

Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the Parks, Cemetery & Allotments Committee meeting held on 30th July 2018 in the Committee Room

Present:

Cllr. Sarah Temple – Chairman

Cllr. John Kimpton Vice-Chairman

Cllr. Terry O’Neill

Cllr. George Randles

Cllr. Alan Gardner

Cllr. Patricia Holder

1. Public Air Time. Proposed by Cllr. Gardner, seconded by Cllr. Kimpton and **RESOLVED – that the meeting be suspended for public participation – PCA15/18.** There being no matters brought to the committee’s attention it was proposed by Cllr. Gardner, seconded by Cllr. O’Neill and **RESOLVED – that Public Air Time be closed and the meeting reconvened – PCA16/18.**
2. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Ellams.
3. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in accordance with s.33 of the Localism Act 2011. Cllr. Temple declared personal / family interest in Items 8.3 & 8.4 as her husband was an allotment tenant.
4. Minutes of the previous meeting. Proposed by Cllr. Kimpton, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Parks, Cemetery & Allotments Committee meeting held on 30th April 2018 be accepted as an accurate record and duly signed by the Chairman – PCA17/18.**
5. Matters arising from the previous meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda
 - 5.1 Children’s Play Area. Painting of railings and gates had been completed by Whittles to a satisfactory standard. Old Vicarage Tree Surgery undertook the trimming back of all shrubbery to enable access to all parts.
6. The committee fully discussed the budget for current fiscal year 2018/19 as follows:

Budget Headin g Code	Description	Budget 2018/19 £	Budget Spend To Date £	Predicted To 31/03/19 £
201	Allotment maintenance	600	96	600
202	Allotment water charge	500	53	500
212	Cemetery maintenance	800	0	800
212a	Cemetery repairs/renewals	400	0	400
213	Parks maintenance	15,200	5,912	6,500 ^(a)
214	Park grass cuttings	3,800	1,058	3,800
215	Park equipment	2,000	197	2,000
222	Materials	300	21	300
226R	Soft safety surface	0 ^(b)	0	0
260R	Future burial provision	925 ^(c)	0	925

Notes to the aforementioned:

- a) Decreased to anticipated spend. Painting of railings came in much cheaper than budget estimates. £8,700 spare due to revised budget;

- b) New budget created to place £8,000 per annum into a specified reserve over the next 5 years to cover estimated costs £40,000 to replace all surfaces in the Children's park. In 2018/19, the Parish Council approved using £8,000 out of the New Homes Bonus Reserve money to place into this new heading. The committee now had the annual inspection report from RoSPA identifying condition of the safety surface;
 - c) The Parish Council decided to create in future years a budget which equalled 50% of the amount of income received for burials in the preceding fiscal year. The income for 2016/17 was £1,850 less 50% = £925.
7. Schemes identified for the 5-Year Business Plan as follows:
- i) Replacement safety surface – see Item 6b above. The committee had cost estimates from a company that the Parish Council had used before. These would be discussed during Part B, at the end of the meeting, to ensure fairness in the bidding process.
 - ii) Erection of circumference pathway around the Parish Field estimated in the region of £31,000 (exc VAT). 3 x quotations had been received which would be discussed during Part B at the end of the meeting.
 - iii) Painting of the Children's Park railings – completed.
 - iv) Flooding around Slot Drain – the Eccies. This could be repaired by RSK subject to signing the full Lease.
 - v) Members viewed the list of Section 106 monies available. After taking out £30k for the pathway project that still left approx. £94k for Informal Public Open Space (POS) and formal children's play space from the Cable Drive development. There was also £8,750 for parks and recreation from the land near Youds Croft (Proffits Lane) development. The committee discussed the following suggestions:
 - a) Replacement Youth Shelter on the Parish Field. It was used as a 'dug out' for the football teams but matches hadn't been played on the field for quite some time. Young people tended to use the wooden shelter on the Sherwood Court site to gather. Cllr. Temple and the clerk would investigate ideas and costs;
 - b) Designated fenced-off 'dog walk' on parish field. Not feasible due to the space that it would take up and it was not popular with the majority of members;
 - c) Helsby Quarry – could be a good use of POS money subject to CWaC approval as they were the quarry owners;
 - d) Cycle Park/Track – it was rumoured that a plot of land was coming up for sale (although this was located in Greenbelt) that could be the right size for a cycle park/track. The land was not registered with Land Registry. Cllr. Kimpton would try to check ownership. Cllr. O'Neill reported that PCSO Kopczyk was making enquiries and could be useful to progressing the project;
 - e) The Persimmon children's play area (owned by Persimmon and managed by POS Landcare) was lacking in challenging play equipment. Although the Parish Council could purchase equipment, it would not want the liability as it had no insurable interest in the site.
8. Queens Drive (QD) and Old Chester Road (OCR) Allotment Gardens
- 8.1 Waiting List. One Helsby resident and one Frodsham resident on the list. The Helsby resident specified OCR only.

