



Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held virtually at 7.00pm on Tuesday 6th April 2021 via Zoom

Present:

Cllr. Terry O'Neill – Chairman
Cllr. Sarah Temple – Vice Chairman
Cllr. Alan Gardner
Cllr. George Randles
Cllr. Peter Duffy

Also present:

Claire Jones Parish Clerk

1. Public Air Time. Proposed by Cllr. Duffy, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED – that the meeting be suspended for public participation – F7/21**. There being no matters brought to the committee's attention it was proposed by Cllr. Duffy, seconded by Cllr. Gardner and **RESOLVED – that Public Air Time be closed and the meeting reconvened – F8/21**.
2. No apologies for absence were received.
3. Declarations of interest. None were received/reported.
4. Minutes of the previous meeting. It was proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Duffy and **RESOLVED to amend a word in Section 8(d) from consultants to contractors – F9/21**. It was proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Duffy and **RESOLVED that the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 4th January 2021 be accepted as accurate, subject to the above amendment, and signed by the Chairman as soon as possible after the meeting – F10/21**.
5. Matters arising from the previous meeting – nothing was raised.
6. Review of Grants and Earmarked Reserves - It was agreed that the £2,500 allocated to office furniture in 2021/22 would be included in the footnotes under (b). The Clerk also agreed to check whether the S106 grant for the knee rail on Parkfield Drive was included in last year's table. It was proposed by Cllr. Duffy, seconded by Cllr. O'Neill and **RESOLVED that the Parish Council be recommended to accept the Grants and Earmarked Reserves table as set out in Appendix 1 – F11/21**.
7. Review of Financial Regulations - It was proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Duffy and **RESOLVED that the Parish Council be recommended to accept the existing Financial Regulations, subject to one change in Section 2.6 as follows – to amend the wording 'Forward Capital Programme' to 'Business Plan' – F12/21**.

8. Review of Assets Register – It was agreed to remove the following assets from the Assets Register: interactive speed sign and upgrade; cableway buffer tyres; knee rail; and red Topsy bin and add the following assets: various Christmas lights, various signage, noticeboard, shredder, digital screen, laptop and first aid kit. Cllr. Temple referred to the wording in the Council’s fixed asset policy which related to recording asset upgrades and any expenditure which increased the life expectancy of an asset. It was agreed to explore this further at the next Finance Committee. Proposed by Cllr. Randles, seconded by Cllr. Temple and **RESOLVED that the Parish Council be recommended to accept the Assets Register detailing £197,388 being the total value of assets held as at 31st March 2021 – F13/21.**
9. Review of Insurance Schedule – It was outlined that that the Parish Council had insurance cover with BHIB Council’s Insurance for liabilities, land, fidelity and assets. A copy of last year’s policy schedule was noted and the Clerk agreed to include the laptop in the list of office equipment. No other amendments were proposed but it was noted that some adjustments might be required after the new office move. It was agreed that the clerk would obtain 3 quotes in advance of the renewal date of 1 June 2021 and a long-term undertaking would be explored. The Clerk also outlined that the Parish Council had insured Helsby Community Centre with Zurich (through the Village Hall Plus Group) and had liability insurance for allotment holders with Chris Knott Insurance (the cost of the latter was claimed back from allotment tenants). It was proposed by Cllr. Duffy, seconded by Cllr. O’Neill and **RESOLVED that the Parish Council be recommended to accept the current insurance schedules – F14/21.**
10. Review of Risk Assessment – The Clerk had circulated some proposed amendments to the document. Cllr. Temple requested the Clerk to add the Fixed Asset Policy to the website. It was agreed that the list of organisations held by the Council would also be explored further in relation to the risks associated with holding personal data. It was proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Duffy and **RESOLVED that the Parish Council be recommended to accept the proposed amendments to the Risk Assessment – F15/21.**
11. Review of Section 106 money available for Helsby – the latest list from July 2020 was noted. The Clerk agreed to obtain a more up to date version from CW&C for discussion at the next meeting. Cllr. Temple asked for clarification particularly in relation to the monies outstanding from the development 12/05370/FUL (Land North West of Cable Drive).
12. The Council’s investment programme was noted as follows:
- Co-Operative Bank – Business Select Instant Access Account - £76,461.69. Interest at a variable rate of 0.03% gross AER, paid twice a year.
 - Monmouthshire Building Society Corporate Bonus 90 (interest calculated on 31st March) £77,238.09. Interest at a 0.30% variable rate + bonus of 0.5% if all conditions are met.
 - Nat West Business Reserve Account – £25,222.87. 0.01% interest gross AER, paid monthly.

