



# Helsby Parish Council

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## Minutes of the meeting of Helsby Parish Council held in the Upper Hall at Helsby Methodist Church at 7.00pm on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023

### Present:

Cllr. Peter Duffy – Chair  
Cllr. Rob Nicklin

Cllr. Sarah Temple  
Cllr. Chris Ellams

Cllr. Stephen Garrity  
Cllr. Margaret Marsh

Claire Jones, Parish Clerk

Marj Thoburn – representing Helsby News

PCSO Sean Parry up to and including Item 4 only

Cllr. Paul Bowers up to and including Item 8 only

1. Public Participation. Members were reminded that the next edition of Helsby News would be the last one before the King's Coronation if the Council wished to publicise any plans. It was also agreed that an article would be included on the results of the recent community questionnaire. No other matters were brought to the Council's attention.
2. Apologies were noted from Cllrs. Branigan, Gardner, Stothard, O'Neill and Holder.
3. No declarations of interest were given.
4. Policing Update – Members noted the contents of PCSO Parry's latest report. It was noted that a bike marking event would be held at Helsby High School on 19<sup>th</sup> February between midday and 2pm. The Clerk agreed to contact CW&C in relation to a number of unlit street lights on Callender Way as there had been some anti-social behaviour in this area. PCSO Parry outlined that he had investigated a number of parking complaints on Lower Rake Lane and Chester Road at the junction of Queens Drive but no enforcement action could be taken.
5. It was **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Helsby Parish Council held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 be accepted as accurate and duly signed by the Chairman – HPC20/23.**
6. Clerk's Report – Under Item 6, the Clerk reported that a meeting had been held with the Council's solicitor and progress had been made on various legal issues. Following his advice, it was agreed that the Clerk would present further information at future meetings on the party wall at the playing field and the car park at Sherwood Court. It was noted that the defibrillator on Chester Road would be installed shortly. Under Item 11, the Clerk outlined that Cllr. Stothard had spoken to representatives from Tesco and they had offered the Council some space on their existing community noticeboard. Under Item 13.6, it was noted that the precept request had been submitted to CW&C and under Item 23.3, members noted that the end of year health check on the Council's accounts had been completed by Scribe.

7. Chair's Announcements – it was outlined that the Chair had presented a card and small gift on behalf of the Council to a local resident on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.
8. Cheshire West and Chester Council matters – Cllr. Bowers outlined that work had commenced on the re-opening of Old Chester Road and was expected to last 6-8 weeks. It was noted that there were delays on the progress of Rake Lane Cottage due to staff absence. The Chair outlined that a meeting had been held with officers from CW&C's Localities team to discuss various matters and a follow-up meeting would be held again in the near future. Cllr. Bowers offered any remaining funds through his Member's Budgets scheme and it was suggested that this could be used to supplement funds for the Council's Grant Show.
9. Cllr. Temple presented the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023. The following was noted/agreed:
  - 9.1 Cllr. Temple outlined that the Clerk's annual appraisal had been held on 20<sup>th</sup> January and a report of recommended actions raised during the appraisal was noted. It was **RESOLVED to approve the Clerk's workplan for 2023 – HPC21/23;**
  - 9.2 It was noted that a number of suggestions had been made at the appraisal in order to manage the Clerk's workload more effectively, including some changes to the Council's committee structure. In this respect, it was **RESOLVED to disband the HR Committee from May 2023, for the Chair and/or Vice Chair of the Council to act as a single point of contact for day-to-day HR issues with the Clerk and to hand over review of employee-related procedures to Full Council – HPC22/23;**
  - 9.3 It was also **RESOLVED to disband the Health and Safety Committee from May 2023 and to hand over relevant duties to other committees or the Clerk – HPC23/23;**
  - 9.4 It was **RESOLVED not to hold Full Parish Council Meetings in August and to avoid any scheduled committee meetings during this month – HPC24/23.** It was noted, however, that ad-hoc meetings might need to be arranged, for example in relation to reviewing any urgent planning applications.
  - 9.5 It was **RESOLVED to set up a working group consisting of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council along with the Chairs of the relevant committees to consider the Council's policies and procedures and to allocate the most appropriate committee or councillor to review them – HPC25/23.** It was agreed that the working group could also explore the benefits of having delegatory rather than advisory committees. Cllr. Nicklin offered his help;
  - 9.6 It was **RESOLVED for all members of the Council to be invited onto the Standing Orders Committee and to consider a second annual meeting of this committee, if required – HPC26/23;**
  - 9.7 It was noted that the Clerk had requested some specialist support in areas such as IT, particularly in relation to the transition to Microsoft Business. In this context, it was **RESOLVED to explore the engagement of specialist IT services – HPC27/23;**
  - 9.8 It was also **RESOLVED to approve further training for the Clerk including courses on GDPR, computer management, risk and insurance, granting dispensations, delegatory powers, manual handling and conflict management – HPC28/23;**
  - 9.9 Cllr. Temple outlined that it was unusual that the Clerk currently processed her own payroll and pension returns as well as making tax and National Insurance payments to HMRC. Members noted a report by the Clerk in this respect outlining various options for an outsourced payroll service. It was **RESOLVED to outsource the Council's payroll service and the Clerk agreed to produce a report for the Finance Committee given**

