

HALTON WITH AUGHTON

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Wednesday 14th May 2025 7:15pm at The Centre @ Halton

Chair: C Slinger

Present: N Turner, A Lamb, J Sewell, C Buntin, C Coates, plus 8 other members of the public

Minutes: L Mills

1. Welcome from the Chair

2. Confirmation of the minutes of meeting held on 8th May 2024

The minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish held on 8th May 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair.

3. Annual Report of the Parish Council by the Chair

Thank you all for attending the AGM of Halton with Aughton Parish Council and for your interest in the workings of the Parish Council. 2024 has been another challenging year for the PC

The Neighbourhood Plan has finally been completed and submitted to Lancaster Council for adoption. Special thanks to the steering group and volunteers over the past 20 years and to Kirkwells Consultants. Hopefully this will help with the proposed 80+ housing application on Low Road.

Planning for 6 Houses on Town End Farm was refused, and it is hoped that this field can be acquired by the Parish Council as a valuable green space.

Castle Hill – an aspiration to grant public access has finally come to fruition thanks to the hard work of Chris Coates and the funding from the Heritage Group. An open day was held in September 2024 and despite the inclement weather was well attended. Works commenced from October until April 2025 when the Grand Opening on 12th April 2025 as a huge success.

Fencing along the roadside of the football field was finally completed this year following a 2 year fight with Lancaster City Council planning department.

Play areas – Plans to refurbish St. Wilfrid's play area are continuing thanks to a grant of £20,000 from Halton Lune Trust. Grants to secure the remainder of the costs are ongoing. Special thanks to Cllr. Naomi Turner for taking the lead on this project.

Mill Lane play area – is in private ownership although discussions are underway to transfer the ownership to Lancaster City council and the PC lease the land (as with St. Wilfrid's Park) enabling grants to be sought for its refurbishment and ongoing maintenance.

Fencing around the allotments and the car park at the centre has been renewed/repared where necessary and new seating has been installed around the sand pit at the centre and on St. Wilfrid's play area.

Halton Gardening Group continue to lovingly care for several parish owned areas, and a Garden Safari is planned for June 2025 supported by the Parish Council. Thanks to all of you for your dedication and hard work. The memorial garden is an asset to the parish.

Carl Richardson – one of our 3 handyman retired in November 2024, and we would like to thank him for his valued work in the parish. We welcome his replacement Phil Smith who has settled in well to the role.

Problems with Lancaster City Council and their changes in bin collections has led to a review of all the bins in the parish with the purchase of 2 new bins and several being relocated.

Anti-social behaviour – has led to the removal of several fruit trees behind the centre due to apples being thrown at adjacent houses and cars.

Traffic problems will always be a major problem due the increasing amount of traffic through the village and the inadequate infrastructure, particularly on High Road with several vehicles sustaining damage. Residents are proactive in reporting incidents to Lancashire County Council and the PC has asked anyone who has experienced any incidents to get in touch so a report can be produced. Speeding also continues to be a major issue throughout the parish, and we will work with residents and the relevant authorities to try and seek resolutions.

The wall on High Road which collapsed into the plantation is awaiting a decision on the ownership.

Challenges will continue into 2025-26 starting with the alleged unauthorised development of land on Bottomdale Road.

Finally, thanks to my fellow Councillors for their support and input over the last 12 months and special thanks to Luke Mills our Clerk who continues to go above and beyond his duties.

C Slinger
Chair

4. Reports from local organisations:

Burton & Rigby Educational Foundation

Awards financial assistance to school children between 11 and 18 years.

In 2024 the Trustees distributed a total of £3200 between 20 applicants of which 14 were from Halton and 6 were from Aughton.

C Slinger
Trustee

Halton Lune Trust

2024 has been another very successful year with income from Halton Hydro of £85,000, donations of £228 and Bank interest of £927 totalling £86,155

There was a total of 6 grants awarded totalling £20,575 and with £173.08 of operating expenses making a total expenditure of £20,748

Finishing the year with a balance of £150,192 compared to £84,786 in 2023. We have set up a reserve of £25,000 to cover any emergencies and have opened a deposit account for excess funds.

