

**Minutes of the Meeting of Hale Parish Council.
Monday 16th October 2023
Hale Village Hall.
Commenced 20.00hrs.**

Note: In the absence of the Clerk to the Council, minutes of the meeting were recorded by Mr Platt following a request by the chairperson.

The minutes are a written record and summary of what decisions were made by Council, and do not record what was said by members of the public in attendance, unless forming part of the public participation of the agenda.

An informative statement was read by the Vice-Chair of the Parish Council.

An explanation to mediate the details of a recent anonymous posting.

1. Attendees:

Cllr Mitchel (chair), Cllr Anderson, Cllr Roberts, Cllr Cleary, Cllr Healey, Cllr Brown, Cllr Lewis.
Cllrs Williams and Trevaskis arrived at 20.08hrs.

(Representation from Cheshire Constabulary, and approx. 100 members of the public).

Apologies:

Cllr King.

2. Declarations of Interest:

None.

3. Approval of Minutes:

- Meetings 18th and 25th September 2023.

(notel amend 25th September 2023 to 4th October 2023)

- Minutes had not been received by a council member.

- Minutes were not posted in a timely manner.

- Agenda items should be prioritised according to importance. Meeting (part 2) 18th September 2023 accepted as a true record. Propose Cllr Cleary, Seconded Cllr Healy.

- - - - Confidential reports should be referenced in the corresponding minutes.

Proposed Cllr Trevaskis, seconded Cllr Williams. Unanimous.

- Ref meeting 4th October 2023, objection that the Police asked members of the Public to leave.

- No minutes were taken a result of this meeting being adjourned/cancelled.

Suggestion that a recording of the meeting events be used as the meeting minutes.

- Point of interest requiring a correction of attendance/absence of both meetings of Cllr King.

- Conflict of interest regarding the positioning of agenda item Public Participation. Position of the placement of this agenda item vote agreed with a named vote. Details of the vote were not recorded. Matter deferred.

Minutes of part 1, dated September 18th 2023 are not available.

4. Payments & Receipts:

Not available Deferred to next meeting.

5. Authorisation of Payments:

A request was sent by the chair to all members requesting the requirement of signatories to authorise payments. Only one positive response from Cllr Roberts.

As a result, payments were unable to be processed through to completion.

Response from Cllr Trevaskis, authorisation of payments does not need to be an existing signatory, stating the bank does not require a councillor's signature. In addition, Cllr Trevaskis informed the council that any councillor providing signatory support would need to be proposed and seconded by council members.

Written by the chair, a letter required by the Bank, was presented to two councillors requesting respective signatures to expedite and sanction payments. Once signed this letter will be sent to the Bank to authorise payments moving forward.

Request the Bank is asked for details of all transactions covering the previous six months.

Proposed Cllr Mitchell, seconded Cllr Lewis. Unanimous.

6. Approval of Independent Investigation Officer:

Agree to commission an HR organisation to provide an investigator.

Council should be provided of evidence leading to the Clerks suspension.

The conclusive decision of suspension was not based on an individual vote.

Individual councillors were asked if they had witnessed any documented evidence.

The response being documented evidence had not been shared, but a conflict of interest regarding a verbal exchange between a councillor and the clerk had been made.

Conclusion being, how can councillors vote on action if evidence had not been produced.

A statement was made that no councillor would act as an authorised signatory following the resignation of 2 councillors during the first quarter of this year and yet financial transactions were completed. A point of interest informed the chair that a significant cost would occur if the matter went to an industrial tribunal.

Details and validation would need to be required of who the HR investigator would be, if applicable. Suggestion of involvement by Cheshire Association of Local Councils was met with a statement that the previous chair had prevent such involvement in the past.

The chair stated confidentiality will not be shared with the public.

Without councillors having access to confidentiality information, how can any such situation be resolved. Proposed by Cllr Williams that confidential evidence must be shared. Seconded Cllr Roberts. Name voter in favour, Cllr Trevaskis, Cllr Anderson, Cllr Lweis, Cllr Brown, Cllr Healy. Abstentions from Cllr Mitchell and Cllr Cleary.

To conclude this agenda item Cllr Trevaskis spoke of the importance of transparency of information and maintaining compassion to all current and future attendees of council meetings.

7. Hale Bank Parish Council Support:

Planning potential to build 500 dwellings in Halegate Road ,Hale Bank.

e-mail notification of proposed planning was sent to all councillors at 13.35hrs on Monday, this was in response to Cllr Williams requesting details of the planning application for which Hale Bank requested the support of Hale Parish Council.

The application should have been brought to council at the time of submission.

A link to access further information will be sent to all councillors.

Proposed Cllr Roberts, seconded Cllr Williams. Unanimous.

8. Poppy Wreath:

To agree the purchase of a poppy wreath to be laid on the War Memorial on 12th November 2023, Remembrance Sunday. Unanimous.

9. Public Participation:

Future planning approval of the siting of the festive crib. Two locations to be assessed in an around the village hall. Estimate cost £100 - £500.

Decision to be included during the next meeting.

Civic Service from Sunday 8th October 2023 observed as being poorly attended.

Poor hospitality shown towards invited guests, however the chair had personally thanked guests individually for attending the event and presented them with personal gifts.

Question was asked "Why has the Clerk never been paid a pension during the 3.5 years in office"? Response " Nothing was ever put in place to accommodate the payment of a pension; historical evidence confirms this".

10. Date of Next Meeting:

Monday 20th November 2023.

Meeting closed at 21.24hrs.

Peter Platt

Minutes compiled and sent to the chair on the 17th October 2023.