



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 13th November 2023

Present:

Cllr. Mike Branigan – Chair
Cllr. Rob Nicklin

Cllr. Sarah Temple
Cllr. Chris Ellams

Cllr. Terry O'Neill
Cllr. Margaret Marsh

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

1. Public Participation - Members received an update about the latest activity at Helsby Methodist Church. It was noted that the church had recently been successful in gaining grant funding through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and would be able to provide help to households in need.
2. Apologies were noted from Cllrs. Stothard, Atkinson and Duffy.
3. Cllr. O'Neill declared non-pecuniary interests in matters relating to the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (Item 13). It was **RESOLVED to grant dispensations for precept setting to Cllrs. Marsh, Branigan and Stothard to 1st May 2027 – HPC178/23.**
4. Policing Update. Members noted the contents of PCSO Flanagan's latest report.
5. It was **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Helsby Parish Council held on 9th October 2023 were accepted as accurate and were duly signed by the Chair – HPC179/23.**
6. Clerks' report – The following was noted:
 - Waiting for a 'Licence to Alter' document from CW&C in order to proceed with the Sherwood Court upgrade work;
 - Need for more parish councillors, possibility of a recruitment drive in 2024;
 - Next Helsby Grant Show booked on 27th Feb at Helsby Community Sports Club;
 - Cardiac Arrest Response Seminar booked on 17th January also at HCSC. It was noted that up to 60 people could attend;
 - Basket swing replaced in play area and 7 new black planters now in place;
 - Meeting held with Frodsham Town Council and CW&C on 31st October. Minutes circulated for information and next meeting set as 7th February;
 - General Maintenance Contract was being advertised on the government's Contracts Finder website – deadline for responses set as 8th December;

- Met With CW&C's Play Project Officer to discuss wheelchair accessible play equipment; and
 - Christmas lights switch on noted as 17th November.
7. Chair's Announcements – the Chair thanked Cllr. Ellams for his help in putting up the remembrance poppies and arranged a date to take them down. Volunteer marshals were reminded about the Ho Ho Helsby event on 2nd December. Councillors remembered a previous parish councillor and Chair, Sam Johnson, who had died recently.
 8. Cheshire West and Chester Council matters – Cllr. Copeman outlined that there had been some interest in the Climate Change Working Group. Cllrs. O'Neill and Nicklin volunteered to join the group. The clerk agreed to arrange the inaugural meeting. It was noted that CW&C's wildflower team would be planting a new wildflower remembrance garden on the grassed area adjacent to St. Paul's Church. It was suggested that the parish council could locate a commemorative bench there as part of the project. Cllr. Copeman agreed to liaise with St. Paul's vicar on this matter. Concern was expressed about the impact of an additional 700 daily lorry movements to and from the Protos site and Cllr. Copeman outlined that he was seeking to encourage further rail usage at the development.
 9. Members noted the draft minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held on 30th October 2023.
 10. Miscellaneous Matters
 - 10.1 A report on the Council's existing IT systems was noted and members considered three quotes from specialist IT companies to migrate to a Microsoft 365 Business account and for ongoing IT support. It was **RESOLVED to use the services of Company A to manage the transfer to a Microsoft 365 Business account at a cost of around £1,500 plus VAT, to include one annual subscription to Microsoft 365 Business Standard and ten annual subscriptions to Microsoft 365 Business Basic - HPC180/23**. It was also **RESOLVED to transfer all staff and councillor emails to the 365 platform (including registering for a .gov.uk domain), for Company A to carry out any necessary training at a cost of up to £550 plus VAT and to provide ongoing IT support to the council at an annual cost of £216 plus VAT - HPC181/23**. In addition, members considered three quotes for video conferencing systems. It was **RESOLVED to purchase the Meeting Owl 3 system at a cost of £1,049 - HPC182/23**. Whilst the most expensive of the three quotes, members agreed that the system had worked well at the last meeting, and it was the model most used by other town and parish councils.
 - 10.2 A report was noted in relation to the future of the guide hut on the parish field. In the first instance, it was **RESOLVED to permit Girlguiding Cheshire Forest to place adverts locally to seek a new tenant for the guide hut - HPC183/23**.
 - 10.3 Correspondence from Onward Homes Ltd was noted. It was outlined that they were currently seeking a new contractor for the Land at Cable Drive development and were hoping to recommence on-site works by March 2024. Members considered the proposed affordable housing scheme for the 215 new properties. It was agreed that the clerk would respond to Onward Homes to refer them to the relevant statement in the Helsby Neighbourhood Plan and to ask for clarification on how long local people

