



Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held at 7.00pm in the Parish Office at Helsby Community Sports Club on Monday 20th June 2022

Present:

Cllr. Terry O'Neill (Chairman)

Cllr. Sarah Temple

Cllr. Peter Duffy

Also present:

Claire Jones (Parish Clerk)

1. Election of Chairman – It was **RESOLVED** that **Cllr. O'Neill be elected as Chairman – F20/22.**
2. Election of Vice Chairman – It was **RESOLVED** that **Cllr. Duffy be elected as Vice Chairman – F21/22.**
3. It was outlined that Cllr. Garrity had requested to join the committee. As all wards were already represented by at least one member and as Cllr. Garrity was not Chair, Vice Chair or Chair of a Committee, the Clerk outlined that he did not strictly meet the criteria to join according to the Council's Standing Orders. However, given his financial interests, it was felt that his membership could be beneficial. It was agreed that the matter would be reviewed again at the next meeting in September once Cllr. Garrity had completed his induction and attended a number of Full Council meetings.
4. Public Participation – It was **RESOLVED** that **the meeting be suspended for public participation – F22/22.** There being no matters brought to the Committee's attention, it was **RESOLVED** that **Public Air Time be closed and the meeting reconvened – F23/22.**
5. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr. Branigan. Cllr. Gardner did not attend.
6. Declarations of Members' Interests. None were received/reported.
7. Confirmation of Previous Minutes. It was **RESOLVED** that **the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 4th April 2022 be accepted as accurate and duly signed by the Chairman – F24/22.**
8. Matters arising. No matters were raised.

9. Members noted the grants and earmarked reserves carried forward from 2021/22 and also provided for, received and spent in the current fiscal year as set out in Appendix 1. It was outlined that the provision of a wheelchair accessible swing was being explored and could be funded through Sherwood Court earmarked funds, general reserves and/or grant and S106 funds. Members considered allocating some funds into earmarked reserves for any upgrades to Helsby Community Centre and an average speed camera pilot project. Cllr. O’Neill agreed to work with Cllr. Branigan to develop a plant improvement life extension plan at the community centre to estimate how much funding might be required. It was also noted that some projects could come out of the community consultation exercise planned later in the year. The clerk agreed to circulate copies of community questionnaires and set up a date for a meeting. It was suggested that a survey could be circulated in the Autumn edition of Helsby News.

Cllr. Temple summarised discussions held by the PCA Committee in relation to a potential landscaping project for the cemetery extension area. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to allocate £5,000 into earmarked reserves to layout the cemetery extension area – F25/22.**

10. The Council’s investment programme was noted as follows:

- Co-Operative Bank Business Select Account - £76,498.48 as at 13 June 2022
- Monmouthshire Building Society Corporate Bonus 90 - £78,478.84 as at 13 June 2022
- Nat West Business Reserve - £55,228.97 as at 13 June 2022
- Nat West Current Account - £62,265.67 as at 13 June 2022
- Nationwide Instant Access - £40,000 as at 13 June 2022

It was **RESOLVED to remove Paul Standing as a signatory of the NatWest account and to add Sarah Temple as a replacement, reserve signatory – F26/22.** Cllr. Temple also agreed to act as a signatory for approval of the monthly payments on a back-up only basis if one of the other 3 signatories were unavailable. The clerk agreed to discuss the addition of a second signatory for approving any online payments with Natwest.

11. Annual Audit – The internal auditor’s recommendations for the year ending 31st March 2022 were considered as follows:

11.1. The Audit Report had one recommendation for 2021/22 and one outstanding issue as noted in the 2020/21 audit as follows:

11.1.1. ISSUE – We have not seen evidence that the Council published the ‘Notice of Conclusion of Audit’ on the authority website before 30th September 2021. We have however seen evidence that the notice was published on a noticeboard. RECOMMENDATION – Please provide for future internal audits a dated screenshot of the Council website evidencing the date the notification was published. ACTION – Noted. Clerk to ensure this is sent in future years.

11.1.2. OUTSTANDING ISSUE FROM 2020/21 – The Council’s general reserve as at 31/3/21 is in excess of 12 months Net Revenue Expenditure (net revenue expenditure is effectively Precept less any loan repayment and/or amounts included in precept for capital projects and transfers to earmarked reserves). Recommendation – the Council should review their general reserves and

consider whether they are being retained for ear-marked schemes. ACTION – funds to be allocated into earmarked resources to layout the cemetery extension area and funds for other projects to be considered later on in the year.

