



Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held at 7pm at Helsby Community Centre on Monday 26th July 2021

Present:

Cllr. Sarah Temple – Chair

Cllr. Terry O'Neill

Cllr. Patricia Holder

Also present:

Claire Jones Parish Clerk

1. Public Participation – It was **RESOLVED** that the meeting be suspended for public participation – **PCA22/21**. There being no matters brought to the Committee's attention, it was **RESOLVED** that public participation be closed and the meeting reconvened – **PCA23/21**.
2. Apologies were received from Cllr. Duffy. Cllr. Gardner did not attend.
3. Cllr. Temple declared a pecuniary interest in Item 8.9 (review of allotment fees) as her partner was an allotment holder.
4. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held on 26th April 2021 be accepted as accurate and signed by the Chair – **PCA24/21**.
5. Matters arising from the previous minutes. The Clerk confirmed under Item 9.5 that a licence had now been granted to the local business seeking to run Tai Chi and Qigong classes on the parish field and a fee of £1 had been paid.
6. The current 21/22 budget spend was noted (see table overleaf). In relation to Budget Codes 213 and 214, the Clerk agreed to check the monies to be vired from Code 241 (salaries) as agreed at the last Council meeting on 12 July (suggest £2000 is vired from 241 to 213). Given the higher than usual water charges so far this year, the Clerk agreed to look at the meter readings from the last 2 years to check the accuracy of the bills. It was also agreed that regular meter readings should be taken to monitor usage. The Clerk outlined that CW&C had not acknowledged the S106 application for the picnic tables and agreed to contact Cllr. Bowers to see if he could make any progress with the Localities team.

| Budget Heading Code | Description | Budget 2021/22 £ | Budget Spend to Date £ | Predicted To 31/03/22 £ |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 201 | Allotment maintenance | 600 | 539 | 1000 |
| 202 | Allotment water charge | 200 | 218 | 200 |
| 212 | Cemetery maintenance | 4200 | 1660 | 4200 |
| 212a | Cemetery repairs/renewals | 400 | 0 | 400 |
| 213 | Parks maintenance | 4000* | 2351 | 4000 |
| 214 | Park grass cuttings | 5000 | 1970 | 4000 |
| 215 | Park equipment | 3000 | 2623 | 3000 |
| 222 | Materials | 300 | 0 | 300 |
| 226R | Play area improv./upgrades | 8000 | 0 | 8000 |
| 260R | Future burial provision | 2843 | 0 | 2843 |

*Footnote: *Includes £2000 vired from Code 241 Salaries*

7. Spending ideas – Cllr. Temple suggested some additional fencing along the bottom of the parish field and the provision of some additional benches along the top path. It was agreed that these projects would be explored further at a later meeting.

8. Allotments

- 8.1 In relation to responses following the previous allotment inspection in June, it was outlined that discussions had been held with the recipient of the Stage 1 letter at Queens Drive regarding their ongoing tenancy. The Clerk outlined that three tenancies had been given up at Old Chester Road following June's inspection. It was also noted that the majority of tenants had responded to e-mails requesting them to tidy plots.
- 8.2 The results of the latest allotment inspection carried out on 16 July 2021 were noted. The Clerk outlined that two Stage 2 and two Stage 1 letters had been sent to tenants. It was also outlined that she had responded to the recipient of one of the Stage 1 letters at Old Chester Road who had expressed offence at the letter and felt the Council were failing to be inclusive in their hire of the allotments. The Clerk agreed to share the tenants concerns with Cllr. Temple as well as forwarding a copy of her response.
- 8.3 The latest allotment tenancies were noted, including three terminations and three new tenancies at Old Chester Road (5, 13R and 16). It was outlined that 5 people were currently on the waiting list.
- 8.4 Review of Allotment Policy and Tenancy Agreement – it was suggested that the Council's address on the tenancy agreement would need to be updated following the move to the new parish office. In relation to the allotment policy, it was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to make the following amendments:**
Clause 5 – add 'subject to their agreement in line with GDPR legislation';
Clause 12 – typo should be 11c, not 10c;
Clause 20 – amend 'general assistants' to 'general maintenance contractor'; and
Clause 10 (Maintenance of Allotments) – add the following sentence 'Tenants should make good any damage caused by deliveries and the current ground

conditions should always be considered when arranging the delivery of any materials’ - PCA25/21.

