



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 12th December 2022

Present:

Cllr. Peter Duffy – Chair

Cllr. Terry O’Neill

Cllr. Sarah Temple

Cllr. Alan Gardner

Cllr. Patricia Holder

Cllr. Margaret Marsh

Cllr. Rob Nicklin

Cllr. Chris Ellams

Claire Jones, Parish Clerk

1. Public Participation. No matters were brought to the Council’s attention.
2. Apologies were noted from Cllr. Branigan. Cllr. Garrity did not attend.
3. Co-optation of Parish Councillor. The Chairman invited Graham Stothard to address members to support his application to become a co-opted member of the Council for a vacancy in South Ward. It was **RESOLVED that Graham Stothard be co-opted onto the Council with immediate effect – HPC215/22**. Cllr. Stothard signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and was obliged to complete a Register of Interest within 28 days.
4. Cllr. O’Neill declared non-pecuniary interests in matters relating to Helsby Community Sports Club (Item 17) and Cheshire Association of Local Councils (Item 18). Cllr. Temple declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning application 19/03851/FUL as she lived in close proximity to the proposed development (Item 20.1).
5. Policing Update – It was noted that PCSO Parry had sent his apologies for the meeting due to an ongoing police incident. Members noted the report he had circulated prior to the meeting. It was outlined that there had been an incident at Sherwood Court resulting in some minor fire damage to the pavilion. Cllr. O’Neill reported that CCTV footage of the incident had been viewed by PCSO Parry.
6. It was **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Helsby Parish Council held on 14th November 2022 be accepted as accurate and duly signed by the Chairman – HPC216/22**.
7. Clerk’s Report – Under Item 7, it was reported that a letter had now been sent to ChALC in relation to CW&C. Under Item 9, it was outlined that the £1,500 grant had been received from CW&C’s Member’s Budgets Awards Scheme. The Clerk thanked Cllr. Bowers for this contribution on behalf of the council. Under Item 11.6, it was noted that no organisations had yet come forward to request one of the old green planters. The Clerk also noted that the temporary planning permission for the storage container at Mountain View expired in 2023 and she had approached the planning authority for guidance on how to re-apply. Cllr. O’Neill agreed to help the Clerk to arrange the Grant Show to be held early in 2023.

8. Chairman's Announcements – no matters were raised.
9. Cheshire West and Chester Council matters – it was noted that Cllr. Bowers had sent apologies.
10. Cllr. Temple presented the minutes of the Standing Orders Committee meeting held on 21st November 2022. The following was noted/agreed:
 - 10.1 It was **RESOLVED to formally adopt the NALC Model Standing Orders in principle but to recognise that further work was required in order to tailor them to fully suit the Council – HPC217/22**. It was agreed that an additional Standing Orders Committee meeting would be held to review a revised draft and a report would be presented to Full Council at a later date in 2023 for consideration;
 - 10.2 It was **RESOLVED to continue with the current procedure for reviewing planning applications but to include an additional stage for a lead councillor from each ward to prepare a response to be agreed at each Full Council meeting before submission to CW&C – HPC218/22**. It was noted that the Clerk would periodically need to request extensions from the planning authority in order to fit in with Council meeting dates. It was agreed that the lead councillor could be rotated at the discretion of ward members;
 - 10.3 It was **RESOLVED to accept the following changes to the existing Publication Scheme: add a section on datasets in line with the ICO's model document; include a cost for the postage of documents; remove references to the Community Resilience Plan; and add references to the Programme for New Councillors, Councillor Induction Pack, CCTV and Surveillance Policy and the Lone Working Policy and Risk Assessment – HPC219/22;**
 - 10.4 It was **RESOLVED to adopt a Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy in principle subject to clarification on a number of points as raised at the meeting – HPC220/22**.

11. Miscellaneous Matters

- 11.1 It was outlined that electricity usage for the parish field lighting and CCTV projects was being recorded in new meters as affixed to both the scout and guide huts. It was noted that in Cllr. Temple's report of August 2021, both groups had given permission to the Council to take a supply from their huts and that each supply would be metered and the Council would pay for any electricity used. As a formal payment procedure, it was **RESOLVED that the Clerk would read both meters on an annual basis and request an invoice from the scouts and guides as based on the highest level of tariff during each particular year – HPC221/22**.
- 11.2 Members considered whether it would be appropriate to allow residents to park on the newly refurbished car park at Sherwood Court. It was recommended that legal advice be sought in order to clarify what would be permitted through the Council's lease agreement with CW&C and any potential costs and risks involved. It was **RESOLVED to liaise with CW&C as landlord and to take legal advice through the Council's solicitor before reaching an agreement on whether to permit the use of this car park - HPC222/22**.

