

# HALLING PARISH COUNCIL

The Community Centre, High Street, Lower Halling, Rochester, Kent. ME2 1BS  
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Assistant Clerk Mr N Miners



The Minutes of an ordinary Meeting of Halling Parish Council held on Monday **10 March 2025, at 7.30pm in the Community Centre, Halling.**

## **016/25 Chair's welcome and recording of those present**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Present	Cllr R Thorne (Chair)	Cllr L Hitchcock
	Cllr N Brown (Vice Chair)	Cllr S McCormack
		Cllr L Ali

In Attendance Clerk Mr C Fribbins. Assistant Clerk Mr N Miners. Five members of the public.

## **017/25 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr G Wenham (family commitments) and Cllr C Saltmarsh (work). It was proposed by Cllr L Ali and seconded by Cllr S McCormack to accept the apologies of Cllr Wenham, ALL AGREED. It was proposed Cllr L Ali and seconded by Cllr L Hitchcock to accept the apologies of Cllr C Saltmarsh, ALL AGREED.

The Clerk reported that the ten days' notice for electors to call a by-election to replace Cllr Robert Brown had now expired and that the Council were now able to fulfil this vacancy through co-option.

## **018/25 Declarations of any Pecuniary and / or Prejudicial Interests**

Cllr L Hitchcock (Halling Community Centre and Halling Youth Club), Cllr N Brown (Halling Youth Club), Cllr L Ali (Jubilee Hall).

Cllr R Thorne reported the passing of former Councillor Barry Barnes. Barry had continued to work for the village after stepping down as a Councillor and had been involved in numerous local campaigns, especially concerning the protection of public rights of way in the parish. Barry had received the Kent and Medway Community Award in 2024 in recognition of his lengthy dedication to Halling and will be greatly missed by everyone who knew him. A minute's silence was held in memory of Barry.

## **019/25 Adjournment for Public Questions**

A resident raised concerns about the financial management of the Community Centre and had compiled a list of questions on this matter. The Chair noted that the Council would review the request upon receiving the questions. The Clerk noted that the Community Centre was a separate legal entity to the Halling Parish Council, and that the Council could answer questions regarding the Council, but that the financial responsibility for running the Community Centre is with the Community Centre itself.

A resident raised concerns about the current parking situation in Howlsmere Close and around the Primary School. It was agreed to contact Medway Council to request 'No Idling Signage' be installed in this area, and to highlight Medway Council's own pledges to improve air quality in areas around schools.

## **020/25 To Approve the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13 January 2025**

Proposed as a true record by Cllr L Hitchcock and seconded by Cllr S McCormack, ALL AGREED.

## **021/25 Clerk's Report and to receive any Reports from Councillors**

### **a) Noticeboard at St Andrew's Estate and Planters**

This noticeboard has been damaged. The Clerk reported he is attempting to locate a contact responsible for the maintenance of St Andrew's Estate as the noticeboard was installed by the developers.

It was anticipated that it would be possible to begin work on planters underneath the noticeboards within the next two weeks. The Chair reported other sites might be preferable but are not in the ownership of the Parish Council.

### **b) End of Financial/Council Year 31/3/2025**

There is now a clearer picture on the accounts, the Reserve of £65,000 is within the recommended band, and Earmarked Reserves are: Refurbishment £77,000, Fire Station £98,000, Events £4,000; there is a budget allocation for Halling View of £200 for delivery and production which will be from within the Assistant Clerk budget. The planters and a new footbridge across the collapsed culvert on the marsh will be funded from the Refurbishment Budget.

### **c) Transfer of Balances to Earmarked Reserves**

Cllr N Brown proposed that £7,000 be transferred from General Reserves to the Events Earmarked Reserve for the forthcoming year, this was seconded by Cllr L Hitchcock, ALL AGREED.

### **d) Risk Assessment**

The Clerk reported that it is best practice for local councils to adopt a risk assessment document and explained the main parts of the assessment to the meeting, notably sections covering risk associated with banking and staff appraisal. The document would be reviewed annually. It was proposed by Cllr L Ali that the Council adopt the risk assessment, this was seconded by Cllr L Hitchcock, ALL AGREED.

### **e) Grants**

The Halling Historical Society had submitted an application to the Council on 22 February for £1,640 towards the manufacture of 13 blue heritage plaques to be installed on the exterior of historic buildings in Halling. Two members of the Historical Society gave a presentation of the project. The 13 plaques are Stage 1 of the project. Stage 2 is the production of a Village History Trail, and Stage 3 is the installation of an information display board. A fourteenth plaque in memory of Ted Gowers, a founder member of the Historical Society is being financed by the Society itself.

It was proposed by Cllr L Ali to award the Society the full grant amount (£1,640), this was seconded by Cllr S McCormack, ALL AGREED. The Chairman thanked the members of the Society for their presentation to the meeting.

