

Minutes of the Hale Parish Council Annual Meeting held on Tuesday 5th September 2023 at 7pm in Hale Village Hall (Downstairs)

Councillors Present: Gemmell (Chair), Gillmon, Kyle, Lavis and Vickery.

In attendance: The clerk and 4 members of the public.

23.78 TO RECEIVE ANY APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Janet Richards, New Forest District Councillor

23.79 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - To receive declarations of interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda (in accordance with the Localism Act 2011). None received.

23.80 REPORT BY NEW FOREST DISTRICT Cllr Richards was unable to attend.

23.81 MINUTES

23.81.1 It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2023.

23.82.2 Note matters arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the agenda.

Speed Indicator devices – The Speed Indicator Devices have not worked properly since purchase and despite communication with the manufacturer and some changes to the devices little improvement has been shown. Councillors agreed that further action is now needed with the items possibly being returned.

Dodgson Close– Following an approach by the clerk the container sited in the car park which was being used by a contractor has been removed.

Village Hall Grant - The grant agreed to the village hall has not yet been paid as the works to the roof have been deferred to next year.

23.82 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - Members of the public are invited to address the council on agenda matters or raise any matters not otherwise on the agenda.

A parishioner spoke regarding Harry's Meadow campsite. Natural England has admitted "anomalies and issues" related to the Exemption Certificate they issued but have chosen not to withdraw it. Some residents have put in a Freedom of Information request to Natural England and are also following the formal complaints procedure as they believe due diligence has not been done.

HPC continue to liaise with the National Park Authority regarding Harry's Meadow.

A parishioner spoke regarding vegetation growing at the cattle grids, therefore making the pedestrian gates difficult to use.

This is the responsibility of HCC, the clerk will report this to HCC and also ask the Lengthsman to carry out some clearance if he is able to.

A parishioner reported a recent spate of crimes which occurred both in Hale and many surrounding villages over one weekend in summer. Some Hale village entry signs were also stolen.

Cllr Vickery will ascertain the situation regarding the Neighbourhood Watch group and whether it is still functioning. The clerk will report missing signs to HCC.

A parishioner spoke regarding the unkempt hedges along Hale Lane which are causing difficulty for road users.

This has previously been reported to the relevant land owner and HCC and information regarding hedge management and responsibilities has been included in the September edition of the Hale and Woodgreen magazine.

A parishioner spoke regarding the road closure along Hale Purlieu by National Grid during the pylon refurbishment. The diversion along Hale Lane is dangerous.

HPC continues to liaise with National Grid to confirm the extent of the next road closure which is currently planned for Sept 18th until Oct 13th. All road works and closures can be viewed at one.network.

23.83 PLANNING APPLICATION - To consider the response to the following applications.

Application Number : 23/01048LDCE
Proposal: Application for a Certificate of Lawful Development for Existing use of building as a dwelling
Site : Woodfalls Cross Farm, Hale Road, Hale SP6 2 NW.

Hale Parish Council discussed the application and recommends Option 3 **PERMISSION** . Hale PC agree that the buildings in question have been used as a single dwelling house (within C3 use class) for a continuous period (without interruption)exceeding 4 years and is therefore lawful.

Application Number : 23/00881FULL
Proposal: Replacement dwelling and garage.
Site : Nestledown, Lodge Drove, Woodfalls SP5 2NH

Hale Parish Council discussed the application and recommends Option 1 **PERMISSION** but would accept the decision reached by the National Park Authority's Officers under their delegated powers. Councillors agreed that although this application is not straightforward, historical events and recent applications from neighbouring properties suggest the continuation of a habitable property on this site. Hale PC agreed that the proposed replacement dwelling is well designed using suitable materials and of a suitable size and scale.

Application Number : 23/00845FULL
Proposal: Installation of ground mounted solar array.
Site : Hemmick Court, Queen Street, Hale SP6 2RD

Hale Parish Council discussed the application and recommends Option 2 **REFUSAL** but would accept the decision reached by the National Park Authority's Officers under their delegated powers. HPC supports the use of renewable energy and increased sustainability however Councillors were not satisfied that this application meets the criteria for a small-scale domestic array as set out in SP14.

23.84 EXTERNAL AUDITORS

Government audits of parish councils are now being carried out by BDO LLP; Hale PC can confirm that no councillors have any dealings with and therefore no conflict of interest with this company.

23.85 EXTERNAL MEETINGS

Hale Village Hall Committee Meeting 11th July – Cllr Kyle attended. The proposed insulation to the roof was postponed as the grant from National Grid had not been received. This money has now been received and will be used to fund the new toilet. The Village Hall will run some pop-up pubs over the summer months. The current reserves policy is in line with long-term repairs and improvements.

Neighbourhood Tasking Group- Cllr Vickery attended. This is held in Downton and attended by Wiltshire Police. Recent crimes of stolen number plates were highlighted and also the greatly increased rate of theft currently occurring in Downton Co-op. There may be benefit in having a similar Neighbourhood Tasking group for the villages in Hampshire.

