

# **Halstock ANNUAL PARISH MEETING Minutes**

**Thursday 15th May 2025**

**Halstock Village Hall**

**The meeting started and 7.30pm and was chaired by Cllr. Richard James**

**Additionally, 7 members of the public and 3 councillors were present**

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME**

## **2. APOLOGIES**

Peter Brink

## **3. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE 2024 MEETING**

Proposed David Warner, seconded Tony Hill

Approved

## **4. MATTERS ARISING**

Item 7 – Playground. The Parish council was asked what the issue was regarding the playground, and it is down to finding a suitable location. There are about 21 children under school age who would benefit from this facility as well as older children. There was interest noted on the stand held at the Halstock Village Fete last year although no formal survey has been completed.

On the issue of a questionnaire, it was noted that unless questions were specific and acted on it could do more damage than good. Should a questionnaire be produced to canvass opinion on a range of issues of concern to residents the Halstock News and Views was suggested as a good platform as it currently has some 500 members as well as social media sites such as Facebook.

## **5. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

See Appendix 1

No matters arising were noted

## **6. REPORTS FROM CORSCOMBE ORGANISATIONS**

See appendix 2

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The issue of communication with residents was raised. How can we better encourage attendance at the Parish meeting and also dissemination of information including of groups and clubs? Some groups were looking for further support and the issue of how to attract younger people into these activities and roles was raised.

It was acknowledged that while the Chimes, Halstock Website, noticeboards, and social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp were being used to disseminate information these did not reach everyone.

It was suggested that there should be more use of the Village shop community room with drop-in clinics with Parish councillors and the Halstock Village Trust.

The Parish council will create a newsletter to help promote the work of the Parish Council and this could be placed on notice boards, websites and copies in the Village shop.

It was acknowledged that the website was only as good as the information it received, and groups and clubs were to be encouraged to make more of this facility to promote their activities. In conjunction with the Halstock Village Trust there are plans to rebuild the Halstock village website increasing interaction with residents and in bedding links to other social media sites such as Facebook.

**The meeting closed at 9pm**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Corscombe, Halstock and District Parish Council Annual Report 2024/25**

This has been an eventful year. The Dorset Council elections in May 2024 provided four new parish councillors, two from Corscombe and two from Halstock, once again giving us a full complement of twelve councillors. The Parish Council voted to accept Power of Competence at the Parish Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024 and we later gained a STAR AWARD for Training from the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils. We have increased the number of defibrillator sites by providing one at the Fox Inn at Corscombe. This now gives us a total of six across the parish – three in Corscombe, two in Halstock and one in West Chelborough. Many thanks to Friends of First Responders and a matched grant from the Department of Health and Social Care.

We have provided a grant towards the upkeep of the Sticklands School swimming pool in Evershot where a number of our children attend and purchased a Speed Indicator Device that will shortly be available for use at two locations within Halstock to help alleviate speeding. Most recently we have assisted with the service and repair of the Halstock Church Organ to enable it to again be used for church services and musical fund raising activity. We had Stands at both the Corscombe and Halstock Fetes last summer as well as one at the Big Breakfast - to let parishioners meet the Clerk, learn more about the PC and to propose ideas and areas that the PC should look at. The Clerk has attended a number of Networking events such as Clerks' Conference and Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils Western Area meetings. She is currently trialling the use of SCRIBE accounting software to assist the Council.

We have revamped the Parish Council Notice Board outside the Halstock Village Shop and helped purchased a further gate to continue the work of the Public Rights of Way group to convert styles to self closing gates. Councillor Nigel Clarke has kindly given his time freely to renovate another Red Finger Post and councillors have supported the Great Big Hedge Survey and been involved in

Climate and ecology issues. We have created a store for sandbags at Corscombe Village Hall and two new grit bins in Halstock. We have provided ongoing support for residents' concerns over road signs, road closures, potholes, gritting, planning issues and liaised with Wessex Water and Wessex Internet. We continue to investigate options for a playground in Halstock.