GRANTS

- £4915 to Aughton recreation room for improvements to access and car park.
- £900 to Green Elephant Co-op for Community & Music Event at Halton Mill in September 2024.
- £4000 to Gressingham Village Hall towards roof repairs.
- £5360 to St Wilfrid's Church to refurbishment of the Mausoleum in the Church yard.
- £400 to Hearts of Halton WI to help maintain its sustainability
- £5000 to Caton Village Institute for vital electrical works.

C Slinger

Halton Community Association

I am delighted to be able to report that some of the major challenges faced at the beginning of this financial year have been successfully overcome.

The annual accounts presented at the AGM last year showed a surplus of approximately £3,500, compared with a loss of around £17,00 the previous year. This was achieved partly by a reduction of the wage bill by restructuring the way HCA was managed and with increased private hires and bars thanks to excellent work by Carol Holman. The luncheon club has continued monthly, a result of great work by Linda Frankland and a team of volunteers. The Christmas Fayre on 8th December and the New Year's Eve Ceilidh were again both sell out successes raising a combined total of £1,900.

The coffee shop continues to provide a popular service to those visiting the Centre, and a useful boost to the Centre's income. This is only possible thanks to our staff, Sallie Boreham and Sandra Lively and a team of volunteers. Duke of Edinburgh Award students and students from Beaumont College continue to help in the coffee shop.

Two students from Lancaster University volunteered between September and December as part of their Clinical Psychology course to see the benefits of community groups on users wellbeing.

The new solar panels installed last year have reduced our electricity demand from the grid, giving a saving of around £5,000 over the year. The accompanying app has given us an appreciation of when we are using electricity and has identified that there is a background demand of around 2.5KW which is made up of fridges, freezers and the CCTV system.

The CCTV system is currently being upgraded with higher resolution cameras.

There are financial challenges ahead. The decking outside the coffee shop is considered unsafe when it is wet. Further, the structure underneath needs attention. The canopy over the front door needs significant refurbishment. In the longer term the floor in the main hall will need replacing. We are currently getting quotes for this work and applying for grants to cover at least part of the cost.

A further objective is the construction of an outside toilet. Regrettably this has had to take a lower priority than the more urgent maintenance mentioned above. To get this moving The Centre needs someone to take on the project as the existing staff are fully occupied.

The Centre's trophy and certificate for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, together with those of the Halton Gardening Group's King's Award for Voluntary Service, are now on display in the coffee shop.

Naomi Turner, Centre Coordinator, has qualified as a Mental Health First Aider, adding to the service we can provide to the community.

Special thanks must also go to Carol Slinger and especially Alan Meikle for their advice and management of HCA finances during a year of challenges. With the help of superb staff and volunteers, HCA continues to thrive and can sustainably continue to serve the community.

N Wilson

HCA Vice Chairperson

Halton Juniors

The fence was installed after fair bit of work.

They have formed 5 new teams, so they expect the pitch to be in high use again.

The club is still growing including 2 new teams for girls.

Funding is tight, so they are on the lookout for additional funding.

Last year they obtained a grant for a new mower at Bolton-le-Sands so it may be possible to do the same at Halton.

Halton WI

Hearts of Halton WI meet at The Centre in Halton at 7:15pm on the 3rd Wednesday in the month. All ladies over 18 years old are very welcome a couple of taster meetings are free to attend.

Since our last update we have had a year of varied meetings and outings.

We have had interesting talks, trips out and Theatre days. Including joining in with Lancashire WI Federation events in person or via the WI learning hub.

Our speakers have been varied, Medical Detection dogs given us an insight into medical detection developments, an insight into Talks of the vault from a retired bank manager, enlightening talk on the Prison service, travel experiences to name a few.

Our joint evening with the gardening club was a success with a talk from Maureen Little a gardener with an interest in flowers and bees.

We enjoyed a trip to Leeds Armoury and a Saturday visit to the Dukes to see a live production of Shirley Valentine – with a lovely lunch before hand. An axe throwing session was enjoyed by all. What do we have planned so far for the future:-

- June 17th -Quiz evening
- July 16th – A glimpse behind the celebrity chef apron with author Caroline Jones ❖ August trip out
- September 17th – Estate planning
- October 15th – our AGM and social evening
- November 19th – Craft evening
- December 18 Party time with live entertainer and hotpot supper And for 2026 – Air ambulance, evening, Gin – a history of disrepute, Tales of the Custom officer, Wool spinning, Author Linda Sawley on Growing old disgracefully, and our own gourmet chef!

