



# 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 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Present:

Cllr. Mike Branigan – Chair  
Cllr. Chris Ellams

Cllr. Terry O’Neill  
Cllr. Mark Atkinson

Cllr. Margaret Marsh

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

Cllr. Rob Nicklin (virtual attendance – no voting rights)

1. Public Participation - No matters were raised.
2. Apologies were noted from Cllrs. Foreman, Stothard and Temple.
3. Cllr. O’Neill declared non-pecuniary interests in matters relating to the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (Item 12).
4. Policing Update. Members noted the contents of PCSO Flanagan’s latest report. It was agreed that the clerk would arrange dates for several ward walks with councillors and PCSO Flanagan.
5. It was **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Helsby Parish Council held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were accepted as accurate and were duly signed by the Chair – HPC18/24.**
6. Clerk’s report – The following was noted:
  - Item 6 - Thrifty’s had been contacted about the poor state of the exterior of the building but no response had been received. A reminder was given about CW&C/ChALC’s Town and Parish Council conference on 6<sup>th</sup> March;
  - Item 11 – 2024/25 precept request had been sent to CW&C;
  - Item 12.1 – still waiting for legal paperwork from CW&C in relation to Sherwood Court and no fees had been paid as yet;
  - CW&C had confirmed that the deadline for the vacancy in South Ward had passed and the council could now co-opt.
7. Chair’s Announcements – No matters were raised.
8. Cheshire West and Chester Council matters – Cllr. Copeman outlined that the owner of the land above the quarry tunnel had kindly shared several legal documents with him showing

that Vale Royal Borough Council had taken responsibility for the quarry tunnel maintenance. He confirmed that these documents had been shared with CW&C's legal department. It was noted that many councils across the country, including CW&C, were facing financial difficulties and ways in which local areas could help were explored. It was noted that a crew from Shropshire had been brought in as a temporary measure to clear the backlog of potholes around the county. Cllr. Copeman outlined that he had arranged monthly meetings with the highways team in relation to any progress at Rake Lane Cottage. As an interim measure, some members suggested re-opening the road as a single lane with temporary traffic lights.

9. Cllr. Nicklin presented the minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The following was noted/agreed:
  - 9.1 It was **RESOLVED to progress a S106 application for £1,235 from the Land at Springfields (19/04572/FUL) development for two projects at the Queens Drive allotments (to rabbit-proof the site and to improve the drainage in the entrance roadway to prevent any waterlogging) – HPC19/24**; and
  - 9.2 One quote had been received in relation to a design for the park masterplan project. It had been agreed to explore several other options before taking this further.

#### 10. Miscellaneous Matters

- 10.1 A report was considered in relation to the introduction of average speed cameras in Helsby. It was noted that as a potential trial site for the scheme, Helsby could be saving up to £120,000 over the project lifetime as the Police and Crime Commissioner would be covering any maintenance costs. The benefits to the community of cutting speeding traffic through the village was also acknowledged. The following was **RESOLVED: to approve the implementation of an average speed camera pilot project (2 camera system with no zoning) in partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire at a cost of £54,676; to sign the funding agreement as dated 22 January 2024; and to use the £50,000 set aside in earmarked funds for the project along with any additional funds being taken from the council's earmarked Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds – HPC20/24**. The Clerk agreed to provide an article in the Helsby News about the project and to explore any implications of the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner elections on the scheme.
- 10.2 It was noted that 14 local community groups had applied to the 2024 Helsby Grant Show. Members agreed that any applicants that did not yet have a bank account in the organisation's name could attend the event but any funds would only be released once an appropriate account had been opened. It was also agreed that 2 groups that had submitted a joint bid were eligible to apply.
- 10.3 It was **RESOLVED to give retrospective approval for KDE to check and make safe any electrical connections in planters at Sherwood Court at a cost of £331.36 (payment made under Standing Order 16(b) Delegation to the Responsible Financial Officer) – HPC21/24**.
- 10.4 It was noted that a meeting had been held with Frodsham Town Council about the potential creation of a joint youth council. The clerk asked for any volunteers that might wish to get involved with such an initiative. Members also noted that a joint meeting had been held with Frodsham Town Council and Cheshire West and Chester

