	125	20
200	Hedge Cutting	-	200	1,600	Burial Ground	380	1,220
540	Pest Control	150	390	600	Bank Interest	-	600
550	Play equipment inspections	520	-	-	Damage	-	-
4,914	Repairs & Renewals	375	4,539	-	General	-	-
380	Weed & Feed Pitch	-	380	-	Grants	-	-
2,000	Tree works & surveying	-	2,000	-	Donations	-	-
145	Alarm Maintenance	80	65	-	VAT	-	-
590	Audit	275	-				
72	Bank Charges	-	72				
300	Clerks Expenses	243	57	52,342	TOTAL	49,637	2,830
449	HCA	72	377				
2,022	Insurance	-	2,022		CASHBOOK BALANCES	ACTUAL	Forecast
751	Subs	520	231		Gross Receipts	83,218	86,048
400	Training	-	400		Gross Payments	13,241	50,442
100	Water	26	74		CASHBOOK BALANCE	69,978	35,607
184	Website	-	184				
20	S137	385	20		BANK BALANCES (31/5/24)		
46,843	BUDGET TOTAL	9,682.27	37,201		Current a/c	94.40	
					Deposit a/c	76,241.00	
-	Assets	-	-		BANK BALANCE	76,335.40	
-	Misc services	94	-				
-	Recreational Area Improvements (S106)	175	-		FUND BALANCES		
-	Refunds	2,520	-		General A/C	31,900.48	
882	Emergency Response & Flood Grant	-	-		General Reserves A/C	20,500.02	
	VAT claimed	-			MUGA Sink Fund A/C	6,000.00	
	VAT to be claimed	770			S106 Recreation Area	11,577.10	
47,725	GROSS TOTAL	13,241	50,442		FUND TOTAL	69,978	

It was resolved: to accept the Finance Report to 12^h June 2024

e) Planning

New Applications (Awaiting Decision)

- [24/00560/FUL](#) | Erection of a single storey rear extension
 - 29 Harrowdale Park Halton Lancaster Lancashire LA2 6QS

Permitted

- [24/0070/TCA](#) | T1 Birch - Crown reduce by 3m G1 2 x Yews - Reduce by 1.5m; 1 x Conifer
 - 73 High Road Halton Lancaster Lancashire LA2 6PS
- [24/00392/PLDC](#) | Proposed lawful development for a change of use from a newsagent to a restaurant
 - Halton Newsagents 163 High Road Halton Lancaster Lancashire LA2 6PY
- [24/00322/FUL](#) | Erection of a rear extension
 - 31 Mill Lane Halton Lancaster Lancashire LA2 6ND
- [24/00174/FUL](#) | Installation of a flue to the rear elevation, a ground mounted solar panel array, 2 air source heat pumps and a sewage treatment plant
 - Aughton Old Hall Aughton Road Aughton Lancaster Lancashire LA2 8LU
- [24/00175/LB](#) | Listed building application for the installation of a flue to the rear elevation
 - Aughton Old Hall Aughton Road Aughton Lancaster Lancashire LA2 8LU
- [23/01429/FUL](#) | Retrospective application for the erection of a general-purpose agricultural building
 - Lower Barn Aughton Brow Aughton Lancashire
- [23/01430/FUL](#) | Retrospective application for the erection of an extension to existing agricultural building
 - Lower Barn Aughton Brow Aughton Lancashire

24/06/06 To consider update on the Neighbourhood Plan, including grant application

A district review of allotments has been completed and the report suggests that some of the recommendations should be included in Neighbourhood Plan.

It was resolved: to mention the allotment review and some of the recommendations in the aspirations section.

The NDP Steering Group met on 6th June to review the informal consultation responses and agreed to changes to the draft plan. Most of the changes will relate to the Green Spaces and Flooding sections, though small changes will happen throughout. The Draft Plan and a date for one or more public drop-in sessions will need to be agreed at the next meeting.

It was resolved: to agree to a Regulation 14 Formal Consultation period of 8 weeks between 15th July and 8th September.

Cllr Coates completed the grant closure form. £2,520 was unspent so must be returned to Groundwork UK.

It was resolved: to apply for a further grant of £7,158 for the final stages of the NP.

Cllr Coates checked whether one of the potential footpaths has any historic justification and the Ramblers Association have stated that there is insufficient evidence.

Action: Clerk to respond to the complainants.

24/06/07 To consider update on the Castle Hill project

The grant acceptance form has been sent in. They are looking into the first phase of contracts. It will be opened on Heritage Open Day on Sat 6th Sept. The Heritage Group are going to aim to run a historical enactment in the Easter Holidays. The next step is to obtain permission from Historic England for the work. A press release will follow soon.

It was resolved: to thank Stuart Cross for taking responsibility for raising the flag for many years.

24/06/08 To consider update on the Play Areas Upgrade project

No progress yet; volunteers to help would be appreciated.

