



HELSEBY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee meeting held in the parish office at Helsby Community Sports Club at 7pm on Monday 27th January 2025

Present:

Cllr. Rob Nicklin (Chair)

Cllr. Sarah Temple

Cllr. Terry O'Neill

Cllr. Chris Ellams

Also present:

Claire Jones, Parish Clerk

1. Public Participation – no members of the public were present.
2. No apologies were noted. Cllrs. Stothard and Branigan did not attend.
3. Cllr. Temple declared interest in Item 14 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 11th December 2024 were accepted as accurate and were duly signed by the Chair – **PCA01/25**.
5. Clerk's Report – it was noted that the Clerk was yet to seek legal advice in relation to parking rights at RSK's car park at Mountain View and to liaise with RSK about the matter.
6. The current and expected budget and reserves expenditure for 2024/25 was noted along with the agreed Parks, Cemetery & Allotments Committee budget for 2025/26 as follows:

Budget Heading Code	Description	Budget 2024/25 £	Budget Spend to Date £	Predicted To 31/03/25 £	Final Budget 2025/26 £
201	Allotment maintenance	3150	3411	3500	3800
202	Allotment water charge	315	147	175	200
211	Cemetery repairs/renewals	1050	241	241	800
212	Cemetery maintenance	3675	4775	5000	5500
213	Parks and general maintenance	12600	12460	15000	15000
214	Park grass cutting	5250	3856	3856	10000
215	Park equipment	2500	3137	3250	3500

501	Play area improv./upgrades	9000	0	9000 ¹	9000
502	Future burial provision	7900	0	7900 ²	10950
TOTAL		45,440	28,027	47,922	58,750

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 ³	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
TOTAL		105,952	23,136	27,005	102,083

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

The following was also noted:

- i) Code 215 – park equipment expenditure includes play area inspections, scout and guide hut electricity payments and repairs to the cableway.
- ii) Code 502 – Figure for 2025/26 is 100% of the cemetery income from 2023/24 (£10,950).

7. Miscellaneous matters

- 7.1 The results of the allotments and cemetery health and safety inspections as held on 17th January were noted. It was outlined that several metal/wooden rods had been placed around the perimeter of various allotment plots, and these could present a safety issue. At the next review, it was agreed that some wording could be included in the allotments policy to ensure that any rods were at a sufficient height or capped to minimise risk. In the meantime, the Clerk agreed to contact all plot holders to outline the risks. The Clerk also agreed to remove an area of ivy that was displacing the retaining wall at the cemetery and to purchase and store some de-icing grit in the cemetery garage.
- 7.2 It was noted that various items had been purchased for the Queens Drive allotment S106 project, and it was expected that the work would be completed by the end of March. It was also noted that a manhole cover had overflowed with water at the Queens Drive site in early January, and this had caused considerable flooding in the area around plot 6 and

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

² Monies being saved under earmarked reserves. See footnote 3.

³ Burial income of £7,900 was carried forward into 2024/25 reserves. It was resolved to transfer £10,000 from earmarked code 502 to code 504 making a shortfall of £2,100 for 2024/25.

along the main pathway. The Clerk outlined that the matter had been reported to United Utilities and that investigation work was ongoing.

- 7.3 It was noted that allotment plot 15 at Old Chester Road was unlikely to be required for the cemetery extension area project so arrangements could be made to re-let it. The Clerk agreed to contact the next person on the waiting list to see if they would be interested in renting it as a small plot. As this was one of the larger small plots, options were discussed to split the plot into two halves, but it was suggested that a decision be deferred until after the first allotment inspections of the year, assuming the person on the waiting list did not take it. It was also suggested that all the plots should be re-measured in due course.
- 7.4 It was noted that the playground inspection course had been arranged on 25th and 26th February and would be held in the parish office as well as at various local playgrounds. The Clerk outlined that there would be 9 attendees including herself and Eddie Bougen of Helsby Garden Services. It was **RESOLVED for the Clerk to undertake the Register of Play Inspectors International exam for Operational Inspections at a cost of £265 – PCA02/25.**
- 7.5 The contents of the latest monthly play area inspections by Northwich Town Council were noted. It was **RESOLVED that the Council would no longer continue with Northwich Town Council beyond March 2025 and instead, request Helsby Garden Services to carry out the monthly inspections in 2025/26, dependent upon a successful examination pass – PCA03/25.** The Clerk agreed to add this to the existing contract with Helsby Garden Services and to explore putting future inspection sheets on an electronic app.
- 7.6 It was noted that Make Space had been appointed to carry out the park's masterplan project and an initial meeting had been held to discuss design options and consultation ideas. It was also noted that the topographical surveys and statutory record drawings had recently been completed.
- 7.7 NALC's Response to the Law Commission's Consultation on Burial and Cremation was noted. It was agreed that the new extension area should be defined as un-consecrated ground.

8. The contents of the outstanding actions log were noted. The Clerk agreed to liaise further with Helsby Community Association about a CCTV policy for the community centre.

9. No urgent matters were raised.

10. The date of the next meeting was noted as Monday 28th April 2025.

Confidential Matters - Exclusion of the Press and Public

11. 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 the appointment of a preferred contractor for the Grass and Hedge Cutting Contract 2025-28 and arrangements for the path edging element of the work; to consider tenders for the cemetery extension layout project and to agree a preferred contractor; to consider next steps in relation to the draft VPA lease; and to receive an update on the guide hut and to consider any next steps – PCA04/25.**

12. It was **RESOLVED to appoint Beechwood Industries to carry out the Grass and Hedge Cutting Contract 2025-2028 at a total cost of £26,455 plus VAT, with the exception of the path edging**

work in Year 1 which would be commissioned as a separate project - PCA05/25. The Clerk agreed to obtain additional quotes for the path edging work.

- 13. It was **RESOLVED to appoint Ground Inc. to carry out the cemetery extension layout project at a cost of £19,072 including all optional extras, to obtain two hard copies of the JCLI Works Contract agreement at a cost of £39 each and to request Full Council to allocate some additional earmarked reserves to cover the full project costs - PCA06/25.**
- 14. The Clerk agreed to liaise further with the council’s solicitor on various matters and then to send the draft lease to the Village Produce Association for consideration.
- 15. An update report was noted on the guide hut. It was noted that Helsby Community Sports Club would inform the council whether they wished to take on the property by 7th February.

The meeting closed at 8.19pm.

Chair’s signature..... Dated.....