

HELSEBY PARISH COUNCIL

BUSINESS PLAN

2023 – 2028

(reviewed Oct 2024)



Contents

INTRODUCTION

What is a parish council business plan?	3
Why has the parish council decided to produce a business plan?	3
Community involvement in the business plan process	3
Monitoring the business plan	3

THE PARISH COUNCIL

An overview of Helsby Parish Council	5
Corporate vision and aims	5
Parish council governance and communication	6
Helsby Parish Council's main areas of responsibility	9
Working with others	11

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Income	12
Expenditure	13
Reserves and developer contributions	14

APPENDIX 1: ACTION PLAN	16
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APPENDIX 2: COMPLETED PROJECTS	18
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Helsby Parish Council would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this business plan.

Introduction

What is a parish council business plan?

It is a statement of the parish council's vision for the village, its **purpose, values, objectives** and **key priorities**. It is not intended to be a traditional 'parish plan' which sets out aims and ambitions that are delivered by the community and partners as a whole. Rather it is a document that sets out what Helsby Parish Council itself can achieve, either directly or by trying to increase its influence on the relevant delivery body, such as Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council.

The aim of the business plan is to give Helsby's residents a clear understanding of what the parish council is trying to achieve and how it intends to deliver this. It details what the parish council intends to focus on over the next five years. The business plan will be used each year to plan activities and set the budget for the coming year.

Why has the parish council decided to produce a business plan?

Having an agreed strategy will provide a framework for the parish council to work within, enabling it to operate in a more consistent and co-ordinated way. Since the development of the business plan has been based on community engagement and involvement, the parish council will become more confident and proactive in its decision-making. At the same time, the business plan will help the local community to have a better understanding of what the parish council does and also to clarify what it doesn't do - in other words, to explain what issues fall under the responsibility of other delivery bodies.

It is a 'live' document which the parish council will update regularly, enabling it to track and monitor its progress against the key priorities. Because the business plan will be publicly available, Helsby's residents will also be able to monitor progress.

Community involvement in the business plan process

To ensure that the business plan truly represents Helsby's best interests, the parish council invited the local community to participate in its development. In 2022, the council agreed to undertake a new consultation, focused on parish council delivery. A short questionnaire was distributed as an insert to the Autumn 2022 edition of Helsby News. The questionnaire was delivered to 2,750 households. Online versions were also available to complete via the online survey tool, Survey Monkey. By the closing date of 31st October 2022, a total of 202 questionnaires had been completed amounting to a return rate of around 7%. The information received in the survey has been considered by our various committees and the comments and views expressed have helped us to draft the business plan.

A summary of the results can be viewed on our website at the link below. Appendix 1 of this document contains a list of project ideas from the survey along with some suggested actions which is updated on a regular basis.

<https://helsbyparish.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/survey-results-V2.pdf>

Monitoring the business plan

Evaluating progress against the list of activities which make up the 'Action Plan' (Appendix 1) will take place at parish council meetings, as necessary. The council will seek to understand the progress made, where further work is needed and if there are any blockages to progress. The whole business plan will be reviewed annually to keep the document relevant and up-to-

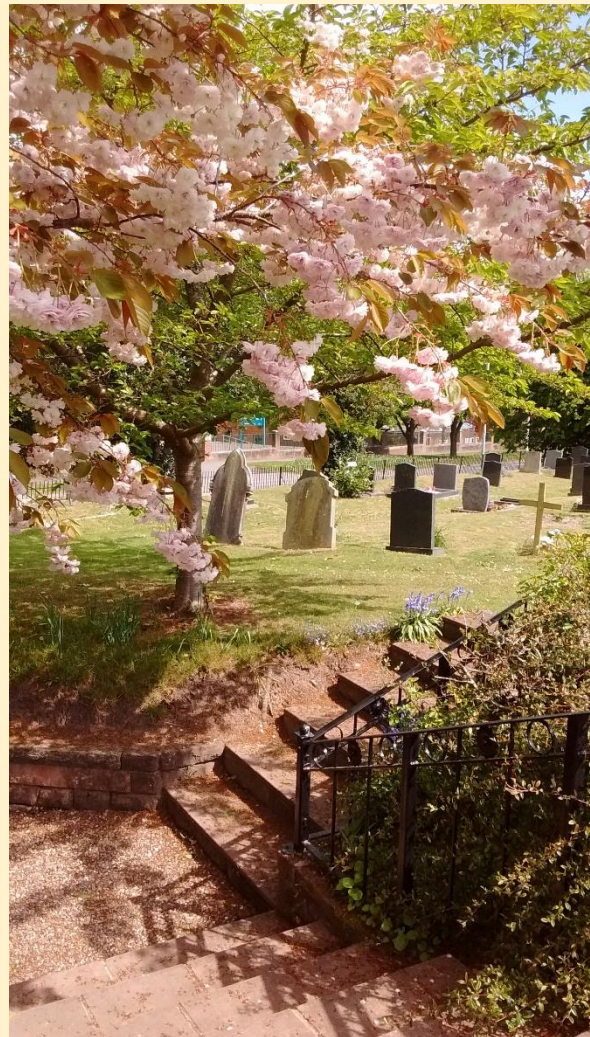
date. It will be available on the Helsby Parish Council website, with hard copies available to view in the parish office.

