



# Helsby Parish Council

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minutes of the meeting of Helsby Parish Council held virtually at 7pm on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020  
via Zoom

**Present:**

Cllr. Terry O’Neill – Chairman	Cllr. Chris Ellams	Cllr. Michelle Massey
Cllr. Alan Gardner	Cllr. Mags Porter	Cllr. Patricia Holder
Cllr. Sarah Temple	Cllr. Mike Branigan	
Claire Jones, Parish Clerk		

**In attendance:**

Mrs Marj Thoburn representing Helsby News  
Mr Allan Fincham

**Chairman’s announcements:** Vice Chair, Cllr. O’Neill, declared himself as the Chairman for the meeting in Cllr. Duffy’s absence. He joined with the rest of the Council in wishing Cllr. Duffy a speedy recovery. He also welcomed prospective new councillor, Allan Fincham, to the meeting.

1. Public Air Time. Proposed by Cllr. Ellams, seconded by Cllr. Temple and **RESOLVED – that the meeting be suspended for public participation – HPC71/20**. There being no matters brought to the members’ attention, it was proposed by Cllr. Branigan, seconded by Cllr. Ellams and **RESOLVED – that Public Air Time be closed and the meeting reconvened – HPC72/20**.
2. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs. Duffy, Kimpton and Randles and PCSO, Lauren Davies.
3. Declarations of Interest. Cllr. Temple declared a pecuniary interest in Item 9.5 as her partner was an allotment holder.
4. Co-option of Parish Councillor. The Chairman invited Allan Fincham to address members to support his application to become a co-opted member of the Council for a vacancy in North Ward. His application had been circulated with the agenda and Mr Fincham was asked several questions to define his suitability for the position. Following a short discussion when Mr Fincham was asked to leave the meeting, it was proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Ellams and **RESOLVED unanimously that Mr Fincham be co-opted onto the Council with immediate effect – HPC73/20**. Mr Fincham signed the Acceptance of Office and was obliged to complete a Register of Interest within 28 days.
5. Police Matters
  - 5.1 Cllr. O’Neill reported that PCSO Davies had been called to an urgent incident and had sent her apologies. He outlined that she would submit a report as soon as possible after the meeting.

- 5.2 Cllr. O'Neill informed members of recent correspondence from CW&C about the interactive speed sign on Chester Road. The clerk had organised its recent repair due to water ingress. It was reported that CW&C had claimed ownership of the sign and had informed the clerk that they were responsible for its maintenance. Clerk to investigate the matter further as the sign is listed on the Council's asset register. Cllr. O'Neill also reported that a number of individuals had been detained following a recent police helicopter operation in the area.
6. Minutes of the previous meeting. Proposed by Cllr. Branigan, seconded by Cllr. Ellams and **RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020 be accepted as accurate and duly signed by the Chairman – HPC74/20.**
7. Matters arising from the previous meeting.
- 7.1 The following member's reports were received:
- Progress on the re-opening of Old Chester Road. The clerk reported that the second letter sent to CW&C's Chief Executive had been acknowledged but a full response had yet to be received;
  - COVID-19 health and safety statement for HPC employees. The clerk reported that this would be addressed at the forthcoming HR catch up meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> August, at the H&S Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> August and the HR Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> September; and
  - Five Year Plan – Cllr. O'Neill had previously circulated a draft which was due for review at the next Finance Committee meeting.
8. Cheshire West and Chester Council
- 8.1 It was noted that several invoices had been received in relation to the use of Helsby Library premises (Helsby Community Centre) dating back to 2018/19 which would be raised under Item 10.5.
- 8.2 Cllr. Bowers did not attend. Cllr. Porter suggested writing to Cllr. Bowers as this was at least the third or fourth meeting without a report from him or without hearing from him at all. It was proposed by Cllr. Porter, seconded by Cllr. Temple and **RESOLVED to write to Cllr. Bowers to state that he had not been in touch with the Council for a while and that members would be pleased to hear from him – HPC75/20.**
- 8.3 In relation to the poor markings on the disabled parking bay by the post office on Chester Road, Cllr. O'Neill expressed his disappointment that CW&C Highways had responded to say they didn't feel that any work was necessary at this time. The clerk informed members that Helsby Library was due to re-open on 10<sup>th</sup> August. It was also noted that CW&C had sent round a list of their senior officers in the latest ChALC bulletin.
9. Minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020. Cllr. Temple presented the draft minutes that included the following recommendations:
- 9.1 Play area – Proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED to purchase COVID-19 signage for the children's play area and warning signage in the basketball area – HPC76/20.**
- 9.2 Parish field - Proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED to develop a specification for the parish field lighting project and to establish if S106 money will cover the work proposed – HPC77/20.**