It was also agreed that an annual Health and Safety inspection would need to be carried out in due course (Clause 20). In this respect, the Clerk agreed to invite a representative from the Health and Safety Committee to the next allotment inspection for this purpose.

- 8.5 The Clerk reported that she had been notified about items being stolen from the allotment site at Queens Drive which had subsequently been found behind some adjacent garages. It was outlined that the PCSO had been informed and she had agreed to add the site to her regular beat. The Clerk also outlined that she had alerted all tenants to the issue and asked them to contact her if the problems continued.
- 8.6 It was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to alter the hinge at the entrance gate at Queens Drive at a cost of £130 – PCA26/21.**
- 8.7 It was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to continue with the inclusion of strimming at Queens Drive as part of the general maintenance contract - PCA27/21.**
- 8.8 The results and recommendations of the Wildlife Survey for the allotments and cemetery as carried out by the Local Wildlife Site Partnership for the Cheshire region were noted. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council that the Clerk would respond to the partnership to accept the inclusion of the area in their official register of wildlife sites and to confirm that the recommendations in terms of managing the sites had been noted - PCA28/21.** The Clerk agreed to share the report with the general maintenance contractor. On the basis of the recommendations, it was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council that the cemetery extension area should have a different mowing regime to the rest of the cemetery by putting a mower wide strip around the edge and leaving the centre as a wildflower meadow to be mown just once a year. In addition, it was also recommended that the sloped verge on the northern edge of the cemetery with the A56 boundary be cut a little less often to protect wildlife – PCA29/21.**
- 8.9 Review of allotment rents – a report as presented by the Clerk was considered and it was noted that rents had not been increased since 2017. The Committee agreed that they were unable to make a resolution on this matter given that only 2 members were able to vote. However, it was agreed that it would be recommended to Full Council that rents be increased to £40 for a large plot and £25 for a small plot. It was suggested that some of the increase in income could be used to cover the costs of introducing a strimming service between the plots at Old Chester Road as currently offered at Queens Drive.
- 8.10 Member’s reports – The Clerk reported that she had sent an e-mail to Old Chester Road tenants in relation to the unauthorised disposal of material from their allotments onto the compost heaps in the wildlife strip. Cllr. Temple requested that the Clerk informed the Old Chester Road allotment holders on the Youds Cottage side when the hedges were due to be cut so that they could clear a pathway for the contractor.

9. Children's Play Area

- 9.1 It was noted that the picnic tables had been installed at the play area by Northwich Town Council.
- 9.2 Various designs and materials were considered in relation to the replacement of the vandalised bin. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to request a quote from Northwich Town Council for one Earth Anchors all steel 82 litre bin including fitting and to include quotes to dispose of the current damaged bin in this area at the same time or at a later date – PCA30/21.**
- 9.3 It was noted that the three replacement trees in the play area and parish field would be planted by Ascent Arboriculture when trees were dormant after October.
- 9.4 No member's reports were received.

10. Parish Field

- 10.1 Cllr. Temple presented an update report on the CCTV and parish field lighting project. It was proposed to install lighting along the paths at the bottom and top ends of the field and each path would have three 20W LED lights mounted on 4m high columns. She also set out that a 6m pole would be installed on the top path to support CCTV cameras covering the play area (for which planning permission would need to be sought) as well as a video recorder and monitor in the scout hut. Cllr. Temple outlined that both the Guides and the Scouts had given permission for HPC to take an electricity supply from their huts. She stated that each supply would be metered and HPC would pay for the electricity used as well as the installation costs. In order to move the project forward, the following was agreed:
 - It was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to install lighting along the bottom and top path of the parish field as well as CCTV over the play area. A detailed specification would be prepared for approval at the next full Council meeting on 9 August – PCA31/21.**
 - It was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to apply to CW&C for S106 funds to cover the cost of the lighting project - PCA32/21.**
 - It was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to apply to Protos CBF for funds towards the CCTV project but if unsuccessful, to use HPC reserves to fund the entire CCTV project - PCA33/21.**
- 10.2 Members noted comments made by the general maintenance contractor in relation to their weekly inspections. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to seek a quote from Helsby Garden Services to fill in and flag over the hole in front of the bench in the field - PCA34/21.** It had also been recommended that additional dog signage was provided. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to purchase some stand alone, movable signage and stakes to display at various areas on the field - PCA35/21.** It was noted that the contractor had requested the Council to reconsider their public liability insurance requirements of £10m as £5m appeared to be the norm for other councils. The Clerk agreed to investigate this in more detail. Finally, it was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to agree to a request for two additional strimming cuts in the cemetery, subject to the resolution as set out in HPC29/21 above - PCA36/21.**

