

Halford Parish Council

A member of the Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held at Halford Village Hall on Wednesday the 6th of May 2026 commencing at 6.50 pm

Present: Cllr Graham Sara (in the Chair)
Councillors Nick Gale, Amanda Luther and Sarah Whalley-Hoggins
Clerk: Karen Parnell - District Councillor Malcolm Littlewood
Eleven members of the public were present

Apologies: Cllr Gerald Newell and County Councillor David Curtis

1. To Elect a Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Two candidates put themselves forward obtaining two votes each – Short speeches were made – The outgoing chairman used his casting vote. Position offered to Graham Sara

The chairman explained that it was possible that he would need to use his casting vote. Councillor Whalley-Hoggins reminded the meeting that due process should be followed. As a result the two candidates addressed the meeting after which ballot papers were issued and completed. The results were tied with two votes for each candidate and the use of the casting vote by the outgoing chairman was required, after which the result was announced.

2. To Elect a Vice-Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Nick Gale Proposed Graham Sara Seconded – Position offered to Gerald Newell

Nominate someone to keep the Village Correspondent for Village Voices up dated with Parish activities on a monthly basis to tie in with Publication dates:
Graham Sara appointed

3. Disclosure of Interests. Councillors are asked to declare personal interests in any items on the agenda. Councillors are reminded that the Code of Conduct that takes effect from May 2021 provides that should they have a prejudicial interest in any matter under discussion they should withdraw from the room and not seek to influence a decision about the matter.

There were no disclosures of interests.

4. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in March 2026

Were agreed by the Council to be an accurate record of the meeting, and were duly signed off by the Chairman as such.

5. (Also item 10) Matters arising therefrom and new matters.

Village Maintenance

There have been problems with the sewage system running behind the Folly and Folly Paddock. A discussion with Severn Trent workers clearing the blocked sewer revealed the problem which was caused by Wet Wipes being flushed down the toilet.

6. Planning:

Application(s) reference: 26/00650/VARY

Proposed : Application Reference Number: 02/00865/OUT Date of

Decision: 23/10/2002

Removal of Condition Number(s): 5, Agricultural occupancy.

Original description of development: Outline application for the erection of one agricultural workers dwelling.

At : Willow Farm, Fosse Way, Ettington, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 7PG

For : Carl and Lesley Cunnane

Application(s) reference: 26/00688/FUL

Proposed : Proposed rear single storey extension

At : 1 Park Farm Cottages, Halford Road, Ettington, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 7PH

For : Mr And Mrs M And A Swift

Application(s) reference: 26/00768/FUL

Proposed : Erection of one self-build/custom build dwelling, widening and alterations to existing vehicular access, and all associated works. Demolition of existing hay/shelter building on site.

At : Land South Of Idlicote Road, Adjacent Plum Trees, Idlicote Road, Halford Shipston-on-Stour

For : Mr J Wheeler

Publicising planning applications to residents will be promoted.

7. Finance:

The internal audit was conducted on the 13th of April 2026 by Kenneth Dunn.

To complete the Annual Financial Return for the year ending 31st March, 2026:-

a) Councillors to complete the Statement of Assurance;

This was agreed by those present

b) Chairman to sign The Statement of Accounts;

This was done and the RFO countersigned

c) Chairman to sign the Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March, 2026.

Done by both Chairman and RFO

To agree that as this parish council has not exceeded either income or expenditure totaling over £ 25,000 and has met the qualifying criteria they wish to certify themselves exempt from a limited assurance review. Agreed by the PC

8. Accounts for payment.

Clerks Salary/Expenses £ 500.00

WALC £ 190.20

Kenneth Dunn (Internal Audit) £ 100.00

Clear Insurance Management Ltd (Insurance) £ 1078.16

Halford Bridge £ 100.00

SDC Land Lease £ 350.00

Receipts: 50% Precept £ 3600.00 from SDC

9. Councillors reports –

David Curtis – WCC Councillor:

