



HELSEBY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Helsby Parish Council held in the parish office at Helsby Community Sports Club at 7.00pm on Monday 9th December 2024

Present:

Cllr. Chris Ellams – Chair

Cllr. Terry O’Neill

Cllr. Rob Nicklin

Cllr. Sarah Temple

Cllr. Mike Branigan

Claire Jones, Parish Clerk

CW&C Borough Councillor representing Helsby Ward, Chris Copeman

Marj Thoburn representing Helsby News

Neil Flanagan, Police Community Support Officer (Item 4 only)

1. Public Participation – no matters were raised.
2. Apologies were received from Cllrs. Stothard and Foster.
3. Cllr. O’Neill declared non-pecuniary interests in matters relating to Cheshire Association of Local Councils (Item 12).
4. Policing Update - Members noted the contents of PCSO Flanagan’s latest report. Various options were considered in relation to the parking issues at Horn’s Mill Primary School. It was noted that a bin had caught fire at Sherwood Court and PCSO Flanagan agreed to investigate any CCTV footage.
5. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Helsby Parish Council held on 11th November 2024 were accepted as accurate and were duly signed by the Chair – **HPC183/24**.
6. Clerk’s Report – the following was noted:
 - Item 6 – thanks were given to those councillors that had attended the Warmer Homes seminar on 19th November. There was a potential to work with Climate Action Frodsham on further sustainability initiatives. A reminder was given to members to provide any biographies for the website/noticeboards. CW&C had responded about the Highways Volunteer Scheme and a meeting would be held shortly to discuss next steps;
 - Item 8 – The Clerk had written to the Green Flag awarding body about the closure of Helsby Quarry tunnel;
 - Item 10.2 – a second calibration of the average speed camera system had been scheduled on 16th December; and
 - Item 10.10 – Cllr. O’Neill would meet the representative from Primary Care Cheshire CIC in January to explore some local bereavement support projects.

7. Chair's Announcements – the Chair thanked the Ho Ho Helsby team for all their efforts this year despite the very poor weather conditions. It was noted that the event had needed to be substantially scaled back and that the parade had been cancelled due to the strong winds. The Chair outlined that he had placed some posters in the noticeboards advertising for new councillors.

8. Cheshire West and Chester Council matters – Cllr. Copeman outlined that CW&C had started a public consultation in relation to redesigning their current Climate Emergency Response Plan. The Clerk agreed to provide a link to the document on the parish council's website. It was noted that Cllr. Copeman had attended a meeting with Sustrans, Cycle North Cheshire and CW&C officers to discuss new cycle routes in Helsby. It was also outlined that several residents had been in contact with Cllr. Copeman in relation to the lack of progress with the road closure by Rake Lane Cottage and had expressed an interest in speaking at a CW&C council meeting. It was noted that Cllr. Copeman had also submitted a question for discussion at the next meeting asking CW&C to progress legal action.

9. Members noted the minutes of the Policy and Procedures Committee meeting held on 25th November 2024. The following recommendations were agreed:
 - 9.1 It was **RESOLVED to adopt a new version of the Financial Regulations, as based on NALC's latest model version from April 2024 – HPC184/24**. The Clerk agreed to contact Cloudy IT in relation to some technical issues with displaying documents in the web version of MS Word;
 - 9.2 It was **RESOLVED to adopt a revised version of the Internal Control Policy (amendments made to Section 3[m] and Appendix 1) - HPC185/24**;
 - 9.3 It was **RESOLVED to adopt a revised version of the Standing Orders with two amendments: to increase the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 threshold from £25,000 to £30,000 and to enable tender documents to be submitted electronically as well as by post - HPC186/24**. The Clerk agreed to bring further suggested amendments to the January meeting;
 - 9.4 It was **RESOLVED to adopt the following new GDPR policies: a Bring Your Own Device Policy; a Data Breach Policy; and a Subject Access Request Policy - HPC187/24**; and
 - 9.5 It was **RESOLVED to adopt a revised version of the Privacy Notice as based on a template from the Information Commissioner's Office - HPC188/24**.

10. Miscellaneous Matters
 - 10.1 It was **RESOLVED to continue to fund the printing and design of Helsby News in 2025 and to continue to use the services of NMC Design and Print and Carswell Creative for this purpose - HPC189/24**. Members agreed to continue using the services of NMC Design and Print for the printing of the publication as they were a charitable organisation, offered good value for money and provided specialised bundling and delivery services that many printers were unable to offer. It was also agreed to continue with Carswell Creative for the design service.
 - 10.2 Members considered setting up a dedicated Helsby Parish Council Facebook page. However, following some debate, it was **RESOLVED that posting on the Helsby village Facebook page was the preferred way of communicating via social media - HPC190/24**. Cllr. Ellams and the Clerk agreed to set up a 'Helsby Parish Council' profile name for this purpose and to look at how to turn off the comments box on any posts. The Clerk agreed

to act as the group administrator and submit all posts. It was agreed that the council's Social Media Policy would also need to be revised in this respect.

- 10.3 It was noted that the new parish council website was now live and was fully accessible (www.helsbyparishcouncil.gov.uk).
- 10.4 Correspondence from the North Cheshire Rail Users Group requesting council support for the installation of an active travel time-based map at Helsby Station was noted. It was outlined that funding had been ringfenced by the North Cheshire Community Rail Partnership for this purpose. It was **RESOLVED that the Clerk and Cllr. Ellams would work with various partners to take forward the development of an active travel map for Helsby – HPC191/24.**
- 10.5 It was **RESOLVED to host a play inspection training course in February and to book two places on the course at a cost of around £245 per attendee – HPC192/24.** It was noted that Helsby Garden Services would fund the £265 examination fee.
- 10.6 Cllr. Ellams outlined that the Clerk's annual appraisal had been held on 26th November. A draft workplan was presented for approval. Cllr. Temple requested a couple of minor amendments after which, it was **RESOLVED to approve the Clerk's workplan for 2025 – HPC193/24.**

11. It was noted that the next surgery would be held at the JTO tearooms on 14th December and would be attended by Cllrs. Temple and Foreman. The Clerk agreed to advertise the surgery on Facebook.

