



Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Helsby Parish Council held in the Upper Hall at Helsby Methodist Church at 7.00pm on Monday 11th March 2024

Present:

Cllr. Mike Branigan – Chair
Cllr. Chris Ellams

Cllr. Terry O’Neill
Cllr. Mark Atkinson

Cllr. Rob Foreman
Cllr. Rob Nicklin

Claire Jones, Parish Clerk
Neil Flanagan, Police Community Support Officer (Item 4 only)
Marj Thoburn representing Helsby News
CW&C Borough Councillor representing Helsby Ward, Chris Copeman

1. Public Participation - No matters were raised.
2. Apologies were noted from Cllrs. Marsh and Temple.
3. Cllr. O’Neill declared non-pecuniary interests in matters relating to the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (Item 13).
4. Policing Update. Members noted the contents of PCSO Flanagan’s latest report. The Clerk confirmed dates for the ward walks with PCSO Flanagan in Central Ward (3rd April at 1pm) and South Ward (15th April at 10am). It was outlined that the North Ward walk would be arranged shortly.
5. It was **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Helsby Parish Council held on 12th February 2024 were accepted as accurate and were duly signed by the Chair – HPC26/24.**
6. Clerk’s report – The following was noted:
 - Item 6 – CW&C’s Legal Department would be making contact with the parish council’s solicitor in relation to the Notice to Alter for Sherwood Court and that there were likely to be additional legal costs as a result;
 - Item 10.4 – the date of the next meeting with CW&C and Frodsham Town Council had been postponed from 20th March until 17th April; and
 - Item 13.3 – comments on CW&C’s Local Plan had been submitted.
7. Chair’s Announcements – The Chair thanked those that had helped with the 2024 Grant Show and all agreed that it had been a successful event.
8. Cheshire West and Chester Council matters – Cllr. Copeman outlined that a new housing strategy was currently out for consultation via the ‘Participate Now’ section of CW&C’s website. It was noted that Old Chester Road would be closed for 3 weeks from 18th March

due to gas pipe replacement works. Cllr. Copeman outlined that he was looking into the impact of PCB's locally. He agreed to contact the Highways department to investigate how they determined the highways improvement programme in the borough for the first quarter of 2024. The Clerk agreed to set up a meeting with the consultants for the proposed Runcorn Carbon Dioxide Spur Pipeline (part of the HyNet project).

9. Cllr. O'Neill presented the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 19th February 2024. The following was noted/agreed:

9.1 It was **RESOLVED to formally adopt the revised Environment Committee Section of the Standing Orders – HPC27/24;**

9.2 It was noted that the next Climate Change Working Group meeting would be held on 14th March; and

9.3 The Clerk outlined that a commemorative bench had been ordered and this had been offered to St Paul's Church as part of their new memorial garden project.

10. Miscellaneous Matters

10.1 It was noted that the 2024 Helsby Grant Show event held at Helsby Community Sports Club on 27th February had been very well attended by local community groups and that 10 grants of £1,000 had been awarded. Thanks was expressed to Marj Thoburn for the article about the show in Helsby News.

10.2 Cllr. Branigan outlined that the Clerk's annual appraisal had been held on 6th March and a report of recommended actions raised during the appraisal was noted. It was **RESOLVED to approve the Clerk's workplan for 2024 – HPC28/24.** It was noted that a further report on the Clerk's salary and working hours would be brought to the next meeting under confidential matters.

10.3 Members noted the contents of the recent tree surveys for Helsby Public Cemetery, Maltby Triangle, Sherwood Court and the play area/parish field along with quotes to tackle any recommended high and medium priority tree work. It was **RESOLVED to approve the quote of £1,450 plus VAT from Frodsham Tree Solutions to fell 2 pines at Sherwood Court and to remove an ash tree and reduce the canopy of a birch tree on the parish field – HPC29/24.** It was also **RESOLVED not to seek alternative quotes on this occasion as this work fell within the remit of the existing Tree Survey/Maintenance Contract 2022 to 2025 with Frodsham Tree Solutions – HPC30/24.**

10.4 It was **RESOLVED to approve a quote from Northwich Town Council to replace the zip wire seat and chain unit in the play area at a cost of £250 plus VAT – HPC31/24.**

10.5 It was **RESOLVED to give retrospective approval for KDE to carry out PAT tests in the parish office at a cost of £80 plus VAT (payment made under Standing Order 16(b) Delegation to the Responsible Financial Officer) – HPC32/24.**

10.6 Members noted that their online Microsoft 365 training with CloudyIT had been scheduled on 21st March at 6.30pm. The Clerk agreed to arrange a second date for any councillors that were not able to attend.

