

HEALEYFIELD PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes Protocol

Adopted: 27th October 2022

Review Date: October 2025

Healeyfield Parish Council

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1 Introduction

All parish and town councils are under an obligation to produce and publish their minutes on their website. This now ensures that the minutes are accessible to a much wider audience. Healeyfield Parish Council (HFPC) has, therefore, produced the following protocol for ensuring that the council minutes are produced following both legal and good practice requirements.

2 Background

The minutes are a public record of the decisions of the Council, and HFPC feels that considerable care should be taken in their format and production. The minutes can be produced in court and other judicial processes as evidence of decisions of the Council, and they form part of the archives of the Parish Council.

3 Advice regarding minutes

The content of minutes is not determined in law. NALC's view is:

- The content should be informative and relevant yet concise.
- Councils should not include personal data in minutes unless this is necessary for the performance of its statutory powers, functions, and contracts.
- They are provided for the parish council to be satisfied with and approve – not for members of the public to approve.
- If members are happy with the minutes of the meeting that they are a true reflection of what happened at the meeting, then they are signed and become a legal record of what happened.

4 Healeyfield Parish Council Minutes

4.1 Style

- Minutes will be produced in a clear house style with a clear heading containing the status of the meeting, the place and date.
- The minutes will also include the time of commencement and conclusion of the meeting and any adjournments.
- Minutes will be numbered consecutively for ease of reference.
- Each minute will contain a heading clearly indicating what the minute is about, a narrative, where appropriate, that briefly summarises what took place, and the decision.
- Abbreviations will be avoided, and acronyms only used after having put the title in full at the first mention.

- The decision will be separately highlighted for ease of identification and words used to indicate it as a decision as shown below.

‘It was **Resolved**’

The minutes will not include the proposer / seconder of a motion, or who votes for and against a motion unless specifically requested – before the vote takes place.

- The order of minutes will normally follow the order of the agenda.

4.2 Declaration of Interest

Declarations of interest will be carefully recorded in the minutes, naming the member, clearly indicating which item the interest referred to, whether the interest is a personal interest or a personal and prejudicial interest, giving the nature of the interest and, in the case of a personal and prejudicial interest, recording that the member left the meeting during discussion and decision of the item.

4.3 Public Participation

- The items raised in Public Participation will be minuted but details will be very brief
- The resident raising the issue / question will not be named in the minutes

4.4 Producing and publishing the Minutes

- HFPC will produce and publish all minutes on the council’s website within 28 days of the meeting.
- These minutes will be identified as ‘Draft’ minutes until their acceptance / approval at the next meeting when they are signed as a correct record and become a valid, legal record of what happened at the meeting.
- The draft minutes will be circulated at the same time as the agendas to all Councillors and County Councillors for the next meeting.
- The signed minutes will be retained by the clerk for the council’s archives.
- If changes are made to the minutes by the Council before acceptance and signing, the wording changes should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting making the changes and the original minutes amended to reflect the changes. The copy signed by the chair will contain the alterations recorded in longhand.
- The Minutes are available on the website.
- If a request is made for copies of minutes of a meeting, then the person making the request will be referred to the website.
- It is at the discretion of the parish council if, and when, such minutes should be copied and sent as hard copy to anyone requesting such minutes.

5 Excluding the Press and Public

The press and public may be excluded on rare occasions following a resolution to exclude. The Minutes will reflect that this has taken place but a very brief outline of the item being discussed together with any resolution will be minuted

6 Reports

- Some matters may require consideration of a variety of facts or documentation. It is becoming more and more important that such information is provided to members in the form of a report.
- Reports may be prepared by the clerk or other employee, or by a member.
- It can improve the speed of handling business at a meeting if all the relevant information is made available to members in a report that assists members' grasp and deliberation of a matter before the meeting.