24/06/09 To consider the Community Road Watch scheme

It was resolved: that Cllr Lamb explore how the Community Road Watch scheme might work.

24/06/10 To consider the purchase of benches for the play area(s)

It was resolved: to purchase replacement seats for the sand pit and St Wilfrid's Park upto £1,058 (excl. delivery and vat)

24/06/11 To consider quotes for repairing the tool shed roof

It was resolved: that to spend £1,623+vat on a replacement roof + extra for any necessary electrical work

24/06/12 Allotments:**a) To consider the creation of an allotment association**

10 out of 13 responses supported the idea.

Only 1 person willing to be on the association.

It was resolved: to postpone the decision until the outcome of the District Allotment Review is clear.

Action: Clerk to contact allotment holders and highlight the interest in an allotment association.

b) To consider allotment fees for 2025

It was resolved: to increase the allotment fees by 10% to £33 for 2025.

24/06/13 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24:**a) To receive, consider and agree the Internal Auditor's Report along with any recommendations**

The Internal Auditor reviewed the accounts and raised some issues; see report. They have signed-off the relevant part of the AGAR. These issues are:

1. General reserves are not clearly disclosed in the year end reserves analysis as we are informed that the Village Improvement fund also constitutes general reserves as opposed to earmarked funds

2. The contract for £3,623 for the Neighbourhood Plan landscape character appraisal was not subject to the standard procurement requirements of the Financial Regulations. We were informed that this was due to the contract being considered a specialist report.
 - **Action:** Clerk to ensure minutes indicate specialist reports/work when applicable and consider the £3,000 limit which requires three quotes when next reviewing the Financial Regulations.
3. The risk assessment does not address the risks of supplier fraud. The supplier fraud risks can be managed via robust policies and procedures including prevention actions such as:
 - training for staff to alert them to the potential risks of providing sensitive company information, by phone or other means, especially contract and account information.
 - establish a rigorous change of supplier details procedure - where a supplier has purported to have changed their bank details always call the supplier to check the veracity of a request, using details in your system, rather than those on any associated letter or email. A person should be authorised to approve a supplier bank account change after having reviewed the process undertaken to verify the supplier details change
 - periodic review of supplier accounts should also be undertaken to remove any dormant accounts. This reduces the likelihood of any old supplier information being used to secure fraudulent payments.
 - checking address and financial health details with Companies House checking samples of online payments to supplier invoices to ensure the payment has been made to the supplier bank account
 - **Action:** Clerk to update the Risk Assessment to cover supplier fraud risk.
4. Although the council complied with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in terms of publishing the notice for the exercise of public rights for the 2022/23 accounts, the notice published on the website was the incorrect template as the notice specifically states 'not to be published on the website'
 - **Action:** Clerk to ensure that the correct template is used - see Item 13c.

It was resolved: to accept the Internal Auditor's Report and agree to the recommendations, subject to the Clerk checking the rules regarding General Reserves.

- b) To receive, consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements, along with supporting documents and to authorise the Chair to sign

It was resolved: to agree positively to each question within the Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24 and to authorise the Chair and Clerk to sign.

It was resolved: to agree with the Accounting Statements for 2023-24 as prepared by the Clerk and authorise the Chair to sign.

- c) To confirm the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights (1st July – 9th August 2024)

It was resolved: that the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights will be from 1st July to 9th August 2024.

24/06/14 To approve updating the bank signatories

It was resolved: to amend the signatories on the bank account to remove Cllr McAleer and to add Cllr Rigby

24/06/15 To approve renaming the Village Improvement account to General Reserves account

It was resolved: to defer until the rules about General Reserves has been checked.

24/06/16 To consider and approve accounts for payment for expenses incurred since the last meeting

Ref	Payee	Description	TOTAL	NET	VAT
19	Water Plus	Burial Ground water supply	8.68	8.68	-
20	Lancaster City Council	Pest control on the allotments	60.00	50.00	10.00
21	Envirocare	Grass cutting May	856.56	713.80	142.76
22	Playdale	Annual safety inspection	624.00	520.00	104.00
23	JDH Business Services Ltd	Internal audit for 23/24	330.00	275.00	55.00
24	HCA	Room hire Apr-Jun	72.00	72.00	-
25	Green Tractor Gardens	Strimming of Army Camp path	95.00	95.00	-
26	Alerta Systems Ltd	Callout	54.00	45.00	9.00
27	L Mills	Salary & reimbursements	946.91	928.82	18.09
28	G Bretherton	Salary	389.05	389.05	-
29	P Bucklow	Salary	401.60	401.60	-
30	Groundworks UK	Unused NP grant repayment	2,520.00	2,520.00	-
		TOTALS	£ 6,357.80	£ 6,018.95	£ 338.85

The invoices were verified by Cllr Rigby.

It was resolved: to approve the above expenditure.

24/06/17 To confirm the date of next Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 10th July 2024 at The Centre. There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:30. Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting.

Signed..... Chair Date