12. Outside Body Reports - Cllr. Temple agreed to circulate the minutes from the Cycle North Cheshire meeting held on 12th November. It was noted that she had also circulated the minutes from a Design Code seminar held by CW&C on 14th November. It was noted that Cllr. O'Neill had attended the following meetings: ChALC Finance meeting on 28th November and a Protos ERF Liaison Committee on 3rd December.

13. Planning

13.1 The council's responses to the following planning applications below were agreed:

24/03315/FUL	Land Adjacent 1 Proffits Lane Helsby Demolition of existing outbuilding and construction of dwelling house Does not object to or support the application but has comments on drainage, lack of amenities to tackle climate change and boundary treatment – HPC194/24.
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24/03430/TPO	Helsby Quarry Woodland Park Robin Hood Lane Helsby Full sectioned fell of large Silver Birch tree No comments – HPC195/24.
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13.2 The latest planning notification report was noted.

13.3 It was noted that several members had attended a drop-in event in relation to the Phase Two consultation on Frodsham Solar. It was **RESOLVED to submit the following comments to the consultation: to request strategic investment in local walking and**

cycling routes across Frodsham Marshes and to consider providing funding to re-open the tunnel in Helsby Quarry – HPC196/24.

- 13.4 It was noted that several councillors had attended a seminar on Cheshire West and Chester’s Design Code: Vision Engagement survey and had submitted their views via the website link. It was agreed that the Clerk would submit a few general comments as raised at the meeting.
- 13.5 Member reports – The Clerk outlined that consultants would attend the next meeting to update members on the Carbon Dioxide Spur Pipeline project.

14. Financial Matters

- 14.1 It was **RESOLVED** that the bank reconciliation sheet detailing **£289,664.99 held in balances as at 30th November 2024 be accepted as accurate – HPC197/24.**
- 14.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the following payments totalling **£14,983.19 paid by either standing order, direct debit, bank transfer, cheque or under delegated authority for November be approved and duly noted – HPC198/24.** The following receipts totalling £3,312.24 were also noted:

Payments

BT	Phone/broadband	£91.25
Northwich Town Council	Play inspection fees	£90.00
Helsby Garden Services	General maintenance	£2,352.41
HPC staff	Salaries Nov 2024	£2,861.55
HMRC	Tax and NI deductions	£1,324.76
Claire Jones	Expenses	£49.31
Scottish Power	Electricity - community centre	£74.00
Water Plus	Water – community centre	£39.36
Pro Print Solutions	Photocopier charges	£28.80
NEST	Clerk’s pension (Nov)	£760.21
Water Plus	Allotment water bill	£4.72
Frodsham Tree Solutions	Hedge work	£576.00
Unity Trust Bank	Handling charges	£10.35
Multipay Card	Paint (£57.99) and fees (£3)	£60.99
Chris Ellams	Expenses (banners)	£85.36
DTM Legal	VPA lease fees	£1,332.00
Cloudy IT	MS365 Premium subscription	£21.72
NMC Design and Print	Helsby News printing	£802.00
Platt White Partnership	Guide hut survey	£720.00
Blachere Illumination	Christmas banners	£3,698.40

Receipts

RSK Group Ltd	Rent for Eccies	£3,312.24
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- 14.3 Members noted a report on various recent bank transfers. It was **RESOLVED** to transfer **£632.90 of remaining funds in the Co-op account to the Unity current account with immediate effect (less a £25 CHAPS fee) and then to close the Co-op account – HPC199/24.**

15. The outstanding actions log was noted. Cllr. O'Neill suggested holding an event for the 200th anniversary of the modern railway (Railway 200) in 2025.

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

11 th December	Environment Committee budget meeting
11 th December	Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee budget meeting
13 th January	Finance Committee
20 th January	Full Council meeting (note third Monday of the month)

Confidential Matters - Exclusion of the Press and Public

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 consider quotes received for the design phase of the park masterplan project; To receive an update on the future of the guide hut and to consider next steps; and to review and recommend any changes to the Clerk's "Terms and Conditions of Employment" in respect of her remuneration, grading, holiday allowance and pension (the Clerk also left the meeting during this discussion) – HPC200/24.**

17. It was **RESOLVED to appoint Make Space Landscape Architecture to carry out the design phase of the park masterplan project at a cost of £4,019 plus an additional £2,050 to obtain the necessary technical surveys – HPC201/24.**

18. Members received an update on the meeting with the guides held on 27th November in relation to the future of the guide hut. It was **RESOLVED to draw up a specification and seek quotes for the hut's demolition, including service disconnection costs; and to continue dialogue with Helsby Community Sports Club and await a formal decision from them in early January 2025 on whether they wish to take on a lease – HPC202/24.**

It was **RESOLVED to continue the meeting beyond a period of two hours in order to complete the remaining items on the agenda – HPC203/24.**

19. It was **RESOLVED for the Clerk to progress one increment on her salary scale from 1st April 2025 and from 2025, to increase the Clerk's leave entitlement to twenty-eight working days per year plus bank holidays following five years of continuous service – HPC204/24.**

The meeting closed at 9.09pm.

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