

Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at 4pm on 9th April 2020 held remotely via the Zoom Conferencing Service

Present:

Cllr. Peter Duffy – Chairman

Cllr. Patricia Holder

Cllr. George Randles

Cllr. Chris Ellams

Cllr. Terry O'Neill

Cllr. M Branigan

Cllr. Mags Porter

Cllr. Sarah Temple

Cllr. Polly Barry

In attendance:

Jim Stockton-Interim Clerk

Claire Jones-Parish Clerk Designate

PCSO Davies-Cheshire Police

Chairman's announcements:

The Chairman thanked all attendees for agreeing to conduct essential Council by remote conferencing whilst the Covid 19 lockdown persists.

1. Public Air Time.

There was no Public Air Time as the ability to permit this via a dedicated Parish Council Zoom account is being investigated.

2. Apologies for absence – received and accepted from Cllrs. Massey, Kimpton and Gardner.

3. Declarations of Interest. Cllrs. O'Neill and Randles declared non-pecuniary interest in Item 5 as both were Executive Members of Helsby Community Sports Club.

4. Police Matters

4.1 PCSO Davies reported as follows:-

Various groups of people lingering at various sites within the Parish had been advised to move on in line with lockdown regulations. These sites included Helsby Hill, the quarry and the railway station car park.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th March 2020

Proposed by Cllr Randles and seconded by Cllr. O'Neill and **RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2020 be accepted as accurate and duly signed by the Chairman – HPC 22/20.**

6. Matters arising from the previous meeting:-

6.1 Closure of Old Chester Road for Bridge work. Cllr. O'Neill reported that this work was still ongoing.

6.2 V.E. Day event scheduled for 8th May-Cllr. O'Neill reported that this event has been cancelled due to lockdown regulations.

6.3 Maltby Triangle-Cllr O'Neill reported that Northwich Town Council had been requested to mow the grass at this site whilst the Environment Committee reviewed the existing agreement with Cheshire West and Chester Council.

6.4 Weaver Vale Housing Trust-Cllr' O'Neill confirmed that following discussions with the Trust regarding the new development at Springfield Avenue that the Trust's allocation policy would prioritise parish residents.

7. Finance Committee

7.1 Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 6th January were accepted as a correct record.

7.2 The Schedule of Payments totalling ££104,446.57 made in March 2020 (as attached) were presented.

7.3 The Bank Reconciliation as at 31st January 2020 (as attached) was presented.

7.4 The Bank Reconciliation as at 28th February 2020 (as attached) was presented.

7.5 The Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March 2020 (as attached) was presented.

Proposed by Cllr. O'Neill, seconded by Cllr. Duffy and **RESOLVED that the above reports be approved and noted-HPC 23/20.**

7.6 Cllr O'Neill reported that the insurance policy had been renewed on the Helsby Community Centre (as set out in the Schedule of Payments attached). Given the finances of the Association, no recharge was proposed for this cost.

7.7 Cllr O'Neill reported on progress regarding the Parish Office lease for the new office in the new Community Sports and Social Club given construction of the new club was expected to be completed around September 2020. Cllr. Randles reported construction was continuing but could slow down due to the short supply of materials. He suggested a peppercorn rent was an appropriate mechanism. Cllr. Temple commented that appropriate running costs/service charges and the proportion payable to the Council had to be identified and defined in the lease. (which had been put on hold while the Grant Agreement was completed to enable the transfer of £100k to the Club. **It was agreed further discussion take place between Cllrs O'Neill and Temple in the next month.**

7.8 Discussion took place regarding an appropriate event for the cancelled VE Day celebrations

7.9 Discussion took place regarding appropriate electronic access for the new Clerk to the Council's bank accounts held with Nat West and the need for a transparent audit trail. It was agreed Cllr. Ellams would progress this over the coming weeks.

8. Environment Committee

8.1. Cllr O'Neill gave a brief update on the Maltby Triangle lease and also progress regarding the draft Conservation Area policy which had been previously circulated to all Councillors.

9. Parks, Cemetery & Allotments Committee

9.1 Cllr. Temple reported on the virtual (Zoom) meeting held by the Committee on 2nd April 2020. Notes of the meeting are attached. Cllr Temple made specific reference to confirmation of Govt. legislation by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management and the impact of social distancing regulations on access to the cemetery and following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr. Temple and seconded by Cllr. Randles and **RESOLVED that the cemetery remain open for visitors as well funerals subject to compliance with lockdown regulations-HPC 24/20.**

10. Health and Safety Committee

10.1 A written report from Cllr. Gardner (copy attached) was presented.

11. Human Resources Committee

- 11.1 Cllr Porter reported on the virtual (Zoom) meeting held by the Committee on 6th April 2020. (Copy attached). Cllr Randles suggested that a list of basic duties for the new Clerk needs to be prepared. **Interim Clerk to action.**

12. Community Action

- 12.1 Cllr. Barry led a discussion regarding Community Action groups within the Parish and the contribution which the Council could make to the protection of old and vulnerable parishioners during the current Covid 19 crisis. It was agreed that Cllr. Barry would convene a meeting of a sub-group of Councillors to discuss this matter in further detail including options to publicise the Council's response to the virus crisis and disseminate information received by the Council regarding different sources of support. It was agreed not to encourage Frodsham Open Hands to deliver to leaflets to Helsby households but instead the Council would display the flyer on its noticeboards and Councillors would circulate electronically.

13. CWAC/NALC

- 13.1 Cllr O'Neill gave an update on various advice/initiatives underway via CHALC and NALC. He drew attention to the opportunity to purchase a professional version of Zoom software that had been negotiated by CHALC suitable for Council use at a reduced rate of £7.99 per month. The Pro version allowed meetings to continue longer than 40-minute limit of the standard version. It was proposed by Cllr. O'Neill, seconded by Cllr. Duffy and **RESOLVED that this subscription be taken out and that the new Clerk progress this initiative-HPC 25/20**

14. Any Other Business

- 14.1 Next meeting-it was agreed that the Chairman would progress this with Interim Clerk with a view to producing a schedule of meetings for the Council and Committees for new municipal year. It was proposed by the Cllr Duffy and seconded by Cllr O'Neill and **RESOLVED that the Annual Parish Meeting (Electorate) scheduled for 23rd April be postponed that the Parish Council (AGM) meeting scheduled for 11th May be carried out using Zoom-HPC 26/20**
- 14.2 RSK rent waiver request-following discussion regarding this request it was proposed by Cllr Randles and seconded by Cllr. O'Neill and **RESOLVED that the rent due from RSK on the Eccies building from 1st April be deferred for three months i.e. to 1st July 2020 when the matter will be discussed again in the light of changing economic circumstances-HPC 27/20.**
- 14.3 Cllr. Branigan raised the matter of construction taking place on Towers Lane. After discussion the Interim Clerk was asked to write to CWAC Planning Officer Rob Charnley to seek an explanation of the activity taking pace and copy CWAC Cllr P Bowers in on the correspondence.

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