... also the numerous Lancashire federation crafts, tours and social events.

The WI is the largest women's voluntary organisation in the world and Hearts of Halton celebrates over 70 years of Fun, friendship and education.

We sing Jerusalem, Some of us make Jam. However, we are so much more..... Want to know more? You are welcome to join us at our meetings. Contact :- secretaryheartsofhalton@gmail.com

Halton Gardening Group

As we look back over the past year or so you realise just what a momentous time it has been for Halton Gardening Group. The Kings Award certificate and Crystal received in 2023 now displayed in the Centre cafe area are a testament to the hard work of the group. Thank you to the Centre for displaying this award alongside your own. In addition to the Crystal and Certificate, two members were invited to attend a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, where the King was in attendance.

Kath Pink and Kath Bryne attended in May last year and thoroughly enjoyed the occasion. As the brass bands played they ate scrumptious sandwiches and cakes and strolled around the extensive gardens. A very memorable occasion and well deserved. Every member has received a badge to wear with pride.

In October each year we plant hundreds of bulbs for the Spring displays. For the first time we planted over 100 (Narcissus pseudonarcissus) or Lent Lily on the wildflower bank. Unfortunately very few grew and flowered this year, possibly due to the very dry conditions. We are hopeful that the yellow rattle seed donated by a supporter will help to reduce the grass in the area and add some colour. However, throughout the village the Spring bulbs have brought such a welcome colourful display and this year was no exception.

The only grant we applied for this year was for a collection of garden tools from the 3R Foundation. These tools now ensure that members do not have to rely on their own equipment when doing community gardening. In addition we have spare tools for the bulb planting and community gardening sessions.

The Plant sale last May was very well supported once again. We raised a significant sum to keep the bank balance healthy and to buy new plants and bulbs. Once again the home made preserves were in demand and sold out quickly.

RHS Bridgewater was the venue in June for our group visit. It was interesting to note the changes in the garden since our last visit in 2022. The Candelabra Primulas approaching the Japanese garden were spectacular.

The Centre terrace has been adorned with seasonal displays all year. The alliums and geums in the spring and the rudbeckia and asters in late summer never fail to please. Some refurbishment is taking place to prevent it becoming overcrowded.

All the planters have been colourful this year and frequently commented on by admirers. The raised beds in the play area have been reduced to one and we decided to put a selection of herbs there for anyone to cut and take for their own use.

Most of our time is spent working in the Memorial Jubilee Garden as it matures and the plants become overgrown or spent. We have been splitting the geraniums, nepeta and asters and removing most of the straggly astrantias. The gabion is being planted with sempervivums and we are hoping to replace the chippings with cobbles. New plants are envisaged for the current bare areas and the weak Pax rose has been joined by another one. We'll see which one is stronger. A magnolia tree has been planted in the woodland area. The cherry tree is showing signs of age and has a large split in its trunk. This is being monitored by the Parish Council and a tree expert, who advises that no action is currently required.

The Red Door cafe kindly continues to host our committee meetings and we have modified these meetings this year to reduce the amount of time spent in meetings. Our committee remains very active and robust. A media role has been developed to look after our newly created website <https://www.haltongardeninggroup.org.uk> to post to the Fb page, and to submit articles for the Prattle and Lancaster Guardian.

We devolve responsibilities and allocate tasks which ensures the workload is shared.

The opening of Castle Hill in March was supported by the group and a fledgling wildflower area is emerging on the Southern slope. We learnt a good deal about pollinators and plants when we enjoyed a joint talk with the WI about creating a pollinator friendly border in March.

As ever we have faced challenges this year. The weather was particularly cold and wet in Spring, then a hot spell brought the growth forward only for it to be held back by another cold spell and lots more summer rain. This is confusing for plants and difficult for us gardeners with limited time to spend on the planting areas.

A Garden Safari is to take place on 7/8th June 2025, with 18 gardens to visit over the weekend. Posters are up and tickets are on sale soon. This will be combined with 'plants for sale' in some gardens instead of the annual plant sale in May at the Centre.

Once again a big thank you to all our members and supporters for making Halton Gardening Group the success it is today.

