



Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Helsby Parish Council held in the Upper Hall at Helsby Methodist Church at 7.00pm on Monday 13th June 2022

Present:

Cllr. Peter Duffy – Chair

Cllr. Terry O’Neill

Cllr. Sarah Temple

Cllr. Alan Gardner

Cllr. Mike Branigan

Cllr. Margaret Marsh

Cllr. Chris Ellams

Claire Jones, Parish Clerk

In attendance:

Marj Thoburn representing Helsby News

Cllr. Paul Bowers representing Cheshire West and Chester Council

PC Vicky Edwards and PCSO Steve Parr

2 members of the public

1. Public Participation. It was **RESOLVED that the meeting be suspended for public participation – HPC94/22**. There being no matters brought to the Council’s attention, it was **RESOLVED that Public Air Time be closed and the meeting reconvened – HPC95/22**.
2. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Stephen Garrity. Cllr. Patricia Holder did not attend.
3. Cllr. O’Neill declared non-pecuniary interests in matters relating to Helsby Community Sports Club (Item 16) and Cheshire Association of Local Councils (Item 17).
4. Policing Update – Police Constable, Vicky Edwards, introduced herself to members. The recent fire at the rugby club was discussed. PCSO Parr mentioned that there had been a spate of small fires and this could be connected to a recent TikTok trend. He outlined that the investigation was continuing and the police/fire service would be liaising with Helsby High pupils as part of a ‘week of action’. It was noted that the speed camera had been deployed on 8 occasions and that he would be setting up his police surgeries shortly. Cllr. O’Neill summarised some of the issues raised at a recent Police and Crime Commissioner meeting he had attended. It was noted that average speed camera pilot applications were still being evaluated. PCSO Parr agreed to take part in any training for the new CCTV system and to find ways to tackle poor driving at the Tesco/Callender Way roundabout.
5. It was **RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Helsby Parish Council held on 9th May 2022 be accepted as accurate and duly signed by the Chairman – HPC96/22**.
6. Matters arising – No matters were raised.

7. Chairman's Announcements – The Chairman outlined that a successful beacon lighting ceremony had been carried out on Helsby Hill to commemorate the Queens Platinum Jubilee. It was also noted that he had attended the Jubilee service and lunch at St. Pauls Church and had laid a commemorative stone on behalf of the Council. The Chairman thanked those members that had attended the village litter pick on 1st June and noted a letter received from the Women's Institute thanking councillors for attending their Jubilee charity coffee morning. Members noted that Cllr. Standing had resigned from the Council and CW&C had been informed of the latest councillor vacancy in Central Ward. The Clerk outlined that the deadline for an election to be called was 15th June.

8. Cheshire West and Chester Council matters – Cllr. Bowers outlined that the netting system proposed at Old Chester Road was viable and would take only 2-3 weeks to be installed once designs had been agreed. He offered a grant from his Member's Budget to the rugby club following the recent fire. It was noted that the wildflowers had been planted on Denbigh Close and a number of other locations in the village were being explored. Following concerns raised about the poor state of the village in general, Cllr. Bowers agreed to follow this up with CW&C's ground maintenance team.

9. Cllr. Temple presented the minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held on 12th May. The following was noted/agreed:
 - 9.1 In relation to the latest ROSPA Play Safety inspection, it was **RESOLVED**:
 - **To obtain quotes to treat and repair some corroded areas of the youth shelter and to repaint it black as well as some minor paintwork repairs to the rocker and swing – HPC97/22.** Cllr. Bowers offered to assist;
 - **To investigate the equipment required to carry out minor repairs to the soft safety surface – HPC98/22.** It was noted that a fixing kit had been sourced in the cemetery garage and it was agreed to ask Helsby Garden Services to assist;
 - **To ask Helsby Garden Services to carry out some minor maintenance as set out in the report (e.g. bolt tightening) – HPC99/22;** and
 - **To seek advice from Winsford Town Council and/or ROSPA in relation to increasing the ground clearance of the seat on the cableway to at least 350mm – HPC100/22.**
 - 9.2 It was **RESOLVED to take down the COVID signage at the play area but to keep it in storage for any future need – HPC101/22.**
 - 9.3 It was **RESOLVED to obtain quotes for a park inspection app – HPC102/22.**
 - 9.4 It was **RESOLVED to seek quotes and arrange for the repair of the bench at the top end of the parish field – HPC103/22.**
 - 9.5 In relation to the CCTV policy, it was **RESOLVED to amend to refer to a designated trained councillor(s) rather than a specific individual and to make a number of amendments in relation to the latest guidance/legislation – HPC104/22.** It was noted that the parish field lighting project had now started but it would be another month before the foundations had set sufficiently to install the CCTV tower.
 - 9.6 As it had now been over 12 months since signage was placed on various graves containing overgrown vegetation, it was **RESOLVED to arrange for Helsby Garden Services to remove this vegetation – HPC105/22.**
 - 9.7 It was **RESOLVED to draft a letter of thanks to Helsby Garden Services for their exemplary levels of service with the general maintenance contract – HPC106/22.**