- 8.2 Allotment inspection undertaken on 22nd July 18. 4 x Stage 1 notices were sent out. 2 on each site. The majority of plots on both sites looked in good order. The next inspection would take place 19th August 18 and include judging "best-kept" awards. One of the Stage 1 recipients (Plots 3f & 3b QD) had vacated with immediate effect. A Helsby resident, with links to horticultural education, had come forward for both plots and a new allotment tenancy agreement would commence on 1st August to let both as two small plots.
- 8.3 Allotment Rent Review. Accurate measurements of all allotment plots had been undertaken. Previously, the committee had proposed to consider charging per sq. mtr and to investigate the feasibility of charging based on actual costs to the Parish Council for maintenance and staff costs for both administrative and to maintain both sites. Cllr. Temple and Mr David Temple had produced 'costs over income' proposals and the committee fully discussed the options and made the following comments: -
- Charging based on actual costs. It would be difficult to justify hyping up the costs if challenged in law;
 - Consideration was given to combining plots into 'large' when an established tenant was cultivating 2 small adjoining plots to reduce admin costs. This applied to 7 tenants over the 2 sites. The clerk confirmed admin was not a big issue and it was agreed to keep the flexibility of the small plots;
 - Allotments were a local provision for the community that the Parish Council should encourage take up and keep charges fair. It was advantageous to have fully tenanted allotment gardens as it saved the General Assistants from having to look after empty plots;
 - Discussion at OCR Allotment Association AGM about charging per square meter highlighted that a lot of the cost were administrative i.e. unrelated to size and spread fairly equally over both sites;
 - Cllr. Gardner commented that the proposals by Cllr. Sarah and Mr David Temple had come up with a lot of good information. He felt the allotments were a Helsby amenity and rents should not be compared with other local sites;
 - It was agreed to keep the same distinction of small/large plots. Cllr. Randles commented that charging per square metre had been worth exploring as possibly a fairer way to treat tenants. He noted that the rents had been increased last year and did not favour a further increase.
- Proposed by Cllr. Kimpton, seconded by Cllr. Randles and **RESOLVED – that the Parish Council be RECOMMENDED that the allotment charges remain the same and to keep the *status-quo* pertaining to all allotment gardens owned by Helsby Parish Council – PCA18/18.**
- 8.4 Review of allotment insurance cover for individual tenants. The Council arranged PLI on their behalf and tenants currently paid £2.60 per tenant (not per plot as some had multiple plots). The insurance premium in 2017/18 was £130.98 and the costs recovered from allotment tenants was £119.60. The Parish Council currently had 40 tenants and the clerk suggested increasing the re-charge to tenants from £2.60 to £3.50 which should cover any small increase in the premium. Proposed by Cllr. O'Neill, seconded by Cllr. Kimpton and **RESOLVED – that the Parish Council be RECOMMENDED to increase the insurance charge recovery from individual allotment tenants from £2.50 to £3.50 to cover the costs to the Parish Council –**

- 8.5 Painting of the allotment gates (nearest to the cemetery). To be discussed under Item 11.1.

