

HALSE PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK'S REPORT – WEDNESDAY 22 JULY 2026 – AGENDA ITEM 6

INTRODUCTION

I have attended three very informative courses run by SALC this year, and as a result of launching the new PC website, would like to make the following recommendations to the council with the objective of improving efficiency and disseminating information to the public.

1. Scheme of Delegation: Planning Applications – the draft document is at the end of this report and has been circulated to councillors previously, and is for councillors' consideration. This policy will enable the council to submit comments on planning applications within the 21 days allowed, and report back at the next ordinary meeting the results. A public notice will be publicized on the website and noticeboard to alert residents that this process is being undertaken giving full details on how the public can submit comments to the council and/ or direct to the LPA. Extraordinary meetings can be called by the Chair for any contentious planning applications which require comments to be submitted to the LPA prior to the next ordinary PC meeting and the views of the public can be listened to in an open meeting, before the council vote on their decision. The clerk will send the Council's comments to the LPA following the public meeting.

2. Standing Orders – This key document will be amended to include a reference to the Schedule of Delegated Powers for Planning, and summons to councillors by email if adopted.

3. Frequency of meetings – the council are required by law to hold six meetings. I would like to council to consider the following schedule of meetings to meet the six meeting requirement:

- Quarterly ordinary meetings to be held in April, July, October and January
- Annual Meeting – held in May each year, date set for 2027 is 12 May. The agenda for this meeting, after the standard items will include approval of the Annual Governance Statement, plus review of the statutory documents.
- Annual Parish Meeting (Assembly) – This meeting should take place between 1st March and 1st June. Although the Chair calls the meeting, he/she does not need to chair this informal meeting where the public have an opportunity to air their views. This can be delegated to another councillor. The meeting is minuted, but any decisions taken at the meeting are not binding on the council. I suggest that representatives from the various groups in the village are invited to send a representative or a report, particularly to those organisations that receive grants from the PC, together with Halse Support Fund. This will help publicise the activities within the village and the ways in which the PC supports them. It will also highlight any issues of concern the public may have in an informal setting.
- Extraordinary meetings can be called by the Chair as required eg co-option of a councillor, planning applications, approval of the precept.

4. Agendas & Minutes – Where possible, in future the agenda will include all topics to be discussed together with all the supporting documentation (or link to the website) as one email, circulated at least 5 days before the meeting. The agenda with supporting documents will be publicized on the website for the public to view. Agenda only on the noticeboard. Producing the agenda in this way, will make taking the minutes simpler, and less verbose.

CONCLUSION

Adopting the above approach to administering Halse Parish Council will improve efficiency and effectiveness.

5. Clerk's Salary and extra hours – My hours have exceeded 3 per week over the last 6 months. The Chair confirmed approval of an increase in the clerk's hours from 3 to 5 hours per week for the first quarter of the tax year. The hours to be kept under review during July, August and September. The Chair confirmed approval of the clerk's salary pay point on the 2026/27 NALC salary scale from PP12 to PP13 from 1 April 2026, as discussed in previous years. Confirmation of these two motions are covered under agenda item 12 Motions for Resolution.

6. Freedom of information request - This was completed within the time limit. The disbursement costs have not to date been received from the applicant.

7. Register of Interests – From 29 June 2026, local authorities will no longer be required to publish an elected or co-opted member's home address in public registers of interest or on council websites. This change has been introduced to support councillor safety and privacy, while maintaining appropriate transparency. Somerset Council has issued a new RoI form, which I am requesting councillors complete, and I will forward to the Monitoring Officer.

8. Signs on The Manor – There has been no response from the owners of Lavender Hill Holidays to the clerk's email request to amend/review the directions to their holiday cottages to alleviate the problems experienced by residents of the Manor, with cars arriving late at night trying to find the cottage complex. The request that a planning officer from Somerset Council Planning visit the Manor to clarify works that the management committee wish to carry out on the building has been refused (this included the design of a sign on the Manor gate posts).

Carol Windeatt
Clerk to Halse Parish Council
14 July 2026

Information relating to other items on the 22nd July 2026 agenda:

AGENDA ITEM 7 – PLANNING and reported matters

(a) Planning at SC confirmed by email they do not request comments from parish council's re agricultural planning applications. This email had been circulated to councillors upon receipt.

(b) Planning applications to be reviewed – None

(c) Planning application decisions : 18/26/005/AGN – Extract from email received from Dave Mansell, Somerset CC, re this decision:

'As you may already be aware, a decision has been taken on the prior notification for an agricultural building (18/26/0005/AGN).

A decision to approve (conditional) was made by the Development Control Manager under delegated powers on 04/06/2026.

The case officer report is available on the website and is attached. Conclusions (pages 8-9) were:

The proposed agricultural building has been reduced in size and height since the previous refusal, and significant landscape planting has been proposed to mitigate the impact upon the visual amenity from the PRowS (Public Rights of Way) nearby.

For the reasons set out above, having regard to all the matters raised, the proposed development is considered to meet the requirements of Schedule 2, Part 6 of the (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) and conditional prior approval is granted, subject to a condition for the landscape details

and planting scheme that have been submitted to implemented and retained.

