



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 9th October 2023

Present:

Cllr. Chris Ellams – Chair
Cllr. Rob Nicklin

Cllr. Sarah Temple
Cllr. Mark Atkinson

Cllr. Terry O'Neill

Claire Jones, Parish Clerk
Neil Flanagan, Police Community Support Officer (Item 4 only)
Marj Thoburn representing Helsby News
Cllr. Rob Foreman (virtual attendance – no voting rights)

Prior to the meeting, Pete Swift, Managing Director of Planit-IE, gave a presentation on the preparation of masterplans in public open spaces.

1. Public Participation. No members of the public were present. Members noted a written report from Helsby Methodist Church about the new Helsby Community Link Hub. It was also noted that RSK were looking to distribute 5 litre bottles of disinfectant to local community groups. Cllr. Nicklin agreed to forward any relevant contact details.
2. Apologies were noted from Cllrs. Stothard, Branigan, Duffy and Marsh.
3. Cllr. O'Neill declared non-pecuniary interests in matters relating to the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (Item 14). Cllr. Temple declared an interest in 11.6 as her partner was treasurer for the Village Produce Association. Members present signed Request for Dispensation forms in relation to setting the precept over the next 4 years. It was **RESOLVED to grant dispensations for precept setting to Cllrs. Ellams, Temple, O'Neill, Nicklin and Atkinson to 1st May 2027 - HPC163/23.**
4. Policing Update. Members noted the contents of PCSO Flanagan's latest report. It was outlined that there had been 2 incidents of criminal damage/anti-social behaviour in the play area and these had been reported officially via 101 with crime numbers allocated. It was also noted that PCSO Flanagan was looking at several parking issues around the village and he agreed to investigate a report of vehicles driving along Rake Lane in the wrong direction. PCSO Flanagan suggested that lighting the parish field all night (rather than switching the lights off around midnight) might help to reduce anti-social behaviour.
5. It was **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Helsby Parish Council held on 11th September 2023 were accepted as accurate and were duly signed by the Chair – HPC164/23.**
6. Clerks' report – The following was noted:

- Onward Housing had written in relation to the new housing development at Cable Drive. It was noted that they hoped to restart works onsite by March 2024;
 - A meeting had been held with Brookhouse on 5th October to discuss various planning applications. It was noted that they were awaiting decisions from the planning authority.
 - The council's grass cutting contractors had carried out several further cuts at the parish field following complaints made at the last meeting.
 - Several new/revised policies had been added to the website.
 - The new cemetery garage roof would be installed on 30 October.
 - A meeting would be held with representatives from Girlguiding Cheshire Forest to discuss the future of the guide hut.
7. Chair's Announcements – volunteers were sought for a quiz team at Helsby Community Centre on 27th October. The Clerk agreed to circulate dates for a working party to put up the lamppost poppies for Remembrance Day.
8. Cheshire West and Chester Council matters – Apologies were noted from Cllr. Copeman. Members noted the contents of a written report he had submitted, including information about the start of demolition of Rake Lane Cottage. It was requested if Cllr. Copeman could find out further details on the traffic management plan for the development.
9. Cllr. O'Neill presented the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 25th September 2023. The following was noted/agreed:
- 9.1 A report was noted on changing the council's bank account given security concerns. It was **RESOLVED to switch the council's current and savings accounts from NatWest to Unity Trust Bank at a cost of £6 per month and 15p per transaction through a 'partial switch' – HPC165/23;**
- 9.2 It was **RESOLVED to obtain a Unity Corporate Multipay Card at a cost of £3 per month plus a £50 setup fee – HPC166/23;**
- 9.3 It was **RESOLVED for the following councillors to be signatories for the new accounts: Cllrs. O'Neill, Nicklin, Ellams and Atkinson – HPC167/23;**
- 9.4 It was **RESOLVED to adopt the proposed BACS payment process as set out in Appendix 2 of the report with 3 classes of user for the new accounts – HPC168/23.** It was agreed that this text would be included in the Financial Regulations/Internal Control Policy in due course; and
- 9.5 It was noted that the Business Plan 2023-2028 had been adopted and could now be viewed on the council's website, with a recognition that it was a live document and would evolve over time.
10. Cllr. O'Neill presented the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 26th September 2023. The following was noted/agreed:
- 10.1 Members considered a draft terms of reference for a Climate Change Working Group. It was **RESOLVED to approve the document with one amendment: for the group to report to the Environment Committee rather than to Full Council – HPC169/23.**