Our business plan will continue to be the main way of telling you what we are doing to meet the needs of the community. It's a two-way conversation. Please tell us what you think about it. We welcome your comments. If you require any further information that would help you to understand what we are trying to achieve, please let us know. We can also provide additional information on the issues raised in the plan.

It is our intention to review the business plan regularly, publish progress and make any changes considered necessary as a result.

Please respond to:

The Parish Clerk
Helsby Parish Council
Helsby Community Sports Club
Callender Way
Helsby
Cheshire
WA6 0FX
clerk@helsbyparishcouncil.gov.uk



The Parish Council

An overview of Helsby Parish Council

There are various tiers of local government, each with different responsibilities. Helsby Parish Council is the most local tier, with an important role to play in promoting the village of Helsby, representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups in the community. We also maintain local amenities such as recreational areas, two allotment sites and Helsby Public Cemetery.

Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council is the next tier and is responsible for services including planning, car parking, housing, street cleaning, highways (relating to both roads and pavements), education, health and social services, public rights of way and libraries.

Helsby Parish Council has up to fifteen elected councillors who are elected every four years. The chair and vice chair of the council are elected annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May. Councillors are unpaid and commit their time to improving Helsby and maintaining it as an attractive and sustainable place in which to live, visit and to do business. The latest elections were held in May 2023.

By law, the council can employ staff as it thinks necessary to carry out its functions and duties. Helsby Parish Council currently employs one member of staff who acts as the clerk and responsible financial officer. Also known as the 'proper officer', the clerk is head of the council's administration. Their overall responsibility is to carry out the policy decisions of the council and to ensure that business is carried out in accordance with the law. Examples of their work include handling the council's correspondence and queries, preparing agendas and issuing public notices for meetings, taking minutes of council meetings and providing the council with independent and appropriate legal advice.

The council works to its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. These lay down the rules by which we operate and conduct our business. We have based our Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (which are reviewed and revised regularly) on models prepared by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). We also expect our councillors to adhere to the council's Code of Conduct, based on NALC's model and adopted by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

The full council meets monthly (usually on the second Monday of each month) and all meetings are open to the public with a period of time set aside for members of the public to address the council. In addition, the council has four separate committees - Environment, Parks Cemeteries and Allotments, Finance and Policy and Procedures who meet regularly throughout the year. Councillors also sit on numerous local liaison committees and associations to ensure the council remains up-to-date with relevant matters.

Helsby has an electorate of 4,131 (as at March 2024) and a population of 5,274 (ONS, 2021).

Corporate Vision and Aims

The parish council's vision for Helsby is:

A desirable, vibrant and sustainable village, where people want to live, work, study and visit.

The Parish Council's Aims

Helsby Parish Council seeks to:

- Be a professional, competent and caring council;
- Provide a democratic and representational voice for the community;
- Manage services to a good quality standard, in an efficient, effective and responsive way and at an affordable cost where these are provided directly. Where they are not provided directly, to work with others to ensure that they are managed fairly and effectively and in accordance with the needs and expectations of the community;
- Work with its residents, local authorities and other service providers, businesses and community organisations with the aim of achieving a safe, healthy, prosperous and sustainable community.
- Ensure the objectives in the 'made' Helsby Neighbourhood Plan are adhered to;
- Achieve a greater degree of influence over service delivery and development in the village to ensure that the best interests of Helsby are taken into account;
- Encourage the devolution of services to the parish council where they can be delivered more effectively and efficiently, and ideally with no additional cost to the taxpayer;
- Enhance and promote the historic and cultural heritage of Helsby and safeguard its unique identity and its natural and built environment;
- Promote and support local voluntary groups and clubs that wish to assist residents and visitors to Helsby;
- To help to create a socially inclusive and caring community which embraces all its residents, irrespective of age, culture, income, race, sexual orientation or religion, and which seeks to develop their well-being, knowledge, understanding and mutual co-operation.

