

HALLING PARISH COUNCIL

The Community Centre, High Street, Lower Halling, Rochester, Kent. ME2 1BS
Clerk/Proper Officer/RFO Mr C Fribbins Telephone (01634) 241551
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Assistant Clerk Mr N Miners



The Minutes of an ordinary Meeting of Halling Parish Council held on Monday **13 January 2025, at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall, Upper Halling.**

001/25 Chair's welcome and recording of those present

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and welcomed the new Assistant Clerk.

Present	Cllr R Thorne (Chair)	Cllr L Hitchcock
	Cllr Mrs N Brown (Vice Chair)	Cllr S McCormack
		Cllr C Saltmarsh

In Attendance Clerk Mr C Fribbins. Assistant Clerk Mr N Miners. One member of the public.

002/25 Apologies for absence

Cllr G Wenham (family commitments), Cllr L Ali (work). It was proposed that both apologies be accepted, proposed by Cllr Mrs N Brown and seconded by Cllr C Saltmarsh – all agreed. Absent Cllr R Brown.

003/25 Declaration of any Pecuniary and / or Prejudicial Interests

Cllr L Hitchcock (Halling Community Centre and Halling Youth Club), Cllr Mrs N Brown (Halling Youth Club). The Clerk reported that the meeting was being recorded for reference purposes.

004/25 Adjournment for Public Questions

Philip Badman gave an update from the Halling Historical Society. The programme for the next season of events for the Historical Society and the Halling Gardening Society has been finalised and 1,600 leaflets are currently being delivered. A time capsule is being installed at the Lakeview Lodge Care Home (this Wednesday) and will include a contemporary agenda and minutes from a Halling Parish Council meeting. The Historical Society will be celebrating its 40th anniversary this June and will be requesting a grant from the Council towards the 13 plaques that are planned to be installed on the oldest and most interesting buildings in the parish. Planning permission has been obtained for blue plaques to be placed on the three listed properties in Halling. Details for the general information plaque for Forge Green had been difficult to obtain, but the location of a 'Smithy' has been found on an Ordnance Survey map of Halling from the 1890s, so the Society will be following this lead with the Medway Archives.

005/25 To Approve the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12 November 2024

Proposed as a true record by Cllr S McCormack and Cllr Mrs N Brown. Agreed.

006/25 Clerk's Report and to receive any reports from Councillors

a) Laptops and Printer

Both laptops had been delivered and are operational. The new printer has been installed and is also operational.

b) Parish Council Support Scheme Application

The deadline to apply for Round 3 funding from the Parish Council Support Scheme is 31 January 2025. The latest round is concentrated with mental health and wellbeing but also includes funding for financial hardship. The Chair asked Councillors to forward to the Clerk any suggestions for funding applications. The Clerk added that a long-standing historical charity covering Halling, Birling and Snodland remained operational and can make grants to individuals and organizations to relieve hardship.

c) Medway Council Village Audit

The Clerk reported this audit covered the whole village (not just the Parish Council's properties) and had been completed in draft form with assistance from Cllr L Hitchcock. The draft was included in the Councillor's Pack for the meeting and some adjustments were made to the current provision of ATMs.

007/25 Finance

a) Budget 2025/26

The budget for the next financial year was considered. The recommendation was proposed by Cllr S McCormack and seconded by Cllr Mrs N Brown – all agreed.

b) Precept 2025/26

The recommendation to increase the precept to £55,000 equated to a 2.2% increase and would result in a Band D property charge of £37.57. This recommendation was proposed by Cllr R Thorne and seconded by Cllr C Saltmarsh – all agreed.

The Billing Authority Request to the Medway Council was then signed by Cllrs R Thorne, L Hitchcock, and Mrs N Brown.

c) Note payments made under the delegated powers of the Chair / Clerk and to seek approval of any additional payments as necessary

The financial report to 31 December 2024 as circulated (including bank reconciliation) was signed as a correct record by the Chair.

d) Rent of the office

It was noted that the rent paid by the Council to the Halling Community Centre had been increased above the rate of inflation.

e) Hire of the Community Centre for the Christmas Pantomime

(At 8.05pm Cllr L Hitchcock left the meeting.)

It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the Community Centre for an explanation of the pricing structure for the hire of the Community Centre for the Christmas Pantomime.

(At 8.07pm Cllr L Hitchcock returned to the meeting.)

008/25 Parish Council Co-Options

No candidates had been forthcoming to fill the current vacancies. It was agreed to continue to advertise the vacancies. Cllrs Mrs N Brown and C Saltmarsh agreed to design a new poster to advertise for candidates.