- had to express an interest before homes were offered to people from a wider catchment area.
- 10.4 It was **RESOLVED in principle to purchase a commemorative bench for the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in June 2024 at a cost of £1,575 plus VAT subject to the confirmation of an appropriate location - HPC184/23.**
 - 10.5 Cllr. Nicklin gave an update from the Communications Working Group and agreed to circulate the latest minutes in due course. Councillors were requested to seek views from a small sample of the community to establish their views on parish council communications and Helsby News. It was noted that a replacement editor for the newsletter would need to be sought in 2024 and may need to be a paid position in the future. It was agreed that the group would consider the development of a terms of reference at their next meeting (to be arranged).
 - 10.6 It was **RESOLVED to amend resolution HPC171/23 in relation to a donation of £325 to the British Legion for the 2023 Poppy Appeal (donation should be £327.50 as suggested donation for wreath had increased by £2.50) - HPC185/23.**
 - 10.7 It was **RESOLVED to give retrospective approval for the purchase of Christmas lighting replacement parts at a total cost of £344.77 plus VAT (payment made under Standing Order 16(b) Delegation to the Responsible Financial Officer) - HPC186/23.** Members considered the purchase of several lit spheres but given the considerable cost, it was agreed to look at various alternatives for 2024 (e.g. traditional coloured bulbs).
 - 10.8 It was noted that the Local Government Pay Claim 2023/4 was for a flat rate increase of £1,925 for scale points up to SCP 43 with effect from 1 April 2023. The clerk outlined that she had been in contact with the council's payroll provider to make the necessary adjustments.
 - 10.9 It was **RESOLVED to amend resolution HPC168/23 to add that in the case of a long-term absence of the parish clerk, online banking payments could be created by one Class B user (but they may not authorise the release of payments during the same pay period) and to ensure that any changes to the banking mandate/direct debit payments were approved by Full Council rather than the Finance Committee - HPC187/23.**
 - 10.10 It was **RESOLVED to give retrospective approval for the purchase of a replacement Body Twist Pod footplate at a cost of £79.00 plus VAT (payment made under Standing Order 16(b) Delegation to the Responsible Financial Officer) - HPC188/23.**
 - 10.11 It was **RESOLVED to approve an additional payment of £108.33 plus VAT for steel green flashing as part of the cemetery garage roof project (see previous resolution HPC149/23) - HPC189/23.**
 - 10.12 Members considered a request for funding from the Little Robins' Baby & Toddler Group. It was **RESOLVED to pay for room hire at Helsby Community Centre on behalf of the group at £22.50 per session in January and February 2024 - HPC190/23.** Beyond that, it was agreed that the group would be advised to apply for funding through the Grant Show in February.
 - 10.13 It was **RESOLVED to adopt ChALC's Cheshire Officer/Member Protocol - HPC191/23.**
11. Councillor surgery update – it was noted that the latest surgery had been held on 21st October in the Tesco café but there had been no attendees. Cllrs. Nicklin and O'Neill agreed to attend the next surgery on 18th November at the tearooms. It was agreed that future surgeries would be held on the Saturday preceding the second Monday of every month.

12. Burial grant approvals - it was **RESOLVED to grant an application for the Exclusive Rights of Burial for a term of 75 years for plot C30 received from Mr Cumming of Helsby — HPC192/23.**

13. Outside Body Reports – Cllr. Temple noted that the next Protos Community Forum would be held on 15th November and outlined that she had circulated some information about meetings relating to the Energy from Waste carbon capture proposal. It was noted that the next meeting of Cycle North Cheshire would be held on 14th November. Members noted that further discussions had been held in relation to the proposed information board at Helsby Station. Cllr. O’Neill outlined that some costings were being prepared for the average speed camera pilot and that Frodsham Town Council had also expressed an interest in taking part.

14. Planning

14.1 It was **RESOLVED to approve the responses as below in relation to the following planning applications:**

23/03077/LDC Teuthill Farm Tarvin Road Frodsham
For a period of excess of the requisite 10 years, the land and buildings have been used for the processing, storage and distribution of potatoes
No objections - HPC193/23

23/03145/FUL 3 Portland Place Helsby
Rendering the external fabric of the property, installation of new windows, storm porch and a dormer window to the first floor, and a proposed carport to the rear
Neither objects to nor supports but comments on the location of the proposed garage and carport and the colour of the render - HPC194/23

It was **RESOLVED to continue the meeting beyond a period of two hours in order to complete the remaining items on the agenda - HPC195/23.**

14.2 Planning notifications – The latest planning notification report was noted.

14.3 Member reports – no matters were raised.

15. Financial Matters

15.1 It was **RESOLVED that the bank reconciliation sheet detailing £316,165.55 held in balances as at 31st October 2023 be accepted as accurate – HPC196/23.**

15.2 It was **RESOLVED that the following payments totalling £14,959.16 paid by either standing order, direct debit, bank transfer, cheque or under delegated authority for October be approved and duly noted – HPC197/23.** The following receipts totalling £3,075.98 were also noted:

Payments

BT line rental	British Telecommunications	£83.06
Claire Jones	Expenses	£87.38
Helsby Garden Services	General maintenance	£1,971.38
HPC Staff	Salaries Oct 2023	£1,624.62
HMRC	Tax and NI deductions	£765.08
ChALC	Training course	£30.00
CW&C	Election fees	£591.00
Water Plus	Allotment water charge	£29.57
Countrywide	Grass cutting	£503.83
Grenke Leasing	Photocopier lease fee	£108.00
Pro Print Solutions	Photocopier charges	£12.30
ChALC	Induction course	£25.00
Carswell Creative	Helsby News design	£240.00
The Poppy Appeal	Wreath and poppies	£327.25
Village Produce Association	Compost etc.	£305.50
Npower	Bridge lighting	£178.07
Helsby Methodist Church	Room hire	£160.00
Amberol	Planters x 10	£5,100.41
Water Plus	Water - community centre	£35.96
Scottish Power	Electricity - community centre	£298.00
Pro Print Solutions	Photocopying costs	£14.57
NMC Design and Print	Helsby News printing	£765.00
HCSC	Service charge	£1,995.43
SLCC Cheshire Branch	Conference fees	£35.00

Receipts

Various	Allotment rents	£114.00
CW&C	S106 Reclaim	£2,318.00
Natwest	Interest Oct 23	£96.38
Co-op	Interest Apr-Oct 23	£547.60

15.3 It was **RESOLVED to remove Cllrs. Temple and Duffy as signatories from both NatWest bank accounts and to add Cllrs. Nicklin and Atkinson as signatories for both accounts - HPC198/23.**

16. The outstanding actions log was noted.

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

4 th December	Policy and Procedures Committee (moved from 20/11/23)
11 th December	Full Parish Council meeting

The meeting closed at 9.04pm

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