Finally, we have been able to work more closely with our new local Dorset Councillor, Chris Kippax on a number of topical issues.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Halstock Reports 2025**

#### **The Friends of St Juthware & St Mary's Church, Halstock**

“ The Friends have temporarily suspended all fund raising activities, except for the 100 Club which continues as normal, as the administrative input to this aspect is being carried out by Elizabeth Dowding and to whom we are extremely grateful for her efforts in this regard. The Friends are in urgent need of a Secretary before they will be able to resume fund raising activities, to enable the remaining few members of the Executive Committee to function effectively in managing such events. Anyone interested in taking up this important and not too onerous role, which is at arms-length from the Church's religious functions, should contact me. The Funds held by the Friends continue to be used to assist the PCC in maintaining the property assets of the Church building when called upon to do so, but we have been recently informed that significant repair works are required once again to the building structure and the estimated costs far exceed the combined financial assets of both the PCC and The Friends.”

In view of the above I suggest it may be appropriate for you to contact the Churchwarden Mary Clegg on 01935 892488 to obtain further information and invite her to share the problems confronting the Church (again) with the Parish Meeting.

Mike Clark

Chairman, The Friends of St Juthware & St Mary's Church, Halstock

#### **HALSTOCK VILLAGE CINEMA**

Halstock Village Cinema is run by volunteers, offering monthly social gatherings at the village hall, based around a shared interest in cinema and in watching good quality, relatively recently-released films.

Through regular targeted email-marketing to a large and dedicated database, plus social media and posters advertising, audiences of around thirty are regularly welcomed from several of our surrounding villages.

Having our own high-quality Blu-ray equipment, sound system and 4-metre-wide screen means we are financially self-sufficient and can donate worthwhile sums towards the upkeep of the village hall, including from bar sales and occasional raffles.

Recent widespread industrial action in the American film industry brought about a reduction in our choice of film titles. But the upside has been to introduce our friends to the wealth of high-quality films being produced here in Britain and our audiences have responded and are holding their own in a sector increasingly moving towards streaming services. The friendly social atmosphere of our Village Cinema will hopefully protect us in that way for a good while to come.

So our offer to everyone is, 'If you'd enjoy meeting a few friends once a month to have a chat, get a glass of wine or a beer at £2.50 and then watch a top class movie, you know where to find us.

Tony Hill

Halstock Village Cinema

[tonyhill45@btinternet.com](mailto:tonyhill45@btinternet.com)

## **REPORT FROM CORSCOMBE & HALSTOCK COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH**

### Community Speed Watch

Community Speed Watch monitoring has been carried out in Halstock since 2017 and is provided entirely by volunteers in association with Dorset Police. The roadside presence of CSW acts as a deterrent to speeding drivers who cannot predict if a team of speed monitors will be in place at particular time. However, that deterrence cannot be continuous owing to its sporadic presence. For that, something more permanent has always been seen as essential.

### New Speeding Measure in Halstock

Therefore, during 2024, Halstock CSW requested funding from the Parish Council for a traffic count in the village, by Dorset Council, to obtain firm data on traffic behaviour and to determine appropriate measures to tackle speeding traffic more effectively.

That proposal was approved and, last September, a 24/7 electronic count was put in place over a seven-day period at two locations in Halstock, to measure speeding as a proportion of overall traffic volumes.

The data showed enough evidence of speeding to merit the acquisition of a Speed Indicator Device (SID). These devices employ a flashing screen informing drivers of their current speed and are known to be particularly effective in prompting those drivers who are speeding unthinkingly, to slow down.

Funding for the purchase was approved by the Parish Council, with valuable match funding from Halstock Village Trust and a SID, powered by solar panels, is due to begin operation in June at the northern and southern ends of the village. The single device will alternate at regular intervals between the two locations and transfers will need to be carried out by volunteers.

Community Speed Watch will continue its work, monitoring speed from time to time at approved locations, and is grateful for the support of the Parish Council and Halstock Village Trust for acquisition of the Speed Indicator Device, which will undoubtedly benefit the whole community.

