



# HELSEBY 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 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024

### Present:

Cllr. Rob Nicklin (Chair)  
Cllr. Sarah Temple  
Cllr. Terry O'Neill  
Cllr. Graham Stothard  
Cllr. Mike Branigan

### Also present:

Claire Jones Parish Clerk

1. Public Participation – no matters were raised.
2. Apologies for absence were noted from Cllr. Ellams.
3. Cllr. Temple declared interests in Items 7.3 and 14 as her partner was an allotment holder and treasurer of the Helsby Village Produce Association.
4. Confirmation of Previous Minutes. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024 were accepted as accurate and were duly signed by the Chair – **PCA35/24**.
5. Clerk's report – the Clerk outlined the following:
  - Item 5 - Peel had been contacted in relation to the air quality monitoring station lease but the matter had not yet been progressed. The tree work had been completed on the parish field;
  - Items 7.4, 9.2 and 9.3 – the cemetery and allotment documents had now been updated and the latest versions would be included on the new website. New webpages had been created for Helsby Public Cemetery, the allotments and the parish field/play area;
  - Item 7.5 – all allotment rents had been received for the forthcoming year;
  - Item 7.8 – the out-of-date sign had been removed from the gate at RSK;
  - Item 8.5 - Fields in Trust had issued a certificate to register the scout hut lease with the Land Registry and this had been sent to the Scout Association for attention;
  - Item 8.6 – Helsby Garden Services had agreed to replace the handrail and paint the steps at the side of the scout hut and the work would be carried out shortly (costs would be around £100 plus labour costs); and

- Item 8.9 – the door at the side of the guide hut had deteriorated further and this had been reported to the guides.

6. The final budget spend for 2023/24 was noted and the Parks, Cemetery & Allotments Committee budget and reserves balance for the year 2024/25 were discussed as follows:

Budget Code	Description	Budget 2023/24 £	Budget spent 2023/24 £	Budget 2024/25 £	Budget spent to date £	Predicted To 31/03/25 £
201	Allotment maintenance	3,000	4,398	3,150	2,419	3,000
202	Allotment water charge	300	256	315	97	200
211	Cemetery repairs/renewals	1,000	746	1,050	241	1,050
212	Cemetery maintenance	3,500	4,282	3,675	3,457	4,500
213	Parks and general maintenance work	12,000	11,548	12,600	7,311	13,000
214	Park grass cutting	5,000	2,939	5,250	3,282	4,000
215	Park equipment	2,500	2,588	2,500	1,647	3,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>27,300</b>	<b>26,757</b>	<b>28,540</b>	<b>18,454</b>	<b>28,750</b>

#### Reserves 2024/25

Budget Code	Description	Opening balance	Transfers & Receipts	Expected Spend 2024/25	Total
501	Play area improve. /upgrades	41,000	9,000	0	50,000
502	Future burial provision	35,252	7,900	0	43,152
504	Cemetery extension area project	4,700	5,000	9,700	0
507	Wheelchair accessible roundabout	5,000	0	5,000	0
520	Parks Masterplan	20,000	0	5,000	15,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>105,952</b>	<b>21,900</b>	<b>19,700</b>	<b>108,152</b>

The following was also noted:

All figures above exclude VAT and are rounded to the nearest £1.

- Budget Code 201 – allotment maintenance contract = £2,880. Hedge maintenance work = £88.
- Budget Code 202 – Last meter reading taken in September 2024.
- Budget Code 211 – Look to appoint a contractor to carry out a memorial safety testing exercise (informal exercise carried out by the clerk found no concerns). Remaining funds could be used towards the extension area project.

- iv) Budget Code 212 - Cemetery maintenance contract = £4,320. Also some ad-hoc maintenance costs expected (e.g. spoil heap clearance).
- v) Budget Code 213 – Contract for general maintenance work (park and Helsby-wide) in 2024/25 = £9,990. Also to include £154 contracted hedge maintenance work and any other ad-hoc work as identified.
- vi) Budget Code 214 – Grass cutting contract = £3,023 plus an additional £1,000 for weekly cuts of the parish field. £200 reduction offered by contractor due to lack of cuts in May.
- vii) Budget Code 215 – Funds needed for repairs to cableway.
- viii) Budget Code 504 – Could consider transfer of any additional funds from Budget Code 502.
- ix) Budget Code 520 - expected spend may need to increase from the currently allocated £5k.

