



# HELBY NEWS

[www.helsbynews.org.uk](http://www.helsbynews.org.uk)

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## Green Councillors in Search of Answers



Regular readers of Helsby News will remember that in the spring and summer editions we reported on the concerns about PCB's and local pollution drawn to our attention by Borough Cllr Chris Copeman.

Following a BBC radio 4 series which conducted some testing on the old BICC site in Helsby and at Commonsidge, looking for PCBs, (a group of toxic forever chemicals,) the Cheshire West Green Party Councillors, led by Cllr Copeman, tabled a motion in Council on the matter, determined to get answers rather than allow the issue to quietly drop off the agenda.

The motion found unanimous support from other CWAC councillors, and as a consequence a "task and

finish" committee has been set up. This committee is now tasked with investigating possible contamination at both sites and will report back its findings within six months.

Initially an NDA (Non-disclosure agreement) was placed on the committee by the CWAC executive. We understand that this has now been lifted and we can report that the committee is made up of 2 Labour, 1 Conservative and 2 Green Party Councillors. The Executive has now appointed a senior barrister to oversee the process and it is uncertain why this has been found necessary.

We feel sure the folk of Helsby will want Helsby News to follow this committee's work and its findings with interest.

*Marj Thoburn*

## A NEW PARISH COUNCILLOR

**Introducing Emma Foster, North Ward's newly co-opted Parish Councillor.**

Emma moved to Helsby eight years ago and immediately fell in love with the place. She has family living in the village and finds herself increasingly committed to the development of the area. She has two sons and a supportive husband, Ricky. Both of them work full time and although busy put a lot into the community already. Ricky is involved locally as head coach for under 11's football.

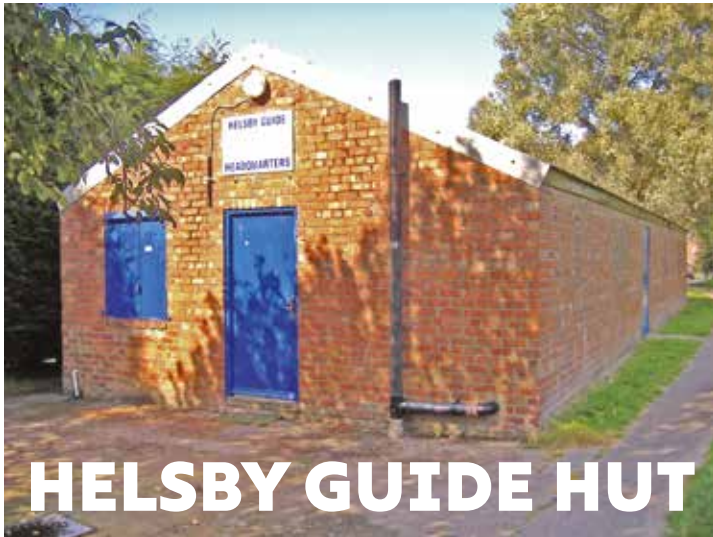
Emma works as a Programme Director for the single biggest host of telecom sites in the UK and knows her way around the world of work. She

brings that experience to the Parish Council but feels she will take her time to get to know the workings of the established Parish Council because that is her way.

We feel sure she will be welcomed by her fellow councillors for her energy, commitment and positive approach to the challenges and demands of the role.

We wish her well.





You may have noticed that the guide hut on the parish field is not in use at the moment as sadly we have no active guiding groups in the village. The hut has been on the parish field for over 70 years and no doubt holds fond memories for lots of local girls and ladies that were previously part of the association.

Girlguiding and Helsby Parish Council are both keen to save the hut and are seeking a potential new tenant. However, as the parish field is a designated Field in Trust, there are some limitations in terms of what the building can be used for. Permitted uses include sports pavilions, changing rooms, storage facilities for equipment used on the field and community cafes. Local clubs and charities and other community organisations with an open membership policy may also be permitted to lease the building in certain circumstances, especially those with a sports connection.

It is unlikely that any commercial ventures would be acceptable so although we are happy to note any interest from local businesses, we are unwilling at this early stage to consider entering a lease. The new tenant would have full responsibility for the maintenance and insurance of the building.