10.7 It was **RESOLVED to approve RoSPA Play Safety's annual inspection of the play area and Sherwood Court at a cost of £78.00 + VAT per play area plus any additional items over five per play area at a cost of £4 + VAT per additional item and to pay an additional £50 plus VAT for Helsby Garden Service to accompany the inspector during the inspections – HPC33/24.**

- 10.8 It was **RESOLVED to approve the Council’s Association Membership for 2024 with Helsby Community Association at a cost of £12.00 – HPC34/24.**
- 10.9 In relation to the average speed camera pilot project, it was noted that the funding agreement dated 22nd January 2024 had been signed by both parties. It was outlined that the Police and Crime Commissioner would now work with the highways team at CW&C to implement the system. It was also noted that an article about the project would appear in the next edition of Helsby News.
- 10.10 The Clerk outlined that Above Zero Landscape Architecture had been commissioned to commence work on the cemetery extension project. It was noted that additional funds might be required for the construction phase of the work and that this would be discussed by the Finance Committee at their next meeting.
11. Burial grant approvals - It was **RESOLVED to grant the following applications for the Exclusive Rights of Burial for a term of 75 years in Helsby Public Cemetery: plot C28 from Mrs Milne of Runcorn and plot CRS22 from Mrs Johnson of Helsby– HPC35/24.**
12. Councillor surgery update. It was noted that the March surgery had been cancelled and that Cllrs. Temple and O’Neill were scheduled to attend the next surgery at the Tesco checkouts on 13th April. Cllr. Nicklin agreed to investigate a new HPC pull up banner for future events. It was also suggested that future surgeries could focus on a single topic to attract more engagement. The following was noted in relation to the last Communications Working group meeting as held on 26th February: informal discussions with residents had shown that people preferred a printed copy of the Helsby News; group members were keen on more staff resources to promote the council via social media; councillors to produce articles on themselves for their local ward noticeboard; and Helsby News was the agenda item for the next meeting on 29th April.
13. Outside Body Reports – Cllr. O’Neill summarised notes from the last ChALC Board meeting held on 14th February. He also outlined the main points raised at the Joint CW&C and ChALC Town and Parish Council Conference held on 6th March. The Clerk agreed to investigate the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS).
14. Planning
- 14.1 It was **RESOLVED to approve the responses as below in relation to the following planning applications:**
- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 24/00168/FUL | 4 Grove Bank Chester Road Helsby
Single storey front porch extension, replacement of and alterations to existing rear single storey projections, alterations to front driveway and gateway access to include new 1 metre gate and fence
No objections – HPC36/24. |
| 23/01527/FUL | Priestner Buildings Chester Road Helsby
Change of use to a Tap Room - Bar (retrospective)
No comments – CW&C did not authorise an extension to the deadline |

24/00214/FUL Bird Hurst Vicarage Lane Helsby
 Single storey side extension and loft conversion with rear facing dormer
No objections – HPC37/24.

24/00617/TPO Windcliffe Alvanley Road Helsby
 Cypress species tree to be section felled to ground to avoid falling on electricity pole/apparatus
No objections – HPC38/24.

- 14.2 Planning notifications – the latest planning notification report was noted.
- 14.3 A pre-consultation letter and associated drawings in relation to a proposed radio base station installation at Meadow Farm, Lower Rake Lane were noted.
- 14.4 The Dunham on the Hill and Hapsford Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code documents were noted.
- 14.5 The revised affordable housing statement for Cable Drive (20/00324/FUL) as prepared by Onward Homes Ltd was noted and no further comments were raised.
- 14.6 Member reports – the Clerk outlined that she had reported a number of obtrusive ‘for sale’ signs to enforcement officers at CW&C.

15. Financial Matters

- 15.1 It was **RESOLVED that the bank reconciliation sheet detailing £278,472.11 held in balances as at 29th February 2024 be accepted as accurate – HPC39/24.**
- 15.2 It was **RESOLVED that the following payments totalling £13,671.81 paid by either standing order, direct debit, bank transfer, cheque or under delegated authority for February be approved and duly noted – HPC40/24.** The following receipts totalling £547.77 were also noted:

Payments

Claire Jones	Expenses	£23.40
BT	Phone and broadband	£83.06
Helsby Garden Services	General maintenance	£1,285.60
HPC staff	Salaries Feb 2024	£1,757.27
HMRC	Tax and NI deductions	£796.79
Pro Print Solutions	Photocopier charges	£12.00
Water Plus	Water - community centre	£35.96
Scottish Power	Electricity - community centre	£257.00
Water Plus	Allotment water	£33.66
Northwich Town Council	Play inspections	£90.00
NEST	Pension contribution	£625.57
AMR Technical	Christmas lighting	£8,594.40
Kittle Photography	ID cards	£77.10

Receipts

Blackwells	Memorial stone fees	£100.00
D Stuart	Deed transfer fees	£70.00

S Rigby	Burial fees	£290.00
Natwest	Interest Feb 24	£87.77

15.3 It was noted that a bank transfer of £40,000 had been made from the Natwest Business Reserve Account to the Natwest Current Account to cover payments to the end of March 2024.

16. The outstanding actions log was noted.

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

18 th March	Policy and Procedures Committee (postponed to May)
8 th April	Finance Committee
15 th April	Parish Council meeting (note 3 rd Monday of month)

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

Chair's signature..... Dated.....