

Minutes of Halwill parish council's February 2026 meeting

Held on 12 February 2026 at 7.30pm In the Baptist Hall

The meeting started at 7:30pm.

In the absence of Councillor Lawlor, Councillor Dixon chaired the meeting.

Present:

Councillors P Dixon (PD), L Bryan (LB), M Harding (MH) and E Down (ED)

In Attendance:

Ward Councillors S Gibson and P Hackett, 2 members of the public and the Clerk

2026/Feb/1 To receive apologies for absence

R Tucker, J Lawlor and V Osborne, County Councillor L Rowsell

2026/Feb/2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Dixon declared an interest in Item 7: Planning

Councillor Dixon asked for and was granted a dispensation to remain whilst Item 7 was debated but not to vote.

2026/Feb/3 Public question time

The chair of the Parish Hall Committee reported that the Hall has so far secured £15,000 in grants for the ceiling project.

A representative of Scallywags pre-school thanked the Council for inviting them to have an input into what new play equipment they would like to see to replace the worn-out play equipment to include a small slide, something similar to the HAGS Jeep in the style of a train and some traversing grips to go on the wall. Scallywags may be willing to contribute to the cost.

Mr J Hunt representing V2G Ltd asked the meeting how plans for an electric vehicle charging pints in the parish were progressing. The Clerk informed him that the works should have been completed by November 2025 but Devon County have not yet selected

a contractor. We have no knowledge of when work is likely to start. Mr Hunt asked whether the Hall had considered installing vehicle to grid charging points.

2026/Feb/4 Clerk's and Councillors' announcements

Ward Councillor Gibson wished those present a belated happy new year as this is the first meeting he has attended this year.

Councillor Gibson informed the meeting that he has contacts in a company that provides play equipment so may be able to arrange for a reduced rate. The Clerk will correspond with Councillor Gibson.

Ward Councillor Hackett informed the meeting that there will be a Police and Crime Commissioner's meeting with Torridge District Council on Friday 13 to which the public are welcome to attend and comment.

Ward Councillor Hackett suggested that interested persons should look through the briefing papers and minutes of the February 2 meeting of TDC's Community and Resources Committee. Projections are that TDC will run out of cash within the next 2 years.

Ward Councillor Hackett asked for the following statement to be read into the minutes:

"At a meeting, you must declare the existence and nature of any personal interest in business being considered before discussion of that item begins. In addition, if a member of the public (with knowledge of the relevant facts) might conclude that your judgement of the public interest could be prejudiced by your interest, then your personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest. You cannot then vote on the matter (unless you obtain a dispensation from the Standards Committee of the principal authority) and if you have a prejudicial interest, you must leave the meeting for the discussion and the vote. The declaration of interests at meetings is intended to give the public confidence in your council's decision making. It helps if the agenda gives councillors an opportunity to declare an interest early in a meeting.

and...

"Furthermore, the council will have difficulty if it:

- *allows one person or a small group of councillors to dominate its work;*

- *allows a councillor (including the chairman) to make decisions on its behalf;*
- *doesn't listen to and communicate with its community, other local councils, principal authorities, outside bodies;*
- *ignores or antagonises the press;*
- *doesn't have contracts of employment for staff;*
- *doesn't keep its records in order;*
- *lacks a robust system of financial control;*
- *doesn't manage meetings effectively;*
- *is not well-informed on topics to be discussed.*

2026/Feb/5 To confirm minutes for the January 2026 Parish Council Meeting

The minutes were signed as a correct record by the Chair

2026/Feb/6 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 February meeting current account

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Date	Company	Amount inc VAT	For what
12/02/26	D C Osborne	£446.68	Pay December
12/02/26	D C Osborne	£12.00	Expenses
12/02/26	HMRC	£4.45	National Insurance employer's

			contribution
06/02/26	Paddy Dixon	£15.00	Councillor's expenses

Current Account Total For month inc VAT: £478.13

Current Account Total for month ex VAT £478.13

VAT for month: £0

2026/Feb/7Planning

The following application was considered:

Reference: 1/0020/2026/FULM

Proposal: Erection of 20no. dwellings and associated infrastructure

Location: Land At Grid Reference 243893 100369, Halwill Junction, Devon

O.S. Map Reference: (E) 243893 (N) 100369

Councillor Dixon declared an interest but remained to chair the debate.