Parish Council Governance and Communication

Good Governance Objectives

Helsby Parish Council aims to be open and accountable in all it does and to ensure the sound financial management of the council resources. In particular, it aims to:

- be well-informed about the needs and opinions of the parish's residents and businesses by consulting them on major issues;
- improve services to the public by encouraging members and staff to develop their skills by undertaking appropriate training;
- ensure councillors are given the opportunity to keep abreast of new opportunities and policies;
- be a good and fair employer by providing fulfilling work opportunities and conditions for its staff;
- continuously promote public participation in all parish council meetings and initiatives;
- seek accreditation through the Local Council Award Scheme (or alternative 'standards' scheme);
- deal with enquiries and fault reports from members of the public speedily and efficiently; and
- be an effective custodian of the council's property and documents.

The parish council recognises the role of 'good communications' in building positive relationships with the public and with organisations that provide services in the village and as such will continue to seek to improve established channels of communication. We would like to be as accessible and engaging as possible to everyone in the community. 82% of respondents to the recent community consultation wanted us to communicate via Helsby

News. Given this, it might be useful to include more detailed articles with parish council news in future editions. Our agendas and information about the council are displayed on our noticeboard at Helsby Community Sports Club and we also have an up-to-date website which includes all our agenda and minutes and information about our councillors and important council documents.

However, we are aware that communication methods change over time, particularly as new technologies continue to evolve. As 48% of respondents to the community consultation wanted us to communicate via Facebook, we may contribute more widely to the village page and perhaps consider creating our own page in the future. 41% said they wanted us to communicate via our website. One respondent felt that our current website was clunky and could be better. In 2024, we therefore developed a new website based on the latest best practice and accessibility standards (see www.helsbyparishcouncil.gov.uk). 35% of respondents would like us to continue posting information on noticeboards. The council has recently invested in three new boards around the village and we will ensure that both council and community information is posted there on a regular basis.

Since we resumed our councillor surgeries following the Covid outbreak, attendance by members of the public has been disappointingly low. These surgeries provide local residents with the opportunity to discuss local issues with two of our parish councillors. Our CW&C ward councillor and PCSO are also sometimes in attendance. 56% of respondents weren't aware about the surgeries so we will publicise these more widely. Reassuringly, 56% of respondents said that they would be interested in attending so we will continue to hold them and hopefully more people will start to attend. We are now more regularly advertising our surgeries and alternating locations in an attempt to boost attendance.

Like many other local councils, Helsby faces the challenge of finding sufficient people with the time and commitment to serve on the council and needs to co-opt members from time to time. Not having sufficient serving councillors puts an additional strain on the others as the same amount of work has to be undertaken by fewer people. The parish council will continue to encourage more people to serve on the council, including providing opportunities for residents to involve themselves with specific committees that they may have some particular interest or expertise in. It is hoped that this partial co-option will appeal to the community and more volunteers will come forward as a result.

Governance Activities

To achieve the objectives detailed above, the council will:

- Maintain and improve its website, providing information about the parish council and also signposting people to other service providers;
- Post regular news about parish council initiatives on the website and in Helsby News;
- Constantly review and improve other methods of distribution for council information, including the use of social media;
- Provide an opportunity at each council meeting for public questions and comments and hold regular councillor surgeries;
- Make updated versions of the business plan available on the website;
- Share a report covering parish council activities during the previous twelve months at the Annual Meeting;
- Carry out a governance review with any recommendations for changes to be agreed at the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2026;
- Conduct a review of training needs of both councillors and staff following any governance changes and then review annually;
- Invite representatives of outside agencies to address the council on key matters of interest (at both parish council meetings and also at round table discussions);

- Set up working groups with other statutory and voluntary bodies, businesses, residents and other stakeholders as appropriate, in order to facilitate coordinated effort;
- Appoint representatives to appropriate external agencies and committees; and
- Attend relevant conferences and meetings.