- 9.8 Following an exercise to evaluate remaining grave space at the cemetery, it was **RESOLVED to look out for any plots of land that could be suitable for a new cemetery and in future, to put the entire income from the cemetery into earmarked reserves given that land prices were continuing to rise – HPC107/22.**
- 9.9 In relation to the contents of the cemetery garage, it was **RESOLVED:**
- To accept the notional offers for machinery equipment from John Rowbotham (£60 for a strimmer) and Eddie Bougen (£200 for 2 mowers, 1 hover mower, 1 strimmer, 2 petrol cans, 2 sprayers and a wheelbarrow). All items to be taken ‘as seen’ – **HPC108/22;**
 - To offer the 2 basketball hoops and nets free of charge to local schools or other community organisations. If unwanted, to include in the contents of the garage for disposal – **HPC109/22;**
 - To accept an offer from Helsby Garden Services to dispose of the remainder of the cemetery garage contents ‘as seen’ in an appropriate manner at no cost to HPC, in return for permitting him to use the garage, at his own risk, to assist his contracted cemetery and general maintenance work. The garage itself to remain the property and responsibility of HPC and to be returned empty when any contracts with Helsby Garden Services are terminated – **HPC110/22;** and
 - To update the asset register to remove all Grounds Maintenance Equipment (total value £1,404.95) once equipment payments had been received and written confirmation had been received from Helsby Garden Services to accept the arrangements for disposal of the contents and use of the garage – **HPC111/22.**
- 9.10 It was **RESOLVED to seek contractors to complete a memorial safety inspection exercise along with any remedial work – HPC112/22.**

10. Miscellaneous Matters

- 10.1 Having noted the guidance from ChALC and CW&C, members **RESOLVED to adopt a personalised HPC version of Cheshire West and Chester Council’s latest Code of Conduct – HPC113/22.** The Clerk agreed to check whether members’ Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms would need to be signed again in relation to this change.
- 10.2 It was **RESOLVED to retrospectively approve the Clerk’s attendance at an online SLCC training course on committees, sub-committees and working groups at a cost of £15 plus VAT – HPC114/22.**
- 10.3 Members were reminded to adopt a parish council e-mail address at the earliest opportunity – the deadline to complete this is 31st August.
- 10.4 It was **RESOLVED for Northwich Town Council to install 2 new community noticeboards at a cost of £500 – HPC115/22.**
- 10.5 It was **RESOLVED for Northwich Town Council to re-locate the council noticeboard to the parish office at the sports club at a cost of £250 – HPC116/22.**
- 10.6 It was **RESOLVED to approve a claim of £139.24 by St. Paul’s Church for refreshments for the Queens Jubilee lunch held on 5th June – HPC117/22.**
- 10.7 Cllr. Temple outlined that she had been approached by a councillor from Elton Parish Council in relation to the provision of a food bank in Helsby. It was noted that she had made contact with a number of individuals and the West Cheshire Foodbank and she was proposing a meeting in early July to explore potential models.

11. Councillor Surgery report – It was noted that no-one had attended the latest surgery on 11th June. To note: the next surgery to be held on 2nd July at Helsby Community Sports Club between 10am and 11am (Cllrs. Gardner and O’Neill).
12. Protos – It was noted a Community Benefit Fund panel meeting had been held on 8th June and one application from Horns Mill School for play area graphics had been approved. It was outlined that the panel would meet again on 7th September. It was outlined that the next Community Forum meeting and AGM (open to the public) would be held on 13th July.
13. Helsby the Art of Here – It was noted that Cllr. O’Neill had attended an update meeting on 9th June. It was outlined that there were still considerable amounts of S106 monies available and councillors were keen to see a lasting legacy from this funding. Cllr. O’Neill outlined that he had suggested to the arts team that they prepared a brief detailing their proposals for a next stage of the project which would then be presented to a future council meeting for consideration.
14. Helsby Community Association – Cllr. Branigan noted that a number of projects at the centre were outstanding and there had still been no resolution in relation to the electricity billing.
15. Cycle North Cheshire – It was noted that discussions were continuing about the potential re-opening of the railway line to Mouldsworth as a new cycleway. Cllr. Duffy agreed to update members on the progress of the feasibility study for a proposed cycleway between the Hornsmill pub and Helsby High School at the next meeting.
16. Helsby Community Sports Club – Cllr. Branigan noted that the first year of the club had been hailed as a success at the latest management group meeting.
17. Cheshire Association of Local Councils – Cllr. O’Neill outlined that the next meeting would be held on 20th July.
18. Transport and Wind Farm Matters – An update from Cllr. Ellams was noted. It was outlined that the next round of applications to the Wind Farm fund was open until the end of August. Members noted that Cllr. Ellams had written to the Chair and Secretary of the liaison group as no meetings had been held since the start of the pandemic and the website was out of date.

