



# HELSEBY PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of the Policy and Procedures Committee meeting held at 7pm in the parish office at Helsby Community Sports Club on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024

### Present:

Cllr. Sarah Temple – Chair  
Cllr. Terry O’Neill  
Cllr. Chris Ellams  
Cllr. Rob Nicklin  
Cllr. Graham Stothard

### Also present:

Claire Jones Parish Clerk

1. Public Participation – no matters were brought to the committee’s attention.
2. No apologies were noted. Cllr. Branigan did not attend.
3. Declarations of Members’ Interests. None were reported.
4. Confirmation of previous minutes. It was **RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Procedures Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were accepted as accurate and were signed by the Chair – PP01/24.**
5. Clerk’s report – the following was noted:
  - Item 5 – council records for archiving would be sent to the new Cheshire Record Office once it had opened and a link to Helsby News would be sent to the British Library in due course;
  - Item 6 – The Clerk was following up matters regarding rights of access across its land at Mountain View and also agreed to follow up queries in relation to the cemetery bin and gender identity guidance;
  - Item 7 - The Employee and Councillor Expenses Policy could be finalised now the new bank account had been set up and the Unity multi-pay card had been received;
  - Item 8 – Guidance from SLCC suggested that not all policies had to be reviewed annually and once per council term might be sufficient. SLCC also recommended policies to have a version control number, section references and a date of policy approval/latest review. The Clerk agreed to retain and archive any old or superceded policies; and

- Item 9 – A ‘review date’ column had been added to the policy table and it would be updated in time for the next meeting bearing in mind the SLCC guidance on frequency of review mentioned above.

## 6. Review of Existing Documents

### Financial Regulations

A revised draft version of the Financial Regulations were considered as based on NALC’s latest model version dated April 2024. It was noted that the Clerk had also incorporated elements from the current document, last updated in September 2023. The following amendments were agreed:

- Header page – amend dates and add a version number (include footnote with previous review dates of the policy);
- Section 2.3 – amend to ‘For any new activity, the Clerk shall consider whether a risk assessment is required...’;
- Section 2.7 – reword to ‘council-owned computer’;
- Section 4.2 – refer specifically to the PCA and Environment Committees;
- Sections 4.9 and 4.10 – swap these around and make the wording a little clearer in relation to the use of earmarked reserves;
- Section 4.11 - specify the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments, Environment and Finance Committees;
- Section 5.5 – check threshold number as this is £25,000 in the Standing Orders;
- Sections 6.8 and 6.10 – delete (to avoid confusion with templated sections covering same actions);
- Section 7.10 – amend to ‘The use of BACS or CHAPS payments shall be reviewed through these Financial Regulations at least every two years’;
- Section 7.12 – delete last sentence;
- Section 16.6 – reword to ‘The Finance Committee, or other relevant committee as defined in standing orders, will review, prior to expiry, all lease agreements with any third party whether lessee or lessor’; and
- Appendix 1 – add reference to Standing Order 18 in paragraph 5.

It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to formally adopt the revised Financial Regulations subject to the amendments above – PP02/24**. The Clerk agreed to circulate a revised version to committee members for consideration as soon as the amendments had been made.

### Internal Control Policy

It was agreed to update Appendix 1 of the Internal Control Policy with the correct references to the revised Financial Regulations: namely Section 7 (Electronic payments) and specifically Sections 7.1 and 7.4. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to amend the Internal Control Policy with the amendments above – PP03/24**.

## Standing Orders

It was also agreed to amend two elements of the Standing Orders which referred specifically to the new Financial Regulations: the procurement thresholds and the ability to accept tenders by electronic means as well as by post. The committee also asked the Clerk to consider any other amendments to the Standing Orders for consideration at the December Full Council meeting.

It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to formally adopt the above amendments to the Standing Orders and to consider any other proposed amendments as suggested by the Clerk – PP04/24.**

### 7. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Update

It was noted that the Clerk had attended a series of training seminars on GDPR and had prepared several new and revised documents as recommended in the sessions.

It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to formally adopt a revised version of the Privacy Notice which was based on a template from the Information Commissioner's Office – PP05/24.**

A series of other new GDPR policies were also considered. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to formally adopt the following new GDPR policies: a Bring Your Own Device Policy - PP06/24; a Data Breach Policy - PP07/24; and a Subject Access Request Policy - PP08/24.**

The Clerk agreed to update the Freedom of Information Policy and the Publication Scheme with the council's new .gov.uk contact details.

Members agreed to convene a GDPR working group meeting with Cllrs. Nicklin, Stothard and Ellams to specifically discuss any further GDPR policy requirements and to make any recommendations at the next meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March. It was suggested that this should include the review of a new data map setting out information held by the council and the council's lawful basis for retaining such data.

It was **RESOLVED to continue the meeting beyond a period of two hours in order to complete the remaining items on the agenda – PP09/24.**

### 8. Biodiversity Policy

The Clerk outlined that the council had a statutory duty to consider biodiversity through Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021. A draft policy was circulated for comment. It was agreed that the policy would be presented for consideration at the next Environment Committee meeting. In the meantime, members agreed to send any comments on the draft document directly to the Clerk.

9. The Clerk agreed to update the Policy Table and to prepare an updated list of policies for review at the next meeting.

10. No urgent matters were raised.

11. Date of next meeting – Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (to be agreed).

The meeting closed at 9.09pm.

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