



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 Monday 24th April 2023

Present:

Cllr. Sarah Temple (Chair)

Cllr. Peter Duffy

Cllr. Mike Branigan

Cllr. Margaret Marsh (substitute member for Cllr. Holder)

Cllr. Rob Nicklin (substitute member for Cllr. Gardner)

Also present:

Claire Jones Parish Clerk

One member of the public

1. Public Participation – A member of the public attended to offer her support in investigating options for the provision of a wheelchair accessible roundabout.

The Chair agreed to bring forward Agenda Item 11.1 so members could discuss the matter further. It was noted that there were various designs of play roundabouts and not all options were ideal for wheelchair users. The Clerk agreed to work with the member of the public to look at preferred design options and to explore what other facilities were available locally. Members noted that there could also be scope for other items of equipment such as a trampoline or sensory panels. It was advised that CW&C were considering similar options and it was agreed to share the names of the relevant officers with the Clerk. Members noted that the preferred location for any equipment would be in the children's play area.

No other matters were brought to the Committee's attention.

2. Apologies were noted from Cllrs. Gardner and Holder.
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 14th December 2022 were accepted as accurate and duly signed by the Chair – **PCA01/23**.
5. Clerk's Report. Under Item 5, it was noted that a meeting had taken place with the Council's solicitor to discuss the Air Quality Monitoring Station lease and the latest draft was currently with Peel's solicitors for consideration. Also under Item 5, it was noted that the Clerk had yet to make any further inquiries in relation to the park inspection app and

Cllr. Bowers had not yet completed the various paintwork jobs in the parish field and play area. It was noted that Cllr. Temple had circulated some information about the new pump track in Elton.

6. The final budget spend for 2022/23 along with the Parks, Cemetery & Allotments Committee budget for the year 2023/24 was noted (as below).

Budget Code	Description	Budget 2022/23 £	Budget spent 2022/23 £	Budget 2023/24 £	Budget spent to date £	Predicted To 31/03/24 £
201	Allotment maintenance	3,500	1,950	3,000	0	3,000
202	Allotment water charge	500	318	300	0	300
212	Cemetery maintenance	3,500	2,602	3,500	0	3,500
212a 211	Cemetery repairs/renewals	400	720	1,000	0	1,000
213	Parks and general maintenance work	12,000	10,478	12,000	0	12,000
214	Park grass cutting	5,000	2,800	5,000	0	5,000
215	Park equipment	3,000	22,046	2,500	0	2,500
226R 501	Play area improv./upgrades	8,000	0	9,000	0	0
260R 502	Future burial provision	3,633	0	4,105	0	0
504	Cemetery extension area design project	0	0	5,000	0	5,000
506	Cemetery garage roof	0	0	7,500	0	7,500
507	Wheelchair accessible roundabout	0	0	5,000	0	5,000

The following was also noted:

- i) All figures exclude VAT and are rounded to the nearest £1.
- ii) New/revised budget codes are highlighted in red.
- iii) Budget Code 201 – Contract with Helsby Garden Services for allotment maintenance work in 2023/24 = £2,714. Also to include hedge maintenance work with Hilldale (£84) and any other potential ad-hoc maintenance costs.
- iv) Budget Code 202 – All meter readings during 2022/23 were estimated as meter is obscured with water. Clerk has reported the fault to Water Plus.
- v) Budget Code 212 - Contract with Helsby Garden Services for cemetery maintenance work = £2,879. £3,500 agreed due to potential ad-hoc maintenance costs on top of contracted work (e.g. spoil heap clearance and tree root infill work).
- vi) Budget Code 211 – Look to appoint a contractor to carry out a memorial safety testing exercise. Expenditure in 2022/23 was for £650 to D T Turner (reclaim from the Children’s Funeral Fund) and £70 refund of memorial stone fees to Buckley Memorials.

- vii) Budget Code 213 – Contract for general maintenance work (park and Helsby-wide) in 2023/24 = £8,389. Also to include £147 contracted hedge maintenance work and any other ad-hoc work as identified.
- viii) Budget Code 214 – Grass cutting contract for 2023/24 is £2,939 but additional cuts may be required depending on weather conditions. Budget allows for additional cuts, if required. Countrywide are paid over a 7-month rather than a 12-month period.
- ix) Budget Code 215 – To include ROSPA safety inspection at play area.
- x) Budget code 501 – £9,000 added to specified reserves to include railings/gate maintenance. £41,000 expected in specified reserves by 31/3/24.
- xi) Budget code 502 - £3,633 added to specified reserves in 2022/23. Budget is 100% of the amount of income received for burials in the preceding fiscal year. The income for 2023/24 is = £4,105. £35,252 expected in specified reserves by 31/3/24.