Councillor Terry O'Neill planting a commemorative tree for Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee in 2022

Main Areas of Responsibility

Helsby Parish Field, Play Area, Sherwood Court and Maltby Triangle

Helsby Parish Field and Play Area: In 1928, the land was bequeathed to the parish council by James Taylor, a director of Helsby BICC, for use as a play area into perpetuity. The land was designated as a 'Field in Trust' in 2012. The facility is completely run by the parish council and it is overlooked by the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee. The parish council installed a path around the parish field in 2018, followed by lighting and a CCTV system at the play area during 2022.

Sherwood Court is an area of land that was previously occupied by the Sherwood Court Residential Home until a decision was made by Cheshire West and Chester Council to close it in 2003 and it was later demolished. The land laid empty and disused until 2015 when the council devised a scheme to encourage its residents to become more active by using an outdoor gym. This was funded by the parish council obtaining a grant from Tesco and utilising S106 (developer contribution) money and by taking on a lease for the land with CW&C. The facility opened in 2016. The parish council is now responsible for the management, maintenance and development of Sherwood Court and it is overlooked by the Environment Committee. The lease with Cheshire West and Chester Council will expire in 2035.

In 2020, the Council also took on the management of an area of land at the junction of Robin Hood Lane and Chester Road known as Maltby Triangle. This lease with Cheshire West and Chester Council will expire in 2050.

Allotments

The parish council owns land at Old Chester Road and Queens Drive which we rent out to allotment tenants in Helsby and the surrounding area, with the income generated through the rent generally covering the costs of running both sites. There are 51 plots which are all currently occupied and there is usually always a waiting list of prospective tenants should a vacancy arise.

Cemetery

Helsby Public Cemetery at Old Chester Road is owned and administered by Helsby Parish Council as the burial authority, in accordance with the Local Authorities Cemetery Order 1977. The parish clerk acts as burial clerk to the cemetery. All the funds raised annually through cemetery income are placed into the council's financial reserves to earmark funds for future burial space.

Christmas Lighting

Christmas lighting is the third biggest expense for Helsby Parish Council, after staff costs and general maintenance. We provide a large number of lit lamp post banners each year as well as the Christmas tree display at the corner of Chester Road and Queens Drive. There may still be scope to extend some lighting displays across the village and some of the current lights only have lifespans of a few years. The council works closely with the organisers of Ho Ho Helsby to provide a wonderful annual Christmas event every December. In particular, the council funds the traffic management service to ensure that the festive parade runs smoothly and safely.

Other areas of responsibility

- The parish council usually hosts an annual grant show, supporting community groups to provide services which benefit the Helsby community. In 2022/23, we gave £9,000 to local groups and charities. Depending on demands for our resources, we intend to continue this event regularly over the next 5 years and have budgeted accordingly. In 2024/25, we have agreed to fund a series of environmental improvements instead.
- We have installed and maintain four community defibrillators around the village to ensure that these life-saving devices are readily available to anyone in need.
- The parish council shares ownership of Helsby Community Centre with Cheshire West and Chester Council. We support Helsby Community Association in running the building.
- We look after a number of planters around the village in conjunction with the Adopt a Planter volunteers. We have upgraded all these planters over the last few years.
- The council owns the war memorial at St. Paul's Church. This is maintained by the local church wardens.



The council installed a new defibrillator in an old BT phone kiosk on Chester Road in 2022

External representation

The council is represented on a number of external organisations, including:

- Frodsham Wind Farm Local Liaison Committee;
- Various transport forums relevant to Helsby;
- Helsby Community Sports Club;
- Helsby Community Association;
- Cycle North Cheshire Cycle Forum;
- Protos;
- Encirc Local Liaison Committee; and
- Cheshire Association of Local Councils.

Working with Others

The parish council is not directly responsible for the delivery of many services in the village such as health and social care, transport provision and planning, but we seek to ensure that the relevant delivery bodies provide good quality, reliable and affordable services which take into account of the needs and expectations of our residents, visitors and businesses.

The council is a consultee on all planning applications in Helsby and reviews between around 40-60 applications annually, providing recommendations to Cheshire West and Chester Council. The council led the community in developing the Helsby Neighbourhood Plan which was approved at referendum in 2016 and forms part of the statutory development plan which is used to assess planning applications by the borough council. The council is currently considering a review of the plan to incorporate higher environmental standards for new house building (e.g. Passivhaus standards). Helsby is designated as a Key Service Centre in CW&C's local plan.