**If you think that you may be able to offer the building a fresh start, please contact the parish clerk (clerk@helsbyparishcouncil.gov.uk or 01928 726433) for further details.**

## Review of the Neighbourhood Plan

Helsby Parish Council is considering carrying out a review of the Helsby Neighbourhood Plan which was made in 2016. The council feels that the plan could be strengthened to include more robust environmental standards for new homes.

One idea would be to introduce a building standard for any new house building in Helsby known

as 'Passivhaus'. This concept was developed in Germany and aims for exceptional energy efficiency in buildings to help tackle climate change.

A review of the plan might also present an opportunity to reflect any changes in national planning policy/guidance or any relevant developments in the local area since 2016.

A formal consultation process will need to be carried out in due course if the council decides to go ahead with a review. In the meantime, if you have any comments on building standards for new homes or you'd like to volunteer to help with a review of the Helsby Neighbourhood Plan, please contact the parish clerk at [clerk@helsbyparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@helsbyparishcouncil.gov.uk).

### Helsby News Editorial Team

Marj Thoburn, Vicky Mohring, Chris Ellams, Ian Oulton, Margaret Marsh and Gary O'Neill.

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## HELSEBY FOOTPATH SOCIETY

We are so fortunate in Helsby to have such a good network of Public Rights of Way giving us useful shortcuts and access to the countryside.

Helsby Footpath Society was formed in 1996 to promote the use of these paths and help keep them in good order.

The Society has been inactive over the past few years, but now is the time to reinvigorate it. We already have a committee in place, with a chair and treasurer, but we are lacking members. Anyone who would like to join us in

monitoring the condition of the PRoWs in Helsby and, if able, to join working parties to help maintain them, please contact [susan.lorimer1@btinternet.com](mailto:susan.lorimer1@btinternet.com).

Membership, normally £2, is free for this year. If you use these paths or want to preserve them for future generations, we would love to hear from you.



# HELBY OPAL NEEDS YOU

**If you have an hour or two to spare and would like to know more about our volunteer opportunities, we'd love to hear from you!**

Our OPAL volunteers help provide vital services to the older members of our community and their carers.

We are always looking for more people to join our fantastic team. Email [volunteering@opalservices.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@opalservices.org.uk) or call our Volunteer Co-ordinator on 07592 464856

Or if you know an older person living in the Helsby community who might benefit from one of our services, please email [contactus@opalservices.org.uk](mailto:contactus@opalservices.org.uk) or call 07562 619 275.

You can find more information about all our services at [www.opalservices.org.uk](http://www.opalservices.org.uk)

## Green Flag Pride???

Keep Britain Tidy have yet again presented Helsby Quarry with a Green Flag Award. The scheme recognizes and rewards the best green spaces in the country and Cheshire West and Chester is celebrating 10 Green Flag Awards in the borough for its parks and green spaces this year.

Our local MP, Mike Amesbury, has recently been in praise of CWAC's achievements saying "It's something we can take pride in as a community".

But Helsby residents may be hard pressed to follow his lead, knowing, as they do, that the bottom entrance to Helsby Quarry, through the tunnel, has been closed to access for more than 2 years.

During that time CWAC has denied responsibility for the Quarry.

This was the case until local investigations produced documents that showed it was handed over as part of the transfer from the previous Vale Royal Authority and therefore CWAC was answerable for its upkeep.

Now, despite the best efforts of the Parish Council and Borough Cllr Copeman, the lower Quarry access seems set to stay closed. CWAC has indicated it would cost too much to make safe.

**Knowing that, can nothing more be done? Is this another incidence of Helsby being let down by CWAC?**

## SUCCESSFUL FIRST SEASON

As Helsby News goes to press plans are underway for the sixth and last Car Boot Sale of this season at St Paul's Helsby. Like all outdoor events in the UK, each is shaped by the weather – there have been several dodging showers and a couple of gloriously sunny days.

These small events average about a dozen cars, but over the summer more than forty cars have turned up. This seems to imply that a local need is being met both for those who are having a clear out or simply have a few things to sell. The advantages are that the site is on the hard standing in the car park, so no muddy fields to contend with and the community hall offers a simple café and toilets, and you do not have to drive miles to get there!



