

Halse Parish Council

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HALSE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting

held on Wednesday 8th April 2026 in Halse Village Hall

Present:	Ms Kathryn Robinson Burge	Vice Chair
	Mr Louis Morris	Footpaths
	Mrs Sylvia Haselock	Councillor
	Mrs Carol Windeatt	Clerk to the Council
	Mr Dave Mansell	Somerset County Councillor, Upper Tone Ward

Members of the Public in attendance: 11

Questions from members of the public:

Eleven members attended this meeting asking questions of the Council relating to: (a) introduction of a 20mph speed limit within the village and (b) reporting of highways issues. The Chair of this meeting, Ms Kathryn Robinson Burge read out the Highways Report prepared by the Chair of the Council in advance of the meeting, which is a follow up from the meeting held on 28th January 2026. Please see details of this report under item 7.1 - Roads & Footpaths. Three highways issues were reported by members of the public.

Reports from County Councillor, Dave Mansell:

Cllr Mansell advised the meeting that Somerset Council have set the budget for the year. For the third year running Somerset Council are relying on capitalisation, and will be selling off assets to balance the budget for this financial year. It is anticipated that permission to rely on capitalisation for the 2027/28 year will be denied by central government. Somerset Council continue to reduce staff numbers and are undertaking an Internal Transformation to continue to reduce council running costs. The projected five year funding gap has been reduced from £200m to £135m. Somerset Council are predicting a funding gap for of £60m for the 2027/28 financial year, which will have an impact of services.

Cllr Mansell advised the meeting that additional funding has been allocated to Highways Maintenance. An email from Somerset Council had been circulated on 8th April with details of how to apply to this fund.

Cllr Mansell advised that he has been in discussions with Mike Davies, Vice Chair of the New Inn Community Pub relating to the increase in business rates for this establishment. Unfortunately, the New Inn does not qualify for rural rate relief as the business does not meet the thresholds set by central government. Cllr Mansell and Cllr Wren are continuing to seek further advice and information relating to this matter and will liaise direct with Mr Davies.

1. Apologies

Cllr Ian Walker offered his apologies. Cllr Kathryn Robinson Burge will chair this meeting in his absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2026 were amended to delete wording relating to Cllr Mansell's comments on 20mph speed limit. Following this amendment the minutes were signed as a true copy of the meeting held on 28th January 2026.

4. Actions from previous meetings

Actions from the previous meeting will be discussed at this meeting. There is one action carried forward relating to the request for information regarding the trees with Halse that are subject to TPOs.

Action: Clerk to follow up

5. Finance

5.1 Schedule of payments – A total of £671.20 has been paid out since the previous meeting on 28th January. All payments were approved at that meeting. There are no payments for approval. The balance in the current account as at 31/03/2026 = £2,739.71 and the reserve account £14,221.98. A total of £16,961.69 is carried forward to the new financial year on 01/04/2026.

5.1 Draft year end accounts to 31/03/2026 – The draft year end accounts had been approved by the Chair, Cllr Walker prior to the meeting, and circulated to councillors in advance of the meeting. These accounts were approved. The Clerk advised that the accounting records of the council will be subject to an internal audit, to be carried out by Mr Keith Hunt, in readiness for the Annual Governance Statement 2026, which will be an agenda item at the next meeting.

6. EV Charging Units

6.1 Update on installation of new EV Charging Units – Cllr Walker confirmed in advance of the meeting that the installation of the new charging unit has been completed by Complete Connectrix. Cllr Walker is taking the lead on this project and is in contact with the installer re maintenance of the unit.

Action: Clerk to publicise the availability of the EV chargers

7. Roads and Footpaths

7.1 Highways report – The following is the report circulated by Cllr Walker prior to the meeting, and read out to the public at the start of this meeting:

Highways Report – PC Meeting 8 April 2026

The above average rainfall recently has presented its problems for road maintenance across the whole country. In Somerset alone over 800 potholes were, apparently, reported over just one weekend. Locally, probably the worst examples have been on Halse Road near the junction of Stoford Lane.

Having sympathy for the difficulty in trying to make a repair in continuing rainfall and runoff, it is surprising that, particularly on a single track road, an attempt was made by Somerset Council after these were first reported. No surprise, the repair did not last and these have been reported again for subsequent work when, hopefully, a drier spell of weather occurs.

The Council have unblocked or improved some of the drains in the Parish recently which is helping to reduce surface water and, hence, stop more road surface erosion in the future. Colin Teasdale has reported the drain outside Priory Lodge directly to Somerset Council as it failed to cope with the amount of rain falling. This is known to be a soakaway rather than an actual piped drain so it is unlikely that much improvement will be made.

