

Helsby Parish Council

Annual Report by the Chairman of Helsby Parish Council Prepared for the Annual Parish Meeting of the Parish Electorate held at 7pm on 19th April 2018 in Helsby Community Centre

My Year as Chair Person

Firstly, I would like to thank our clerk Jeanette for all her hard work in making not only my job easier but she also insures that all of your parish councillors work strictly under the Local Council framework and national guidelines that govern the way in which your Parish Council operates.

My grateful thanks also go to all the people of Helsby that volunteer for the many organisations, groups and committees that make Helsby such an interesting place to live. In particular the Helsby Community Association who manage the Helsby Community Centre. The Association have just received a grant from the Marshes Community Benefit Fund - MCBF to update the Accessible Toilet. The MCBF grant is conditional that Cheshire West and Chester Council extend the lease to 10 years minimum. The Parish Council leases the building from Cheshire West and Chester Council and is trying to negotiate an extension to the Lease that expires in May 2019.

The 4th June Fun Day, which was organised by the scouts and held at the Helsby Community Sports Club, helped raise funds to send scouts to Norway. It was a great turn out with lots going on including the portable climbing wall. Monies raised help push the fund raising over the line. The scouts have a similar event planned 14th July

June Proffits Lane Planning application for 23 affordable houses Consultation 8th July. The Parish Council objected on the grounds that the area was designated Greenbelt and insufficient proof of the need for affordable dwellings. Planning permission was granted and the case went to the Secretary of State who upheld the approval decision. Since then your Parish Council has endeavoured to make sure that people from Helsby will always get the first opportunity of occupancy.

In June we welcomed back Mrs Polly Barry who re-joined us as one of the councillors for North Ward. However due to the demands made on Parish Councillors, one of our newer young councillors Tim Thorn came to the conclusion that it was impossible for him to find the time for work, family and the parish council and therefore decided to stand down. Tim brought a lot to the council so hopefully in the not too distant future we will be able to welcome him back. Due to personal circumstances one of our former chairman, who served on the council for 18 years, Miss Sylvia Crossley-Jones decided to also stand down. Note that we are currently seeking nominees to fill this vacancy.

I would like to extend my thanks to all our Parish Councillors for all their hard work during my year of office together with our General Assistants John Robotham and Stan Jones who are so central to keeping Helsby something for us all to be proud of.

Whilst the reopening of the Halton Curve is great news to those wanting a direct service into Liverpool, it's going to put additional pressures on the parking provisions in Helsby. This is an ongoing problem and CW&C have come up with a Parking Strategy for the area. Unfortunately,

they failed to consult with the Parish Council who are of the belief that the said strategy will only serve to encourage 'Park and Rail' drivers to clutter up our village with parking in what ever available space they can find.

In August permission was granted to demolish the Horse & Jockey and build the 15 new homes. Your council just wish that work would start so that this terrible eyesore would be eliminated.

In November it was great to see the children of Hillside and Hornsmill actively participating in the Helsby Grant Show evening.

Congratulations must go to the team who for the 2nd year staged Ho Ho Ho Christmas event which was a fantastic success and we are all looking forward to this year's event on the 1st December

On the 4th March as chairman of your council I was asked by Rotary to present the prizes at district final of youth speaks. There was a total of 8 teams participating including Helsby High. Well done to Helsby High who had qualified to this stage but with extremely stiff competition didn't quite manage to progress to the Regional finals.

Many have asked if and when will we get a new sports club, the answer to that is YES & SOON. However, the cost of delivering the new sports facility with the costs incurred to-date left a shortfall of approximately £2mil. The club has made contact with recognised funding streams to meet this shortfall but without success of participation.

With time running out on the planning permission on the 1st May 2018 the club decided to go for a phased construction just using the available monies from the sale of the enabling development.

Phase 1. To make the road entrance into the new club thereby securing the planning permission this has now been completed

Phase 2. Build the much needed and improved sporting facility consisting of a new club house complete with parish council office, up to date changing rooms, 3G pitch, tennis courts and bowling greens with Pavilion all built on the original approved footprint. This will allow the club to move and operate in a similar way in which we do to day

Phase 3. To come later when additional funding can be found will be the erection of the sports hall.