The car boot sales have provided a focus for the village once a month, when people can have a walk around, catch up with neighbours, possibly gain new friends and stretch their legs. The feedback is that people like it. The sales will be back next April and until then I will need to find a new supplier to get my fresh eggs.

*Gary O'Neill*



One of our oldest residents in the village, Gwen Baskerville is seen here being wished a very Happy 104th Birthday by Chairman, of the Parish Council, Chris Ellams. Gwen lives in Loxley Hall and is visited regularly by her son, Keith.

# VERGES AND HEDGES

Clr Copeman told Helsby News, "Quite a few residents have contacted me recently about overgrown verges and hedges in Helsby, often obstructing pavements and roads and making life difficult for pedestrians. I have asked quite a few householders to cut them back and asked the Council to act where appropriate. If you have a hedge on a roadside please cut it back now bird nesting season is over."

Residents may welcome knowing of the CWAC Report It app where complaints and issues can be reported. The app is available for download on your device's app store. The app is called Cheshire West and Chester and can be found using the search function.

Marj Thoburn



# Helsby Hillside WI

The Annual WI outing this year was a visit to the Emma Bridgewater pottery. Members took a tour around the pottery, and visited the gift shop. The visit concluded with a most enjoyable afternoon tea.

In August we held a social evening with entertainment provided by the Committee. The evening concluded with a lovely buffet, cakes, and soft drinks.

Our monthly lunch club have been enjoying visits to local restaurants where members sample different cuisines. The Sports Section is well under way with the outdoor bowling season, and the darts players are warming up for the winter games.

Our regular meetings from September 10th will see Rosie Lee telling us about The Reluctant Shepherdess. On 8th October Stephen and Ann Maund will relate their community work in Malawi. At the Annual Meeting on 12th November, Derek Arnold will be talking on the history of the Mersey Ferries, Daffodil and Iris. Our year concludes on 10th December with our Christmas Party.

Our Programme Secretary is working very hard to book interesting speakers for 2025, and we would like to welcome new members to our Group. We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month in the Helsby Community Centre at 7.30pm. If you would like to know more, or just come for a visit, contact Pam Hinkley on 01928 722161.

Pam Hinkley



**Ho Ho Helsby**

Helsby's very own Christmas event

Fun for all the family

Don't miss it!

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

- Stalls, Santa's grotto & attractions from midday
- Festive parade from 6pm

Keep up-to-date at [www.hohohelsby.co.uk](http://www.hohohelsby.co.uk)

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# ONE YEAR OF HELPING HELSBY RESIDENTS

Having opened 12 months ago, Helsby Community Link Hub is celebrating its first anniversary. The Community Hub offers two sessions a week of listening, signposting and a community pantry. The Hub is open most Mondays 11.30 till 1.30pm and Fridays from 10.00am till midday and provides a welcoming safe, confidential space where a wonderful volunteer team offers a cuppa and are happy to listen and offer support.

Nicola Brown, the Hub lead, told Helsby News, "the Hub is for anyone, just call in. We are waiting to help and understand that life can be quite tough for many of us."

The Hub has helped many local people in this past year and there has been much positive feedback. They have made contacts and relationships with other community support groups and these essential links provide a network of resources that can be tapped into, including accessing West Cheshire Foodbank with a referral code.

## Special Events

Following a successful 'Eating Well for less' event in the summer the Hub put on 'Energy Matters' in September in partnership with Citizens Advice. Something that impacts on all of us.

If you are having any challenges with energy issues, then please call into the Hub and speak to one of their volunteers.

Find them at The Link, Helsby Methodist Church, Chester Rd, Helsby, WA6 0AQ. Mondays 11.30 -1.30pm and Fridays 10am -midday



## Get the most out of Helsby Library

### Did you know...?

- It's free to join
- We provide a wide range of books for all ages, available in different formats such as audiobooks and large print.
- We have eBooks and eAudiobooks available via our Borrowbox app and eMagazines via our Libby app
- We provide genealogy eResources such as Find My Past, Ancestry and British Newspaper Archive. We also loan iPads and litter pickers.
- We offer a Home Library Service, so if you can't get to a library we will come to you.
- We're part of the national databank providing free SIM cards for people in need.
- You can sign up to an eNewsletter and receive news about what's happening in libraries.