I checked a few points with the case officer, who said: "This prior approval application and the proposed mitigation in terms of reducing the overall size and significant levels of landscaping overcame the previous reason for refusal and the Landscape officer had no objections to the amended plans." I understand this to mean that the criteria set for this type of permitted development were now met with this application.

In terms of notification, she confirmed that a site notice was required and that the application was available on the council's website and on the weekly planning list, but that notification is not sent to parish councils for this type of application.

*Cllr Dave Mansell
Upper Tone – Somerset Council'*

AGENDA ITEM 8 – HIGHWAYS REPORT

b. To consider the next actions regarding the Village Speed Survey- *please see below the response from Local Highways Authority which was posted on the PC website on 2nd June 2026*

HALSE PARISH COUNCIL – Update on Village Speed Limit Consultation – 2nd June 2026

Following the Village Consultation regarding the speed limit in Halse, the results were forwarded to the Local Highways Authority. Their views on the issue, the questionnaire responses and the possible need for change we sought. The following information was provided by the Authority:

The speed data we access is captured by vehicle telematics which most modern cars have. This is uploaded to a national database and updated once per year. At present we are accessing Jan – Dec 2024 data which should hopefully be updated to 2025 soon.

From looking at the questionnaire replies there are just less than 20% of residents that feel there is a speed issue in the village. However, there are no comments of where they actually feel speeding is taking place.

The majority of the comments are from the 25% who do not feel there is a speed issue in the village. With the main concerns around the impact on the environment, maintenance, effectiveness, cost and overall feeling that it is not needed.

This makes me think that if it were to be advertised then you would receive a lot of objections which would need answering. Where there are objections raised we need to carry out a determination report to evidence why the scheme should go ahead and this could be difficult if there is no evidence of speeding or safety issues in the village. We would also need to get support from the police. I can't see any injury accidents logged in the village over the last 5 years.

AGENDA ITEM 10 - FINANCE

(a) To verify payments made since last meeting held on 13 May 2026		
Somerset Assoc of Local Councils	Course fee – Responding to Planning Applications	25.00
Character Graphics	Photocopying – Village Speed Limit consultation	54.00
Zurich Insurance	Annual insurance premium	264.00
Clerk's Salary	April – June 2026	783.30
Clerk's Expenses	April – June 2026	59.33
HMRC	PAYE April – June 2026	195.60
SALC	Annual subscription & NALC subs	145.20
Tracey Prosser	Reimbursement of Green Bin annual subs	76.30
	TOTAL	1662.73

(b) To resolve to pay the payments as listed below:		
Somerset Assoc of Local Councils	Course Fees – Clerks 2 Agenda Minutes and Meetings	£60.00
Somerset Web Services	Annual Domain renewal for .org.uk website	£24.00

(c) Bank Reconciliation as at 11 July 2026

BANK RECONCILIATION as at 11 JULY 2026		
Balance brought forward as at 1 April 2026		£16,964
REVENUE		
2026/27 Precept received from Somerset Council	9,619	
Interest on reserve account	42	
		9,661
		£26,625
EXPENDITURE		
Web Services and email accounts	878	
Course Fees	25	
Clerk's 1 st quarter salary	783	
PAYE HMRC	196	
Clerk's Expenses	47	
Insurance	264	
Subscriptions	219	
VAT	187	
Miscellaneous Expenses	45	
Rounding	2	
		2,646
Balance as at 11 July 2026		£23,979
Represented by:		
Current Account as at 11 July 2026	2,215	
Reserve account as at 11 July 2026	21,764	
		£23,979

APPENDIX – DRAFT SCHEME OF DELEGATION: PLANNING APPLICATIONS

HALSE PARISH COUNCIL

SCHEME OF DELEGATION: PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1. Statutory Authority and Purpose

1.1 This scheme of Delegation is made in pursuant to Section 101 of the **Local Government Act 1972**.

1.2 The purpose of this document is to enable the Council to operate efficiently and respond to planning applications within the statutory consultation windows imposed by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), while maintaining full transparency and councillor oversight.

1.3 This scheme operates alongside, and supplementary to, the Council's adopted **Standing Orders**.

2. General Planning Delegations to the Clerk

2.1 The Council delegates authority to the Parish Clerk (Proper Officer) to receive, log, and process all planning applications notified to the Council by the LPA (Local Planning Authority).

2.2 The Clerk is authorized to submit the final corporate response to the LPA under delegated powers, subject to strict adherence of the protocol outlined in Section 3 of this policy.

3. Protocol for Inter-Meeting Email Consultations

3.1 **Trigger for Consultation:** Upon receipt of a planning application where the LPA's statutory deadline falls before the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Full Council, the Clerk shall initiate an electronic consultation.

3.2 **Circulation & Deadline:** The Clerk will email the application link and plans to all Members of the Council within **2 working days** of receipt. Members will be given a strict deadline of **7 calendar days** from the date of the email to submit written comments to the Clerk.

3.3 **Quorum & Consensus Threshold:** For the Clerk to exercise delegated authority to respond based on email feedback, a minimum of **3 Members** must submit a response.