## **022/25 Finance**

The Clerk reported he had updated the financial report and reconciliation statement to show the latest bank account, AGREED TO NOTE.

## **023/25 Parish Council Co-options**

The Clerk reported that there are now six vacancies for co-option, but no interested individuals at present. The number of vacancies is a democratic shortfall and impacts negatively on the ability of existing councillors to carry out existing and planned work.

## **024/25 Reports from Portfolio Holders**

### **a) Footpaths Report**

No Update.

### **b) Marsh**

The Clerk reported that Medway Council's application to the Ramblers Association for funding towards a footbridge across the collapsed culvert had been unsuccessful and noted that the Parish Council's Refurbishment Budget could be used to finance this project. A suggestion had been received that the new crossing could be named as 'The Barry Barnes Bridge' in recognition of Barry's dedication to Halling and his work on public rights of way. Medway Council had advised the Parish Council that a footbridge would cost in

the region of £10,000 to £11,000. It was proposed by Cllr N Brown that the Council agree to this project in principle and acquire two/three quotes for the crossing. This was seconded by Cllr L Ali, ALL AGREED.

#### **c) Recreation Ground**

Lower Rec, Vicarage Close. A new individual has expressed an interest in the position of 'odd job man'. Cllr L Hitchcock agreed to pursue this matter.

Upper Rec, Car Park Browndens Road. The Clerk reported that the lighting in the car park will be inspected before the autumn and that Medway Council are investigating lighting specifications.

#### **d) Planning**

Cllr L Ali reported on the following planning applications:

MC/25/0423, 114 Pilgrims Road, Upper Halling. No current objections.

MC/254/036, Land to the rear of 106 Pilgrims Road, Upper Halling. There are currently no objections and the residents adjoining the site have made no complaints about the development.

#### **e) Benches, Bus Shelters and Noticeboards**

The Clerk reported that the removal of the shelter at Cuxton Marina (Elmhaven) had been postponed as the Medway Council had not issued the correct permit for the work to be completed. It is anticipated that the shelter in Pilgrims Road will be renewed within the next two weeks, if the permits are granted. The noticeboard glass had been replaced in all six aluminium boards. Bench refurbishments had been carried out in Upper Halling.

#### **f) Planters in Village and Station Platform**

The Clerk reported he had met Nigel Kirk from Grow19 and discussed the locations of six new planters underneath the Parish Council's noticeboards and hoped to see this project progress in the near future. Cllr S McCormack reported on the progress of improvements at Halling Station, he is in discussion with the Community Rail Partnership concerning local community involvement as a potential Station Adopter Group.

#### **g) Plaque for Forge Green**

Philip Badman, secretary of the Halling Historical Society had supplied the Council with a suggested draft wording for the plaque at Forge Green. The draft included information of blacksmiths in Halling, how the name of Forge Green was chosen in 2004, and that the area was formerly known as 'Halling Bottom'. Cllr L Hitchcock proposed that Cllr C Saltmarsh be approached to see if her company could assist with the plaque. This was seconded by Cllr L Ali, ALL AGREED.

#### **h) Halling View**

The Chair outlined the plans for the relaunch of Halling View. Trevor Reynolds, a former Halling Parish Councillor, has agreed to assist with the relaunch. The Halling View was previously self-financed by advertisements, but the new publication will not be carrying commercial adverts. Local and community groups will be contacted for news of their activities and events. Cllr C Saltmarsh has agreed to assist with printing and layout options.

### **025/25 Events Committee Report**

Cllr N Brown reported that Halling Primary School has agreed to be the venue for the VE Day Celebration Street Party and the Christmas Pantomime. The school has also expressed an interest in being involved in the Light and Peace Parade. The Beacon will be lit to formally commemorate the anniversary at 9.15pm on Thursday 8 May.

Cllr N Brown also reported that the date of Hallingbury had been set for Saturday 9 August and will include tribute acts to pop and rock music bands. Looking further ahead, the date and venue of Halling Spookfest has been set for 28 October at the Moot Brewery.

The Clerk reported that he had contacted the Halling Community Centre regarding the £750 charge for the 2024 Christmas Fayre and Pantomime and had been advised by the Community Centre that they were fully confident of the calculations for the price of the hire based on potential commercial hire for the day.

### **026/25 Kent Community Award Scheme**

The Clerk reported that the Council's award nomination had been submitted. It was expected that the award would be confirmed by April and that if successful the presentation could be included in the Annual Parish Meeting, with a possible presentation by the Mayor of Medway.

**027/25 Parish Council Meeting Dates**

The next ordinary meeting was confirmed a being Monday 5 May 2025 at the Jubilee Hall, Upper Halling which would be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, followed by the ordinary meeting.

**028/25 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.

**Meeting Closed 21:05**

**Signed: Cllr**

**Date :**