- the financial implications – HPC29/23.** The Clerk agreed to source some additional quotes for the report, including one from the Council’s own internal auditors, if they offered such a service.
- 9.10 It was **RESOLVED to make a number of amendments to the ‘Programme for New Councillors’ in respect of who would take forward the various actions – HPC30/23;**
- 9.11 Members noted an action from the December 2022 meeting where it was agreed to undertake a job re-evaluation with ChALC to confirm where the current Clerk’s role sat on the pay-scale bands (HPC235/22). It was noted that ChALC had completed this task on 12<sup>th</sup> January and it was noted that the recommended pay band was in line with the role’s current placing (SCP29-32). It was **RESOLVED to accept the results of ChALC’s job re-evaluation – HPC31/23;** and
- 9.12 It was noted that any amendments to the Clerk’s hours of work would be discussed under Confidential Matters at the end of the meeting.

## 10. Miscellaneous Matters

- 10.1 Cllr. Duffy presented a summary of the meeting he had held with Frodsham Town Council on 26<sup>th</sup> January to discuss matters of joint interest. It was noted that there could be scope to work together on matters such as meeting the local MP, celebrating the King’s Coronation, provision of wheelchair accessible play equipment and working with the business community.
- 10.2 Correspondence was noted from Virgin Media in relation to the provision of ultrafast broadband in the area. It was noted that they would be working on local roads, footways and footpaths and would be writing to Helsby residents in due course.
- 10.3 The contents of a tree survey for Sherwood Court was noted. The Clerk outlined that the recommendations from the survey along with some of the lower priority suggestions from the other tree surveys had been compiled into a specification and sent out to several tree surgeons for quotes. Members considered the quotes and it was **RESOLVED to appoint Countrywide Grounds Maintenance at a cost of £1,391 plus VAT – HPC32/23.**
- 10.4 Members noted the response from CW&C in relation to questions posed by the Council about their Local List heritage project. It was felt that the project would not offer the same level of protection as a conservation area and would not change any permitted development rights.
- 10.5 Arrangements for the 2023 Helsby Grant Show on 28<sup>th</sup> February were noted and it was outlined that there had been a considerable volume of applications. Given that not all applicants would be successful, it was suggested that some of the other local grant funders could be invited to the event such as the Windfarm and Protos funds. The Clerk agreed to contact them. As Cllr. Bowers had offered some funding for the event, it was **RESOLVED to apply to CW&C’s Members Budgets Awards Scheme for £1,000 to add to the Council’s grant contribution – HPC33/23** (footnote: having checked with officers at CW&C, the deadline for applications is now closed and the Council is unable to apply).
- 10.6 Cllr. Marsh outlined that she had attended Frodsham Town Council’s Events Committee meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> February to discuss any plans for the King’s Coronation in May. Whilst no formal event was being planned, it was noted that suggestions had been made to offer some type of a commemorative item. Cllr. Marsh suggested seeking quotes for recycled leather bookmarks for local school children (1745 in total