7. The cemetery, allotments and general maintenance contract 2021/24 with Helsby Garden Services was reviewed. It was noted that the contractor had completed an annual risk assessment, confirmed public liability cover of £5m and had undertaken or was in the process of undertaking some relevant training courses. It was noted that both parties were satisfied with the existing contract. However, it was outlined that the contractor had requested an increase in their rates during 2023/24 given higher than anticipated inflation levels. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to continue with cemetery, allotments and general maintenance contract during 2023/24 with Helsby Garden Services and to agree in principle to an increase in rates (with a 10% increase cap on 2022/23 prices) – PCA02/23**. It was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with the contractor to prepare some specific rates for presentation at the May Full Council meeting. Members noted that the contract would end in April 2024 and a new tender process for the contract would need to be carried out later in the year.
8. The hedge maintenance contract 2022/25 with Hilldale Grounds Maintenance was reviewed. It was noted that members were satisfied with the quality of the work and the Clerk was waiting to hear back in terms of any proposed changes to rates during 2023/24.
9. Projects identified in the recent community questionnaire for consideration by the PCA Committee were reviewed. It was agreed to consider including the following potential new projects in the 5-year Business Plan: Calisthenics gym equipment in the parish field (Cllrs. Duffy and Branigan to explore further) and skatepark/BMX track/basketball court facilities (require considerable area of land so limited opportunities but could work with future housing developers).

10. Allotments

- 10.1. It was noted that income from allotment rents for the year 2022/23 was £1,629.
- 10.2. The Clerk updated members on correspondence that was sent out after the previous allotment inspection in October 2022. It was noted that one tenant had given notice on their plot at Old Chester Road.

- 10.3. The results of the latest allotment inspection carried out on 21st April were noted. It was outlined that two Stage 1 letters would be sent out following the inspection. Cllr. Nicklin requested to accompany the Clerk at the next inspection.
- 10.4. The latest allotment tenancies and current waiting list were noted. It was agreed to advertise for prospective tenants on Facebook and through the Village Produce Association, as there was currently no waiting list for Old Chester Road.
- 10.5. Member's reports – the Clerk outlined a request from AMR Technical to pave the grassed area in front of the container. It was agreed to discuss the issue with the Village Produce Association as leaseholders of this area and to ask Helsby Garden Services if they could assist.

11. Parish Field and Children's Play Area

- 11.1. Wheelchair accessible roundabout update – see Item 1.
- 11.2. It was noted that the results of the latest RoSPA Play Safety inspection had not been received to date.
- 11.3. It was noted that monthly play area inspections by Winsford Town Council had increased to £75 per inspection from 1st April 2023. An alternative quote from Northwich Town Council was considered. Given that Winsford Town Council had not previously highlighted any issues with the zip wire, as picked up in the RoSPA report, it was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to appoint Northwich Town Council to carry out further monthly play inspections - PCA03/23.**
- 11.4. A quote from Hilldale Grounds Maintenance to replace several recently felled trees and to complete some stump grinding was considered. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact them for further details on proposed tree types and locations within the play area and parish field and the optimum time for planting. The Clerk agreed to put a specification together and seek alternative quotes in due course. The Clerk outlined that any proposed new trees within Sherwood Court would be considered as part of the landscaping project.
- 11.5. Inspection reports as submitted by Helsby Garden Services and Winsford Town Council were noted for information.
- 11.6. Member's reports – it was noted that there were several issues with the recent tree work carried out in the parish field and other locations and the contractors had been asked to revisit some areas to resolve.

12. Cemetery

- 12.1. It was noted that income from cemetery fees for the year 2022/23 was £7,900.
- 12.2. The Clerk agreed to follow up the proposed plinth and hinge work to the cemetery gates with the contractor.
- 12.3. It was noted that Advantage Roofing and Cladding had inspected the cemetery garage roof. The Clerk outlined that she was waiting for a quote and would follow up.
- 12.4. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to renew the Council's annual membership with the ICCM at a cost of £95 - PCA04/23.**

12.5. Cemetery extension area design project – Cllr. Temple agreed to send contacts of some potential contractors to the Clerk. The Clerk also agreed to contact ICCM for any recommendations.

12.6. Member’s reports – the Clerk agreed to contact plot holders in relation to some inappropriate ornaments that had been affixed to the oak tree and to make further investigations in relation to a wooden fence that had been affixed around a grave plot.

13. No urgent matters requiring immediate attention were raised.

14. The date of next meeting was noted as Monday 24th July 2023.

The meeting closed at 9.06pm

Chairman’s signature Dated.....