- 11.3 It was **RESOLVED to add one additional spinal column point (SCP) to the clerk's salary for her success in obtaining the CiLCA qualification (backdated to 11th November) - HPC223/22.**
- 11.4 Correspondence from a local resident in relation to the implementation of new parking restrictions at the Railway Inn pub was noted. It was outlined that this was expected to exacerbate parking issues in the surrounding area and the Clerk outlined that she had already been in dialogue with CW&C and the PCSO in relation to vehicles parking in front of the adjacent bus stop on Chester Road.
- 11.5 It was **RESOLVED to give retrospective approval for the purchase of 2 replacement defibrillator pads (payments made under Standing Order 26(a) Delegation to the Clerk) at a cost of £156 – HPC224/22.**
- 11.6 It was **RESOLVED to offer a payment of £55.20 to Horn's Mill Primary School towards one set of replacement defibrillator pads following use of the equipment within the local community – HPC225/22.**
- 11.7 A draft summary report of the questionnaire results was noted. It was agreed that a working group meeting would be set up in January to discuss the report and make recommendations for its publication early in 2023. Cllr. O'Neill requested that each Committee consider the draft summary report when recommending next year's budget.
- 11.8 It was noted that the general maintenance contractor had raised concern in relation to several loose coping stones on a wall adjacent to the parish field. It was agreed that Cllr. Gardner would inspect the wall from a health and safety perspective at the earliest opportunity and make recommendations for an immediate short-term solution. Cllr. Temple agreed to collate any historical information about the wall and it was **RESOLVED to seek legal advice in relation to the Council's liability for the wall should any longer-term remedial work be carried out – HPC226/22.**
12. Burial grant approvals – It was **RESOLVED to grant an application for the Exclusive Right of Burial for a term of 75 years for plot CRS21 received from Mr Rogers of Helsby – HPC227/22.**
13. It was noted that no members of the public had attended the councillor surgery held on 10th December despite this being advertised on Facebook. Cllr. Nicklin agreed to look at various alternative ways of hosting these sessions in future in order to foster more engagement, potentially by offering online sessions or by using different venues. He agreed to arrange the next few 'test' sessions and report back. Cllr. Stothard suggested community 'drop boxes' might be effective at various locations in the village where people could leave comments or suggestions.
14. Protos – Cllr. Temple outlined that the Community Benefit Fund panel had met on 7th December and had allocated funds to four projects, none of which were in Helsby. It was confirmed that £50,000 had been allocated to the fund in 2023. It was noted that a new secretary was being sought and meeting dates for 2023 (likely in March, June, Sept and Dec) would be confirmed later.
15. Helsby Community Association – no reports were received.

16. Cycle North Cheshire – it was noted that the minutes of the 11th November meeting with Sustrans had been circulated along with their draft feasibility report for cycle routes through Helsby. Cllr. Temple outlined that the next CNC meeting would be held on 10th January at 7.30pm in the parish office and a representative from Sustrans would attend to talk about active methods of getting to school. It was noted that the meeting was open to the public.
17. Helsby Community Sports Club – Cllr. O’Neill reported that there were currently a number of staff/volunteer vacancies and the affiliation of the individual sections was being progressed in time for the AGM in February.
18. Cheshire Association of Local Councils – Cllr. O’Neill reported that he had attended a Sandstone Ridge meeting to discuss the potential AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) designation which would include Helsby. It was noted that a formal consultation would be held in 2024. It was reported that he had also attended an Encirc meeting and outlined their plans to ship a higher proportion of resources into and out of the plant by rail. It was noted that the next ChALC Executive meeting would be held on 13th December.
19. Transport and Wind Farm Matters – it was noted that Cllr. Ellams had circulated updates from the Marshes Community Benefit Fund and Liverpool Airport. Concern was expressed that the Windfarm Liaison Forum had not met since before the pandemic. Cllr. Temple suggested writing to CW&C/Peel given that this was a condition of the planning approval. Cllr. Ellams agreed to make further enquiries.