41 respondents to the recent community consultation felt that tackling crime and anti-social behaviour should be a priority. The parish council will continue to work with Cheshire Police to share information on local crime and safety issues. This includes receiving local crime reports and the PCSO attending monthly council meetings. The parish council also reports any concerns and incidents submitted to them to the PCSO directly or via calls to 101. In 2022, we installed CCTV cameras and lights in the parish field to help combat any issues in this area. In 2024/25, we worked with the Cheshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to install an average speed camera project on Chester Road. We will also continue to work closely with our local PCSO to monitor the general levels of speeding in the village and Cheshire Police have recently invested in a new handheld speed camera device for the local area.

The council was disappointed to hear that only 15% of respondents to the recent community consultation thought that the quality of life was better in Helsby now than it was 10 years ago. Whilst some people recognised that local facilities had improved (e.g. Tesco and Helsby Community Sports Club), many respondents felt that too many new houses had been built in the last 10 years, levels of noise and traffic had increased and roads remained closed for too long.

The parish council will continue to work closely both with our local CW&C ward councillor and the Localities team and other departments within the borough council to address issues and concerns about the village. For example, we will encourage CW&C to accelerate road and pavement repairs and we regularly report weeds and overgrown vegetation to them. We have expressed an interest in their Highways Volunteer Scheme which involves local volunteers helping to clear roadside verges and weeds. We also sent representatives to CW&C's

Planning Committee to object to the latest largest proposed housing development and will continue to encourage the provision of adequate service provision as new houses are brought forward.

Financial Information

Income

The parish council is mainly funded by the residents of Helsby, through what is known as the 'precept'. This is the local tax levied by the parish council which is collected on its behalf by Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council through council tax bills.

Due to the increasing costs of goods and services, we calculated that would need to increase the Band D precept charge by around 9% in 2024/25. However, we requested a much lower increase of 5.4% from Cheshire West and Chester Council as we continued to be mindful not to overburden local taxpayers. We agreed to cover any shortfalls using some of our general reserves. Based on a precept amount of £109,040, a Band D property paid £52.00 (a cost of £1 per week), an increase of £2.68 when compared with 2023/24. In comparison, the average Band D precept charged by local precepting bodies across England (including local councils) for 2024/25 was £85.89.

Income also comes from the following other sources:

- Rent from allotment tenants;
- Burial fees from the cemetery;
- Bank interest (we have invested some of our funds in higher interest savings accounts in 2024/25);
- Rent from a private company that leases council-owned land;
- Helsby Community Association who pay for energy usage in the shared areas at Helsby Community Centre (the council then uses this income to repay CW&C);
- Reclaimed VAT spent during the previous year from HMRC;
- Successful grant applications, where relevant; and
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments - Helsby Parish Council receives 25% of these charges which are levied by CW&C on new local development.

5 Year Plan - Income

Description	Actual Receipts 2023-24	Budget 2024-25	Budget 2025-26	Budget 2026-27	Budget 2027-28
Precept	104,844	109,040	109,040	109,040	109,040
Bank interest	3,092	3,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Rental income	19,485	13,315	13,582	13,853	14,130
Grants	2,318	0	0	0	0
Insurance claims	0	0	0	0	0
Community centre	4,794	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Cemetery fees	10,950	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
Allotment rents	1,657	1,800	2,000	2,000	2,000
Sundries	0	100	100	100	100
VAT recovery	11,602	8,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
TOTAL	158,742	147,255	151,722	151,993	152,270

Expenditure

The main items of expenditure for the council are staff costs, general maintenance, one-off projects (where monies are often held in earmarked reserves or funded through grants and developer contributions) and Christmas lighting. For the 5-year budget plan below, inflation (where relevant) has been estimated at 5% during 2024/25 and 2025/26 due to the current financial climate and then 2% thereafter.