For opening hours, contact details and all of our regular activities go to the Helsby library webpage via [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/libraries)

## COMMEMORATING 60 YEARS

A wonderfully nostalgic exhibition of the life of Helsby Hillside School was created by the current pupils and in creating it they have provided themselves with a real window into the school lives of earlier classmates, some of whom were their own parents or grandparents!

A tremendous amount of creative work had been put in and each year group, from reception to year 6 had produced a fresh look at the past.

It was a pleasure to walk around each display and absorb the long history of a primary school that has provided so much for the children of the village for the past 60 years.

Well done today's children and well done to the staff.

*Marj Thoburn*

*Pictured to the right: Headteacher Adam Kahn and exhibition lead Judith Potts*

*Pictured below: The hard work of the pupils*



# Come and Sing Choir

present

## Little Saint Nick



**Fri 6  
December  
7.30pm**

**in St Paul's  
Church, Helsby**

*Music from The Beach Boys, John Lennon,  
Greg Lake, David Willcocks, Gustav Holst,  
John Rutter, William Mathias and trad carols.*

**Admission**  
£7.50 on the door  
No charge for children with an adult

*Refreshments available in the interval*  
**For more information ring 07976 729 449**

This delightful poster for our next Concert tells that rehearsals are now underway for the choirs tenth Christmas Concert, which customarily takes place on the first Friday in December, falling on the eve of *Ho Ho Helsby*.

The 6 December is *Saint Nicholas Day* or the *Feast of St Nicholas* and has been celebrated for centuries in different countries and cultures world wide.

The concert programme for *Little Saint Nick* takes its inspiration from *St Nicholas* in the first part and his modern successor *Santa Claus* in the second part – and yes, there will be a certain song by the Beach Boys!

The concert will be by candlelight and should make an entertaining start to the season for everyone.

*Gary O'Neill*



**Horn's Mill and Heathercliffe – Living Lives Together Project**

As headteacher at Horn's Mill, I have been delighted to be working with the charity Ready Generations over the last few months. Ready Generations work closely with Belong Care Village, Chester [www.belong.org.uk/locations/chester](http://www.belong.org.uk/locations/chester) to connect people of all ages providing opportunities for people to enjoy multi-generational experiences as part of daily life. Ready Generations <https://readygenerations.co.uk/> is a research charity that is keen to expand research further into the positive impact of intergenerational work across all ages.

Horn's Mill is keen to be part of this research, and we have started to 'dip our toes in' last term by successfully partnering with Heathercliffe

Residential Care Home in Helsby. The early stages of the project have involved two visits from a key group of children to their 'Grand-friends' last half term. We have planted and played, and it has been wonderful to see the developing relationships between the children and adults, and the positive impact on everybody, that is already evident.

*Sharon Wyatt*

Sarah, the manager at Heathercliffe, and Sharon Wyatt, headteacher of Horn's Mill, are passionate about the Living Lives Together Project and are excited to continue and grow the work with Ready Generations as the new academic year progresses.



## Horn's Mill Pre School Graduation

"Class of 24" of Horn's Mill Pre School, celebrate their Graduation July 2024. Pre-School Staff wished the children good luck in their new schools. We will miss them.

## CELEBRATIONS AT THE HIGH SCHOOL

Year 13 Students, Parents and Staff celebrated as the 'Class of 2024' opened their envelopes, revealing another set of fantastic A-Level and Vocational qualifications results for the Sixth Form students at Helsby High School.

Director of Sixth Form, Tor Cross, told Helsby News she couldn't be more delighted and was proud of everything the students had done. "These wonderful results are a very well-deserved reward for all of their hard work".

Headteacher, Martin Hill, said "The results achieved by the 'Class of 2024' are amongst the school's best-ever and above the national average. The students deserve their success and we wish them all well as they move on into the next stage in their lives"

A week later saw the arrival of the envelopes with the GCSE results and more celebrations were in order for Year 11. At a time when

the pressure of GCSE examinations has been well documented, nearly 90% of the school's Year 11 students achieved 8 or more GCSE or vocational qualifications and 80% achieved a GCSE qualification in the "English Baccalaureate"

Natalie Witcher, Assistant Headteacher, commented: "We are so proud of our Year 11 students and wish them well for the future and hope to see many of them in the Sixth Form"

Martin Hill, Headteacher, said "This group of students have achieved well across all of their subjects, with a quarter of all grades at 7,8 or 9. Of particular note is how well they have done in Mathematics.

