

Minutes of Halwill parish council's April 2025 meeting

Held on 10 April 2025 at 7.30pm In the Baptist Hall

The meeting started at 7:30pm. Councillor Lawlor chaired the meeting

Present:

Cllrs J Wilson (Chair), J Lawlor (JL), V Osborne (VO), R Grocock and L Bryan(LB), M Harding(MH), E Down(ED)

In Attendance:

Ward Councillors P Hackett and S Gibson. Two members of the public (MoP) and the Clerk

2025/Apr/1 To receive apologies for absence

None

2025/Apr/2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Harding had an interest in Item 9 but as he was only just co-opted he had not declared an interest prior to the meeting

2025/Apr/3 Public question time

A representative from the Baptist Church asked about boundary issues with the neighbouring property currently being developed by a councillor and with the parish council's land. The Clerk explained that any dispute between the church and a councillor was not a matter for the parish council but is a bilateral problem for the 2 parties. The Clerk said he would be willing to attend a meeting between the 2 parties.

It was suggested at the March Meeting that SW Water may want to move the sewer to run on Parish Council land at some future date. Councillor Bryan asked SW Water and they have no intention of moving the sewer. See also Item 9

2025/Apr/4 Order of business and any items to be discussed with the public excluded

None

2025/Apr/5 Clerk's and Councillors' announcements

Ward Councillor Gibson gave an update on devolution and the push to unitary authorities. It is all a bit of a mystery but what is certain is that Devon is not in the first tranche of Councils to become unitary authorities. It is likely that Parish and Town Councils will have more devolved powers under a unitary authority – or maybe not. Because of its size Devon is likely to be split into 2 or more unitary authorities – but maybe not. County Council elections will go ahead in May 2025 – definitely.

In England, a unitary authority or unitary council is a type of local authority responsible for all local government services in an area. They combine the functions of a non-metropolitan county council and a non-metropolitan district council, which elsewhere in England provide two tiers of local government.

Councillor Hackett asked Councillor Gibson if his recent meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in Holsworthy was an official visit [representing the Police] or was the PCC attending as a Conservative Party member for electioneering purposes. Councillor Gibson became evasive and refused to answer as he felt it was not of interest to the parish council. The Chair soon put him right on that and asked him to answer the question. Councillor Gibson said the invitation [to the PCC] was sent by him in his capacity as a Ward Councillor and a prospective County Councillor to discuss issues pertinent to Holsworthy. Councillor Hackett is a member of the Police and Crime Panel but was unaware that a meeting had been arranged. No other Town or District Councillors were aware of the meeting. The PCC has been invited to meet with District Councillors and members of the Chamber of Commerce of Bideford but the PCC's office had replied that she as this is a time heightened sensitivity due to the forthcoming County elections she would not come. Councillors wanted to speak to her on the lack of resources in North Devon. Councillor Hackett thought they should have been told and it is important for Ward Councillors to work together for the benefit of the electorate regardless of which political parties they represent. Councillor Hackett looked proper cross.

The Clerk informed the meeting that the mower stored in the shipping container on the playing fields has been stolen. Hopefully insurance will cover it. Regarding future security for any equipment kept on the playing fields the chair of the Football Club said the container had high quality locks but the site is remote and lacks electric. Only the mower tractor was taken. The School's CCTV may have caught images of the miscreants but the school is on holiday so a while until we can find out. Various suggestions were made including: trackers, CCTV, security lights and turning the container round so the door faces the pitch. This is considered to be a priority as a new mover will need to be purchased.

2025/Apr/6 To confirm minutes for the March 2025 Parish Council Meeting

The minutes were signed as a correct record by the Chair

2025/Apr/7 Finances

1 Bills for payment

It was **resolved** to pay the following bills

Table 1: Table of bills to pay and cheques to be raised at the March meeting

Date	Company	Amount inc VAT	For what
10/04/25	D C Osborne	£402.00	Salary March
10/04/25	D C Osborne	£24.39	Expenses
04/04/25	L&M Coles Landscapes	£656.00	Parish Warden January to April 3 rd
06/04/25	Halwill Baptist Chapel	£20.00	Hall hire February, March
26/03/25	Halwill Cleaning Services	£90.00	Bus shelter washdown x 2
05/03/25	Mr C Jebb (Hawthorns Accounting Services)	£75.00	Payroll services 6 months

Current Account Total For month inc VAT: £1267.39

Current Account Total for month ex VAT £1264.99

VAT for month: £2.40

2025/Apr/8 To consider responses to planning applications

None

2025/Apr/9 To consider requests from residents of Station Road to buy a strip of land adjoining their property.

There was an initial disagreement as to whether this should be put to a vote. The area being considered is between the grass area South of the car park and the Somerslea estate. The Chair did not want the boundary to become staggered but would rather it was a straight line. Councillor Lawlor wondered what would happen if some bought their boundary but some did not. Councillor Grocock though the Council should give the land to people who did not wish to buy it. The proposal that the land should be offered at no

profit to the council with residents covering the legal fees. It was **resolved** that the land to the bottom of the bank should be offered to adjoining properties from the existing boundary between the parish council's land and said property up to the bottom of the embankment on an at cost basis. Those who wish to purchase the strip of land will be responsible for fencing the boundary and there will be a restrictive covenant placed to prevent building on that land.

2025/Apr/10 Active Halwill delegate report

Indicative plans of the proposed changing rooms, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) were circulated before the meeting and are attached to the minutes. These are not final plans so the location of parking and access will change. Councillor Down though the size of the current grass pitch could be a limitation in the future as it could hinder progression up the league structure.

2025/Apr/11 Progress reports

1. Parish ground keeping
All agreed the Parish was looking fine
 2. Speed sign
Carried over.
 3. Gazebo
It is progressing slowly.
 4. Change of domain name
The transfer of the website to the new domain name is underway.
 5. Advertising for new Parish Paths Partnership (P3) coordinator
Carried over
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2025/Apr/12 Correspondence

Correspondence received and to be written

None

2025/Apr/13 Next meeting

The Annual parish Council Meeting and the next Ordinary Meeting will be on the 15 May at Baptist Hall

The meeting ended at 20:45

Signed

Date

DRAFT