5 Year Plan – Expenditure

Description	Actual Spend 2023-24	Budget 2024-25	Budget 2025-26	Budget 2026-27	Budget 2027-28
Staff pensions	2,707	2,800	3,500	3,570	3,641
Salaries	37,089	38,000	45,000	45,900	46,818
Postage and phone	908	1,000	1,020	1,040	1,060
Insurance premiums	1,469	1,500	1,530	1,560	1,591
Council office	1,663	735	750	765	780
Legal/professional	1,080	1,000	2,000	1,000	1,000
Room hire & meetings	220	250	250	250	250
Councillors' expenses	33	100	100	100	100
Internal audit fees	338	365	385	390	400
External audit fees	420	420	420	420	420
Admin car allowance	234	378	397	405	413
Admin stationery	68	100	100	100	100
Admin sundries	245	250	250	250	250
Admin subscriptions	3,770	3,800	3,876	3,954	4,033
Equipment	979	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Cllr/employee training	785	600	600	600	600
Allot. maintenance	4,398	3,150	3,307	3,374	3,441
Allotment water	256	315	330	337	344
Parks & general maintenance	11,548	12,600	13,230	13,500	13,795
Grass cutting	2,939	5,250	5,510	5,620	5,735
Park equipment	2,588	2,500	4,500	2,500	2,500
Cem. maintenance	4,282	3,675	3,858	3,935	4,015
Cemetery repairs	746	1,050	1,100	1,125	1,150
Bridge lantern lights	742	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Maltby Triangle	31	210	220	225	230
Bedding plants	868	750	790	805	820
Village clock	0	0	0	0	0
Christmas lights	9,533	20,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Christmas tree	2,949	2,757	3,000	3,000	3,000
Ho Ho traffic management	1,050	1,155	2,500	2,500	2,500
Street furniture	6,300	4,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
War memorial	0	0	0	0	0
Average speed cameras	0	0	0	0	0
Village awards	0	0	200	200	200

Litter/dog/grit bins	0	400	400	400	400
Sherwood Court	1,828	525	550	560	575
HCC light and heat	3,487	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
HCC repairs and renewals	0	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
HCC insurances	1,068	510	535	550	560
HCC sundries	44	100	100	100	100
HCC water charges	396	450	450	450	450
Community projects	7,050	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Chair's allowance	225	225	250	250	250
Sundries	1,225	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Donations/S137	0	0	0	0	0
Newsletter	4,027	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500
Remembrance day	319	300	250	250	250
Election expenses	591	0	0	0	4,000
H&S/PPE etc.	0	500	500	500	500
Play area imp/upgrades	0	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000
Future burial provision	0	7,900	7,000	7,000	7,000
TOTAL	120,498	151,120	155,258	153,985	159,771

Reserves and Developer Contribution Funds

As at 31st March 2024, the council had £77,877 in general reserves and £171,315 in earmarked reserves. The council's general reserve acts as a contingency for any unexpected inflation, unforeseen events and unusual circumstances that affects the council's business. It can also be used to offset the budget requirement. Other reserves are held for specific, earmarked purposes as identified in the table below (as of Sept 2024).

In previous years, the council's general reserves had been increasing and our internal auditor had outlined that the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance recommendation was for local council general reserves to be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure. We have now drawn up a General Reserves Policy in order to agree a level appropriate to our size, situation and risks. We will ensure when carrying out future budgets that the council's general reserves are kept within these appropriate levels.

The council also has access to monies through local Section 106 agreements via the borough council. All Section 106 money must be spent in line with the legal agreement for each development. Current S106 funds available to the council are estimated at around £9,000 for play provision, £7,000 for open space and over £50,000 for public art.

Table to show levels of Earmarked Reserves

Earmarked Reserves as at Sept 24	Amount (£)	Date of expected expenditure	Potential funds available by 2028
Play Area Improvements/Upgrades	50,000	2028+	77,000
Future Burial Provision	43,152	2028+	63,252
Cemetery extension area design project	8,703	2024/25	0
CIL payments	5,363	2024/25	0
Wheelchair accessible play equipment	5,000	2025/26	0
Average speed cameras	50,000	2024/25	0

Park masterplan	20,000	2025/26	0
Queens Drive allotments S106 funds	1,236	2024/25	0
Helsby News website	183	2024/25	0
Helsby Community Centre improvements	10,000	2025/26	0
TOTAL	193,637	-	140,252

APPENDIX 1: ACTION PLAN (VERSION 2 – 2024/25)

This action plan has been drawn up in response to some of the suggestions made in the recent public consultation as well as in relation to some other topical issues that the parish council expects to be involved in over the next 5 years and beyond. Some of these potential projects have been discussed by the council over recent months, mainly through its Environment and Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committees, and some progress has already been made. The action plan will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

