



DRAFT Minutes of Much Hoole Parish Council meeting held on Monday 8th September 2025 at 7.30pm at The Venue, Hoole Village Memorial Hall, Much Hoole.

Present: Cllrs K. Hayes (Chair), A. Taylor, E. Houghton, R. Lea, P. Cocker, E. Jackson, P. Fox and Clerk Miss A. Evans

1. Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Council witnessed Cllr P. Fox signing the Declaration of Acceptance following his co-option to the parish council.

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr T. Hewitt

3. Declaration of Interests and Dispensations:

Cllrs A. Taylor and E. Houghton declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8.

4. Minutes of the previous Meeting

It was resolved that the minutes of the MHPC meetings held on both the 14th of July 2025 and 21st of July 2025 were agreed to be a true and accurate record. Proposed by Cllr E. Houghton, seconded by Cllr A. Taylor and agreed unanimously. The Chair signed the minutes.

5. Public Time

Public Participation: two members of the public were present, one was present to observe and another raised several queries relating to the improvement work on FP11, including the suggestion of a kissing gate and boundary fencing. The Chair proposed we invite LCC to attend the site as they would need to authorise a boundary fence and kissing gates. It was agreed that the Clerk write to LCC's PROW Manager to arrange for him to attend the site along with the landowner and Cllrs A. Taylor and P. Cocker. *Public time closed at 19:46pm.*

6. Correspondence from members of the public.

None received.

7. Reports from other meetings and information on future events

- Cllr E. Houghton advised council that LALC had an executive committee meeting on the 30th August 2025 but that she could not attend. Council also noted the Kings Award for Voluntary Service and Cllr R. Lea proposed the parish council nominate the large team of volunteers at the Village Hall for the award. This was seconded by the Chair and unanimously agreed.
- Council noted the Lancashire Parish and Town Council Conference on 1st November 2025 and it was agreed that Cllrs R. Lea, E Houghton and P. Fox attend on the council's behalf.

8. Village Hall

The Council noted Cllr A. Taylors' report on the Village Hall. The tennis courts are in use for Pickleball and tennis and pickleball club is enthusiastic. The Classic vehicle show had a record attendance, helped by good weather and raised over £3000. The management group is now actively looking at renewing the bowling/tennis pavilion and has applied for further funds with the help of the community liaison office at SRBC. Automatic access by card or phone is being considered so that access to the courts will be available without anyone needing to unlock it.

9. Off Road Cycle Track

Cllr P. Cocker inspected the track this week and reported minor litter and damage to the membrane surface. Cllr A. Taylor proposed that Cllr R. Lea speak with the cycle track lengthsman regarding repairs and the Clerk confirmed there is budget for this work to be completed. Cllr E. Jackson advised the fence replacement is on the village lengthsman's list. Cllr R. Lea reported regular litter during his inspections and that he had cleaned the picnic tables.

10. Finance

- It was resolved** to sign off the Bank reconciliation for the months of July and August 2025, signed by Cllr E Houghton and unanimously agreed.
- Council noted the following bank transactions that left the account in the months of July and August 2025 as per the bank reconciliation:

Date	Recipient	Amount	For
01/07/2025	EasyWebsites	62.04	Web/Email hosting
17/07/2025	B/P to: Fertile Frog	90.00	Redraw of PROW map
17/07/2025	B/P to: Hoole Parish Church	500.00	Annual Burial ground maintenance grant
17/07/2025	B/P to: Hoole Village MH	62.50	Meeting room hire - Village Hall
17/07/2025	B/P to: Amy Evans	52.32	Clerks June expenses
17/07/2025	B/P to: Amy Evans	457.93	Clerks June salary
17/07/2025	B/P to: Harry Jackson	366.26	Lengthsman June invoice
17/07/2025	B/P to: LALC	50.00	LALC conference attendance
31/07/2025	Service charge	6.00	Service charge

