



Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held at 7.44pm in the Parish Office at Helsby Community Sports Club on Wednesday 13th December 2023

Present:

Cllr. Rob Nicklin (Chair)

Cllr. Sarah Temple

Cllr. Mike Branigan

Also present:

Claire Jones Parish Clerk

1. Public Participation – No matters were brought to the Committee’s attention.
2. Apologies were noted from Cllrs. Stothard and Ellams.
3. No declarations of members’ interests were made.
4. Confirmation of Previous Minutes. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held on 30th October 2023 were accepted as accurate and were duly signed by the Chair – **PCA24/23**.
5. Clerk’s report - the following was noted:
 - Various matters remained outstanding: update on Air Quality Monitoring Station lease; park inspection app; paintwork jobs in the parish field and play area; quote for rocker unit; cemetery tree condition report; play area path edging; coping stones on parish field;
 - Various work was now completed – cemetery garage roof, hedge trimming, basket swing, repairs to gates and posts at Queens Drive and Old Chester Road, letters delivered to residents adjacent to parish field about leaving the lighting on overnight (guide hut side now on, still need access to the scout hut);
 - Two new tenants had taken on plots at Old Chester Road and one eviction notice had been issued at Queens Drive. Cllr. Nickin to check status of Stage 2 plot at Queens Drive during week commencing 18th December;
 - Cllr. Temple and the clerk had met a representative from play area company, Kompan, and various designs and quotes had been received (clerk to circulate);
 - CCTV images were clearer when downloaded and viewed onto a pc; and
 - An outstanding actions log for the PCA Committee was suggested.

Confidential Matters - Exclusion of the Press and Public

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 leave the meeting during consideration of the following two items: to consider quotes received for the Cemetery, Allotment and General Maintenance Contract 2024-27 and to consider quotes for a project to plant 8 new trees on the parish field and the play area – **PCA25/23**.

6. Cemetery, Allotment and General Maintenance Contract – It was **RESOLVED** to contact the three shortlisted companies to provide further information and then to score each tender using the criteria as set out in the accompanying report – **PCA26/23**. It was noted that the contract would then be awarded at the next PCA Committee meeting in January.
7. New tree planting at the play area and parish field – it was **RESOLVED** to defer a decision for 12 months until there was further clarity on the masterplan project – **PCA27/23**.
8. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend the following PCA Committee budget for 2024/25 totalling £45,440 for the inspection and approval of the Finance Committee – **PCA28/23**.

Budget Heading Code	Description	Budget 2023/24 £	Budget Spend to Date £	Predicted To 31/03/24 £	Recomm. Budget 2024/25 £
201	Allotment maintenance	3,000	3,058.54	4,148.54	3,150
202	Allotment water charge	300	171.77	251.77	315
211	Cemetery repairs/renewals	1,000	438.06	508.06	1,050
212	Cemetery maintenance	3,500	3,091.21	3,291.21	3,675
213	Parks and general maintenance	12,000	8,245.30	11,140.30	12,600
214	Park grass cutting	5,000	2,939.02	2,939.02	5,250
215	Park equipment	2,500	1,555.95	2,455.95	2,500
501	Play area improv./upgrades	9,000	0	9,000 ¹	9,000
502	Future burial provision	4,105	0	4,105 ²	7,900
TOTAL		40,405	19,499.85	37,839.85	45,440

All figures above exclude VAT.

The following was also noted:

- i) Code 201 – see new contract costs. Includes costs to repair QD and OCR allotment gates in 2023/24 (£1,090). Hedge maintenance contract for 2024/25 = £88.
- ii) Code 202 – paid up to 23 September. Water now turned off for winter. Still difficulties reading meter.

¹ Monies being saved under earmarked reserves. No funds spent in 2023/24

² Monies being saved under earmarked reserves. No funds spent in 2023/24

- iii) Code 211 – to budget for memorial testing in 2024 (around £3 per memorial, £350 full survey). Includes work to repair cemetery gates in 2023/24 £70 (but not to add additional strut supports).
- iv) Code 212 – see new contract costs. Also to add various ad-hoc work such as spoil heap clearance.
- v) Code 213 – see new contract costs. Also to include ad-hoc work such new planter installation and bench installation. Hedge maintenance contract for 2024/25 = £154.
- vi) Code 214 – contract with Countrywide for grass cutting is £3,023. Additional £1,000 for weekly cuts to parish field.
- vii) Code 215 – includes Northwich TC inspections at £900 over 12 months. Also to include costs of park inspection app and training package with CloudyIT of £112.50 set up and then an annual subscription fee of £120.
- viii) Code 501 – now also includes budgeting for any future gate/railing maintenance. £41,000 expected in earmarked reserves by 31/3/24.
- ix) Code 502 - Figure for 2024/25 is 100% of the cemetery income from 2022/23 as shown in 31 March 2023 financial statement (£7,900). £35,252 expected in earmarked reserves by 31/3/24.

It was also **RESOLVED to request the Finance Committee to create a new £20,000 earmarked reserve fund for a parks masterplan project consisting of remaining reserves from the cemetery garage roof project (£5,791.67) along with £14,208.33 taken from general reserves – PCA29/23.** It was agreed that a new earmarked reserves budget code would be created for this project. It was noted that monies remained in earmarked reserves for the following projects: Code 504 - Cemetery extension area design project (£5,000) and Code 507 - Wheelchair accessible roundabout (£5,000).

A potential project to install rabbit proof fencing and gravel-based hardstanding under the entrance gate at the Queens Drive allotment site was raised. It was noted that S106 monies could be available. The clerk agreed to liaise with a representative from the Queens Drive allotment holders to explore this further.

9. Miscellaneous matters

- 9.1. The results of the health and safety inspections carried out at the cemetery and allotments on 15th November were noted. It was **RESOLVED to seek a contractor to strip the remaining ivy off the oak tree at the far end of the cemetery and to carry out a survey of its condition – PCA30/23.**
- 9.2. It was **RESOLVED to approve a request to replace a bench in the cemetery – PCA31/23.** It was noted that the approval was subject to the owner affixing the bench in a secure manner to an appropriate footing and the continued maintenance of both the ironwork and wood.

10. No urgent matters were raised.

11. The date of the next meeting was noted as Monday 29th January 2024.

The meeting closed at 9.08pm

Chair's signature Dated.....