20. Planning

20.1 It was **RESOLVED to approve responses as below in relation to the following planning applications:**

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|---------------------|--|
| 22/03854/FUL | Hover Force Ltd Grassy Lane Frodsham
Construction of new building associated with outdoor target activities and siting of two weather shelters/viewing areas. (part retrospective)
No objections – HPC228/22. |
| 19/03851/FUL | Rake Cottage Rake Lane Helsby
Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of new dwelling now including retaining wall to highway including landscaping
Objection relating to obtrusive nature of scale of dwelling – HPC229/22. |
| 22/01773/FUL | 13 Swireford Road Helsby
Erection of new porch, single storey side and rear extension, and raising the roof (amended plans and description)
No objections – HPC230/22. |

20.2 Planning notifications – none were received.

20.3 Correspondence was noted in relation to the replacement of wooden windows with plastic ones at a property on Chester Road. Disappointment was expressed that the

letter was sent anonymously so the Council was unable to write in response. It was outlined that whilst this property was included within Helsby Neighbourhood Plan's Local List, this provided no additional planning control and planning permission was not required to replace the windows within the property. It was also confirmed that the dwelling was not within a conservation area.

- 20.4 Mere's Edge Masterplan – it was noted that a meeting had been held with the Brookhouse Group on 7th December. Cllr. O'Neill outlined that Brookhouse were working on an outline planning application for a mixed-use development to include around 100 new homes in this area. It was also noted that the developer was seeking to develop a linear park containing walking and cycle paths within the entire Mere's Edge area as well as the construction of 7 new properties on land adjacent to Helsby Community Sports Club.
- 20.5 Member reports – concern was expressed that Helsby residents and businesses were not being made aware of local temporary traffic regulation orders (TTRO) involving local road closures. The Clerk agreed to clarify the obligations of the applicants in terms of notifying stakeholders of such orders. Cllr. Marsh volunteered to circulate details of the forthcoming closure on Britannia Road to local businesses.

21. Financial Matters

- 21.1 It was **RESOLVED** that the bank reconciliation sheet detailing **£265,071.42 held in balances as at 30th November 2022 be accepted as accurate – HPC231/22.**
- 21.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the following payments totalling **£6,674.47 paid by either standing order, direct debit, bank transfer, cheque or under delegated authority for November be approved and duly noted – HPC232/22.** The following receipts totalling £4,775.40 were also noted:

Payments

The Poppy Appeal	Poppy wreath/donation	£250.00
BT	Phone and broadband	£81.71
Water Plus	Water - community centre	£29.31
Scottish Power	Electricity - community centre	£373.02
NatWest	Safe Custody Service	£25.00
Claire Jones	Expenses	£63.70
Helsby Garden Serv.	General maintenance	£1,343.00
Lexis Nexis	Arnold Baker book	£131.99
Liverpool Doc Systems	Photocopier charges	£67.31
Hilldale GM	Tree work	£1,200.00
Water Plus	Allotment water	£16.66
HMRC	Tax and NI contributions Nov 22	£468.38
HPC Staff	Salaries Nov 22	£2,146.00
NEST	Pension contribution Nov 22	£478.39

Receipts

Blackwell's Stonecraft	Memorial fees	£100.00
J C Clarke	Burial fees	£550.00
J C Clarke	Burial fees	£290.00
RSK	Rent for Eccies	£3,183.60

O'Hara	EROB transfer	£70.00
Buckley Memorials	Memorial fees	£70.00
J C Clarke	Burial fees	£480.00
Natwest	Interest Nov 22	£31.80

21.3 It was noted that the SAAA external auditor for the next five-year period beginning on 1 April 2023 and ending on 31 March 2027 would be PKF Littlejohn LLP. It was also noted that their fees for this period would be £420 plus VAT.

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

14 th December	Budget meetings
9 th January	Finance Committee
16 th January	Parish Council meeting (note 3 rd Monday of the month)

It was noted that the annual meeting had been re-scheduled from 8th to 15th May.

Confidential Matters - Exclusion of the Press and Public and the Parish Clerk

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, it was **RESOLVED that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press as well as the Clerk leave the meeting during consideration of the following: To review and recommend any changes to the clerk’s “Terms and Conditions of Employment” in respect of her remuneration, grading, pension and hours of work noted – HPC233/22.**

23. The proposals regarding the Clerk’s hours, grading, pension and pay were discussed and agreed.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Chairman’s signature..... Dated.....