- 9.3 Parish field – Proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED to remove the goal post at the lower end of the field following complaints from a local resident – HPC78/20.**
- 9.4 Parish field - Proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED to develop a specification for this year’s hedge and tree maintenance work – HPC79/20.**
- 9.5 Allotments - Proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED to keep allotment rental fees the same as 2019 at £20 small and £35 large plot – HPC80/20.**
- 9.6 Allotments - Proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED to amend the Allotment Policy as follows: add sentence to Item 19 under the ‘Maintenance of Allotments’ section saying ‘Sprinklers or hosepipes not to be left running when the tenant is not present on their plot’. To amend the Tenancy Agreement as follows: to leave the rental fee in Section 2 blank – HPC81/20.**
- 9.7 Allotments – Proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED to give permission for the 1<sup>st</sup> Helsby Beavers to visit the Queens Drive allotments at a date to be arranged – HPC82/20.**
- 9.8 Cemetery - Proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED to allow a request by the new cemetery contractor to use the garage in the cemetery for the storage of equipment – HPC83/20.**
- 9.9 Cemetery – Proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED to reinstate the cemetery extension area as green land and to ensure that it is regularly mown as part of the cemetery maintenance contract – HPC84/20.**
- 9.10 Cemetery - Proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED to keep burial fees the same as 2019 – HPC85/20.**
- 9.11 Cemetery – Proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED to display 2 small war graves signs at both entrances to the cemetery – HPC86/20.**
- 9.12 Cemetery Regulations – full review in Oct 2020 but in the meantime, proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED to allow cremated remains in full sized burial plots, introduction of a rule to only assign a Grant of Authority and an exact plot number once interment date had been set, introduction of a Notice of Interment pro forma and introduction of guidance on the scattering of ashes on an existing burial plot – HPC87/20.**
- 9.13 Cemetery – Proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED to give retrospective approval to the request for the scattering of ashes at an existing family grave on 29 July 2020 – HPC88/20.**

## 10. Financial Matters

- 10.1 Bank reconciliation. Proposed by Cllr. Porter, seconded by Cllr. Holder and **RESOLVED that the bank reconciliation sheet detailing £229,572.53 held in balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> July be accepted as accurate – HPC89/20.**
- 10.2 It was noted that the payment made to the Society of Local Council Clerks for 2020/21 membership was £217 and not £242 as reported in the previous minutes (HPC65/20).
- 10.3 It was noted that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2019/20 had been submitted to the external auditor.
- 10.4 Payments. Proposed by Cllr. Ellams, seconded by Cllr. O’Neill and **RESOLVED that the following payments totalling £16,302.64 paid by either standing order, direct debit,**

bank transfer, cheque or under delegated authority for July be approved and duly noted – **HPC90/20**. The following receipts totalling £75.21 were also noted:

