



Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held at 7pm in the Parish Office at Helsby Community Sports Club on Monday 29th January 2024

Present:

Cllr. Rob Nicklin (Chair)
Cllr. Sarah Temple
Cllr. Chris Ellams
Cllr. Mike Branigan
Cllr. Graham Stothard

Also present:

Claire Jones Parish Clerk

1. Public Participation – No matters were brought to the Committee’s attention.
2. There were no apologies for absence.
3. Cllr. Temple declared an interest in Item 7.1 as the proposal for works at the Queens Drive allotments had been submitted by her partner.
4. Confirmation of Previous Minutes. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held on 13th December 2023 were accepted as accurate and were duly signed by the Chair – **PCA01/24**.
5. Clerk’s report – it was noted that the Finance Committee had approved the new £20k earmarked reserve for the parks masterplan project and the Clerk had drafted an outstanding actions log for the Committee which would be raised under Item 7.10.
6. The Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee budget for the year 2023/24 and for the forthcoming fiscal year 2024/25 was discussed as follows:

Budget Heading Code	Description	Budget 2023/24 £	Budget Spend to Date £	Predicted To 31/03/24 £	Final Budget 2024/25 £
201	Allotment maintenance	3,000	4,239	4,439	3,150
202	Allotment water charge	300	203	252	315
211	Cemetery repairs/renewals	1,000	723	723	1,050
212	Cemetery maintenance	3,500	3,091	3,291	3,675
213	Parks and general maintenance	12,000	10,005	11,140	12,600

214	Park grass cutting	5,000	2,939	2,939	5,250
215	Park equipment	2,500	1,781	2,456	2,500
501	Play area improv./upgrades	9,000	0	9000	9,000
502	Future burial provision	4,105	0	4105	7,900
TOTAL		40,405	22,981	38,345	45,440

All figures above exclude VAT.

The following was also noted:

- i) Code 201 – Includes additional costs to repair allotment gates and gate posts (£1,090) and tree felling at Queens Drive (£480).
- ii) Code 501 – funds not spent but held in earmarked reserves. £41,000 expected in earmarked reserves by 31/3/24.
- iii) Code 502 – funds not spent but held in earmarked reserves. Figure for 2024/25 is 100% of the cemetery income from 2022/23 (£7,900). £35,252 expected in earmarked reserves by 31/3/24.
- iv) Monies were in earmarked reserves for the following projects: Code 504 - Cemetery extension area design project (£5,000), Code 507 - Wheelchair accessible roundabout (£5,000) and Code 520 - Parks Masterplan project (£20,000).

7. Miscellaneous matters

- 7.1. It was outlined that the Clerk had received a request from an allotment holder at Queens Drive to use any available S106 monies to rabbit-proof the site and to improve the drainage in the entrance roadway to prevent any waterlogging. The Clerk outlined that CW&C had confirmed that these projects would be eligible for S106 monies from the Land at Springfields (19/04572/FUL) development. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to progress a S106 application for £1,235 for these two projects at the Queens Drive allotments – PCA02/24**. It was noted that the monies were for materials only and that several plot holders had agreed to provide any labour required.
- 7.2. The slow worm records for 2023 were noted. The Clerk agreed to forward the records to the appropriate representatives from CW&C and Cheshire Wildlife Trust.
- 7.3. Cllr. Temple presented an update report on the cemetery extension layout project. It was noted that on-site discussions had been held with three specialist cemetery design companies. As like-for-like quotes for the entire project were not possible without a detailed design, it was proposed to appoint one of these designers based on the on-site discussions¹. It was **RESOLVED to request Above Zero Landscape Architecture to take forward the project as set out in the accompanying report using funds set aside under earmarked reserves – PCA03/24**. As a first stage, the Clerk agreed to ask the contractor to provide a design and an estimate of costs and timescales as well as some further information about how they would manage the subsequent tender and construction phases of the project.

¹ Financial Regulation 11.2 (b) allows the council to enter into a contract for specialist services without competitive tendering

- 7.4. Correspondence from Helsby Garden Services was noted in relation to the following maintenance issues: parish field coping stones; improvements to the north gate entrance to the play area; tarmac and path edging repairs. It was **RESOLVED to approve the draft letter in relation to the coping stones on the parish field – PCA04/24**. It was also **RESOLVED to order a new spring for the rocker at the play area from HAGS-SMP at a cost of £176 – PCA05/24**. The Clerk agreed to investigate any installation costs. Members felt that the quote from HAGS for the broken telescope (£467) was expensive and asked the Clerk to look at alternative options. Members agreed to consider any further access and path maintenance issues as part of the parks masterplan project.
 - 7.5. The contents of the latest inspections by Northwich Town Council were noted. It was **RESOLVED to continue with their services during 2024/25 at a cost of £75 per inspection – PCA06/24**. It was agreed to ask them to provide a quote for repairs to the zip wire chain and tyre.
 - 7.6. Cllr. Nicklin summarised a meeting he had held with Planit-IE on 12th January in relation to the proposed parish field masterplan/vision project. Members put together a 'wish list' of potential projects for Planit-IE to explore and agreed to forward several documents to them. It was agreed that Cllr. Nicklin would request a cost from Planit-IE to draw up a design as based on the wish list and documents as provided.
 - 7.7. It was **RESOLVED to approve an application for a grave deed transfer for plot North Pink 92 subject to the new owner providing a document to indemnify the council in relation to the transfer and subject to the words 'Ashes interred at Blacon' being inscribed on the proposed memorial tablet – PCA07/24**. Given the time taken by the Clerk to resolve this matter, it was proposed to consider introducing higher fees for complex burial transfers during the next review of the council's burial fees.
 - 7.8. It was noted that Frodsham Tree Solutions had removed the ivy from the tree in the cemetery. Their condition report was considered. Given its poor condition, it was **RESOLVED to request Frodsham Tree Solutions to quote to reduce the tree and to carry out the work – PCA08/24**.
 - 7.9. Members considered the 'Helsby Tree Survey/Maintenance Contract 2022 to 2025' with Hilldale Grounds Maintenance. It was noted that the last tree surveys had been completed in September 2022 and the contract stated that surveys should be carried out approximately every 18 months. Whilst it was noted that Hilldale had advised carrying out surveys every 3 years, given any potential damage from recent storms, it was **RESOLVED to request Hilldale to carry out the next survey as soon as possible subject to their agreement of the £480 survey fee as set out in the contract – PCA09/24**.
 - 7.10. The proposed new outstanding actions log was noted. Cllr. Ellams agreed to request a key for the Clerk to gain access to the scout hut.
8. No urgent matters requiring immediate attention were raised.
9. Date of next meeting – Monday 22nd April 2024.

Confidential Matters - Exclusion of the Press and Public

10. 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 item: To select the preferred contractor for the Cemetery, Allotments and General Maintenance Contract 2024-2027 – **PCA10/24**.
11. Confidential item – Information was considered from the three shortlisted contractors. It was **RESOLVED** to award the Cemetery, Allotments and General Maintenance Contract 2024-2027 to Helsby Garden Services at a total cost of £53,135 - **PCA11/24**.

The meeting closed at 8.54pm

Core members of this committee: Cllrs. Nicklin, Temple, Branigan, Ellams and Stothard.

Claire Jones – Parish Clerk - Email: parishclerk@helsbyparish.org.uk Phone: (01928) 726433

Chair's signature Dated.....