- **Access:** The primary objection is the access via Holly Close Road, which is 4.5 metres wide. The new access is expected to increase traffic by 300%. It was noted that widening the road for a pavement is difficult as the land is privately owned.
- **Joining to A3079:** A suggestion to move the 30mph speed limit was discussed.
- **Housing Mix:** While supporting development in principle, the council expressed concern that building only bungalows attracts a specific demographic and fails to meet the local need for housing for young people and first-time buyers.

It was **resolved** that Halwill Parish Council would not to object to the development itself but will submit a neutral comment recommending a mixed-use housing scheme.

2026/Feb/8 Progress report on Baptist church drainage and boundary sale

The Chair and the Clerk reported that they have been pressing the solicitors to act and have always responded to requests in a timely manner. The Baptist Union's solicitor had asked for permission for a gate to be written into the easement but that request was

denied. It is not the local Baptist Church who are handling negotiations but the Baptist Union solicitors in Birmingham.

2026/Feb/9 Active Halwill delegate report

The Active Halwill committee is waiting to see if it can acquire an adjacent piece of land before proceeding with the MUGA design. Acquiring this land could enable the creation of FA-standard pitches for youth football. The group agreed to explore this before committing to a design.

2026/Feb/10 Clerk's delegate decisions

To note list of delegated decisions made by the Clerk:

1. Fence for play area

A contractor has been commissioned to install a new 30-metre fence, but work is delayed due to wet ground.

2. Accept offer of new bus shelters

The Clerk accepted Devon County's offer to replace 3 of the existing bus shelters at no cost to the parish. Work should start in the next financial year.

3. Meeting with Sovereign play to discuss new play equipment
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2026/Feb/11 Action list

The content of the Action list was noted.

Additional measures to be added to the action list:

- Prepare a list of required play equipment and obtain three quotations, including one from Proludic that can be presented to TDC for a s106 grant. Approach Scallywags for a financial contribution towards the play equipment.
- The Clerk will submit a formal recommendation to the planning authority on behalf of the Parish Council on application 1/0020/2026 FULM, supporting the principle of development but suggesting a mixed-use housing scheme.
- The Chair to email the Baptist Church's solicitors to apply pressure regarding the easement.

- Active Halwill to approach the landowner about the piece of land desired for the MUGA.
 - Gauge interest from other councils (Black Torrington, Ashwater) for a joint face-to-face training session with DALC. Clerk to contact Black Torrington and Ashwater.
 - Arrange a meeting with the school about planting the Devon Hornbeam tree.
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2026/Feb/12 Correspondence

Email from Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC). A proposal was made for face-to-face training on council conduct (£250 plus VAT and mileage). To share costs, it was suggested to invite other councils like Black Torrington or Ashwater. The Clerk will contact neighbouring parishes.

School Car Park Agreement: It has been suggested that the car park agreement with the school, for which Devon County Council pays the parish £2,500 annually, could be reviewed next May. The loan taken out by the parish to build the car park paid off by then. The school has suggested they should stop paying the fee once the loan is cleared. The parish council is concerned about funding future maintenance without this income. A formal decision will be made when a request is received.

Email from Airband. An email from Airband stated that the village's Airband internet installation is delayed until September 2027.

Baptists path request. The Baptist church has requested that a path between their car park and the playing fields be permitted to allow children and adults using the Baptist Hall to get to the playing fields without having to walk up the road. This will be a matter for future discussion.

2026/Feb/13 Next meeting

The next Ordinary Meeting will be on the 12 March at the Baptist Hall

2026/Feb/14 Exclusion of Public

Not needed

2025/Feb/15 PART II - (CLOSED SESSION)

No items

2025/Feb/16 Close

The meeting ended at 21:01

DRAFT