#### Payments

Date	Method	To whom paid	Particulars of payment	Amount (£)
01.07.20	SO	Arndale Transport	Rent - July 2020	320.00
02.07.20	DD	NEST	Pension contribution June	244.47
15.07.20	DD	Water Plus	Water - community centre	30.48
15.07.20	DD	Scottish Power	Electricity - community centre	166.00
20.07.20	DD	ICO	Annual registration fees	35.00
22.07.20	CHQ5118	Helsby Comm Ass.	COVID-19 Grant (CW&C)	10,000.00
23.07.20	DD	Siemens FS	Photocopier lease	147.81
28.07.20	DPC	Water Plus	QD Allotments water charge	28.11
28.07.20	DPC	BT	Line rental	82.77
28.07.20	DPC	C Jones	Zoom and Land Registry fee	110.43
28.07.20	DPC	Northwich TC	Grass cutting	529.20
28.07.20	DPC	Kestrel	Turnpike stone signs	50.00
28.07.20	DPC	ChALC	Subscription fee and LCR mag.	1,466.00
28.07.20	DPC	SLCC	Subscription fee 2020/21	217.00
28.07.20	DPC	EoN	Bridge lighting - electricity	130.65
31.07.20	DPC	HPC staff	Salaries July 2020	1,909.88
31.07.20	DPC	HMRC	Deductions Tax and NI July 2020	590.37
31.07.20	DD	NEST	Pension contribution July	244.47

#### Receipts

Date	Method	From whom paid	Particulars of payment	Amount (£)
14.7.20	101007	Heritage Stone Ltd	Memorial stone fees	75.00
30.7.20	Auto	Natwest	Interest July 2020	0.21

**10.5** Cllr. O'Neill outlined that CW&C had invoiced the Council for maintenance work and utility bills at the community centre dating back to 2018/19. It was outlined that after some discussion, CW&C had agreed to remove the costs for the maintenance work and only invoice the Council for a share of the utility costs. It was proposed by Cllr. O'Neill, seconded by Cllr. Temple and **RESOLVED to approve payment of CW&C's invoice of £2,741.23 for community centre utility usage for 2018-19 – HPC91/20**. It was agreed that regular meetings with CW&C about these payments needed to be re-instated as soon as possible and members felt that it was highly disappointing that such payments were being claimed after so long.

**11.** Helsby News – Marj Thoburn gave a short summary of the discussions held with councillors on 16 July (notes previously circulated) and proposed another online publication of the newsletter, along with 250 printed copies, for circulation in September. She outlined that she had received a quote of £89 for the printing costs which the Council was unable to price match. It was proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Porter and **RESOLVED to fund the cost of £89 for printing 250 copies of the Autumn edition of Helsby News – HPC92/20**.

**12. Environment Matters**

- 12.1** Cllr. O’Neill reported that the cost of the annual service of the parish clock on the Koraii Restaurant, Chester Road, had risen to £322 plus VAT due to the operatives not being able to access the premises during the daytime. It was proposed by Cllr. Porter, seconded by Cllr. Temple and **RESOLVED for the clerk to request the restaurant owners to be available at a pre-arranged time during daytime hours for a more cost-effective service to take place – HPC93/20.** Environment Committee to investigate further what the annual service involves and if there is a local company that would service the clock at a more reasonable rate in future years.
- 12.2** Members considered a 90-day consultation from BT regarding the removal of the telephone box at the junction of Britannia Road and Chester Road. Given that the phone box was averaging at least 5 calls per month, it was proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Porter and **RESOLVED to respond to the consultation to say that the Parish Council did not support its removal – HPC94/20.**
- 12.3** It was reported that vegetation at Sherwood Court had been left to flourish and Cllr. O’Neill and the clerk had walked around the area to assess the level of maintenance required. It was proposed by Cllr. O’Neill, seconded by Cllr. Temple and **RESOLVED that Sherwood Court would be included in a specification for all tree and hedge maintenance work in the village (see also Item 9.4) – HPC95/20.**
- 12.4** Members considered Cheshire West and Chester Council’s forthcoming call for habitat provision projects as part of a pilot project in relation to Natural England’s national Biodiversity Credits Scheme. It was agreed that members of the Environment Committee would discuss further at their next meeting.