Local Government Reorganisation

Local Authorities had until March 24 to submit preferences for Foundation Strategic Authorities <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-and-community-empowerment-bill-guidance/english-devolution-and-community-empowerment-bill-guidance> In essence this will be the Strategic Authority that will be formed by North/South/Unified Warwickshire with other LA's. The preference among most is for a N/S split Warwickshire with South Warwickshire combined with Glocs and Worcs. It will be a decision by Sec of State and will likely be announced shortly before the summer recess i.e. mid July

VAS and Bollards

As reported the VAS will be reinstated and work to address the kerb outside the pub and to install bollards is under way. I'd like to thank Cllr Whalley Hoggins for raising the issue of the VAS at a recent meeting with County Highways and I'm grateful to the team for responding to the concerns raised so promptly

Living Well

The Council's Living Well webpages bring together useful guidance, tools and local support about:

- ☐ Staying active and moving safely
- ☐ Supporting mental wellbeing and emotional health
- ☐ Reducing loneliness and staying socially connected
- ☐ Eating well and maintaining energy levels
- ☐ Making homes safer and easier to live in

Mental health and brain health are just as important as physical wellbeing. Reading, puzzles, online brain-training activities and learning new skills can all help to keep the mind stimulated. Access digital books and audiobooks through Warwickshire library services.

Funding opportunities

- ☐ New Queen Elizabeth Trust To Support Communities - Rural Services Network

☐ HCAF (Highways Community Action Fund) I had a meeting with Richard Fenwick. Head of Highways and David Elliston, Highways Area Team Manager who confirmed there is some flexibility in awarding grants from HCAF and I'm willing to support applications from the Parish

- ☐ Rural Finding Digest

Rural Funding Digest - April 2026 - Rural Services Network links to numerous funding opportunities

- ☐ Heating Oil

Rising Heating Oil Costs Draw Westminster Attention - Rural Services

Network The Government has announced more than £50 million in targeted financial support to help low-income households who rely on heating oil manage rising fuel costs. The funding will be distributed through local authorities from April via the new Crisis and Resilience Fund, with £27 million allocated to England and additional funding provided to the devolved administrations. In the announcement, the Government indicated that it intends to introduce stronger consumer protections in the heating oil market, including improvements to price transparency, strengthened industry codes of practice

and the possible creation of a new regulator or ombudsman to oversee the sector.

Greater oversight of the heating oil market is something the Rural Services Network has long called for, highlighting the lack of consumer protections for households reliant on off-grid fuels.

□ Councillor Grant Fund

This has been continued. A group has been formed to review the criteria and application procedure and is expected to report by end May. This first round deadline will likely be in early July. I will prioritise local community projects that have support from the PC.

□ SDC Climate Resilient Stratford-on-Avon

SDC has launched its Climate Resilient Stratford-on-Avon programme which provides an opportunity for ten organisations to have a personalised Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan produced for them and will receive £10,000 in grant funding to begin to implement the actions identified in the Action Plan. Organisations that can apply are:

- Town and Parish Councils
- Community and charity groups
- Independent businesses

ASDA Foundation

<https://asdafoundation.org/our-grants/local-community-spaces-fund/>

[Cost of living website](#) (X and Facebook)

Many different aspects of daily life have been affected by the rising cost of living.

To help find information to support with managing increased household costs visit: www.costoflivingwarwickshire.co.uk

Warm weather water safety advice (X and Facebook)

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service is urging residents and visitors to take extra care in and around water as temperatures begin to rise.

Find out how to stay safe around water:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7593/enjoy-the-warm-weather-safely-with-water-safety-advice-from-warwickshire-fire-and-rescue-service>

Staying healthy, connected and independent (X and Facebook)

Warwickshire County Council is highlighting the importance of healthy ageing and the small, everyday steps that can help residents to stay healthy, independent, and connected as they get older.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7601/council-highlights-support-for-people-to-stay-healthy-connected-and-independent>

Potholes

Due to the continued wet weather Highways is under extreme pressure. Please use this link to <https://services.warwickshire.gov.uk/report-a-pothole/> If you believe the issue is dangerous, please contact our Customer Service Centre on 01926 412515 between 9am - 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am - 4.30pm Friday.

Road markings

To discuss and note any road markings that need re-doing.