19. Planning

19.1 The following planning applications were duly noted:

22/01482/FUL	136B Chester Road Helsby Erection of a 4-bedroom dwelling Objections based on HNP Policy H6 (Backland Housing Development) re. loss of green/garden space and mature vegetation and out of keeping with distinctive older style character of buildings in this area. Also queries relating to number of bedrooms and unauthorised driveway onto Old Chester Road
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- 22/01376/FUL** 92 Chester Road Helsby
Demolition of existing outrigger, erection of single storey rear extension
No objections
- 22/01533/FUL** 1 Callender Gardens
Replace open porch, with an enlarged and enclosed porch
No objections

- 19.2 No planning notifications were noted.
- 19.3 Mere's Edge Masterplan – it was noted that a meeting had been held with the Brookhouse Group on 7th June. Cllr O'Neill outlined discussions had been held about a planning application for a bridge renewal to a proposed new mixed development site.
- 19.4 No members reports were received.

20. Financial Matters

- 20.1 Internal Auditor's Report – the Clerk outlined that the 2021/22 Audit Report had 2 recommendations as follows:
- (a) ISSUE – We have not seen evidence that the Council published the 'Notice of Conclusion of Audit' on the authority website before 30th September 2021. We have however seen evidence that the notice was published on a noticeboard. RECOMMENDATION – Please provide for future internal audits a dated screenshot of the Council website evidencing the date the notification was published. **ACTION – A screenshot of the website was available but the checklist did not make it clear that both were required. Clerk to ensure that evidence of posts on both the website and noticeboard are submitted next year.**
- (b) Follow up of 2020/21 internal audit recommendations. OUTSTANDING ISSUE – the Council's general reserve as at 31/3/21 is in excess of 12 months Net Revenue Expenditure. RECOMMENDATION – The Council should review their general reserves and consider whether they are being retained for ear-marked schemes. **ACTION – Noted. General/ear-marked reserves and proposed expenditure to be discussed at the next Finance Committee.**
- 20.2 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2021/22 Part 3.
- (i) Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2021/22. The Chairman read out Questions 1-9. It was carried **UNANIMOUSLY that Helsby Parish Council was able to respond with the answer 'Yes' to Questions 1-8 and N/A to Q9 in Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 of the AGAR for 31st March 2022 demonstrating that the Parish Council had a sound system of internal financial control in place – HPC118/22.**
- (ii) Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2021/22. It was **RESOLVED that Helsby Parish Council approved the amounts in Section 1-11 of the AGAR for 31st March 2022 confirming that £227,660 was held in balances as at 31st March 2022 – HPC119/22.**
- 20.3 It was **RESOLVED that the bank reconciliation sheet detailing £312,522.55 held in balances as at 31st May 2022 be accepted as accurate – HPC120/22.**
- 20.4 It was **RESOLVED that the following payments totalling £14,021.24 paid by either standing order, direct debit, bank transfer, cheque or under delegated authority for**

May be approved and duly noted – HPC121/22. The following receipts totalling £8,172.86 were also noted:

Payments

BT	Line rental	£76.74
Water Plus	Water - community centre	£29.31
Scottish Power	Electricity - community centre	£280.00
Claire Jones	Expenses	£270.40
Helsby Players	Grant payment	£1,000.00
Water Plus	Water - allotments	£46.28
Helsby Garden Serv.	General maintenance	£1,348.00
Angharad Williams	Art of Here donation	£50.00
Zurich Municipal	Parish Council insurance	£1,178.69
NMC Design&Print	Helsby News printing	£658.00
Peter Duffy	Chairman's Allowance	£225.00
JDH Bus. Services	Internal audit fees	£367.20
Jax First Aid Supplies	High Viz vests	£51.22
SLCC	Committee training course	£18.00
Mike Carney	Art of Here printing	£580.00
Countrywide GM	Grass cutting	£480.00
Signs of Cheshire	Noticeboards	£930.00
Claire Jones	Expenses	£118.98
SLCC	Training summit	£54.00
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Angharad Williams	Expenses	£255.91
Amberol Ltd	Planters	£3,608.60
HMRC	Tax and NI contributions May 22	£497.99
HPC Staff	Salaries May 22	£1,395.73
NEST	Pension contribution May 22	£447.19

Receipts

HMRC	VAT reclaim to 31.3.22	£6,482.12
Helsby Comm. Assoc.	Electricity and water reclaim	£937.90
Buckley Memorials	Memorial inscription fee	£70.00
Annette Todd	Parish field licence fee	£1.00
Karen Woodfine	Allotment rent - 7LOCR	£28.50
Ministry of Justice	Children's Funeral Fund claim	£650.00
Natwest	Interest May 22	£3.34

21. The dates of the next Council meetings were noted as follows:

20 th June	Finance Committee
4 th July	Health and Safety Committee
4 th July	Environment Committee
11 th July	Parish Council meeting

Members agreed to cancel the Human Resources Committee on 21st June.

The meeting closed at 8.18pm

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