**13.** Cycle North Cheshire – the contents of the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July and previously circulated were noted.

**14.** Cheshire Association of Local Councils – Cllr. O’Neill reported that a finance meeting had been held on 17<sup>th</sup> July and the next meeting of the Executive Committee would take place on 9<sup>th</sup> September. It was noted that it would be unlikely that an AGM would be held this year.

**15.** Transport and Wind Farm Matters – the contents of the report circulated by Cllr. Ellams and previously circulated were noted. Cllr. Ellams reported that he had put stickers on the old telephone boxes to show that funding had been received from the Marshes Community Benefit Fund for the defibrillators. Cllr. Temple agreed to raise fly tipping issues on the marshes at the next meeting of the Protos Community Forum.

**16. Miscellaneous Matters**

- 16.1** It was proposed by Cllr. Ellams, seconded by Cllr. Temple and **RESOLVED to purchase a shredder and first aid kit for the parish office – HPC96/20.** Members suggested a number of companies that also offered large scale shredding services if required.
- 16.2** The clerk reported that she had ordered replacement pads for the defibrillator at Loxley Hall at a cost of £49. It was proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Porter and **RESOLVED to purchase replacement pads for the defibrillators in the 2**

**telephone boxes at a cost of approximately £140 – HPC97/20.** It was agreed not to purchase paediatric pads at the present time. It was suggested that the Environment Committee looked at the potential use of the telephone kiosk that had recently been purchased by the Council on Bates Lane. It was also suggested that the future maintenance costs of any defibrillators being maintained by the Council be considered in future budgets.

- 16.3** Cllr. O’Neill reported that whilst some judging did take place last year for the Best Kept Village competition, there hadn’t been an Annual Meeting in April, so no awards had been presented. It was proposed by Cllr. O’Neill, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED that the competition would be postponed until 2021 – HPC98/20.**

## 17. Planning

- 17.1** The Council’s responses to the following planning applications were duly noted:

App no.	Application address	Proposed development	Recommendations
20/02292/TP O	The Old Hall	Application for works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)	Neither supports nor objects. Some concern expressed about reasons for work and visual impact. Request for tree officer to visit site.
20/01487/FUL	Land at Proffits Lane	Proposed agricultural shed and stable block - amendment to application 19/00965/FUL	Neither supports nor objects. Proposal should avoid impact on other local residents.
20/01537/FUL	Land at 8 Old Chester Road	Erection of one dwelling - amendment to 19/00710/FUL	Neither objects nor supports this application but a number of road safety concerns raised in relation to new accessway.
20/02358/FUL	Horn's Mill Primary School Nursery	Installation of 2 canopies to pre school	No objection.
20/02290/FUL	43 Mountain View	Demolition of single storey side extension and erection of a two-storey extension to side	No objection.

- 17.2** It was noted that correspondence had been sent to CW&C in relation to application number 20/00324/FUL (Land at Cable Drive) requesting them to co-ordinate consultation between all relevant parties. Cllr. O’Neill reported that since the letter, Cllr. Randles had been contacted by Rob Stratton, a director at Lane End, to request a meeting with the Council to start the consultation process. Members felt it was inappropriate to meet with individual developers. It was proposed by Cllr. O’Neill,

seconded by Cllr. Ellams and **RESOLVED to write to CW&C again to request that they convene a meeting with all parties involved and to request that a public consultation meeting is also held – HPC99/20.**

**17.3** The clerk outlined that the Council had received a response from CW&C's Acting Head of Planning in relation to development concerns on the traveller site on Towers Lane. It was noted that there had been a planning breach but CW&C had been unable to progress the matter as there was currently a substantial back log with court proceedings.

**17.4** No member's reports were received.

**18.** Dates of the next Council meetings.

19 <sup>th</sup> August 2020	Health and Safety Committee
19 <sup>th</sup> August 2020	Environment Committee
14 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	Parish Council meeting (members to note that this is different from the date circulated on the 2020/21 meeting list)

The meeting closed at 8.24pm

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