Livestock worrying

A dog doesn't have to make contact with an animal, it includes chasing and racing about. Livestock have been known to have broken their limbs, suffocated, had a cardiac arrest, aborted their unborn, or suffered later when giving birth after being chased by a dog.

How can you help?

- Keep your dog on a lead and under close control and stay on designated footpaths and do not go onto private land unless there is a public footpath or you have permission from the landowner
- If you leave your dog outside on its own, on your property, ensure that it is in a secure area and cannot escape.
- If you are reentering an area where there are other animals give them plenty of space.
- Make sure your details are on your dog's collar and it is microchipped, so that you can be reunited quickly if it is lost, plus it is a legal requirement.

If you have livestock and would like a "Dog on Lead" sign, then please email the team on RuralCrimeTeam@warwickshire.police.uk .

Malcolm Littlewood – SDC Councillor

Ward Report covering April 2026

Health screening events across Stratford District

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has joined together with the Graham Fulford Charitable Trust (GFCT) to offer a series of health screening events for both men and women across the District.

The tests on offer cost £14 each, subsidised by the District Council and are:

- ☐ For men over 40 - PSA (Prostate Screening)
- ☐ For men and women aged 18 and over - diabetes and cholesterol

The next event takes place on Saturday 9th May at The Graham Adams Centre, Saint James Road, Southam, CV47 0LY

The accessible sport of padel coming to Stratford Leisure Centre

Everyone Active is partnering with padel centre operator PadelStars to construct the courts at the centre, which is run by award-winning operator Everyone Active and Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

The new padel courts will sit next to the existing outdoor courts, replacing the 2G Multi-Use Games Area. Customers will have access to three football courts and three padel courts by the end of the project. There will be two doubles courts for padel and one singles court. Construction begins toward the end of May, with courts for matches and training expected to open by June.

Free memberships for people with Parkinson's in Stratford-on-Avon District

Free gym memberships are being offered by local leisure centres to people living with Parkinson's.

Stratford Leisure Centre, Southam Leisure Centre, Shipston Leisure Centre, Studley Leisure Centre and The Greig Leisure Centre in Alcester, run by award-winning operator Everyone Active in partnership with Stratford-on-Avon District Council, offer the initiative co-designed with the charity Parkinson's UK.

Now in its fifth year, the Everyone Active and Parkinson's UK free membership provides access to gym, swim and group exercise classes, as well as online Synergy Dance classes.

A free membership will also be given to up to three carers to provide additional support if needed. Currently, Everyone Active supports 96 individuals in Stratford-on-Avon District with Parkinson's. World Parkinson's Day, which took place on Saturday 11 April 2026, raises awareness of the progressive neurological condition that currently has no cure.

Parkinson's affects around 145,000 people in the UK and there are more than 40 symptoms, from tremor and pain to anxiety.

Being physically active can play an important role in living well with Parkinson's. Those living with the condition can find various activities, such as swimming, walking and dance, beneficial in managing their symptoms.

Clinical waste disposal

We are seeing an increase in needles and other clinical sharps being found in recycling and household waste bins. This is dangerous and puts residents and waste crews at risk. Any clinical sharps such as needles, syringes and prick sticks boxed up to 1 litre can be taken to pharmacies across the District.

Sharps boxes over 1 litre should be returned to your doctor's surgery.

By-election in the adjoining Ward of Bishops Itchington, Fenny Compton and Napton
For information purposes with the resignation of Cllr. Nigel Rock (LibDem) due to ill health the local by-election will take place on the 7th May. This will not have any direct effect on your Parishes but depending upon the outcome could change the political balance within SDC and change the membership of the working committees, especially for the minor parties and independent members. Good luck to all candidates.

10. Comments from the public –

Sewage in a field is an issue involving Severn Trent. They will be invited to attend a future meeting of Halford PC. It was noted otters in residence in Halford are in need of protection from water pollution.

Cllr Whalley-Hoggins recently attended a meeting involving highways and cameras. She noted 1.5 Million has been spent on the Fosse Way due to the death toll on this road. She has procured the radar sign staying in situ at costs to WCC and not the PC. The relocation of the 30mph signage was suggested and will be followed up.

Meeting closed: 7.30 pm

Signed Chairman.....July 2026