9. Children's Play Area

9.1 RoSPA Play Safety Inspection Report. The report detailed risk associated with each item inspected including the shrink back of the teen area safety surface which we already know about and are already saving up to replace all areas. Estimates have now been received for the following which will be discussed during Part B at the end of the meeting: -

- (i) repair edges of teen and swing areas
- (ii) replace teen area only
- (iii) replace teen and swing areas
- (iv) replace teen, swing and toddler areas

10. Parish Field

10.1 Circumference pathway. Daniel Lockwood (CWaC CIL and s.106 Monitoring Officer) has confirmed that the proposed pathway around the parish field can be funded through the s.106 money from Cable Drive development. The application was still going through their process and we awaited confirmation from CWaC that money could cover the estimated costs £31,000 net of VAT. The estimates would be discussed during Part B – exclusion of the press and public at the end of this meeting.

The committee discussed option to put in distance markers using specialist paint that adhered to tarmac at 50 mtr intervals although there was some flexibility in this. Searches had been undertaken re services and drains that had been passed to the landscape architect.

10.2 Robin Hood development – drainage grid. To consider actions / options following the response from Masefield's. The committee agreed that the contractor had done a 'cheap' job. Cllr. Gardner confirmed that the metal grid could be removed to clear out the drain. He would test the drain (with assistance from Cllr. Randles) to check if it was doing what it should. The committee agreed that it would not accept any responsibility for any damage to the party wall as a result of standing water as, from the very start, they had been in regular correspondence with the surveyor informing him of their dissatisfaction with the standard of workmanship and reticence to sign any party wall agreement.

10.3 Rubbish build up behind the guide hut. Cllr. Temple and Mr David Temple had very kindly removed the rubbish. The Guide leaders were very difficult to communicate with but said they had no idea where the materials came from.

11. Cemetery

11.1 Cemetery Gates and railings. The committee discussed the options which also included one set of allotment gates.

It was agreed that, rather than undertake the work piecemeal, it was better to have the work done all at once which had a small saving. Funds were available from the £8,700 underspend on the Parks Maintenance budget. Proposed by Cllr. Kimpton, seconded by Cllr. O'Neill and **RESOLVED – that the Parish Council be**

RECOMMENDED to employ Whittles Programmed Maintenance to undertake the following work – PCA20/18:

Page 258

Chairman's initial.....

- (i) **Re-paint Old Chester Road Cemetery gates and buttresses £474**
 - (ii) **Re-paint Chester Road Cemetery gates £474**
 - (iii) **Re-paint Allotment gates nearest to cemetery £474**
 - (iv) **Re-paint handrails in cemetery £232**
 - (v) **Re-paint railings on Old Chester Road / Chester Road Cemetery £997**
 - (vi) **Job lot – take off 2.5% of total costs**
- at a cost of £2,651 less 2.5% = £2,585 (net of VAT)**

- 11.2 Update on cemetery bin emptying. The Clerk reported that the bin could get very full when visitors cleared plots. Proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Kimpton and **RESOLVED – that the Parish Council be RECOMMENDED to place a notice on the cemetery railings (next to the bin) asking visitors to use the spoil heap for biodegradable waste and save the bin for landfill materials – PCA21/18.**
- 11.3 Review of cemetery fees. Cllr. Temple had produced a paper detailing income over costs and comparisons with Frodsham cemetery charges. Helsby's were pretty much in line with its neighbours. Proposed by Cllr. Kimpton, seconded by Cllr. Randles and **RESOLVED – that the Parish Council be RECOMMENDED that the burial fees and charges for Helsby Public Cemetery remain the same – PCA22/18.**

12. Date of the next meeting – 29th October 2018

13. Part B – Exclusion of the Press and Public. Proposed by Cllr. O'Neill, seconded by Cllr. Kimpton and **RESOLVED – that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paras 7, 8, 9 and 12 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 – PCA23/18.**

14. Confidential Items

14.1 Circumference Pathway around Parish Field. Proposed by Cllr. O'Neill, seconded by Cllr. Kimpton and **RESOLVED – that the Parish Council be RECOMMENDED to employ Horticon (subject to Section 106 monies being available) to undertake the installation of a circumference pathway around the Parish Field (plus all other associated work) – PCA24/18.**

14.2 Soft Safety Surface. Proposed by Cllr. O'Neill, seconded by Cllr. Kimpton and **RESOLVED – that the Parish Council be RECOMMENDED to obtain competitive quotes to replace the soft safety surface in the teen and swing area of the children's park – PCA25/18.**

The meeting closed at 8.10pm

Chairman's signature..... Dated.....

