



# HELSEBY PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held in the parish office at Helsby Community Sports Club at 7.55pm on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024

### Present:

Cllr. Rob Nicklin (Chair)  
Cllr. Sarah Temple  
Cllr. Terry O'Neill  
Cllr. Chris Ellams  
Cllr. Rob Foreman (to observe)

### Also present:

Claire Jones, Parish Clerk

1. Public Participation – no members of the public were present.
2. No apologies were noted.
3. Cllr. Temple declared interest in Item 7.3 as her partner was 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 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024 were accepted as accurate and were duly signed by the Chair – PCA43/24.**
5. Clerk's Report – the following was noted:
  - The guide hut door had been secured;
  - There had been interest in taking on plot 15 at Old Chester Road which was currently vacant. The Clerk agreed to liaise further with the potential tenant and to consider splitting the plot;
  - The cableway had been inspected and repaired by HAGS-SMP Ltd and an invoice had been received for payment;
  - The tender documents for the cemetery extension area project had been sent out to prospective contractors and the closing date for quotes was noted as 21<sup>st</sup> December; and
  - The playground inspection training course had been booked for 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February and it was agreed that the Clerk would attend. It suggested that the Clerk also took the associated exam and members agreed to consider this at the next meeting.

The Chair brought forward Item 10 (Grass and Hedge Cutting Contract 2025-28) prior to discussion of the 2025/26 budget.

### 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 items: To consider quotes for the Grass and Hedge Cutting Contract 2025-28 – PCA44/24.**

Various quotes were considered. It was agreed to shortlist several companies and to liaise further with them before awarding the contract. For the purposes of budgeting, it was agreed to use the quotes from the shortlisted company with the highest costs.

6. It was **RESOLVED to recommend the following Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee budget for 2025/26 totalling £58,750 for the inspection and approval of the Finance Committee – PCA45/24.**

| Budget Heading Code | Description                | Budget 2024/25 £ | Budget Spend to Date £ | Predicted To 31/03/25 £ | Recomm. Budget 2025/26 £ |
|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 201                 | Allotment maintenance      | 3150             | 3243                   | 3500                    | 3800                     |
| 202                 | Allotment water charge     | 315              | 117                    | 150                     | 200                      |
| 211                 | Cemetery repairs/renewals  | 1050             | 241                    | 241                     | 800                      |
| 212                 | Cemetery maintenance       | 3675             | 4691                   | 5000                    | 5500                     |
| 213                 | Parks and gen. maintenance | 12600            | 10581                  | 14500                   | 15000                    |
| 214                 | Park grass cutting         | 5250             | 3856                   | 3856                    | 10000                    |
| 215                 | Park equipment             | 2500             | 1855                   | 3000                    | 3500                     |
| 501                 | Play area imp/upgrades     | 9,000            | 0                      | 9,000 <sup>1</sup>      | 9,000                    |
| 502                 | Future burial provision    | 7,900            | 0                      | 7,900 <sup>2</sup>      | 10,950                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        |                            | <b>45,440</b>    | <b>24,584</b>          | <b>47,147</b>           | <b>58,750</b>            |

#### Reserves 2024/25

| Budget Code  | Description             | Opening balance | Transfers & Receipts | Expected Spend 2024/25 | Total          |
|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 501          | Play area imp/upgrades  | 41,000          | 9,000                | 0                      | 50,000         |
| 502          | Future burial provision | 35,252          | -2,100 <sup>3</sup>  | 0                      | 33,152         |
| 504          | Cemetery extension      | 4,700           | 15,000               | 19,700                 | 0              |
| 507          | Accessible equipment    | 5,000           | 0                    | 0                      | 5,000          |
| 520          | Parks Masterplan        | 20,000          | 0                    | 6,069                  | 13,931         |
| 522          | S106 QD allotments      | 0               | 1,236                | 1,236                  | 0              |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |                         | <b>105,952</b>  | <b>23,136</b>        | <b>27,005</b>          | <b>102,083</b> |

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

<sup>1</sup> Monies being saved under earmarked reserves. No funds spent in 2024/25.

<sup>2</sup> Monies being saved under earmarked reserves. No funds spent in 2024/25.

<sup>3</sup> Burial income of £7,900 was carried forward into 2024/25 reserves. At the last meeting, it was resolved to transfer £10,000 from earmarked code 502 to code 504 making a shortfall of £2,100 for 2024/25.

The following was also noted:

- i) Code 201 – See HGS report for 2024/25 spend. HGS contract costs for 2025/26 are £2,967. Proposed hedge maintenance contract for 2025/26 = £240.
- ii) Code 202 – Last meter reading taken in September 2024. Water now turned off for winter.
- iii) Code 211 – to budget for memorial testing in 2025 (around £3 per memorial, £350 full survey)? Funds could also be used to contribute to cemetery extension area project?
- iv) Code 212 – See HGS report for 2024/25 spend. HGS contract costs for 2025/26 are £4,450. Also to add various ad-hoc work such as spoil heap clearance and possible additional cuts.
- v) Code 213 – See HGS report for 2024/25 spend. HGS contract costs for 2025/26 are £10,290. Proposed hedge maintenance contract for 2025/26 = £315. Also to include ad-hoc work such as tree work, bench installation and beacon lighting.
- vi) Code 214 – New contract from 2025/26. Costs to be confirmed in January.
- vii) Code 215 – includes NTC and RoSPA inspections (£1,100) and scout and guide hut electricity payments (£684). HGS to train to carry out monthly inspections. Arrange inspection app. Cableway repairs invoice £1,131.
- viii) Code 502 - Figure for 2025/26 is 100% of the cemetery income from 2023/24 as shown in 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 financial statement (£10,950). In Oct 24, the committee resolved to transfer £10,000 from this earmarked reserve to cover the remaining estimated costs of the cemetery extension area project.
- ix) Guide hut – it was suggested that some funds may need to be earmarked for any guide hut costs. To raise at the January Finance Committee.

## 7. Miscellaneous matters

- 7.1 It was agreed to carry out a health and safety inspection at the Queens Drive allotment site on 3<sup>rd</sup> January. Further inspections at the cemetery and the Old Chester Road allotment site would be arranged in January.
- 7.2 It was outlined that a work programme had been submitted for the rabbit-proofing and drainage works at the Queens Drive site and the project was expected to be completed by the end of February.
- 7.3 VPA lease update - It was outlined that the council's solicitor had advised against an equitable lease arrangement. Various other alternatives were considered and the Clerk agreed to liaise further with the solicitor.

8. No urgent matters were raised.

9. The date of the next meeting was noted as Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

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