## 7. Allotments

- 7.1. The Clerk updated members on correspondence that was sent out after the previous allotment inspections in August and September. It was noted that one eviction notice had been issued along with three Stage 1 letters. The results of the latest allotment inspection carried out on 18<sup>th</sup> October were also noted where one Stage 1 letter had been issued. It was felt that there had been a general deterioration of standards, but members agreed that this was probably due to poor weather conditions. The Clerk agreed to send out an e-mail in relation to tree pruning over the winter months. It was suggested that the allotment award scheme could be re-introduced from next year to try to improve general standards.
- 7.2. Allotment tenancies and waiting list – the Clerk outlined that there was currently one vacancy at Old Chester Road. It was agreed to place an advert in the Spring edition of Helsby News seeking potential new tenants.
- 7.3. It was noted that the S106 funds for rabbit-proofing and drainage works at the Queens Drive site had been received from CW&C. The Clerk agreed to liaise with David Temple and the volunteer group to take the project forward.
- 7.4. Cllr. Temple suggested that the council may wish to send out further correspondence to local residents in relation to granting permission to park on RSK's car park at Mountain View. It was **RESOLVED to seek legal advice in relation to parking rights in this location as well as to liaise with RSK about the matter – PCA36/24.**
- 7.5. No member's reports were received.

## 8. Parish Field and Children's Play Area

- 8.1. It was **RESOLVED to approve the specification to seek quotes for the 'Grass and Hedge Cutting Contract 2025/28' subject to several amendments – PCA37/24.** It was noted that any quotes received would be considered at December's budget meeting.
- 8.2. It was agreed not to issue an invitation to tender for any tree maintenance work and that this would be carried out as and when required. The Clerk agreed to

ensure that tree surveys were carried out periodically (either annually or once every two years).

- 8.3. Quotes were considered both to repair and to replace the cableway. Given the substantial cost of replacing the full cableway, it was agreed just to carry out any necessary repairs at the present time. It was **RESOLVED to appoint Company A to carry out repairs at a cost of £1,131 – PCA38/24**. The Clerk also agreed to ask them to check the fitting of the basket swing and to ask their advice about improving the drainage along the length of the cableway.
- 8.4. The results from recent weekly and monthly play inspections were noted. It was outlined that several of the railing posts around the play area had corroded and required some additional support. The Clerk agreed to ask Widnes Fabrication to inspect the railings and to quote for any necessary work. Following a quote from CSS, it was **RESOLVED for them to provide an annual service of the CCTV system at a cost of £280 per year – PCA39/24**.
- 8.5. It was noted that a payment of £403.33 had been made for the electricity used at the guide hut for the parish field lighting.
- 8.6. The Clerk outlined that she had sourced several quotes for the parish council to host a 2-day play area inspection training course. It was suggested that Eddie Bougen and either one councillor or the clerk could attend. However, it was noted that the course would need between 6 and 12 delegates to be feasible to run. It was agreed to continue to seek interest from other external parties such as local schools and town/parish councils. Members agreed to consider a detailed proposal at a future meeting if sufficient delegates could be found.
- 8.7. No member's reports were received.

## 9. Cemetery

- 9.1. The Law Commission's Consultation Paper on Burial and Cremation was noted. The Clerk agreed to provide members with a copy of ICCM's response to the paper in due course. Cllr. Temple offered to read the summary to see if any proposals might affect the parish council.
- 9.2. No member's reports were received.

10. The outstanding actions log was noted.

11. No urgent matters were raised.

12. The date of the next meeting was noted as Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024 (budget meeting).

## 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:**

13. The draft tender/quotation package for the cemetery extension area project was considered and approved subject to some minor amendments to be discussed with Above Zero. It was agreed to consider the priced schedule at the November Full Council meeting and to consider transferring funds from other earmarked reserves to cover the full project costs before issuing the invitation to tender.

14. A draft revised lease with the Helsby Village Produce Association was considered. Members agreed to hold further discussions with the council's solicitor and report back once several issues had been clarified.

15. It was noted that three quotes had been received for the design phase of the park masterplan project although these were not on a like for like basis. It was agreed to try to source an additional quote which included a full consultation package as part of the project.

It was **RESOLVED to continue the meeting beyond a period of two hours in order to complete the remaining items on the agenda – PCA40/24.**

16. The results of the building survey of the guide hut were not available so this matter was deferred to a future meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.17pm

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