Tony Hill

Co-ordinator, Corscombe and Halstock CSW

May 2025

### **Parish Rights of Way Group**

The group is currently dormant and has not met during the year 2024 - 2025. However, members continue to monitor local footpaths and bridleways and to report on problems. Parishioners can also report directly on the Dorset Council website (search for "Dorset Council report a problem on a right of way" on Google).

A few copies of the Walks Guide are still available in Halstock Community Room and the routes can be downloaded from the village websites.

Two self closing gates to replace stiles are still available for installation at suitable locations. If anyone has a suggestion for a possible site, which must be agreed with the landowner, contact Diana Staines, [distaines19@gmail.com](mailto:distaines19@gmail.com)

Diana Staines

For the Rights of way group.

### **Halstock Community Arts Chairman's Report for 2024**

At our AGM last year, the committee decided to change the name of our organisation to Halstock Community Arts and to set up our own website. We also agreed to continue our Arts Awards scheme for local artists. The successful applicants were Patrick Earle a film maker, and Somerset Youth Dance Company who each received the sum of £400. We hope that these funds will help them to continue with their important work in the community.

We started our season of Artsreach performances in January with an exhilarating and foot tapping performance by bluegrass band, Old Baby Mackerel.

In February we hosted Psychedelight Theatre Company with a brand-new show called "Mohand and Peter". The two young actors played out the story of Mohand's flight from war torn Sudan and vividly portrayed his love and longing for his lost home and family, and the kindness of his new British friends.

In July we hosted an outdoor summer show and barbecue held in the village hall field. The evening began with excellent entertainment from Theo Sleight local musician and song writer and was followed by Miracle Theatre with their brilliant, hilarious rendition of an old favourite "Love Riot". It was a great evening much appreciated by an audience of over 100.

During the summer holiday we offered a children's workshop entitled "Acting Up" again organised through Artsreach and appreciated by attending local children.

The Autumn season began with a dance/circus skills workshop for adults. The workshop was run by the extremely talented and charming company Nikki and JD who encouraged the participants,

including two of our committee members, to excel themselves by performing some breathtaking acrobatics.

The evening show “Knot” also by Nikki and JD used circus, dance and storytelling to examine love and conflict between two people seemingly in a relationship. The performance was physically exhilarating and touchingly poignant and thrilled the audience.

In December Near-Ta Theatre with their long running popular show “Christmas Time” gave us a fabulous evening’s entertainment.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Artsreach for bringing us these shows; our loyal audiences, approximately 25% of whom come from within 4 miles of Halstock, and of course to our dedicated committee who do a wonderful job of selling tickets and setting up the hall as well as looking after the performers and audience members with drinks and home cooked refreshments.

## **Halstock Village Shop Limited - Report to Halstock Village Meeting – 15 May 2025**

### **Finances**

The accounts for the year ended 31 May 2024 are available on the village web-site.

Shop sales in that year totalled £417,602 and the company made a pre-tax profit of £2,685 after writing off exceptional costs of £13,584 in relation to the extension to the south side of the existing shop premises which we decided not to proceed with.

Sales in the current year to 31 May 2025 are expected to be about £435,000, which would represent an annual increase of just over 4%.

As always, huge thanks are due to our employed staff, our many volunteers and our loyal customers for the shop’s continuing success.

### **Shop extension**

At last year’s Village Meeting, we reported that instead of building an extension to the south side of the existing shop premises, we had instead agreed with the Halstock Village Trust to extend the shop into the front part of the Community Room. This extension was opened in August last year and cost a total of £24,292, including new freezers, chillers and additional shelving, towards which we have received grants of £13,000 from Halstock Village Trust, which we greatly appreciate, and £9,363 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund via Dorset Council, so the net cost to the shop was only £1,929.

This extension has provided the shop with additional selling space which has enabled us to stock additional lines and present our frozen goods in a more customer-friendly manner. The new shop layout has been favourably received by our customers and now seems to be feeding through, as we hoped it would, into increased sales, the sales figures for March and April being particularly encouraging.