009/25 Reports from Portfolio Holders

a) Footpaths Report

No update.

b) Marsh

The Clerk reported that there was no update on the culvert as Medway Council appear to have been unsuccessful in their application to the Ramblers Association for funding towards a bridge across the culvert.

c) Recreation Grounds (Cllr L Hitchcock)

Lower Rec, Vicarage Close – Norman Godding is currently reviewing the annual inspection. Upper Rec, Browndens Road – the new security fence around the bank has now been installed. Mark Tickner had locked the carpark gate this evening. A Further meeting is to be arranged with Volker Highways and Medway Council to discuss options and costs for installing solar lighting. The Clerk hoped to report on progress on this item before the summer months.

d) Planning

No update.

e) Benches, Bus Stops and Noticeboards

Cllr Mrs N Brown reported that the bench had been refurbished in Upper Halling. The Clerk reported that he had asked Boundary Fencing to inspect two other benches. Firstly, the bench located halfway down Vicarage Road as it appeared to require some cleaning and painting; and secondly the bench located at the end of Pilgrims Road (near the bus stop) also requires some work to clear vegetation.

The Clerk reported that he was chasing the contractor regarding two bus shelters. They are finalising the costings towards the replacement of the shelter at the end of Pilgrims Road, and the removal of the shelter known as ‘Cuxton Marina’.

The Clerk reported that Cllr G Wenham had been liaising with a supplier of UV filter Perspex to replace the defective Perspex currently on six steel noticeboards. This work will be undertaken in the very near future.

f) Planters in Village and Station Platform

Two approaches are being made to install a planter on the Halling Station platform. The Clerk reported he has been continuing to liaise with Grow19, and Cllr S McCormack reported that he had been in discussion with the Medway Valley Line Community Partnership. It was hoped that progress would soon be made on this item.

g) Plaque for Forge Green

(See minute 04/025 above.)

h) Recruitment of Assistant for ‘odd jobs’

The Chair reported he was continuing to liaise with Norman Godding on this matter. The Clerk confirmed that the purchase of a cordless jet washer to remove algae and moss would come under delegated powers as the cost would be in the region of £55 (which can be progressed under delegated powers of the Clerk).

i) Recruitment of Halling View Editor

The Chair reported that Halling View will be relaunched as a Halling Parish Council publication with information covering local groups, activities and events within the village. The Halling View will be available in A4 and A4 folded formats and hopefully the next edition will be produced in time for Easter, and to publicize the celebrations to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day. The Chair and Assistant Clerk reported that they would begin discussing arrangements for the next edition. Cllr C Saltmarsh agreed to assist with the templates for the layout.

010/25 Events Committee

Cllr Mrs N Brown reported that the Christmas Pantomime had been a success and 200 tickets for the event were all sold. The Christmas Tree lighting ceremony had also been a success, with involvement from Halling Primary school and Holmesdale School contributing to a spectacular event. A great deal of positive feedback had been received for both events. Planning for events for 2025 is now underway, including a venue change for the Pantomime to the Primary School, and will be reported to future Council meetings. A vote of thanks to Cllr Mrs N Brown and the Events Team for their work in 2024 was agreed.

011/25 Kent Community Award Scheme 2025

The Clerk reported two nominations had been received for the Award Scheme, both for the same recipients.

(At 8.32pm Cllrs Mrs N Brown and L Hitchcock left the meeting.)

The two nominations as received were agreed.

(At 8.34pm Cllrs Mrs N Brown and L Hitchcock rejoined the meeting.)

012/25 Parish Council Meeting Dates for 2025

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 11 March 7.30pm at the Community Centre. However, this date would be problematic for the Clerk, and it was agreed to liaise with the Boxing Club to see if they would forgo their booking on Monday 10 March, so that the Council could meet a day earlier. The Clerk agreed to liaise with the Boxing Club to see if they would be able to cancel their hire of the Centre for the evening in question. Cllr C Saltmarsh proposed that the Boxing Club could be compensated by the Council for any inconvenience. This was agreed. It was also agreed to publicise the Annual Parish Meeting more widely and councillors were asked to consider speakers for the Annual Parish Meeting in April.

013/25 Public Bodies (Admission to Meeting Act 1960 Exclusion of Press and Public)

Proposed by the Chair, seconded by the Vice-Chair that due to the discussion of personnel and confidential matters. Not required as no personnel and confidential items.

014/25 Confirm Date and Venue of Next Meeting

Monday 10 March 2025 at the Halling Community Centre (to be confirmed).

Closure of Meeting

The meeting closed at 8.38pm.