	Total	1647.05	
01/08/2025	EasyWebsites	62.04	Web/Email hosting
14/08/2025	B/P to: PTA Hoole primary	175.00	Grant
18/08/2025	B/P to: Amy Evans	555.03	Clerks July salary
31/08/2025	Service charge	6.00	Service charge
	Total	798.07	

c) **It was resolved** to authorise the following payments, proposed by Cllr E. Houghton, seconded by Cllr R. Lea and unanimously agreed:

1. Retrospectively approve the payment of the Clerk's July salary in the amount of £555.03, which was processed in August in accordance with employment obligations and HMRC requirements.
2. Clerk's August gross salary in the amount of £293.65
3. Clerk's July reimbursements in the amount of £52.32 (£47.32 for mileage and £5.00 for Lebara PAYG Sim)
4. Clerk's backpay in the amount of £71.75
5. Clerk's August reimbursements in the amount of £5.00 for Lebara PAYG Sim
6. Lengthsman H Jackson's invoice for July in the amount of £362.04 (£240 for hours worked and £122.04 invoices)
7. Lengthsman H Jackson's invoice for August in the amount of £256.00

11. Annual review of Clerks salary

The council undertook the 12-month review of the Clerks salary level. Cllr R. Lea proposed increasing the Clerk's salary from SCP 18 to SCP 21 and backdate this to 1st May 2025 and that the Clerk's salary should be reviewed annually each April in readiness for implementation in May. This proposal was seconded by the Chair and unanimously approved.

12. Footpaths & Gardens

- a) Cllr P. Cocker reminded the council that LCC have removed their budget for the PROW and biodiversity grant scheme and that we can still work on FPs using CIL income. The Chair advised we need to be mindful that we run any projects by LCC PROW team first. Cllr P. Cocker informed council that he had inspected 9 of the footpaths and that there were no major problems to report. The council thanked Cllr Cocker for his efforts.
- b) Cllr A. Taylor reported that LCC had cleared the pipe and removed roots that may have been causing the flooding in Smithy Lane. Cllr P. Fox advised that a neighbouring resident had raised concerns about a blocked ditch adjacent to Smithy Lane and leading to his property, and he agreed to clear it to improve water flow.

13. Review & Amendment to Council Policies

- a) **Freedom of Information Policy – it was resolved** to remove the £10 disbursement fee in line with current legislation. This was proposed by Cllr R. Lea, seconded by Cllr P. Cocker, and unanimously agreed. The Chair signed the updated policy.
- b) **Standing Orders – It was resolved** to add a clause delegating authority to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, to make urgent decisions between meetings, with any decisions to be reported and approved at the next council meeting. This was proposed by Cllr R. Lea, seconded by Cllr E. Houghton, and unanimously agreed. The Chair signed the updated policy.
- c) **Communication and Email Use Policy – It was resolved** to add a clause allowing members of the public to request agenda items with at least seven days' notice, at the discretion of the Clerk and Chair. This was proposed by Cllr R. Lea, seconded by the Chair, and unanimously agreed. The Chair signed the updated policy.

14. Budget Monitoring Quarterly Statement

Council reviewed the budget monitoring report for the quarter. The Clerk confirmed that 44% of the budget had been spent to date and that expenditure is on track to remain within budget by the end of the financial year. Council noted the variances in the budget for recreational facilities and community projects as these had been covered by CIL reserves. Income received to date is as expected for this stage of the financial year. The Clerk recommended that the community projects budget be spent within the next six months. Council noted the report and was satisfied with the current financial position, acknowledging that budget spends are in a stronger position than at the same time last year. Earmarked and unearmarked reserves are near the agreed budgeted levels.

15. Annual Review of Internal Audit Effectiveness

Council conducted the annual review of the effectiveness of its internal audit arrangements, as recommended by the Internal Auditor, and formally approved the review. This was signed by the Chair and unanimously agreed.

16. Parish Council .gov email addresses

Council discussed the reported access and user issues with the council's .gov email addresses and agreed that members had been experiencing similar problems but some had issues now resolved. Council noted the support available from EasyWebsites and agreed that the Clerk would reach out to them to arrange a meeting for Councillors to receive support if they are still experiencing issues.