It was agreed that the Clerk would seek advice from Jim Stockton in relation to the above programme and report back at the next Committee meeting.

13. Annual Audit and Annual Return of the Council's accounts for Financial Year ending 31st March 2021.
- Internal Audit to be undertaken by JDH Businesses Services by the end of April – duly noted.
 - External Audit to be carried out by PKF Littlejohn in advance of this year's deadline of 2 July 2021 – duly noted.

It was proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Duffy and **RESOLVED that the Parish Council be recommended to accept some additional support for the Clerk from Jim Stockton in relation to the completion of this year's audit – F16/21.**

14. 2020/21 Bank Reconciliation and Financial Report for 31st March 2021. The Clerk outlined the contents of both documents. It was agreed that the Section 137 information would be completed along with an amendment to the general reserves table. It was agreed that the Council should look into spending some of its reserves in 2021/22 and a consultation exercise could be considered as a first step, along with consultation with each Committee. It was proposed by Cllr. Duffy, seconded by Cllr. O'Neill and **RESOLVED that the Parish Council be recommended to accept the Financial Report/Balance Sheet 31st March 2021 subject to the amendments outlined above – F17/21.**

15. Review of Bank Direct Debits and Standing Orders. The Parish Council currently pay a)-f) by Direct Debit and g) by Standing Order:

- Siemens – quarterly Direct Debit for photocopier rental and annual Lease Agreement fees
- Scottish Power – monthly Direct Debit for electricity charge Helsby Community Centre
- Water Plus – monthly Direct Debit for waste water charge - same
- BT – monthly Direct Debit for rental, phone and broadband
- NEST – monthly employee/employer pension contribution
- Information Commissioner's Officer – annual registration fee
- Arndale Transport – monthly office rent.

Proposed by Cllr. O'Neill, seconded by Cllr. Randles and **RESOLVED that the Parish Council be recommended to continue paying regular payments and utilities by Standing Order and Direct Debit as an efficient and acceptance method of payment – F18/21.**

16. Urgent matters – None were raised.

17. Date of the next meeting – 28th June 2021.

The meeting closed at 19:47pm

Chairman's signature Dated

APPENDIX 1: Grants and earmarked reserves for identified projects (as at 31 March 2021)

Particulars	c/f 2019- 20 £	Provided 2020-21 £	Planned Usage 2020-21 £	Released 2020-21 £	Expected Balance 31.3.21 (£)	Provided 2021-22 £	Planned Usage 2021- 22 £	Expected Balance 31.3.22 (£)
Specified earmarked reserves								
Future burial provision	21,768 ^a	2,903	0	0	24,671	2,843	0	27,514
Soft Safety Surface	8,000	8,000	0	0	16,000	8,000	0	24,000
Grants								
S106 reclaim - retention fee	0	738	738	738	0	0	0	0
Ho Ho Helsby	0	3,950	3,950	3,950	0	0	0	0
CW&C Covid HPC	0	10,000	2,664 ^b	2,664 ^b	7,336	0	2,500 ^b	4,836
CW&C Covid HCA	0	10,000	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	0
S106 reclaim – basketball and teen shelter	0	1,193	1,193 ^c	1,193 ^c	0	0	0	0
CW&C Members Budget laptop	0	500	500	500	0	0	0	0
Arts Council - Helsby Art of Here plus S106	0	9,900	870	870	9,030	6,100 ^d	15,130	0
Community Policing Fund 2020-21	0	500	0	0	500	0	500	0
Total	29,768	47,684	19,915	19,915	57,537	16,943	18,130	56,350
Total earmarked reserves balance at 31st March 2021					57,537	Expected balance at 31st March 2022		56,350

^a Incorrectly recorded in the 2019/20 final year accounts. Should have been £22,491. Add the £723 difference to 2020/21's figure of £2180 = £2,903.

^b Costs for new noticeboard to be taken from the COVID grant money in 2020/21 and for the office relocation in 2021/22.

^c Project paid for in 2019/20 financial year.

^d Includes remaining £1,100 grant money from Arts Council and £5000 contribution from S106 monies through CW&C.