In September these phased amendments, to the original planning permission, were submitted to the LPA, these were approved in January and the club Trustees signed a new S106 agreement. This has paved the way for the legal agreements that are currently being drawn up between, CW&C, Brookhouse and the preferred bidder of the clubs existing site the sale of which will provide the funding for Phase 1 which has been completed and work on Phase 2 will hopefully start later this year with an estimated completion date of September 2019

Brief Synopsis of the Parish Council's accounts for Year Ending 31st March 2018

The Parish Council began 2017/18 with £158,197 held in balances of which £112,671 was held in earmarked reserves. Total receipts for the year £121,595. The main income was the Parish Precept £87,260 collected through your Council Tax payments. Cheshire West and Chester Council gave out 'Council Tax Grant' to local councils and Helsby was the recipient of £3,088. In addition, we successfully obtained a further £4,533 in donations of which £2,292 came in as grants from Ho Ho Helsby. Regular income was received from the Helsby Community Association £3,878.43, cemetery fees £7,131 (a rise of 74% on last year) and £12,853 VAT reclamation from HMRC (59% rise on previous year due to reclaiming the VAT on the outdoor gym capital spend). Interest from investments and rents brought in £2,737.

Payments totalled £115,355 (a decrease of £27,647 on 2016/17 due to there being no major projects in the year). The largest outlay of £34,675 paid for salaries, PAYE, NI and pension for 3 part-time employees. A further £11,918 went towards part-funding our Police Community Support Officer - PCSO. This would be the last payment (for the foreseeable future) as Helsby's PCSO would be fully funded by Cheshire Constabulary from 1st April 2018.

Updating and purchasing new Christmas lighting stock plus installation of the full festive display including the Christmas Tree and traffic management for the Ho Ho Helsby Christmas Parade totalled £23,207. Although this sounds like a large sum of money, it is recognised that the Ho Ho Helsby Christmas Event and the festive display including the new tree features are very popular with the residents and the youngsters. The Christmas Event is solely organised by the Ho Ho Helsby Working Group and the many volunteers.

Another annual event that is always eagerly awaited is the Helsby Grant Show. The Parish Council gave away £4,500 in grants shared out 7 x £500 and 1 x £1,000, to local groups. Cllr. McKie kindly donated £1,000 from his discretionary fund (included in the £4,500)

The day-to-day running of the Parish Council (including ongoing training, rents, insurances, subscriptions and consumables) amounted to £12,886. The largest one-off payment in the year has been the new Trucam £7,200 that the Parish Council paid for out of the 'New Homes Bonus Grant' reserve fund. The Trucam is a hand-held device that measures traffic speed and is calibrated to a level that enables the PCSO to capture the data and forward it to Central Ticket Office for process which may end up with drivers receiving a prosecution. The Parish Council very much hopes that, through enforcement, this may help to keep the roads in Helsby safer for our residents and other road users.

Cost to maintain the council's lands £7,733 and costs for the Community Centre totalled £6,970. Some of these costs were recovered through rents and charges. Parish Councillor's expenses for the year added up to £237.

The Parish Council ended the year with £164,437 held in balances. Included in this amount is £109,132 which is an accumulated sum for earmarked projects, which includes £80,000 towards the redevelopment of Helsby Community Sports Club, £18,000 for future cemetery land purchase and £11,132 for projects that will benefit residents.

The full Balance Sheet for Year Ending 31st March 2018 can be viewed on the Parish Council's website at www.helsbyparish.org.uk

NORTH WARD

Cllr. Polly Barry	4 Hillside Close WA6 9LB	723238
Cllr. Alan Gardner	Lyndhurst, Vicarage Hill WA6 9AD	722360
Cllr. John Kimpton	59 Bates Lane WA6 9LH	724236
Cllr. Sarah Temple	4 Redstone Hill WA6 9PE	722181

VACANCY

CENTRAL WARD

Cllr. Chris Ellams	4 Coppins Close WA6 9QL	724409
Cllr. Patricia Holder	4 Rose Farm Court, Chester Road WA6 0AN	727384
Cllr. Sam Johnson	3 Hallastone Road WA6 OPR	722297
Cllr. Michelle Massey	21 Crescent Drive WA6 9QH	727377
Cllr. Terry O'Neill	Renbie, Robin Hood Lane WA6 9HN	723205

SOUTH WARD

Cllr. Peter Duffy	72 Latham Avenue WA6 0EG	722908
Cllr. Stuart Hulse	34 Hemlegh Vale WA6 0DB	724272
Cllr. Andy MacPherson	80 Kingswood Park Frodsham WA6 6EH	
Cllr. Alan McKie	27 Sandringham Avenue WA6 9QJ	724960
Cllr. George Randles	2 Undermount Mews, Rake Lane WA6 9PA	724775

I commend this report to the residents of Helsby

George E Randles -Chairman of Helsby Parish Council