



HUMBERSTON VILLAGE COUNCIL

Annual Report and Accounts
Year 23/24

Councillors' Attendances

Each month the usual Council meetings were called on the first Tuesday and then Planning Committee Meetings were held on the third Tuesday of the month if required.

There were 12 scheduled monthly meetings and then one extraordinary meeting of the Council called during the year. As well as Planning Committee Meetings, Personnel Committee meetings were also held.

There was also a special Budget Meeting called in January 2024 to set the budget for the 24-25 financial year and the precept requirement for Humberston Village.

Attendances for Councillors serving throughout the year – 14 full main Council meetings:

Cllr. Liz Shawhulme (Chairman)	14 from a possible 14
Cllr. Heidi Clark (Vice-Chair)	11 from a possible 14
Cllr. Mike Hodgins	10 from a possible 14
Cllr. Tracey Rudd	12 from a possible 14
Cllr. Jim Hudson	12 from a possible 14
Cllr. Dennis Sharp elected in May 2023	12 from a possible 13
Cllr. Tracey Duff coopted in March 2024	1 from a possible 1

Former Cllrs. who served through the year but are not longer members

Former Councillors who served throughout the year were as follows:

Cllr. Jane Woollock left after the July 2023 meeting and attended 0 out of possible 4 meetings.

Cllr. David England was coopted onto the Council in August 2023 and attended 4 out of a possible 9 meetings.

The Council started the year with 5 members out of a possible 12 and completed the year with 7 members.

Cllr. Shawhulme served as Chairman for the year and Cllr. Clark served as Vice-Chair for the year.

Cllr. Rudd served as Chairman of the Allotments Committee for the year and also Chairman of the Personnel Committee.

Mrs. Kathy Peers, a CiLCA qualified Clerk, served as the Village Clerk for the year. The Clerk is also an associate member of the Society of Local Council Clerks.

Councillors also undertook training throughout the year by attending virtual events, a Conference and the Clerk attended ERNLLCA and SLCC training events.

Members and the Clerk also attended meetings of outside bodies including the Town and Parish Liaison Committee with NELC, quarterly Highways meetings with NELC and the ERNLLCA North East Lincs District Committee meetings.

Planning Matters

The Village Council is a statutory consultee of the local Planning Authority, which is North East Lincolnshire Council. The Village Council is consulted on every planning application within the Village and also those which are on its boundary or close to its boundary within a neighbouring Village.

During the year the Village Council was consulted on all planning applications which are within, or adjacent to, Humberston Village. Consultation is 'paperless' with a list sent through, the applications added to each Agenda and Members viewing the plans and details through the planning portal on the NELC website.

Just over 90 applications were considered during the year by the Village Council which is an increase on the previous year. Also the Village Council were officially consulted by NELC on the new proposed Local Plan and the Members met informally to formulate the Council's response and comments were submitted before the end of the consultation period, with the Village Council submitting detailed comments in each section.

Relevant plans are downloaded by the Clerk and projected at meetings so that member and any public present can also see the issues Council members are considering and discussing.

During the course of the year various representatives from development teams attended Council meetings to undertake pre-application consultation on proposed future developments within the Village and the meetings were well attended by local residents concerned with planning applications.

The Council's comments and observations on the planning applications are also published on the Village Council's website, and residents are most welcome to attend meetings of the Planning Committee and make their views known to members.

During the year the main issues centred around new housing developments and issues around the Fitties Conservation area. The Village Council is also notified of planning appeals.

Wendover Hall and Wendover Paddock Hall

The Village Council owns and manages the Wendover Paddock area which incorporates play equipment and leisure equipment areas as well as both Wendover Hall and Wendover Paddock Hall. Security for the whole compound is provided inhouse via the Village Council's own staff.

The Village Council employs three Caretaking/Cleaning staff to operate the Halls and the grounds are professionally maintained by a grounds maintenance contractor.

Both Halls are extremely busy and generate good revenue for the Village Council. There are reduced rates for regular, long-term hirers and special rates for community/charitable/not-for-profit groups. Party hirings are also available at reduced rates for Humberston residents and slightly higher rates for non-residents.

During the year the car park was also resurfaced with Specialist Surfacing from Scunthorpe. The works took place in May 2023.

The Paddock saw some improvements throughout the year with installation of new equipment including outdoor fitness equipment and new swings including parent and child swings. Extra benches were also provided with wheelchair accessible picnic benches being provided.

