



# Helsby Parish Council

## Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Helsby Parish Council held in the Upper Hall at Helsby Methodist Church at 7.00pm on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024

### Present:

Cllr. Chris Ellams (Chair)  
Cllr. Margaret Marsh

Cllr. Terry O'Neill  
Cllr. Sarah Temple

Cllr. Mike Branigan

### Also in attendance:

Claire Jones, Parish Clerk  
Cllr. Rob Foreman (virtual attendance – no voting rights)  
Neil Flanagan, Police Community Support Officer (Item 11 only)  
Marj Thoburn representing Helsby News  
CW&C Borough Councillor representing Helsby Ward, Chris Copeman

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair. It was **RESOLVED that Cllr. Ellams be elected as Chair of Helsby Parish Council – HPC67/24**. Cllr. Ellams signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office. It was **RESOLVED that Cllr. O'Neill be elected as Vice-Chair of Helsby Parish Council – HPC68/24**.
2. Apologies were noted from Cllrs. Stothard (health) and Nicklin (work commitment). Members were reminded to send their apologies with reasons for absence for any meetings that they could not attend (*Local Government Act 1972, s.85 (1)*).
3. Cllr. O'Neill declared non-pecuniary interests in matters relating to the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (Item 18).

The Chair agreed to move Item 11 (Policing Update) to this point of the meeting so that PCSO Flanagan could resume police business after his update. Members noted his latest report. It was outlined that a local beat manager was currently being recruited as the previous police constable had now left her role. It was agreed that holding a joint police/council surgery might be beneficial. PCSO Flanagan agreed to increase patrols at the car event held at Helsby Community Sports Club following a series of complaints.

4. It was **RESOLVED that the following councillors be appointed to serve on the following committees – HPC69/24**:
  - Environment - Cllrs. O'Neill (C), Ellams (VC), Nicklin, Branigan and Foreman (5).
  - Parks, Cemetery & Allotments - Cllrs. Nicklin (C), Temple (VC), O'Neill, Stothard, Branigan and Ellams (6).
  - Policy and Procedures – Cllrs. Temple (C), Stothard (VC), Ellams, Branigan, Nicklin and O'Neill (6).

In accordance with the above selection process and Standing Order 4e(vi), members of the Finance Committee shall be Cllrs. Temple, O’Neill, Ellams and Nicklin.

5. No new committees were appointed.
6. It was **RESOLVED to appoint the following representatives to the following external bodies**  
– **HPC70/24:**

<b>Name of Organisation</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Appointee(s)</b>
Air Quality Forum	1	Cllr. Temple (reserve Cllr. O’Neill)
ChALC Area Meeting	3	Cllrs. O’Neill, Stothard and 1 vacancy
Helsby Community Association	1	Cllr. Branigan
Helsby Footpath Society	1	Cllr. Temple
Helsby Community Sports Club	1	Cllr. Branigan
Protos	1	Cllr. Temple (reserves O’Neill/Nicklin)
Protos ERF Local Liaison Committee	1	Cllr. O’Neill (reserve Cllr. Nicklin)
Liverpool John Lennon Airport Group	1	Cllr. Ellams (reserve Cllr. Atkinson)
North Cheshire Rail Users’ Group	1	Cllr. Ellams (reserve Cllr. Atkinson)
Encirc	2	Cllrs. O’Neill and 1 vacancy
Frodsham Wind Farm Local Liaison C.	2	Cllrs. Ellams and Nicklin
Cycle North Cheshire	1	Cllr. Temple

The usual arrangements for providing updates (i.e. raising matters under ‘Outside Body Reports’ at Full Council meetings) were not amended.

7. It was noted that the council could continue to exercise the General Power of Competence (in accordance with the *Localism Act 2011, ss.1-8*).
8. It was noted that the dates and times for Full Council meetings had been agreed at the April meeting. However, members considered a proposal to move Full Council meetings to the parish office. The Clerk outlined legislation stating that parish council meetings should not be held in licensed premises unless no suitable room was available either free of charge or at reasonable cost (*Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, 10(1)*). Members felt that the parish office was the only suitable venue as it offered a secure internet connection for virtual attendees. It was also noted that the parish office was not part of the licensed area within the building. It was therefore **RESOLVED to move Full Council meetings to the parish office and to purchase 2 boardroom tables and 8 chairs at a cost of £1,870 – HPC71/24**. As members wished to match these items with the existing parish office furniture, it was agreed that quotes from other suppliers would not be sought.
9. It was noted that the deeds for the Council’s lands could be inspected in the parish office. It was also noted that the counterpart lease for the ‘Eccies’ was held with DTM Legal LLP.
10. Public Participation – concern was raised about having insufficient space for members of the public to attend meetings in the parish office. The Clerk agreed to make appropriate arrangements for meetings where it was anticipated that large numbers of people might attend.