## **THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**

### **HALSTOCK AREA**

#### **REPORT TO PARISH MEETING 15<sup>th</sup> MAY 2025**

It has been over a year since our branch closed and the few remaining members transferred to the Beaminster branch. We have joined them at various functions they have organised, not least the recent celebrations for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day. We may no longer have a branch but I am still the Poppy Appeal Officer for the district which covers many of the villages in our part of Dorset. With my increasing years I find it more difficult to cover the whole area and would welcome any help. In Halstock I have many people who help me and I would like to give a special thank you to them all.

I will soon start getting stock in for this year's Poppy Appeal in November, if anybody would like me to order anything for them, such as a wreath, please let me know. One final piece of information, last year we raised £3263.46, this is more than Beaminster raised, well done everybody and thank you for your help.

## **HALSTOCK COMMUNITY HALL**

### **CHAIRMANS REPORT TO THE PARISH AGM 2025**

The hall management committee continues to meet on six Monday evenings during the year.

The hall continues to be well used with the regular events still taking place. We have had several younger people join the badminton group on Tuesday evenings which is very encouraging. The art classes continue but have moved to Wednesday afternoons and short mat bowls, which is played on Friday afternoons has also seen new members. The Coffee and Craft mornings which have been held on Tuesday mornings will stop at the end of this month, I would like to thank Rosemary and Dave Clary who have run this event for the last three years. Would anybody like to take this over?

Film Nights continue to be popular and has the support of regulars who enjoy not only the film but also meeting friends for a natter over a drink or an ice cream at the interval. I think the most popular film of this season was 'Conclave' and what good timing that turned out to be. We have had broadband for just about a year now and it has proved to be very successful and is used by many individuals and groups.

Earlier this year we received £5,000 donation from The Shire which is to enable the hall to make improvements and purchase equipment that will be of benefit to both the hall and The Shire. We have made a start on this and we continue to have meetings with Pip and Matt to see what more can be done.

One of the permanent items on the agenda for our meetings of the hall committee is the future of the hall, especially the position of chairman. Whilst I am happy to continue as chairman it would be wise to be looking for a younger person to take over at some point. It would be a great help if this person was on the committee for at least a year before taking over as chairman to see what is involved. Do you see yourself as a future chairperson for the hall?

Finally I would like to thank all the committee members for their help during the year and also a big thank you to people who are not on the committee but continue to help in so many ways.

Peter Brinck -Chairman, Halstock Community Hall Management Committee

Peter Brinck, Poppy Appeal Organiser, Halstock area.

## **Halstock village Trust**

Halstock Village Trust Annual Report 2024-25

HVT has undergone several changes this year due to illnesses of key trustees. Martin Manning has had to step down as Chair, after over 20 years in that role. As a result of his diligent stewardship in that time he leaves HVT in good order administratively and financially. Allison Rees has also resigned as a trustee, after playing a full part in recent years, as she is moving out of the area.

Chris Milton an existing was elected Chair and is working toward the replacement of both Martin and Allison. David Wright and Sheila Sanger remain as trustees.

In the year we have financially supported the village shop by allowing them to re-invest profits normally donated to HVT for the improvement of the shop, which has been completed with new freezer space and an increased range of products. Additionally, new tables were purchased for the village hall at a cost of £2,300 to replace the old and worn- out tables that had done over 20 years of service.

HVT has also funded with the Parish Council the purchase of a speed indicator device for Halstock by match funding £2,500.

The coming year will be one of bedding in new trustees and looking at ways that HVT can work with the Parish Council, the village hall committee and with the village shop.

Chris Milton – Chair 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025

## **Halstock Village Fete Annual Report**

2024-25

This year's fete was a huge success, with an increase in overall numbers attending. This year saw the introduction of "the arena" in which we were able to showcase classic cars and our annual sheep racing event. Additionally, the "tug-of-war" was introduced this year and Halstock challenged Corscombe and won.

The number of children attending increased this year and thanks must go to Debbie Heal and her links with FOSSA for increasing the number of child focussed events and stalls at the show.

Income from the fete was down on the previous year. However, as ever the profits from the village fete were distributed across a number of village related organisations including First Responders, The Shire and many others.

The fete for 2025 is on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August and commences at 12pm, half an hour earlier than previous years to maximise the event and incorporate some further new events of interest,

Chris Milton Fete Chair 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025