Community/Highways/Footpaths/Other

During the year the Council carried out necessary repair and improvement works to areas of land owned and maintained by the Village Council.

The Council has full ownership of land off Humberston Avenue at Carrington Gardens and the Westleigh Homes site. Contractors maintain the site for the Village Council.

As the remainder of this site is developed by the owners, then further land will be transferred to the ownership of the Council along with another bonded sum for its upkeep.

The Village Council also owns two thoroughfares within the Village known as Strang Walk and Postman's Walk and these are also maintained through the Grounds Maintenance Contract which also incorporates the Cemetery.

The Village Council employs a litter picker who covers the whole village on a few hours per week.

Events were again held with a very successful Summer Event with entertainment, food and a bar run by the Village Council. Then the popular Christmas Event was held in December 2023 with a very popular visit from Santa and his Sleigh. A Fashion Show was also held in the Spring of 2023.

The Centenary Green project was completed with the flag pole installed, benches put in and the new notice board installed. Thanks to Lovelles Humberston for sponsoring the flower bed for us.

Newsletter

The Village Council has continued with the production and distribution of its Newsletter during the year with the usual delivery to every household and business in the Village now back in place.

This publication is produced every quarter, with four editions covering Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. The publication sells advertising to support the cost of production and distribution and is managed entirely by Council members and the Clerk. The Newsletter is now printed in full colour.

A copy of the Newsletter is distributed to every home within the Humberston electoral area, including Humberston Fitties, and also to every business in the Village.

Humberston Cemetery

The Cemetery on Humberston Avenue is managed by the Village Council with the land owned by the Village Council. During the year the Village Council agreed to purchase land adjacent to the current site for a new cemetery extension and that purchase was completed just at the end of the financial year. The land was purchased for £37.5k from North East Lincolnshire Council. The Village Council has successfully obtained planning permission for the cemetery extension. A loan has been obtained from the Public Works Loan Board to put the infrastructure in place for the new extension, which will consist of landscaping, fencing and hedging, paths and benches and a small memorial seating area which is being developed. It is hoped that the new extension will come into use in late 2024.

There is a scaled fee system in place for the Cemetery, with local residents enjoying reduced fees for interments and plot purchases and non-residents paying higher fees.

The Cemetery is maintained through a Contractor who is appointed by the Village Council and the Company preparing the grave spaces is an independent company, not contracted by the Village Council, but used by local funeral directors.

Also during the year the Village Council had path repairs carried out on its behalf through the NELC highways team and further work will be carried out in the coming financial year. Two more trees were also removed for health reasons on the main carriage drive at the Cemetery and a local contractor has been commissioned to carry out some tree carving at the entrance to the cemetery. More tree work is earmarked as ongoing improvements to the site continue to be made.

The Village Council employs a Cemetery Sexton who is present for funerals and independent memorial masons operate within the Cemetery installing and repairing memorials as required. The Parish Clerk also attended Cemetery Management and Memorial Safety training as a refresher course during the year.

Humberston Allotments

The Village Council manage the allotments on land leased from North East Lincolnshire Council. The Village Council has an Allotment Committee and members undertake regular inspections of the site throughout the year and undertake any necessary actions.

The Village Council works closely with HAHA (the Humberston Allotment Holders' Association) and each year in January, renews the allotment tenancies for another year. The tenancy agreement is reviewed each year, in liaison with HAHA, and then issued to all tenants.

The Allotment Competition was held during the year and a presentation held in the Summer to the winners and runners up.

Improvements to the site included financial support with walkways etc. and clearing some plots between tenant handovers. Flooding of some plots was also an issue during the year with the Council looking at possible solutions. The Village Council also provided a skip for one weekend during the year which was for use solely by allotment tenants for clearing allotment items.

The Village Council is a member of the National Association of Allotment Gardeners and the Committee Chairman and the Clerk both attended allotment training during the year.

Finance

The precept set by the Village Council for 23/24 was £108,000 which was increased from the previous year. The precept was increased due to the increase in the number of homes in Humberston from the previous year. The village, in relation to the Council Tax Base figure set by NELC, is now the largest area after Grimsby and Cleethorpes.