- Council on 26<sup>th</sup> January and the next one would be held on 20<sup>th</sup> March. The clerk agreed to circulate the minutes in due course.
- 10.5 It was noted that CW&C had recently installed LED lighting in Helsby Community Centre at no cost to the parish council.
- 10.6 Members considered CW&C's West Cheshire Museums and Libraries Consultation 2024 and agreed not to respond. It was noted that there was a proposal to reduce the opening hours at Helsby Library by two hours on Wednesdays.
- 10.7 It was agreed that the council's IT upgrade had been successful and that all councillors and the clerk were now using gov.uk e-mail addresses via their 365 Business accounts. It was **RESOLVED for Cloudy IT to migrate Cllr. Temple's old council e-mails from her personal account to the new business account at a cost of £85 – HPC22/24**. No other councillors expressed an interest in this service. The clerk agreed to bring a proposal to hold full council meetings in the parish office to a future meeting.
11. Councillor surgery update. It was noted that no members of the public had attended the last surgery which was held in the Tesco café on 10<sup>th</sup> February. Cllrs. Marsh and Branigan agreed to attend the next surgery on 9<sup>th</sup> March and Cllr. O'Neill would attend on 13<sup>th</sup> April. Cllr. Nicklin agreed to source a pull up banner for future events.
12. Outside Body Reports – it was noted that Cllr. Temple had circulated the latest update from Protos.
13. Planning
- 13.1 It was **RESOLVED to approve the response as below in relation to the following planning application:**
- 24/00261/FUL** Land At Protos (Ince Resource Recovery Park)  
Full planning permission for the construction and operation of a post combustion Carbon Dioxide (CO<sup>2</sup>) Capture Facility  
**No objections – HPC23/24.**
- 13.2 Planning notifications – The latest planning notification report was noted. The Clerk outlined that the council's own application 23/02224/FUL (renewal of planning permission 16/00749/FUL for siting of a temporary container) had been approved for another 5 years to 2029.
- 13.3 It was agreed to send Cllr. Temple's comments in response to the CW&C's Local Plan initial evidence base consultation exercise on employment areas and places. Members were requested to forward any comments on the land availability assessment in advance of the deadline of 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024. It was agreed not to put forward any green investment site suggestions.
- 13.4 Member reports – no matters were raised.
14. Financial Matters
- 14.1 It was **RESOLVED that the bank reconciliation sheet detailing £291,596.15 held in balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 be accepted as accurate – HPC24/24.**

14.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the following payments totalling **£11,270.77** paid by either **standing order, direct debit, bank transfer, cheque or under delegated authority for January be approved and duly noted – HPC25/24**. The following receipts totalling £4,594.42 were also noted:

**Payments**

Claire Jones	Expenses	£30.86
BT	Phone and broadband	£83.06
Helsby Garden Services	General maintenance	£681.12
HPC staff	Salaries Jan 2024	£1,757.47
HMRC	Tax and NI deductions	£796.59
Pro Print Solutions	Photocopier charges	£19.08
Northwich Town Council	Play inspections	£180.00
Water Plus	Water - community centre	£35.96
Scottish Power	Electricity - community centre	£257.00
Mega Electrical	Christmas Tree	£1,650.00
Water Plus	Allotment water	£19.81
Grenke Leasing	Photocopier lease	£108.00
Northwich Town Council	Play inspections	£90.00
NMC Design & Print	Helsby News printing	£765.00
Hilldale Grounds Maintenance	Tree work (cemetery)	£216.00
Blue Arrow	Ho Ho Traffic management	£1,260.00
GeoXphere Ltd	Parish Online subscription	£120.00
Widnes Fabrication	Gate and railing repairs	£1,434.00
Npower Solutions	Bridge lighting	£298.42
Cloudy IT	IT equipment for office	£296.39
Scribe	End of year health check	£58.80
D M Payroll	Payroll support	£90.00
KDE Ltd	Electrical work at Sherwood	£397.64
NEST	Pension contribution	£625.57

**Receipts**

RSK	Rent for Eccies	£4,394.67
Blackwells	Memorial stone fees	£100.00
Natwest	Interest Jan 24	£99.75

14.3 Bank signatories – it was agreed to continue with the bank mandate changes as resolved at the meeting held last November.

15. The outstanding actions log was noted. The Clerk outlined that she would organise a date for her annual appraisal shortly.

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

19 <sup>th</sup> February	Environment Committee
11 <sup>th</sup> March	Full Council meeting

The meeting closed at 8.24pm

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