



Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Helsby Parish Council held virtually at 6pm on Tuesday 19th January 2021 via Zoom

Present:

Cllr. Peter Duffy – Chair

Cllr. John Kimpton

Cllr. Chris Ellams

Cllr. Alan Gardner

Cllr. Allan Fincham

Cllr. Sarah Temple

Cllr. Terry O'Neill

Cllr. Michelle Massey

Claire Jones, Parish Clerk

In attendance:

Marj Thoburn representing Helsby News

Sue Lorimer, member of Helsby Hill Conservation Area working group (for item 1 only)

Five members of the public

1. Public Air Time. Proposed by Cllr. O'Neill, seconded by Cllr. Kimpton and **RESOLVED that the meeting be suspended for public participation – EHPC01/21**. The Chair read out an e-mail from James Dixon, Built Environment Officer (Conservation and Design), Cheshire West and Chester Council, the key points being as follows:
 - CW&C is of the opinion that the proposed conservation area is of special interest and merits designation;
 - The meeting should avoid discussing the pros and cons of designation as there is already a procedure in place for consultation;
 - CW&C would be happy for Helsby Parish Council to delay the engagement period for 6 months due to current Covid restrictions, after which it may be possible to hold a public meeting or library exhibition as originally planned; and
 - In the meantime, CW&C recommends Helsby Parish Council discusses and minutes a communications plan for this time.

Mrs Lorimer expressed some concerns about delays to the process beyond 6 months. She also stated that letters had been hand delivered to around 140 properties in Helsby affected by the proposals purely to save money on postage costs for the Parish Council. Speaker one thanked the parish council for convening the meeting and expressed her view that the consultation should be fair, open and transparent and allow everyone to have a voice. Speaker two outlined his concerns that a designated conservation area could attract more parking issues on Alvanley Road and felt that there was little mention of transport within the draft document. Speaker three asked for further clarification about the current status of the consultation period and whether the process would now be extended or stopped for 6 months. Marj Thoburn outlined that 2 copies of Helsby News would be issued in the next 6 months and both editions, circulated to 2,500 homes, could include some information about the conservation area. There being no matters brought to the members' attention, it was proposed by Cllr. Kimpton, seconded by Cllr. Ellams and **RESOLVED that Public Air Time be closed and the meeting reconvened – EHPC02/21**.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Randles and Branigan.
3. There were no declarations of interest.
4. Conservation Area – Cllr. Ellams briefly outlined some background about the project and expressed a view that the council would be doing the residents an injustice if the consultation was not postponed for a minimum of 6 months. In the meantime, he suggested that information about the proposed area could be put onto the council’s website along with some frequently asked questions and answers about conservation area status. Cllr. O’Neill stated that a thorough consultation process had been carried out for the Helsby Neighbourhood Plan and that this consultation exercise should offer similar opportunities for the public to express their views. He felt that a sufficient level of engagement was not possible during the current Covid crisis. Cllr. Temple felt it important to clarify that the postponement period should not be part of the consultation, it should simply be a chance for residents to gain information about the proposed conservation area. It was proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Ellams and **RESOLVED to postpone the consultation process for a 6-month period and review at the July Council meeting whether it would be a safe and appropriate time to commence the conservation area consultation – EHPC03/21.**
5. Date of the next Council meeting - 8th February 2021.

The meeting closed at 18:33pm.

Chairman’s signature..... Dated.....