Income for the year:

- Precept - £108,000
- allotment rents - £5,131
- cemetery income - £27,985
- income from hire of Wendover Hall - £21,114
- income from hire of Wendover Paddock Hall - £16,807
- income from advertising sold in village newsletter - £875
- VAT refund - £17,429
- Ward funding (from NELC Ward Cllrs.) - £2,000

- Other income included minor amounts for stall holder rents, tickets etc. for events and sponsorship of the Centenary Flower Bed from Lovelles, Humberston

(VAT reclamation is allowed to local authorities and affiliated bodies)

Expenditure for the year:

- Wendover Halls - £24,169
- Wendover Paddock - £38,980
- Cemetery expenditure - £24,392 (including £2.5k tree works)
- Allotment expenditure - £1,763
- Land maintenance expenditure - £1,800 (land off Humberston Avenue)
- Highways/footpaths - £6,387
- Newsletter expenditure - £6,926 (including distribution for the year)
- Salaries for all staff - £47,488 (5 staff positions)
- Events/Holiday Clubs - £3,335
- General administration - £6,000

Notes on Expenditure:

Hall expenditure includes all insurances (both buildings, public liability and employer's liability), heat, water and commercial rates as well as repairs and day to day running costs such as cleaning materials and hygiene products as well as all necessary electrical and gas compliance etc.

Cemetery Expenditure includes the grounds maintenance contract which also covers grass cutting at Wendover Hall and two small footpaths the Village Council own and manage. There are also insurances, water rates and non-domestic rates payable on the site. The grounds maintenance contract is awarded to a contractor every two years as part of a competitive bid process and the current contract expires in June 2025.

Allotment expenditure includes insurance, water rates and any minor repairs carried out by the Council.

Highways and footpaths includes all maintenance of land owned by the Council such as Postman's Walk and Strang Walk and also repairs to street lighting. This also includes all gritting works carried out during the winter months.

Land management expenditure covers the land off Humberston Avenue which the Council owns and maintains. A contract is awarded for this through a competitive

bid process. The maintenance is carried out in accordance with a land management plan for the area agreed when the Council took ownership of the land.

Newsletter expenditure includes printing and distribution.

Salaries covers five staff positions and covers all PAYE such as tax and national insurance as well as holiday/relief cover and pension contributions. Salary scales are not set by the Village Council but are set nationally for the staff.

General administration covers the Council for all of its insurances, membership of its County Association, the East Riding and Northern Lincs Local County Association, training for members and the Clerk, all office and administration costs including postage, stationery and travel expenses for both members and the Clerk, a Chairman's allowance and also membership of bodies such as the National Institute of Cemetery and Crematoria Management and a contribution towards the Clerk's membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks.

The Village Council has an approved list of contractors which it uses for works/contracts/repairs etc. This is based on a local contractor priority policy as far as is practical and also any of the advertisers which support the Village Newsletter.

There is an internal audit carried out each year, and this was done in May 2023 and carried out by Mr. M. Peterson, with a full written report submitted to the Village Council. An external audit has to then take place which is usually completed by September each year. No concerns or actions were raised from the audit. There were four quarterly account reconciliations carried out in June 2023, September 2023, December 2023 and then at the end of the financial year in March 2024 – these are all published on the Village Council's own website.

The Village Council's external audit each year is carried out by the nationally appointed auditors, PKF Littlejohn (based in Canary Wharf) and the Village Council complies with all legal requirements of the audit process each year.

The Village Council has its own website which is administered by the Village Clerk and has a Facebook and Instagram page to keep residents updated with events and Village Council news.

The Village Council met in January 2024 to ensure budgets were on target, set the budget for financial year 23/24 and to set the precept for the coming year.

General Matters

Ward Councillors from NELC for the year were Cllrs. Stan Shreeve, Hayden Dawkins and Stephen Harness. The three Ward Councillors are regular attendees at the Village Council meetings each month and work closely with the Council on projects and issues both locally and borough wide with NELC.

Members of the public were also regular attendees of meetings over the course of the year along with various visitors including representatives of developers/planners who regularly conduct consultation with the Council on planning matters.

The Village Council also enjoys a close working relationship with the local Policing Team and acknowledges their hard work on behalf of the Village throughout the year. There was occasional attendance at meetings by the Police during the year, but detailed written reports are received each month throughout the year and circulated to all members of the Council and published in the quarterly Newsletter.

In May 2023 the Council held its Annual Parish Council Meeting at which it reviewed all of its documentation, procedures and governance arrangements and appointed the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and its Committees.

The Annual Parish Meeting for Humberston was also held in May 2023 at which the Annual Report for 22/23 was published.