17. Newsletter

It was resolved to approve the final version of the parish council annual newsletter and to authorise its printing and distribution. Council recorded a vote of thanks to Cllr Lea for drafting the newsletter and for his ongoing work in producing it each year. The resolution and vote of thanks were proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr E. Houghton and unanimously agreed. Cllr R. Lea confirmed that printing will be arranged for 9th September, with delivery planned for the following weekend by a group of volunteers.

18. Update on New Noticeboard Delivery and Erection at the Methodist burial ground.

Council noted that Cllrs R. Lea and A Taylor received the delivery of the new noticeboard and that this was erected by Cllr Taylor and his brother but the doors will need to be swapped around for easier access. Council expressed their thanks to Cllr A. Taylor for erecting the new noticeboard.

19. Crime prevention in Much Hoole

- a) Council noted the Clerk's update that no response was received to the council's letter to the Lancashire Police Crime Commissioner. It was agreed to remove it from the agenda moving forward.
- b) Council considered the six quotations for a speed indicator display (three battery-powered and three solar-powered). It was agreed that further enquiries would be made by the Clerk with LCC Highways Safety Department to see if they can provide assistance, and that the Clerk would also contact the suppliers to confirm whether the SPIDs can be easily relocated. The Clerk will also consult with the Clerk for Little Hoole Parish Council and LALC for any additional information.

20. Much Hoole business directory of services & suppliers

- a) Council noted that Little Hoole Parish Council had discussed the idea of collaborating on this project but that they were not in a position to be seen to recommend any contractors or suppliers to members of the public.
- b) Council agreed to proceed with the project and Cllr R. Lea confirmed that as this topic is included in the annual newsletter, he would collate any replies received and report at the next parish council meeting.

21. Fallen Soldier's Plaques

The Chair informed council that she attended the church to go through several records relating to the addresses of fallen soldiers and that currently 90% of the addresses have been collated. The Chair proposed Cllr R. Lea put a post on the Much Hoole Village Facebook inviting relatives to confirm the correct address via email to the council. It was agreed that the Chair will draft the content of the post and Cllr R. Lea will put this on the Facebook page. Additionally, the Chair proposed that the Clerk confirm the current prices of the plaques with the supplier at an estimated quantity of 18 plaques with the placement of the plaques to be agreed later.

22. A59 crossing

- a) Council noted that Little Hoole Parish Council had discussed the idea of collaborating on this project and that they agree to continue dialogue with MHPC but that a refuge island had previously been rejected by LCC and an employed crossing patrol officer was not realistic. Council agreed to defer the discussion until the next meeting where Cllr T. Hewitt could attend.
- b) The Chair confirmed she was awaiting a response from Cllr T. Hewitt with the email from LCC so that she could draft a letter to them.

23. Community Orchard Garden

Cllr R Lea informed the council that he has had to visit the orchard and water the trees a lot so far this year. Residents are invited to read all about the Community Orchard Garden in the upcoming annual newsletter. Additionally, the live Christmas tree will be ready in around five years depending on regrowth and this be a long-term project

24. Devolution and Local Government

Cllr E. Houghton informed the council that this was a major topic at the LALC conference in June 2025. It was agreed to defer further discussion until after the next LCC conference on November 1st 2025 where Cllrs R. Lea, E. Houghton and P. Fox will report back with an update in the November parish council meeting.

25. Planning

Council noted planning application 07/2025/00647/DIS and had no comments.

26. Items for next agenda

Village Business directory
Much Hoole Village Calendar for 2026
Allotments
Fallen Soldiers plaques
A59 crossing

27. Date of the next meeting

The Council unanimously agreed to the date of the next meeting being held on Monday 13th October 2025 at 7.30pm at The Venue, Hoole Village Memorial Hall, Liverpool Old Road, Much Hoole, PR4 4QA. The meeting closed at 20:54pm.