



Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held at 7.00pm in the Parish Office at Helsby Community Sports Club on Thursday 12th May 2022

Present:

Cllr. Sarah Temple (Chair)

Cllr. Peter Duffy

Cllr. Patricia Holder

Cllr. Margaret Marsh attended in place of Cllr. Mike Branigan

Also present:

Claire Jones Parish Clerk

1. Public Participation – It was **RESOLVED that the meeting be suspended for public participation – PCA12/22**. There being no matters brought to the Committee's attention, it was **RESOLVED that Public Air Time be closed and the meeting reconvened – PCA13/22**.
2. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Branigan. Cllr. Gardner did not attend.
3. Declarations of Members' Interests. None were reported.
4. Confirmation of Previous Minutes. It was **RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held on 24th January 2022 be accepted as accurate and duly signed by the Chairman – PCA14/22**. It was **RESOLVED that the minutes of the Extraordinary Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held on 7th March 2022 also be accepted as accurate and duly signed by the Chairman – PCA15/22**.
5. Matters arising. Under Item 7.2 (24th Jan), it was noted that an e-mail had been sent to David George thanking him for his slow worm records.
6. The Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee final budget spend for 2021/22 along with the budget for the year 2022/23 was noted (see table overleaf). It was outlined that there had been an overspend last year of around £5,000 due to the new general maintenance contract, the unexpected purchase of two replacement picnic tables and higher than expected tree maintenance costs. It was felt that the 2022/23 budget was likely to be more accurate given that there was now a better sense of the general maintenance contractor costs under each specific budget code.

Budget Code	Description	Budget 2021/22 £	Budget spent 2021/22 £	Budget 2022/23 £	Budget spent to date £	Predicted To 31/03/23 £
201	Allotment maintenance	600	1747	3500	0	3500
202	Allotment water charge	200	399	500	0	500
212	Cemetery maintenance	4200	3501	3500	0	3500
212a	Cemetery repairs/renewals	400	0	400	0	400
213	Parks and general maintenance work	6000	10378	12000	0	12000
214	Park grass cutting	5000	4322	5000	480	3500
215	Park equipment	3000	4100	3000	105	23788
226R	Play area improv./upgrades	8000	8000	8000	0	8000
260R	Future burial provision	2843	2843	3633	0	3633

The following was also noted:

- i) Budget Code 201 – Contract for allotment maintenance work at QD and OCR in 2022/23 costs = £2,637. Also to include £80 hedge maintenance work and any other potential ad-hoc maintenance costs.
- ii) Budget Code 202 – Clerk to investigate any unauthorised usage during the 2022 season.
- iii) Budget Code 212 - Contract for cemetery maintenance work = £2,795. £3,500 agreed due to potential ad-hoc maintenance costs on top of contracted work.
- iv) Budget Code 212a - propose to purchase grave stability equipment (stakes and tape) for the memorial stability testing exercise to be carried out in Summer 2022. Alternatively, appoint a contractor to carry out exercise.
- v) Budget Code 213 – Contract for general maintenance work (park and Helsby-wide) in 2022 costs = £8,294. Agreed to increase budget to £12,000 to cover any additional tree work following survey. Also to include £140 contracted hedge maintenance work.
- vi) Budget Code 214 – Grass cutting contract for 2022/23 is £2,800. Budget allows for additional cuts, if required. Spend to date is first instalment of grass cutting contract (to be paid over a 6-month period).
- vii) Budget Code 215 – To include CCTV and parish field lighting projects (monies largely to be reclaimed from grant and S106 funds during 2022/23). £4,000 already committed to CCTV project from Protos grant. Cost of CCTV project = £6,880. Cost of lighting project = £13,908. Spend to date is cost of ROSPA safety inspection at play area.
- viii) Budget code 226R – Another £8,000 added to specified reserves. £32,000 expected in specified reserves by 31/3/23.
- ix) Budget code 260R - £2,843 added to specified reserves in 2021/22. Budget is 50% of the amount of income received for burials in the preceding fiscal year. The income for 2022/23 is £7,265 less 50% = £3,633. £31,147 expected in specified reserves by 31/3/23.

7. Allotments

- 7.1. It was noted that income from allotment rents for the year 2021/22 was £1667.50. It was agreed that the fees for 2022/23 would be reviewed at the next meeting.
- 7.2. The Clerk outlined that no correspondence had been received from tenants after the previous allotment inspection last October. It was noted that a tenant at the Old Chester Road site had given up their plot in February and this had subsequently been re-let.
- 7.3. The results of the latest allotment inspection carried out on 9 May were noted. Cllr. Temple outlined that the Queens Drive site was in a very good condition generally. Several issues with plots at Old Chester Road were noted and it was outlined that Stage 1 letters had been sent to 3 plotheholders, along with a Stage 2 letter to one plotheholder.
- 7.4. The latest allotment tenancies and waiting list records were noted. Cllr. Temple outlined that the majority of people on the waiting list were those who wanted additional or larger plots at Queens Drive. It was noted that there were also two people on the list who wanted small plots on Old Chester Road.
- 7.5. No member's reports were received.