### Well Done Helsby High!



## DON'T BE A LITTER LOU!

TEAM 5 at Horn's Mill School and two members of the Parish Council, Cllrs Nicklin and Foster, decided to complete a local litter pick as part of a geography project.

The Children wrote "We walked along the roadside between Horn's Mill school and the shops on the high street, we also picked at the park. We were shocked with the amount of small pieces of litter we found along the roadside (over 1000 pieces). We found cigarette butts, wrappers, plastic and even vapes among other things. There was a lot of litter in the layby outside Shell garage. We were surprised by how much litter there was even when there were bins. We spoke to Margaret Marsh, from the Parish Council, to share our findings and show her some posters that we made. We think that everybody should take more responsibility and be more respectful of our local area. Everybody should put their own litter in a bin - we don't think that is too much to ask. We need everybody's help to make this better so please spread the word and do your bit."

I went to interview Team 5 about the results from their Litter Pick. They are enthusiastic about getting the message out to stop all the litter in the village. I showed them the App, on my mobile, for CWAC where you can report a litter bin that needs emptying. They were going to tell their families to get it. Their geography project is full of ideas to make the environment a better place. This is the generation who are far more aware of the damage that has been done to the planet by us. They are taking notice of all the warnings where older generations have ignored the signs for decades. Team 5 are part of the future.

Margaret Marsh





## HELSEBY GOLF CLUB HOSTS A SUCCESSFUL JUNIOR FESTIVAL OF GOLF

On a beautiful summer afternoon (a rare thing!) Helsby Golf Club hosted a hugely successful Festival of Golf on the Club's practice ground. The event was organised by Mandy Dorrell the local School Sports Coordinator and involved 16 young leaders from Helsby High School directing each of the 8 Tri-Golf-golf games that are promoted by Golf England. 60 young children from 6 local primary schools attended and there was tremendous enthusiasm amongst the children and some great skills were on show!

The event was supported by the

Captain Mike Branigan, Lady Captain Pauline Branigan, President Barbara Leigh, Professional Josh Hall, Secretary Kieran McCabe and other members of the club. A big thank you must go to those who prepared the ground as it was perfect for the very successful afternoon.

It is hoped that this will be regular annual event and some of the youngsters may become junior members of the club in future.

*Peter Storey and Simon Begley  
Junior Coordinators, Helsby Golf Club*



## Powered Wheelchair Classic 41<sup>st</sup> fundraiser at Helsby Golf Club

Helsby Golf Club were delighted to host their 41st Wheelchair Classic fundraiser recently at the club.

Approximately 100 players braved wet and blustery conditions to enjoy the golf competition but the highlight of the whole event was undoubtedly the presentation of 2 powered wheelchairs which brings the number now provided to an amazing 429!

The chairs were presented on the night by charity trustee Roddy Snedden, accompanied by Club officials – President Barbara Leigh, Past Captain Christian Lindley and Powered Wheelchair Appeal Chairman Steve Cunniffe.

The first chair went to 17 year old Caitlin

Walsh from Liverpool. The second chair to 15 year old Alex Robinson from Hoole, Chester. The youngsters were accompanied by family members and were delighted with their new chairs and are looking forward to the increased independence they will bring.

The funds raised on the day amounted to just over £10,000 and the Powered Wheelchair Appeal committee would like to thank everyone involved in the day - players, sponsors and all the supporters – a great day and evening was had by all fundraising for this fantastic cause!

*Kathryn Hoather*

### Helsby Parish Council

#### North Ward

Robert Foreman 07483 851260  
Sarah Temple 722181  
Emma Foster  
Vacancy  
Vacancy

#### Central Ward

Chris Ellams (Chair) 724409  
Terry O'Neill 723205  
Rob Nicklin 07891 078097  
Vacancy  
Vacancy

#### South Ward

Michael Branigan 607821  
Margaret Marsh 725562  
Graham Stothard  
Vacancy  
Vacancy

#### Clerk

Claire Jones 726433

#### Parish Office:

Helsby Community Sports Club, Callender Way, Helsby, Cheshire WA6 OFX