M Williams HGG Chair

Lune Valley CLT

AFFORDABLE HOMES IN THE LUNE VALLEY

Over the past year, the CLT has focused on spreading the word about how to achieve affordable, sustainable rural housing locally. We have created a roadshow and so far we have taken it to Caton (in October) and Silverdale (in November). It was well received, and has proved to be a catalyst for further action.

Caton now has a steering group: email lunevalleyclt_caton@proton.me. One of its members, Tony Rei, has been co-opted onto the CLT board. The Rural Housing Enabling Service, Community Futures (RHES) is assisting the group with a local housing needs survey. The group is looking at several potential sites and is in contact with Lancaster City Council, who are supportive.

In Silverdale, the Parish Council has taken the lead and, again with support and funding from RHES, has completed a housing needs survey. Some members are now looking to join Lune Valley CLT, to help them go forward.

There is affordable homes action in Arnside, too. The Parish Council is partnering with South Lakes Housing Association (our partners running Lune Walk in Halton), who are buying a site, with grant support from Westmoreland and Furness Council.

Our next stop is Sedbergh in June, to do a presentation at the request of the Parish Council.

Lune Walk in Halton

Our affordable homes here are proving to be an example of 'how it can be done' for the CLT, South Lakes Housing and the City Council. We all continue to learn from it and use it as a model to help spread innovation in the sector. Residents seem to enjoy living there too! The recent residents' meeting was well attended and proved to be a useful forum for sharing experiences and sorting out some practical issues.

RESEARCH PROJECT

South Lakes Housing (SLH), Lancaster City Council and the CLT are running a year-long project comparing living in Passivhaus energy-standard homes with homes on other SLH sites. The houses selected are: two on Lune Walk, two new ones on another SLH site and a standard older one on a third site. The houses are being monitored for energy performance and cost, and residents will be asked about positives and negatives of living in their homes. The CLT has contributed towards the cost of the project and will have access to the findings.

PUBLIC GREEN SPACES

There has been renewed interest in revisiting plans for a community orchard in Halton. The favoured site is still the Community Open Space behind Foundry Close. Grants to fund a feasibility study have been identified. We would like to work with the Parish Council on this project, as we believe it would benefit the village community in many ways and would boost biodiversity.

CLT Board of Trustees: Chris Coates (Chair), Charles Ainger, Debbie Mace (Treasurer), Lois Hurst, Ann Lanes, Steven Conrad, and Tony Rei. Jane Alder is our Company Secretary. To get in touch with us: info@lunevalleyclt.org

Heritage Group

Following a successful joint application by the Heritage Group in partnership with the Parish Council to the Rural England Prosperity Fund run by Lancaster City Council in March last year we were able to plan access improvement works to the Norman Motte & Bailey Castle to open it to the public. We received £18,000 from the Prosperity Fund, which we were able to match with previous funding from Halton Lune Trust and from the Parish Council.

Working in partnership with the Parish Council helped both with issues around ownership and Historic England permissions. A small steering group was set up to co-ordinate the work. We were able to start work in October after the summer horse grazing was over. The works included removing scrub from the motte, installing safety fencing at the top of the steep slope, providing new gates and gateway, creating grass reinforced pathways and installing information signs and a picnic area. We managed to complete the improvements by the grant deadline at the end of March this year.

To mark the opening of the site on Saturday 12th April nearly 400 people made their way to Halton Castle Hill to see the 30 or so members of the medieval re-enactment group Historia Normannis demonstrate aspects of life in the 12th-century. As well as being treated to displays of weaponry, a medieval fashion show and a shire court session, those attending the event could wander around various stalls that brought to life aspects of life in the 12th Century. There was; an apothecary stall, leather and fabric workers, a field kitchen, and a weaponry. All bringing history to life in a historically accurate and engaging way.

As part of the proceedings the Deputy Mayor of Lancaster, Cllr Sam Riches, officially opened the site which will now be open to the public. Once some final bits of work have been completed the Heritage group are hoping that it may be possible to find funding for a community archaeological dig sometime in the future.

Chris Coates

Chair

Halton-with-Aughton Heritage Group

Neighbourhood Watch/Litter Picks/Cards Fighting Loneliness

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

We continue to meet quarterly. Our next meeting takes place at 19:30 on Wednesday 18th June at The Centre, all are welcome. Our objectives for 2025 are Loneliness, Litter, Speeding / Parking and Community Resilience. The scheme currently has 100+ members registered via the NW website, although our quarterly meetings frequently have incredibly low attendance. We have explored various methods to increase engagement with little success.

