

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly of Halford Parish Council
Held on the 6th of May 2026 at 6.30 pm at The Bridge Inn

Present:

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

In attendance:

Eleven members of the public were present
Apologies: Cllr Gerald Newell, County Councillor David Curtis

1) Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly in May 2025

Were agreed and duly signed off by the Chairman to be a true record.

2) Matters arising therefrom

None

3) Chairman's report on the work of the Parish Council during the last twelve months

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2026

This is my eleventh year as Chairman of Halford Parish Council and sixteenth year since I became a Parish Councillor.
Thanks to County Councillor David Curtis and District Councillor Malcolm Littlewood for their input and help in looking after the needs of Village Residents.

PRECEPT

This has been kept at the same level as previous years while keeping services the same.

QUALITY STATUS

This has been retained which helps maintain our profile when dealing with County and District matters.

ROADS AND DRAINAGE

By and large issues have been few this year.
Any issues raised with District and County have by and large been completed without too much delay. It remains to be seen how the Idlicote Road Development will affect the fabric of the road with heavy traffic being generated.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Nothing contentious has been raised over the year.
THE FOSSE

Traffic speed continues to be an issue but any help from Police, District or County is unlikely to bring any satisfactory response. New Street Lighting and improved crossing areas have not really helped.

VILLAGE IMPROVEMENTS AND MAINTENANCE

Verges and infrastructure are kept as well as possible but we do rely on Residents keeping us informed of issues when they occur. Fly tipping is an ongoing problem but “ Street Scene” are relatively prompt in sorting out.

VILLAGE VOICES

The Parish continue to give financial support to this vital voice for Halford and Alderminster Villages. Changes in the Publication team are being resolved.

PUBLIC

It is always important that Villagers are aware that their input and views are welcome and they are encouraged to come along to Meetings to give us information on areas that need attention.

PARISH CLERK

Thanks to Karen Parnell for her work in support of our efforts. She has as usual been exemplary. Much appreciated.

THE COMMUNITY

All your Councillors enjoy working with the Community and continue to take on board the regular information passed on to them to them.

THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

NICHOLAS GALE
CHAIRMAN

4) Statement of Accounts of the Parish Council

Karen had produced the end of year accounts for 2025/26, which she summarised; a copy was sent to all Councillors and was available to any public present as well as being placed on the website. Income was £ 9305 and Expenditure £ 7989 - The year-end balance is £20569 representing a surplus of £ 1316.

5) District Councillor's Report

SDC Councillor Malcolm Littlewood

Ward Member Annual Report

Is it already another year gone by, and what a year for Stratford on Avon District Council. My focus as Ward member has and always been on residents. I have been active supporting residents in their problems with Planning, Housing Associations, Severn Trent Water, and Highways (potholes etc.). I have attended as many Parish Council and Parish Meetings as I have been able to, in line with my Role and Responsibilities as your Ward Member. For those interested a full description of the role and responsibility of a District Councillor can be read at Ward Councillor.

After the General Election in 2024, the new Labour Government started a range of democracy changes including Local Government reform abolishing County, District, and Borough Councils replacing them with Unitary Authorities (UA's). At the moment, these changes are planned to take effect after the next elections for the current Authorities in May 2027.

When SDC is abolished, a new shadow authority will be established. Wards are likely to disappear, and the old County Divisions, or close to those boundaries, replace them. This would reduce democratic representation significantly, so I think it is likely that the 'new divisions will have two councillors, but this is yet to be determined. For Town and Parish Councils this will mean little change. This change coincides with the need to produce a new Local Plan which was started before 2023 by SDC and Warwick District Council; known as the South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP). The SWLP is now almost ready to be agreed and move to Regulation-19 by the end of 2026; the major step in its progress to planning and development policy. Sadly, in December of last year the current Local Plan – the Core Strategy – was found to be not fully up to date because an Inspector found that SDC's Housing Land Supply was only 2.7 years and not the required 5 years.

This means that local communities have come under increasing pressure from housing developers who wish to build in our rural communities because of the higher housing value and increased profitability. Rural communities need housing to meet local needs, but these are not the dwellings that developers want to build necessarily. To help rural communities protect their settlements, I successfully put down a motion (seconded by Cllr. Anne Parry Wellesbourne North and Rural) to provide funding for Town and Parish Councils to bring up to date existing Neighbourhood Development Plans and help to fund new NDP's. When 'made' an NDP has equal planning weight with the Local Plan and forms part of local planning policy.

At the same time as introducing Planning and Local Government Reform, the Government has required the new UA's to come together to form Mayoral Strategic Authorities with populations around 500,000 with mayors. Strategic

Authorities will take on the role of Police Authority, Fire Authority, and Highways and receive additional funding it is promised. The new Mayoral Strategic Authorities are supposed to geographically match with Police and NHS organisations, whilst at the same time looking to reduce the number of Police authorities significantly, so this latter responsibility is proving almost impossible to incorporate into strategy planning!

I will continue to represent all residents in the Ward to the best of my ability, and remain available to help, signpost and advise as well as I am able.

6) County Councillor's Report

WCC Councillor David Curtis conveyed apologies for this meeting. Report included within the minutes of the following meeting.

7) Any other business

None

Meeting closed: 6.45pm

Signed:.....Chairman