11. Miscellaneous Matters

- 11.1 It was noted that no election had been called in North Ward following a recent councillor resignation and the Council was now able to co-opt for the vacancy.
- 11.2 Cllr. Nicklin gave an update from the first meeting of the Communications Working Group. The group was seeking volunteers from the council to help to improve communication with stakeholders and the wider community, including preparing future articles for Helsby News in association with the editorial team. Cllrs. Nicklin, O'Neill and Foreman agreed to assist, initially to prepare an article for the Christmas edition. It was outlined that the next meeting would take place on 16th October (Cllr. Foreman agreed to attend remotely). Cllr. Nicklin agreed to bring a report to the next meeting in relation to purchasing a video camera conferencing system for meetings.
- 11.3 A request by Cllr. Copeman for the parish council to part fund a security gate on land behind Callender Gardens/Way was noted. However, members felt it was more appropriate to apply for funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner for this project.
- 11.4 Recent anti-social behaviour issues at the play area were noted. It was reported that Northwich Town Council had advised the council to remove a fire damaged basket swing following their latest inspection. It was noted that the swing unit had now been dismantled at a cost of £50 and it was **RESOLVED to approve a quote of £900 from Northwich Town Council to replace the basket swing as soon as possible using funds from the PCA budget - HPC170/23.**
- 11.5 It was **RESOLVED to approve a donation of £325 to the British Legion for the 2023 Poppy Appeal (includes an additional £75 for 25 lamppost poppies) - HPC171/23.**
- 11.6 It was **RESOLVED to purchase Autumn/Winter bedding plants (around £250) and compost for the village planters (£305.50 – includes a £2 subscription to the Village Produce Society) - HPC172/23.**
- 11.7 It was **RESOLVED to approve a payment of £68.38 to the Council's webhosting service for 12 months - HPC173/23.**
- 11.8 It was **RESOLVED to pay the following service charges for the parish office at Helsby Community Sports Club for 2021-22 (£791.84) and 2022-23 (£871.02) - HPC174/23.** The Clerk agreed to add a caveat specifying that whilst the council had accepted these charges based on recent exceptionally high energy prices, it would expect a return to the Consumer Price Index or any other official index as specified in the lease agreement in future years.
- 11.9 The Clerk outlined that she had received two quotes for the repair of the wall adjacent to the parish field but they were not on a like for like basis. It was agreed that the work would be discussed in more detail at the next PCA Committee meeting.
12. Councillor surgery update – A report from Cllr. Nicklin on the latest surgery held on 16th September was noted. Members noted that 2 residents attended. One idea raised was to plant fruit trees around the village. The other resident mentioned vehicles using Rake Lane the wrong way and suggested a pelican rather than a zebra crossing on Chester Road. The Clerk agreed to find out the criteria from CW&C for designating a pelican crossing. Volunteers were sought for the next surgery scheduled on 14th October.
13. Allotment tenancies – new tenancies were noted as follows: Sillitoe (Plot 4R OCR), Hall (Plot 13L OCR), Manning (Plot 16 OCR) and Giverin (Plot 17 OCR).

14. Outside Body Reports – It was noted that ChALC’s AGM would be held at Helsby Community Sports Club on 12th October. Cllr. O’Neill reported that he had been contacted by a representative about the average speed camera project and would meet the contractor on 13th October to discuss a potential scheme in Helsby. Cllr. O’Neill outlined matters discussed at various meetings he had attended including the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, HyNet and the Northern group of Local Councils. It was noted that Cllr. Temple had circulated minutes from the latest Protos meeting held on 27th September and would circulate the minutes of the latest Cycle North Cheshire meeting held on 12th September. Members noted Cllr. Ellams’ latest transport report.

15. Planning

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

23/02771/FUL 6 Queens Drive Helsby
 Single storey extensions to the side and rear of dwelling, to provide parent accommodation and extension to kitchen facilities
No objections - HPC175/23.

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

15.3 Member reports – no matters were raised.

16. Financial Matters

16.1 It was **RESOLVED that the bank reconciliation sheet detailing £328,375.98 held in balances as at 30th September 2023 be accepted as accurate – HPC176/23.**

16.2 It was **RESOLVED that the following payments totalling £7,167.00 paid by either standing order, direct debit, bank transfer, cheque or under delegated authority for September be approved and duly noted – HPC177/23.** The following receipts totalling £2,138.24 were also noted:

Payments

NEST	Pension contribution	£611.12
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Huntington Parish Council	Play inspection training	£55.00
HMRC	Tax and NI deductions	£765.28
HPC staff	Salaries Sept 2023	£1,624.62
Claire Jones	Expenses	£23.40
BT line rental	British Telecommunications	£83.06
PKF Littlejohn LLP	External Audit Fees	£504.00
Chris Knott Insurance	Allotment insurance	£134.98
Pro Print Solutions	Photocopier charges	£12.00
Helsby Garden Services	General maintenance	£1,894.14
Water Plus	Allotment Water Charge	£10.49
Water Plus	Water - community centre	£35.96
Scottish Power	Electricity - community centre	£298.00

Countrywide	Grass cutting	£503.83
Receipts		
Various	Allotment rents	£1,401.00
Blackwell's Stonecraft	Memorial stone fees	£100.00
J C Clarke	Burial fees	£550.00
Natwest	Interest Sept 23	£87.24

17. The outstanding actions log was noted.

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

30 th October	Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee
13 th November	Parish Council meeting

The meeting closed at 8.54pm

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