11. Policing Update – see above.
12. It was **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024 were accepted as accurate and were duly signed by the Chair – HPC72/24.**
13. Clerks’ report – the following was outlined: the memorial bench would be installed next to the new wildflower meadow at St. Paul’s Church shortly and the Chair agreed to attend the D-Day memorial service at the church on 6 June to present the bench; volunteers were requested to help with the D-Day beacon on the evening of 6 June; the south ward noticeboard could not be installed until CW&C had granted permission through a Street Furniture Licence; separate meetings had been held with Brookhouse and Dunham on the Hill and Hapsford Parish Council to discuss housing developments at Mere’s Edge and a joint meeting with both parties would be arranged shortly; and a meeting had been arranged with the council’s solicitor about the future of the guide hut.
14. Chair’s Announcements - The Chair thanked Cllr. Branigan for his service as Chair over the last 12 months. The Chair felt it was important to make efforts to recruit some additional councillors during his term of office over the next 12 months.
15. Cheshire West and Chester Council matters – Cllr. Copeman outlined that CW&C had come under pressure to re-open the case on potential contamination from the Commons side tip and the matter had now been referred to the Environment Agency and the UK Health Security Agency. It was noted that Frodsham had produced an active travel sign/map that would be displayed at Frodsham station shortly. Cllr Temple agreed to follow up a preliminary discussion with North Cheshire Community Rail Partnership, who had indicated they would fund a similar sign in Helsby if content could be provided by local representatives. It was reported that CW&C’s Planning Enforcement team had yet to contact Cllr. Copeman in relation to the extension of the Junoon Restaurant. Cllr. Copeman suggested amending the Neighbourhood Plan to include higher building standards (Passivhaus standards) for new housing and offered to set up a group to explore this.
16. Cllr. Temple presented the minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024. It was **RESOLVED to dispose of the two goalposts that had previously been removed from the parish field due to their poor condition – HPC73/24.**
17. Miscellaneous Matters
  - 17.1 A report which outlined quotes for renewal of the council’s insurance was considered. It was **RESOLVED to renew the council’s cover with Zurich Municipal on a 3 Year Long Term Undertaking at a cost of £1,451.21 per year plus additional cover for Debt Recovery and Contract Disputes – HPC74/24.**
  - 17.2 A report on the Local Council Award Scheme was considered. It was **RESOLVED to duly note the LCAS scheme but not to take forward an application at present – HPC75/24.**
  - 17.3 It was **RESOLVED to retrospectively approve the Clerk to attend an online website training course at a cost of £30 [payment made under Standing Order 16(b) Delegation to the Responsible Financial Officer] – HPC76/24.**

18. Outside Body Reports – Cllr. O’Neill outlined that he had attended a ChALC Board meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> April where their new Net Zero group had been discussed and comments had been raised on the difficulties of commenting on Local Plans. A summary of the recent Protos meeting was also given. Cllr. Temple outlined that Cycle North Cheshire were holding a meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> May to discuss cycle routes through Helsby (Cllr. Copeman agreed to attend).

19. Councillor surgery update – it was noted that the last surgery had been cancelled. Members felt that surgeries were still beneficial but agreed that a rota should be developed with a fixed format and specific dates and with full commitment from all council members to attend. Members agreed that PSCO Flanagan and Cllr. Copeman should also be invited to attend on occasion.

## 20. Planning

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

- |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>24/00854/FUL</b> | Land At 136B Chester Road Helsby<br>Existing garage to be used for temporary residential accommodation (part retrospective)<br><b>No comments – CW&amp;C did not authorise an extension</b>                     |
| <b>24/00860/FUL</b> | 12 Holly Court Helsby<br>Extension to bungalow and rebuilding of garage<br><b>No comments – CW&amp;C did not authorise an extension</b>                                                                         |
| <b>24/00905/FUL</b> | Land At Grid Ref 348596 374897 Longster Close Helsby<br>Erection of a two storey dwelling. Resubmission of approved application 21/00084/S73<br><b>No objections – HPC77/24</b>                                 |
| <b>24/00942/FUL</b> | Redwood 12 Chester Road Helsby<br>Two storey side extension to form utility accommodation and bedroom<br><b>No objections – HPC78/24</b>                                                                        |
| <b>24/00956/OUT</b> | Land At 3A The Rock Alvanley<br>Erection of three detached dwellings - resubmission of 19/01460/OUT<br><b>Objections based on backland development (contrary to HNP), access and lack of privacy – HPC79/24</b> |