- 10.3 It was noted that when the path was laid on the parish field, it was edged with wood. Cllr. Temple outlined that in the top corner by Parkfield Drive, the grass and ground had sunk away slightly and this was causing damage to the wood and tarmac. It was **RESOLVED to ask Helsby Garden Services to fill in the path with top soil and grass seed – PCA37/21.**
- 10.4 The Clerk outlined that it had been agreed that the tree and hedge maintenance contract would be extended into the 2021 season subject to mutual satisfaction and agreement. It was **RESOLVED that the contract would be extended with Ascent Arboriculture for work at Sherwood Court, the play area and the parish field and with Helsby Garden Services in relation to hedges at the Old Chester Road allotment site – PCA38/21.**
- 10.5 Member's reports – nothing was raised.

11. Cemetery

- 11.1 It was noted that offers had been made for various items of Council-owned garden machinery. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council that agreement be made in principle to sell a strimmer to retired general assistant, John Robotham, and to sell various other items to Helsby Garden Services – PCA39/21.** It was agreed that the Clerk would confirm which strimmer John Robotham was interested in and the Council would then decide on an appropriate sales value. It was agreed that the Clerk would then discuss a cash payment with Helsby Garden Services for the equipment they had expressed an interest in as well as some potential payment in kind in relation to items 10.2 and 10.3 above.
- 11.2 It was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to purchase a copy of the ICCM publication 'Essential Law for Cemetery and Crematorium Managers' at a cost of £39 – PCA40/21.**
- 11.3 The Clerk presented a draft Notice of Interment for discussion and outlined that she had sent it to one of the local funeral directors for comment. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to start using the draft document and make tweaks in due course based on any feedback received – PCA41/21.**
- 11.4 It was noted that a local resident had requested the Council to consider a change to Cemetery Regulation 6.3 in relation to the pre-purchase of graves. The matter was discussed but it was felt that enabling the purchase of graves prior to death led to difficulties in managing plots and could cause issues in the future due to lack of space in the cemetery. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to leave Cemetery Regulation 6.3 unchanged – PCA42/21.**
- 11.5 Review of cemetery fees – it was **RESOLVED to recommend to full Council to increase the fees as follows – PCA43/21:**
Burial fees – full grave
Purchase of lease to exclusive rights of burial £650
First interment fee £240
Subsequent interment fee £240
Admin fees £70
Placing of memorial stone £100 (any subsequent changes will also incur an admin fee of £70)

Cremated remains fees

Purchase of lease to exclusive rights of burial £300

Interment fee (1st Casket) £110

Subsequent interment fee £110

Admin fees £70

Burial of cremated remains in full size grave £110

New fee - Transfer of grant of exclusive rights of burial, if relevant, £70

Search and response for cemetery records £60

No change to the fee structure for non-residents and Under-16's.

- 11.6 It was agreed that the steps required following the registration with BRAMM would be discussed along with any proposed changes to the Cemetery Regulations for consideration at the next meeting.
- 11.7 Member's reports – it was agreed to allow the placing of a memorial stone on an existing grave, commemorating a family member whose ashes had been interred elsewhere. The Clerk to approve any inscriptions in due course and keep a note on any records that no interment had taken place.

12. No urgent matters were raised.

13. Date of next meeting – Monday 25th October 2021.

The meeting closed at 21:19.

Chairman's signature Dated.....