No.	Objective	Lead/ Partners/ Committee	Activity	Timescale	Budget?	Comments
1	Improved communication	Helsby Parish Council (HPC)	Consider improving the council's presence on social media	Short term	No	
2	Improved effectiveness of the parish council	HPC	Conduct a review of training needs of councillors and staff	Short term /ongoing	Yes	Retain budget for training
3		HPC	Carry out a governance review	Medium term	No	To consider the effectiveness and speed of council decision-making and evaluate staffing levels
4		HPC	Seek re-accreditation of Local Council Award Scheme	Long term	Yes	Clerk to investigate with SLCC
5		HPC	Update the Helsby Neighbourhood Plan	Medium term	No	Government funding available. Requires a working group of volunteers
6	Enhanced facilities and infrastructure	PCA	Develop facilities at the play area for wheelchair users	Short term	Yes	Money allocated in earmarked reserves
7		PCA	Complete a landscape design project for the cemetery extension area	Short term	Yes	Money allocated in earmarked reserves

8		Env	Repair or replace various benches where relevant	Short to medium term	No	Carry out an inspection to determine work required. Should be sufficient funds already in budget
9		HPC/CW&C/ HCA	Improvements to Helsby Community Centre	Medium term	Yes	Work with Helsby Community Association to identify where improvements are required. Monies allocated in earmarked reserves
10		PCA	Consider the provision of a skate park or basketball court	Medium to long term	No	Work with developers of new housing schemes to explore potential youth facilities
11		PCA	Continue to seek land for future cemetery expansion	Medium to long term	Yes	Reserves being set aside for future land purchase
12		Env	Consider a heritage/art project for the village	Medium to long term	No	Substantial S106 monies available for public arts project
13		Env	Consider the provision of public recycling bins	Short to medium term	No	Work with borough councillor and CW&C to explore feasibility of recycling bins in the village
14		PCA	Create a masterplan for the future development of the parish field and play area	Medium to long term	Yes	Seek consultants to work on a design and implementation package. Consider lifespan of existing equipment and look to provide additional assets
15		HPC/CW&C/ developers	Provide supporting infrastructure as a result of continued new house building in Helsby	Medium to long term	No	Continue to lobby for increased capacity of local services e.g. school places, GP and dental appointments
16	A stronger and healthier community	CW&C Ward Councillor/Env	Development of a climate change working group	Short term	No	Look at potential for a community garden/orchard, tree planting, secure cycle parking, better energy efficiency at Helsby Community Centre, wildflowers, etc.

17		Env	Consider holding more community events such as a village summer fete	Medium term	Yes	Possibly grant funds available. Will need volunteers
18		Sustrans/CW&C	Develop cycle routes through Helsby	Medium to long term	No	Council to encourage plans via Cycle North Cheshire representation
19		Sandstone Ridge Trust/Env	AONB designation	Medium to long term	No	Could revisit the potential for a conservation area in Helsby in this context
20	Expansion of council assets and opportunities for devolved services	Finance/CW&C	Consider opportunities to purchase land/buildings from CW&C and privately-owned land and consider taking over relevant services from CW&C where quality is below that which is expected	Long term	No	Council to be mindful of double taxation issues. Could increase precept levels. Explore further with ChALC and neighbouring councils.
21		HPC	Governance boundary review	Medium to long term	No	Consider implications of governance boundary proposals

Short term: up to April 2024; Medium term: April 2024 to March 2026; Long term: 2026 onwards.

APPENDIX 2: 2023-28 ACTION PLAN - COMPLETED PROJECTS

This table lists those projects from the 2023-2028 action plan that have been implemented, including any relevant dates and costs.

Objective	Lead/ Partners/ Committee	Activity	Implementation Date	Costs	Comments
Improved communication	HPC	Purchase of video conferencing equipment to enable remote attendance at meetings and better public interaction	Nov 23 – Sep 24	£1,375	Purchased Owl system and also upgraded IT capability in parish office

	HPC	Moved council meetings to parish office	June 24	nil	Savings made on room hire, more secure
	HPC	Enhance the council's existing website	Sept 24	£699	Developed new, enhanced and more accessible website
Enhanced facilities and infrastructure	ENV	Improved landscaping at Sherwood Court	Feb 24	£11,594	
	ENV	Replaced all the green village planters with new black ones	May 22 – Mar 24	£11,516	
A stronger and healthier community	ENV	Installed average speed cameras	Sept 24	£54,677	Joint project with Police and Crime Commissioner. Monies used from both earmarked and general reserves.