20mph Speed Limit

At the last PC meeting one resident requested that the PC investigated the idea of a 20mph speed limit, rather than the national speed limit, in Halse. In response Traffic Management at Somerset Council was contacted and were most helpful. This was their reply:

“From looking at our speed data the average speeds in the centre of the village all look to be below 20mph. So a reduction in the speed limit is feasible, however it would need to be fully funded by the Parish Council and also supported by the Police. Somerset Council do not have the funds to introduce new speed limits so we ask the Parish Councils to fund them. Depending upon where you want the speed limit to start the costs could be in the region of £10k, however we would only charge for the actual works and advertising of the Traffic Regulation Order which is the legal order required to enforce the speed limit. If this is something that the Parish wish to pursue then I would need more information about the extents so that I could cost up and check speed data and discuss with the police before any detailed designs are drawn up. It is also worth noting that the introduction of a speed limit 20 or 30mph would involve the installation of several posts and repeaters and

roundels on the road so it is important to bear in mind the aesthetics and how this will look in a village setting. It is also worth carrying out some consultation locally as dealing with objections later down the line can add to the costs."

The Parish Clerk has contacted 2 local PCs that have quite recently introduced 20mph limits, Monksilver and Crowcombe, to learn of their experience. Monksilver replied and confirmed that their limit was introduced after the village was consulted and a resolution passed by the MPC. Four residents offered to underwrite the total cost between them, if sufficient funding was not raised by a request to all villagers. Crowcombe, to date, has not responded.

A notice was placed, by a resident, in Halse News online and Halse Newsletter requesting support of a 20mph limit in the village write to the PC Clerk. To date there have been 7 responses from 6 households.'

Following the questions from the public at the start of this meeting, the Vice Chair, confirmed the following action plan to address the issues raised:

Action 1: Canvass local residents re introduction of 20mph

Action 2: If the result is in favour of 20mph speed limit, liaise with Somerset Council Traffic Management and the Police

Action 3: Report back to residents with costs and detailed designs as referred to above

Action 4: Request funds from residents to pay the costs for the introduction of 20 mph speed limit.

Action 5: Report to highways: (1) traffic control post missing in centre of village, (2) pull-ins on the Heathfield road are badly rutted in some cases, (3) mud and water on the road at the bottom of Stoford Lane adjacent to the riding stables causing a risk (4) concerns the water draining down Stoford lane and eventually entering Halse Water is causing an pollution/environmental issue.

7.2 Footpaths – Cllr Louis Morris advised the meeting that he had met with two of the three farmers who have recently taken over the farmland surrounding Halse. The six footpath posts purchased by the PC last year have been offered to the farmers for erection and footpath signs to be attached. The fields surrounding the village have been used as arable land for many years. The new land owners are transitioning to livestock farming. Plans are in place to fence the fields. Imogen Greenway, the farm manager, has been in contact with Somerset Council and permission has been given to install kissing gates (not stiles) once the fencing has been completed. Imogen and Martin Greenway advised Cllr Morris that Sandpits field will be fenced round the edge of the field. The land owners are liaising with Somerset Council to create permissive footpaths around some of their fields that currently do not have rights of way. Regulations covering permissive footpaths vary from the regulations covering rights of way and to comply with permissive footpath regulations, these footpaths will be closed for one day a year. The Greenways are seeking clarification from the Parish Council regarding the responsibility for the maintenance of the handrail and steps (Blakes Lane and Sandpits Field). Cllr Mansell agreed to seek clarification from Somerset Council Footpaths team and report back.

8. Planning

8.1 Report on planning and related matters – One site visit had been carried out on 28th February at the Old Cider House, Blakes Lane, which was signed by the Chair of the meeting.

9. Clerk's Report

9.1 New Halse Parish Council website – The clerk reported that this will be finalised and will go live within the next few weeks, and thanked councillors for their feedback. The new website contains links to Somerset Council to facilitate residents in reporting direct to the council issues such as potholes and flooding; link to the Slinky Bus service; local community information, together with the statutory requirements for parish council websites. The new address is: www.halseparishcouncil.gov.uk. The clerk would like to thank Michael Baker for a number of photos of Halse which have been uploaded to the site.

9.2 Review of Risk Assessment – to be carried forward to the next ordinary Parish Council meeting

9.3 Annual Governance Statement – The internal audit will be instigated in readiness for completion and submission of the Annual Governance Statement to meet the deadline of 31st July 2026.

Action: Clerk to liaise with Internal Auditor

Action: Clerk to complete Annual Governance Statement

9.4 Set date for the Annual Meeting – The date set for this meeting is Wednesday 13th May at 6:30pm Halse Village Hall. This meeting will be followed by an ordinary Parish Council meeting.

10. Matters of Report

10.1 Village Hall Report – The clerk advised the meeting that the renovations to the village hall kitchen will be completed within the next few days. This work has been partly funded by the Decarbonisation Grant. Appliances in the kitchen have been replaced with energy efficient equipment.

10.2 Police Report – Cllr Kathryn Robinson Burge shared with the meeting the two Police Reports received from PCSO Brianna Whelan covering January and February 2026.

11. Dates of meetings

11.1 Annual Meeting – Wednesday 13th May at 6:30 pm in Halse Village Hall

11.2 Parish Council Meeting – Wednesday 13th May 7:00 pm in Halse Village Hall

The meeting closed at 7:35pm. Cllr Kathryn Robinson-Burge thanked the members of the public and councillors for attending and contributing to the meeting.

Signed: *K. Robinson-Burge* Date: 16th May 2026