8. Children's Play Area

- 8.1. The results of the latest RoSPA Play Safety inspection were duly noted. It was outlined that no issues of high risk had been highlighted so there was nothing to resolve urgently. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to carry out the following:**
 - **To obtain quotes to treat and repair some corroded areas of the youth shelter and to repaint it all in black paint as well as some minor paintwork repairs to the rocker and swing;**
 - **To investigate the equipment required to carry out some minor repairs to the soft safety surface;**
 - **To ask Helsby Garden Services to carry out some minor maintenance as set out in the report (e.g. bolt tightening); 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 - PCA16/22.**
- 8.2. The continued need to display the COVID signage at various locations in the play area was discussed. Given that the risk of contracting a serious illness was now considerably reduced, it was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to take down the COVID signage but to keep it in storage for any future need – PCA17/22.**
- 8.3. No member's reports were received.

9. Parish Field

- 9.1. It was noted that the trees and other vegetation at the lower end of the field had been cleared and the fence had been relocated to the correct place. Cllr. Temple also reported that the 3 Council-owned felled trees in the field and play area had been now been replaced.

- 9.2. It was noted that Helsby Garden Services had completed the path edge repairs and grass seeding at the top end of the playing field and the grass seed planting at the lower end of the field.
- 9.3. The Clerk outlined that Helsby Garden Services had reported some slight movement in the goal post. It was also noted that initial discussions had taken place about the possibility of the Council purchasing a specialised app to record future park inspections via mobile phone. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to obtain a quote for a park inspection app – PCA18/22.**
- 9.4. Members considered a proposal to refurbish or replace the bench at the top end of the field. It was felt that a refurbishment would be sufficient and it was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council for the Clerk to seek quotes and arrange the repair – PCA19/22.**
- 9.5. The Clerk reported that Mega Electrical had agreed a date for the completion of the parish field lighting work by 10th June. Members expressed disappointment that the project had been delayed due to staff illness and poor weather.
- 9.6. A number of amendments were proposed to the CCTV policy. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council 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 – PCA20/22.** It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate appropriate signage to be erected once the system had been installed. It was also suggested that the Council's HCA representatives investigate the policy and procedures for the CCTV system at Helsby Community Centre. The Clerk agreed to liaise with CSS in relation to installing a Hikvision system given its recent poor publicity.
- 9.7. It was noted that the Council had agreed to a request from a local business in relation to the continued provision of Tai Chi and Qigong classes on the field.
- 9.8. No member's reports were received.

10. Cemetery

- 10.1. It was duly noted that the income received from cemetery fees in 2021/22 was £4,105.
- 10.2. It was noted that the Council had only received one query in relation to the signage that had been placed on graves with overgrown trees/shrubs. Given that at least 12 months had now passed since the signage was erected, it was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to arrange for Helsby Garden Services to remove this vegetation – PCA21/22.** Cllr. Duffy suggested that the Council should write a letter of thanks to Helsby Garden Services for their exemplary levels of service with the general maintenance contract. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council for the Clerk to draft a letter of thanks to be signed by the Chairman of the Council – PCA22/22.**
- 10.3. Members discussed a potential project to design the layout of the cemetery extension area. The Clerk outlined burials in new graves were taking place at an average rate of around 3-4 per year and new cremated remains plots were being purchased at an average rate of 2-3 per year. On this basis, it was estimated that it would be at least 5 years before any spaces were required in the extension area. It was agreed that the Clerk would look into costs for a landscape architect to

design the extension area and report back at a future meeting. In the longer term, it was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council that members should keep an eye 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 – PCA23/22.**

- 10.4. Cllr. Temple outlined that she had carried out an inventory of the various items of unused garden machinery both in the cemetery garage and the VPA hut. It was noted that not all equipment appeared to be listed on the asset register and some items appeared to have not been physically discarded once replacements had been purchased. It was proposed to make a cost estimate of all these items (total value suggested as circa £1,800) and then either sell or discard them. Cllr. Temple agreed to liaise with John Robotham and Eddie Bougen in relation to any items they wished to purchase. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to accept notional offers for any equipment from John Robotham and Eddie Bougen, to take a resolution to Finance Committee for Helsby Garden Services to clear the remainder of the cemetery garage and for the Clerk to update the asset register once all items had been discarded – PCA24/22.**
- 10.5. Cemetery risk assessment update – it was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council for the Clerk to seek contractors to complete a memorial safety inspection exercise along with any remedial work – PCA25/22.** The Clerk reported that she had now completed an application form for memorial masons but a grave digging form/policy had yet to be completed. It was also noted that work was still outstanding on a revision to the cemetery regulations.
- 10.6. No member’s reports were received.

11. No urgent matters requiring immediate attention were raised.

12. Date of next meeting – Monday 25th July 2022.

The meeting closed at 8.26pm

Chairman’s signature Date.....