- 11.2. External Audit – it was noted that the AGAR documentation had been sent to PKF Littlejohn and the period for the Exercise of Public Rights had commenced on 16th June in accordance with the external auditor’s instructions.
12. 2022/23 Budget Analysis – income and expenditure as at 13th June 2022 was noted. It was agreed that the clerk would swap any non-barcoded stamps with the Royal Mail in advance of the 31st January 2023 deadline.
13. Review of Section 106 money available – it was noted that the Clerk had contacted CW&C officer, Daniel Lockwood, with a list of queries. It was outlined that two claims for S106 funds would be submitted shortly for the parish field lighting project (around £14,000) and the public art project (£8,000). Cllr. Temple suggested that some S106 funds allocated specifically to the Queens Drive allotment could be spent on the provision of rabbit proof fencing.
14. Participatory Budgeting Event – given that there were significant unspent sums allocated in earmarked reserves under the Queens Jubilee, it was suggested that a participatory budgeting event could be held later in the year to use up these funds. It was outlined that only £289.22 had been spent on Jubilee projects, leaving remaining funds of £9,710.78. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to hold a participatory budgeting event in November 2022 with an allocated budget of £9,000 – F27/22.** It was agreed that the event would be advertised in the Autumn edition of Helsby News.
15. Finance Software Subscription – a report was considered in relation to taking out a subscription with a software company for an online accounting package. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to take out a subscription with Scribe for a trial one-year period at a cost of £697 (annual fee = £400, set up fee = £297) – F28/22.** Cllr. O’Neill requested to participate in any training and set up sessions alongside the clerk.
16. Urgent matters – Cllr. Temple outlined that a gas main had been discovered by the contractors working on the parish field lighting project which had needed to be disconnected. Members noted that there would be cost implications of reconnecting the gas supply to the guide hut and potentially resetting appliances. It was agreed that the clerk would make contact with the guides to offer to cover the costs of any fees associated with this work.

17. Date of next meeting – Monday 26th September 2022.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm

Chairman’s signature Dated.....

APPENDIX 1: Grants and earmarked reserves for identified projects (as at 13th June 2022)

Particulars	c/f 2020-21 £	Provided 2021-22 £	Usage 2021-22 £	Balance 31.3.22 £	Provided 2022-23 £	Planned Usage 2022-23 £	Expected Balance 31.3.23 £
SPECIFIED EARMARKED RESERVES							
Future burial provision	24,671	2,843	0	27,514	3,633	0	31,147
Play area improvements/upgrades	16,000	8,000	0	24,000	8,000	0	32,000
Public consultation	0	2,000	0	2,000	0	2,000	0
Sherwood Court projects	0	10,000	0	10,000	0	10,000	0
Queens Platinum Jubilee	0	10,000	0	10,000	0	10,000 ^a	0
Total	40,671	32,843	0	73,514	11,633	22,000	63,147
GRANTS							
CW&C Covid HPC	7,336	0	6,448 ^b	888	0	888	0
Arts Council - Helsby Art of Here plus S106	9,030 ^c	0	7,448	1,582	9,100	10,682	0
Community Policing Fund 2020-21	500	0	500	0	0	0	0
CW&C Members Budget table tennis table	0	500	0	500	0	500	0
S106 reclaim - picnic tables	0	2,634	2,634	0	0	0	0
S106 reclaim – parish field lighting	0	0	0	0	13,908	13,908	0
Protos grant for CCTV project	0	0	0	0	4,000 ^d	4,000	0
Total	16,866	3,134	17,030	2,970	27,008	29,978	0
TOTAL	57,537	35,977	17,030	76,484	38,641	51,978	63,147
Total grants and earmarked reserves balance at 31st March 2022				76,484	Balance at 31st March 2023		63,147

^a Only £289.22 spent on Jubilee projects. Proposal to use the remaining monies for a 2022 Helsby Grant Show.

^b COVID grant money in 2021/22 used for noticeboard in 2020/21 (£2,664) and for office relocation in 2021/22 (£6,448). Remaining £888 to be used to partly fund new community noticeboards.

^c Another £1,100 due from Arts Council plus £8,000 S106 monies due in 2022/23. £15,632 spent so far.

^d Protos grant for CCTV project - £4,000 awarded in 2021/22 but not claimed as yet.