23.86 CLERKS REPORT

Cemetery – Cemetery volunteers have worked over the summer to increase the planting in the cemetery centre bed and encourage more wildlife. Plants were purchased at a cost of £47.97 which will come from the cemetery reserve. The hedges will be cut in September by Cutting Edge a local contractor will cut the front hedge (along the road) outside and top in September.

Hedges – Information regarding hedge cutting and associated laws will be included in the September Hale and Woodgreen magazine.

Ragwort – Some councillors are concerned by the amount of ragwort growing in fields in Hale. The ragwort control Act 2003 places a duty on landowners to control ragwort on their land due to its toxicity if eaten by livestock. The National Park Authority Land Advice Service was contacted for advice, they advised that Natural England can take action regarding harmful weeds. Natural England publish the following – The requirement is for all common ragwort growing within 100m of any land at risk to be removed, with no minimum population density. Where the land at risk has a valid reason to require the control of common ragwort then all common ragwort must be prevented from the seed spreading. Where the complaint is being upheld, then full removal of the common ragwort must be undertaken. A complaint is upheld if the area at risk is used for keeping or grazing horses or other livestock, or farmland to produce conserved forage, or other agricultural activities. Natural England can be contacted at weedenuiries@naturalengland.org.uk for further information.

Lengthsman – The Lengthsman will be working in Hale on 9th September and will repair any missing dragons teeth, strim stinging nettles at Tethering Drove/Forest Road and clear road signs. Clerks have been invited to a meeting in Fordingbridge on Sept 12th to review what tasks the Lengthsman is able to complete.

Pylon Refurbishment – The second phase will begin shortly with road closures planned from Sept 18th to Oct 13th. The clerk will liaise with National Grid to see if road closures can be minimised.

Forestry England – Some further clearance occurred at Turf Hill during August, a small team worked in areas which were too wet to access in the winter. No comments have been received from parishioners or the wider public.

23.87 REMEDIAL WORKS TO THE BOAT (Running from Hale Village Car Park to Hale Purlieu) – To discuss required works and approve any funding required.

Cllr Lavis met with Andy Aiken (Countryside Access Manger, Hampshire West) to discuss works to improve the surface of the BOAT which is currently very rutted due to water runoff. A plan of works was drawn up to install a small kerb across the BOAT to stop water and re-profiling of the track to ensure the water flows into the French drain which will be re-dug. Cllr Lavis and the Clerk will seek quotations for the works and investigate any grants that may be available.

23.88 ACCOUNTS.

Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the accounts for the months of July and August.

The Treasurers account balance is currently £2,946.05 and the Business account balance is £23,430.05.

23.89 MONTHLY PAYMENTS - It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following payments.

PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	VAT	PAYMENT METHOD
A.Johnson	Salary - July and August			Standing Order
Cutting Edge	Cemetery cut – July and August	£180.00 each month		Bank Transfer
G.Babey	Plants for cemetery	£27.97		Bank Transfer
Hale Church	Grant - Roof repairs	£3000.00		Bank Transfer
Avon Valley	Grant – Community	£100.00		Bank Transfer

Churches	picnic			
HCC	Speed sign posts.	£276.00		Bank Transfer
A.Johnson	Office supplies	£60.91		Bank Transfer
A.Johnson	Home working – April – Sept.	£117.00		Bank Transfer
Susan Witt	Plants for cemetery	£20.00		Bank Transfer

23.90 CORRESPONDENCE - To consider correspondence received before 29/08/2023 and any urgent correspondence received after the agenda was finalised not dealt with elsewhere in the agenda.

For information (circulated)

- 10/07/07 New Forest Community Energy Lunch – 18th July
 - 14/07/23 Response from Desmond Swayne
 - 18/07/23 NFALC AGM 20th July
 - 24/07/23 Latest news from National Park Authority
 - 28/07/23 Forestry England – work at Turf Hill
 - 31/07/23 HALC – Newsletter
 - 31/07/23 Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner – Ask a Question 14th August
 - 31/07/23 Community Energy South Presentation – Monday 11th September (online)
 - 01/08/23 Rural Services Network - Rural Funding Digest
 - 02/08/23 New Forest Water News
 - 14/08/23 The Verderers – HLS Celebration Event
 - 16/08/23 NFDC – Consultation on Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan
 - 17/08/23 NFALC Survey
 - 21/08/23 Latest news from National Park Authority
 - 29/08/23 HALC –D-Day Celebrations 2024.
- Cllr Kyle will put forward to the Village Hall Committee which now includes the Social Committee.*

- Parishioner emails
- 18/08/23 Email regarding hedges on parish highways
- Copied into emails regarding the road closures (pylon refurbishment)

23.91 ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND MATTERS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

The oak tree in the cemetery requires inspection to ensure that it is safe. The clerk will action.

23.92 DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Tuesday 5th November 2023 in Hale Village Hall (Downstairs)

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm.

Signed by

Date