20.2 The latest planning notification report was noted.

20.3 Members noted the publication of the proposed Frodsham Neighbourhood Development Plan (Publicity stage - Regulation 16). It was agreed to submit comments by the next Full Council meeting so a response could be submitted in advance of the deadline of Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

20.4 No member reports were received.

## 21. Financial Matters

21.1 It was **RESOLVED** that the bank reconciliation detailing £347,335.40 held in balances as at 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024 be accepted as accurate – **HPC80/24**.

21.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the following payments totalling £12,575.68 paid by either standing order, direct debit, bank transfer, cheque or under delegated authority for April be approved and duly noted – **HPC81/24**. The following receipts totalling £110,718.77 were also noted:

### Payments

BT	Phone/broadband	£83.06
Robert Gleave and Sons Ltd	Gas bottle/deposit	£95.99
Water Plus	Allotment water bill	£20.47
Frodsham Tree Solutions	Tree removal	£420.00
Frodsham Tree Solutions	Tree removal/reduction	£1,320.00
Wirral Transport Users Assoc	Membership fees	£10.00
Countrywide GM	Grass cutting	£689.65
Carswell Creative	Helsby News design	£240.00
Mid Cheshire Footpath Society	Membership fees	£8.00
Northwich Town Council	Play inspection fees	£90.00
Helsby Garden Services	General maintenance	£1,426.48
ChALC	Membership fees	£1,551.66
NPower	Bridge lighting	£311.65
ROSPA Play Safety	Play inspections	£295.20
Peoplesafe	Safety alarm	£142.13
Chris Ellams	Expenses	£30.20
HPC staff	Salaries April 2024	£2,245.15
HMRC	Tax and NI deductions	£966.94
Parish Noticeboard Company	Noticeboard	£1,008.00
Northwich Town Council	Zip wire seat replacement	£300.00
ICCM	Membership fees	£100.00
Terry O'Neill	Expenses	£14.40
Claire Jones	Expenses	£115.74
Scottish Power	Electricity – comm. centre	£257.00
Water Plus	Water – community centre	£39.36
Grenke Leasing	Photocopier lease charges	£108.00
Pro Print Solutions	Photocopier charges	£12.00
NEST	Pension contribution	£674.60

### Receipts

Natwest	Interest April 24	£92.10
Cheshire West and Chester Council	Precept 2024/25	£109,040.00
Nationwide Building Society	Interest	£772.66
Co-Operative Bank	Interest	£631.23
Helsby News	Reserves for website	£182.78

21.3 Internal Auditor’s Report – the Clerk outlined that the 2023/24 Audit Report had 1 recommendation as follows:

ISSUE – The payroll agent is notified of changes to pay rates by an e-mail from the Clerk. RECOMMENDATION – The Chair should be copied into e-mails to the payroll agent notifying them of changes to pay rates. **ACTION – Clerk to action and add this to the council’s risk assessment.**

21.4 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24 Part 3.

(i) Section 1 – It was **RESOLVED to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 - HPC82/24.**

(ii) Section 2 – It was **RESOLVED to approve the Accounting Statements 2023/24 – HPC83/24.**

21.5 It was noted that a VAT reclaim of £10,829.08 for the previous fiscal year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 had been received from HMRC.

22. Members noted the contents of the outstanding actions log.

23. Dates of the next Council meetings

20 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	Policy and Procedures Committee (to be re-arranged)
10 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	Full Council meeting
17 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	Finance Committee meeting
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2024	Environment Committee meeting

### **Confidential Matters - Exclusion of the Press and Public and the Parish Clerk**

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, it was **RESOLVED that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press leave the meeting during consideration of the following: To review the terms and conditions of service of existing employees (Standing Orders 11 and 19 must be read in conjunction with this requirement), including any amendments to the Clerk’s Revised Contract of Employment (dated 10th July 2023) and the Update of the Clerk Flexible Working Time Conditions document dated 8th May 2023 – HPC84/24.**

24. It was **RESOLVED to amend the Clerk’s Revised Contract of Employment (dated 10th July 2023) with the changes to her working hours and salary as agreed at the last Full Council meeting – HPC85/24.** Cllr. Temple agreed to draft an update of the Clerk’s Flexible Working Time Conditions document dated 8th May 2023 and circulate this for consideration at a future meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Chair’s signature..... Dated.....