



HELSEBY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held in the parish office at Helsby Community Sports Club at 7.00pm on Monday 17th February 2025

Present:

Cllr. Terry O'Neill (Chair)
Cllr. Chris Ellams
Cllr. Rob Nicklin

Also present:

Claire Jones, Parish Clerk

1. Public Participation – no members of the public were present.
2. No apologies were noted. Cllrs. Branigan and Foreman did not attend.
3. Declarations of Members' Interests. None were reported.
4. Confirmation of Previous Minutes. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 11th December 2024 were accepted as accurate and were duly signed by the Chair – **E01/25**.
5. Clerk's Report – the following was noted:
 - Item 5 – Blue Arrow had charged £500 for the Ho Ho Helsby traffic management service to cover their costs for the installation of the cones and signs and Mega Electrical had charged an additional £100 for repairs to the reindeer. Disappointment was expressed that the new Christmas lit spheres and banners had not been displayed;
 - Item 7.2 - the council's new biodiversity policy was now available on the website; and
 - Other updates – there had been no response from BT Openreach in relation to cutting back their tree adjacent to the new speed camera. The Clerk agreed to follow up. A new door closure unit had been ordered for the defibrillator kiosk on Chester Road opposite Bates Lane at a cost of £129.25 (payment made under Financial Regulation 5.14 Delegation to the Responsible Financial Officer). The war memorial had been valued at £75,000. The Clerk agreed to update the council's insurance policy in this respect.

The current and expected budget and reserves expenditure for 2024/25 was noted along with the agreed Environment Committee budget for 2025/26 as follows (all figures in the table below exclude VAT and are rounded to the nearest £1):

Budget Heading Code	Description	Budget 2024/25 £	Budget Spend to Date £	Predicted To 31/03/25 £	Budget 2025/26 £
218	Bedding Plants	750	805	805	800
219	Village clock	0	0	0	0
220	Maltby Triangle	210	33	33	100
222	Christmas tree	2757	3687	3687	3807
223	Litter/dog/grit bins	400	0	0	400
224	Village awards	0	0	0	200
225	Ho Ho Traffic M'ment	1155	500	500	2120
227	Bridge lantern lights	1000	1142	1142	1000
228	Christmas Illuminations	20000	16672	17472	12000
229	Sherwood Court land	525	1477	1477	1000
230	Street furniture/BT boxes	4000	3803	3803	3000
231	War memorial	0	0	0	0
TOTAL		30,797	28,119	28,919	24,427

The following was also noted:

- i) Code 220 – Hedge maintenance in 2025/26 will be £60.
- ii) Code 222 – Additional £930 spent in 2024/25 due to relocation of reindeer and repairs to reindeer. Cost with new contractor in 2025/26 will be £3,807.
- iii) Code 224 – Will awards be held in 2025/26? Pilot allotment awards could be trialled in 2025/26 using funds from this budget code (to raise at next PCA Committee).
- iv) Code 225 – Minimal traffic management service this year due to poor weather.
- v) Code 228 – Still to pay electricity bill for Christmas illuminations (around £800).
- vi) Code 229 - Hedge maintenance in 2025/26 will be £240.
- vii) Code 230 – Some to be spent on bench and planter at Denbigh Close in 2025/26.
- viii) Earmarked reserves – Code 519 Average Speed Cameras (£50,000 fully spent), Code 505 CIL payments (partially spent, £687 remaining) and £10,000 still in reserves for Helsby Community Centre (Code 520).

6. Miscellaneous matters

- 6.1 It was **RESOLVED** to approve the ‘Christmas Tree Installation plus Associated Work Contract 2025/28’ with Northwich Town Council – **E02/25** and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the ‘Festive Light Installation plus Associated Work Contract 2025/28’ with AMR Technical – **E03/25**.
- 6.2 The council’s Christmas lights over the 2024 festive period were reviewed. It was agreed to keep the reindeer at Maltby Triangle. It was noted that the 2025/26 budget had not included any new festive decorations, but it was agreed that the lighting gear and timer on the lamppost now housing the average speed camera would need to be relocated. It was recommended that options for a lit tree at the Helsby High School end of the village could be explored when setting the budget for 2026/27.
- 6.3 Members noted an update on the highways volunteer scheme. It was outlined that a provisional date of 14th March had been set for the first session (CW&C to confirm).

- 6.4 It was noted that a meeting about Helsby Community Centre would be held on 24th February with representatives from HPC, HCA and CW&C attending. It was agreed to ask CW&C for a long-term maintenance plan for the building. It was also agreed to raise issues in relation to the management of parking at the centre and access to the toilets.
- 6.5 It was **RESOLVED to purchase a plain black metal bench and an additional planter with ‘Helsby’ wording for the grassed area at Denbigh Close at a cost of £1,236 plus installation and delivery costs – E04/25.** It was agreed that no other quotes would be obtained on this occasion as only one manufacturer produced these specific designs of benches and planters, and they would match others in the village. The Clerk agreed to apply for the necessary licences from CW&C.
- 6.6 It was **RESOLVED to light the beacon on Helsby Hill for the 80th anniversary of VE Day on 8th May – E05/25.** The Clerk agreed to seek the necessary permissions and make any necessary arrangements. The potential to hold any other community events in 2025 was discussed. It was agreed to ask Ho Ho Helsby for a stall at the next Christmas event to generate awareness of the parish council. Cllr. Nicklin agreed to look at the potential for the council to host a community volunteering day.
- 6.7 CW&C’s draft Licence for Alterations for the work carried out in 2024 at Sherwood Court was considered. It was recommended to present this to the next Full Council meeting for approval and signature. In line with Clause 3.5 of the document, the Clerk agreed to take some photographs of the completed work and send this to CW&C for information.
- 6.8 It was noted that the daffodil bench on Chester Road had been ordered. It was also outlined that CW&C had agreed to remove the ground bolts left in situ from the previous bench and were processing a licence to give the council permission to erect the new bench. The wording for the memorial plaque was agreed.
- 6.9 Correspondence from TWM in relation to the interactive speed sign on Chester Road was noted. It was **RESOLVED to sign up to a SIM contract at a cost of £125 per year – E06/25.** The Clerk agreed to seek confirmation that any technical issues would be resolved before signing the contract and to enquire whether any historical data from the sign would be available.

7. Urgent matters – the following was noted:

- Cllr. Nicklin had made an initial enquiry with CW&C about the S106 public arts funds;
- Brio would be running a 12-week exercise class at Sherwood Court;
- Primary Care Cheshire were seeking permission to set up a gardening group with Mersey Forest at Sherwood Court (and possibly also seeking funding). It was agreed to approve this in principle subject to further information being provided in due course and to inform them about the council’s community grant process;
- The Clerk agreed to enquire about the flagpole at St. Paul’s Church following a resident’s query; and
- Members discussed the initial parks masterplan design and the proposals for Sherwood Court.

8. Date of the next meeting – to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 8.24pm.

Chair’s signature..... Dated.....