- for three Helsby schools) and it was agreed that she would bring a detailed report to the next meeting.
- 10.7 It was **RESOLVED to appoint Wrought in the Port to replace the hinges and eyebolts on the cemetery gates at a cost of £320 – HPC34/23**. Cllr. Temple requested to liaise with the contractors on the specific design proposed before the work commenced.
  - 10.8 It was noted that Cllr. O’Neill was currently working on a draft of the 5-year business plan. In relation to the summary of the recent community questionnaire, the Clerk agreed to seek final comments from members by the end of February and to present the final version for resolution at the March meeting. It was agreed that the document would then be published on the Council’s website. The Clerk agreed to produce a much shorter summary for the next edition of Helsby News.
11. Cllr. Nicklin summarised the councillor surgery as held on 4<sup>th</sup> February at JTO Vintage and the Old Bank Tearooms. Note: the next surgery is planned to be held in the Tesco cafe on 18<sup>th</sup> March. The Clerk agreed to check whether councillor surgeries could be held during purdah.
  12. Protos – Cllr. Temple outlined that a Community Forum meeting was held on 18<sup>th</sup> January and a Community Benefit Fund Panel meeting was scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup> March.
  13. Helsby Community Association – no report was given.
  14. Cycle North Cheshire – no report was given.
  15. Helsby Community Sports Club – no report was given.
  16. Cheshire Association of Local Councils – It was noted that Cllr. O’Neill had circulated the latest minutes and raised three issues for consideration: declaring a climate emergency (to be considered by the next Environment Committee), to note a decision by the Planning Inspectorate in relation to a traveller site in Mickle Trafford and NALC’s Civility and Respect Pledge (for the Policy and Procedures working group to consider).
  17. Transport and Wind Farm Matters – various reports from Cllr. Ellams were noted. It was noted that he would be attending a Liverpool Airport Consultative Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> February. It was noted that the airport was currently recruiting (Cllr. Ellams to check if jobs could be advertised locally).
  18. Planning
    - 18.1 It was **RESOLVED to approve the responses as below in relation to the following planning applications:**

<b>22/04546/FUL</b>	75 Old Chester Road Single storey side extension <b>No objections – HPC35/23.</b>
<b>22/04673/FUL</b>	Land West of Chester Road Construction of a 75-bed care home (Use Class C2) with associated parking and landscaping

**Neither objects to or supports but has some comments, also to add request to continue combined cycle and pedestrian way along the frontage – HPC36/23.**

**22/04674/OUT**

Land At Mere's Edge

Outline application (with all matters reserved) for the development of up to 100 dwellings (Use Class C3), up to 30 bedspaces (Use Class C2), up to 1,000 sqm of commercial, business and service floorspace (Use Class E) and/ or community uses (Use Class F), new pedestrian and cycle route, and associated highway, landscaping and engineering works

**Objection based on lack of sufficient supporting infrastructure and risk of flooding– HPC37/23.**

- 18.2 It was noted that the Ince Neighbourhood Plan (Draft 2022) was open for consultation until 14 March.
- 18.3 Planning notifications – none were received.
- 18.4 Mere’s Edge Masterplan – no update was received.
- 18.5 Member reports – none were received.

19. Financial Matters

- 19.1 It was **RESOLVED that the bank reconciliation sheet detailing £252,614.98 held in balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 be accepted as accurate – HPC38/23.**
- 19.2 It was **RESOLVED that the following payments totalling £19,276.68 paid by either standing order, direct debit, bank transfer, cheque or under delegated authority for January be approved and duly noted – HPC39/23.** The following receipts totalling £791.80 were also noted:

**Payments**

BT	Phone and broadband	£81.71
Water Plus	Water - community centre	£29.31
Scottish Power	Electricity - community centre	£373.02
Claire Jones	Expenses	£19.20
Helsby Garden Serv.	General maintenance	£464.40
Npower	Bridge lighting	£129.14
Hilldale GM	Hedge cutting	£480.00
Water Plus	Allotment water	£38.63
Winsford TC	Play area inspections	£210.00
Siemens FS	Photocopier lease	£147.81
CW&C (Hornsmill School)	Defib pads	£55.20
Scribe	Year End health check	£46.80
Water Plus	Allotment water	£21.97
Mega Electrical	Christmas tree	£3,000.00
Complete Security Services	Office door entry system	£1,848.00
AMR Technical	Christmas lights contract	£9,526.80
HMRC	Tax and NI contributions Jan 23	£575.57
HPC Staff	Salary - Jan 23	£1,641.92

NEST	Pension contribution Jan 23	£587.20
<b>Receipts</b>		
J C Clarke	Burial fees ATHERTON	£310.00
B Haslam	EROB transfer	£70.00
Griffiths Solicitors	EROB transfer	£70.00
D T Turner FD	Burial fees NASH	£310.00
Natwest	Interest Jan 23	£31.80

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

20 <sup>th</sup> February	Health and Safety Committee
20 <sup>th</sup> February	Environment Committee
6 <sup>th</sup> March	Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee
13 <sup>th</sup> March	Parish Council meeting

#### **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 hours of work – HPC40/23.**

21. It was **RESOLVED to increase the Clerk's hours of work from 30 to 33 per week effective from 1 March 2023 – HPC41/23.** It was agreed that a new contract would be prepared for the Clerk to reflect this, and other recent changes, in due course.

The meeting closed at 9.08pm

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