- **Clear Consensus:** If responding Members are in agreement, the Clerk will draft and submit the final response reflecting that consensus.
- **Split Opinion:** If responding Members hold conflicting views, or if any Members request a formal debate, the Clerk will request an extension from the LPA. If denied, the Clerk will call an Extraordinary Meeting of the Full Council.

3.4 **Non-Response:** Silence or failure to respond to the consultation email by the specified deadline will be recorded as 'No Objection' by that individual Member.

4. Trigger Points for Escalation (The Call-In Mechanism)

4.1 The Clerk's delegated power to respond shall be automatically suspended, and the application referred to a public meeting of the Full Council, if any of the following trigger points are met:

- Any number of councillors explicitly requests that the application be deferred to a formal council meeting for debate.
- The application constitutes a major development proposal (e.g. multi-dwelling housing estates, large infrastructure changes, or significant heritage/conservation area impacts).
- The application is submitted by, or directly impacts a sitting member or officer of the Parish Council.

5. Handling Public Comments

5.1 **Transparency and Notification:** The Clerk shall ensure that all planning consultation links received by the Council are published on the Council's website or noticeboards within **2 working days** of receipt, alongside the deadline for councillor feedback.

5.2 Submission of Public Comments: Members of the public wishing to comment on an application undergoing electronic review must submit their representations in writing via email or letter to the Clerk. These must be received at least 48 hours prior to the councillor feedback deadline.

5.3 Integration into Council Responses: The Clerk shall circulate any public comments received to all Members during the email consultation period. Public comments will only be factored into the Council's final corporate response if they pertain strictly to Material Planning Considerations (see Section 6).

5.4 Direct Representations: The Council's public notice will explicitly advise residents that the LPA is the ultimate decision maker. Residents are strongly encouraged to submit their comments directly to the LPA's online portal to ensure they are formally logged in the official statutory register.

6. Material Planning Considerations

6.1 The Council and individual Members when commenting to the Clerk, shall only base their feedback on genuine Material Planning Considerations. The Clerk is authorised to omit any non-material comments from the final corporate submission.

6.2 Valid Material Grounds include:

- Local planning policies (e.g. Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plan)
- Government planning policy and guidance (NPPF)
- Highway safety, traffic generation, and parking capacity
- Overlooking, loss of privacy and overshadowing (loss of light).
- Visual amenity, layout, density, design, materials, and character of area
- Effect on listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeology
- Noise, disturbance, odour, environmental pollution resulting from use
- Loss of trees, nature conservation and impact on biodiversity

6.3 Non-Material Grounds (To Be Disregarded)

- Loss of individual's private view over land
- Negative impact on private property values
- Private disputes, boundaries, covenants or land ownership issues
- The applicant's personal circumstances, character or motives
- Business competition or commercial interests
- Structural stability or matters covered strictly by Building Regulations

7. Post-Decision Reporting and Transparency

7.1 All planning consultation responses submitted by the clerk under this delegated scheme must be compiled into a report using the framework set out in Appendix A.

7.2 This report will be formally presented, noted and recorded in the minutes of the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Full Council to ensure a clear audit trail.

8. Planning Site Visits

8.1 Purpose: Site visits are intended solely for Members to familiarise themselves with the physical context of the planning application (e.g. topography, neighbouring properties, highway layouts). They are fact finding exercises and no forums for debate, negotiation or decision making.

8.2 Informal Viewings (Preferred): Members are encouraged to view application sites independently from public vantage points (e.g. public footpaths or highways) within the specified email consultation window.

8.3 Access onto Private Land: Members have no statutory right of entry onto private land. If a Member feels an effective assessment requires access to the private site, they must request the Clerk to arrange formal permission from the applicant or land owner. Members must never enter private property uninvited.

8.4 Formal Site Visits: If the Clerk or Full Council determines that a collective, formal site visit is required due to the exceptional complexity or scale of the application, the following rules apply:

- The Clerk will formally request access from the applicant/agent
- The Clerk will issue a written invitation to all Council Members stating the date and time

- A strict record of attendance will be kept by the Clerk
- Members must not engage in private debates with the applicant, agent or objectors if they are present on site. No decisions or votes shall be taken during the site visit.

Adopted by Halse Parish Council

Date:

APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE OF DELEGATED PLANNING DECISIONS

Report to the Full Council Meeting held on: [INSERT DATE]

Pursuant to the Council' Scheme of Delegation (Planning), the following consultation responses were formulated and submitted to the Local Planning Authority by the Clerk during the inter-meeting period:

App Ref	Property Address	Brief Description	Council Response (Object/Support/No Objection)	Summary of Material Planning Grounds Raised	Date Submitted
18/26/0001	14 High Street	Two storey rear extension	No Objection	Complies with Neighbourhood Plan H2, no privacy impacts	12/05/2026
18/26/0002	Land at Oak Farm	Outline for 5 dwellings	Object	Highway safety risks at access point; outside defined settlement boundary	12/05/2026

Recommendation: That the Council receives, notes, and formally ratifies the actions taken by the Clerk under delegated authority as set out above.

Moved by:_____Seconded by:_____

Resolution Number:_____