The scheme secured £900 from HLT in February 25. The funds will be used for our 5th Cards Fighting Loneliness campaign and litter pick refreshments. We are delighted to have secured these funds in advance and are hugely grateful to the trustees at HLT for granting these funds. In November 24 we received £500 of funding from Standfast & Barracks as part of their centenary celebrations. S+B requested that this money be used to provide gifts for our 'St Nic for a Neighbour' appeal.

In September I received the award for 'Innovation and Reach' at the annual NW Crime Prevention conference, after being nominated by a member of our scheme. It was wonderful to be recognised in this way, I also delivered a presentation to delegates at the conference about our Cards Fighting Loneliness campaign.

LITTER PICKS

Litter picks continue to run 11 months of each year (no pick in December). Our family friendly picks take place from March to October and are suitable for all ages and abilities. Litter picks in the winter months are only suitable for adults that are capable of walking extended distances on varying gradients in inclement weather. Dates for low-key litter picks over winter will no longer be published in The Prattle or on social media / The Guardian, instead opting to contact willing volunteers directly to confirm availability. This revised approach is to ensure all our volunteers remain safe and the potential risk is minimised.

We have had a great start to our 2025 'family friendly' pick season, with 27 volunteers participating in April, 14 of whom were children. We are currently trying to engage and inspire members of the community to get involved, as we recognise the majority of our core volunteer group are in their 70s and 80s. In addition to this, a number of the target areas in the village are physically demanding to complete, require a good level of general fitness and are unsuitable for children or families. I hope this year we will boost our core volunteer numbers of adult pickers and have lots more families attend.

CARDS FIGHTING LONELINESS / ST NIC FOR A NEIGHBOUR

Our 4th campaign has been the most successful to date, with 1109 cards received within the 6 month campaign period. We currently have 126 recipients on our list and each of them received at least one card every month between October and March. Key to the success was the increased engagement from primary schools across the district; Scorton C of E and Calder Vale St John's Primary Schools both created cards for 4 consecutive months and combined with Kirkland and Catterall Primary, contributed over 400 cards to the campaign, which is incredible. Dallas Road Primary invited me to host a community craft workshop where families created cards for us following a

short presentation. I also presented to Scorton Primary School children in March. 1st Halton Squirrels and Beavers have contributed during single months for us, which has been wonderful. We also received hundreds of keepsakes, most of which were lovingly handmade by our incredible recipient, Tony Woodhouse.

In November, £500 of funding from S+B was used to purchase 84 of the 126 festive gifts we required, to accompany our Christmas cards as part of our St Nic for a Neighbour appeal, with the community donating the remaining gifts. These were delivered by Mrs Elf to our recipients. We were able to donate our 39 surplus gifts to Age UK and our 130 surplus Christmas cards to local charities, care homes and people in need.

The culmination of the campaign was our 'Big Get Together' event at Halton Mill on 29th March. It was more than an event - it was a celebration of community, connection and kindness. A small army of volunteers all gave their time, energy and warmth to create a welcoming space for everyone who stepped foot through the doors of Halton Mill that afternoon. Representatives of Hearts of Halton WI kindly served cake which had been lovingly made by the village's very own 'angels in aprons!' The Mill was filled with love, laughter and a wide range of activities that were suitable for all ages - from crafts and games, face painting, sunflower planting and more. St Wilfrid's Primary School choir ended the afternoon with a beautiful performance, which was a truly memorable moment and a fitting end to our 4th campaign. Our event raffle raised £302.87, every penny of which will go back into supporting future campaigns.

Our 5th campaign will commence in October as we are now on our summer break. I will be appealing for handmade birthday cards in Aug / Sept for Halton's oldest resident, Joan who turns 104 in October. I will appeal via our dedicated campaign Facebook group, also sharing details on both Halton community groups.

5. Matters of interest raised by electors

Resident asking about Mill Lane Play Area

Concerned that it poses a risk to children and wondered what the plans are.

Members of the parish council explained the issues and plans for the play area.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20:00. Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting.

Signed..... (Chair) Date