



HELMDON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES



**of the meeting of Helmdon Parish Council, held in the Reading Room,
Church Street, Helmdon on 28 September 2022 at 7:30pm.**

Present: Cllrs Harris, Marchant (Vice-Chair), Moody (Chair), Plunkett, Thorpe, and Wheeler

Clerk: In the absence of the Clerk the notes were recorded by Cllr Moody

Public: There were 3 members of the public present

Cllr Moody opened the meeting with a moment's silence for Queen Elizabeth II, who died on 8 September 2022. After the silence it was agreed to send a letter of thanks to Mr Abbey, the council's Flagmaster for his diligence during the mourning period.

047. To receive and approve apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Gray (Personal commitment) and Cllr Thorpe (Personal commitment). Cllr Bearman was absent.

RESOLVED: To approve the apologies received from Cllrs Gray and Thorpe.

048. Declarations of Interest on items on the agenda

Cllr Moody declared a personal interest in item 052(c) as one of the payees.

049. To approve for signature the minutes of the council meeting held on 27 July 2022

RESOLVED: That the minutes be signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

050. Matters arising from the minutes not covered below on the agenda

There were no matters arising.

051. Open Forum

Representations were made on:

- Availability of allotments (Cllr Moody to confirm)
- The hedge south of the Jubilee Wall (Cllr Harris to ask landowner to cut hedge)
- Budget for bulbs (Add to agenda for October meeting)
- Overhanging vegetation on Station Road (Cllr Moody to ask homeowner to trim)

052. Finance

- a) To approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee that the council's insurance cover be renewed for three years with BHIB Councils Insurance**

RESOLVED: That the recommendation be approved, and the insurance renewed.

- b) To receive the finance report to 22 September 2022**

RESOLVED: To receive and note the report.

- c) To approve bills for payment**

The following bills were presented for payment:

Payee	Invoice No.	Purpose	Amount
HP Instant Ink	-	Printer Ink	£4.49
BHIB	LCO01676-671965	Insurance	£614.10
D Phillips	485	Playground repairs	£340.00
D Moody	-	Snapshot Books	£473.27
PKF Littlejohn	SB20221955	External Audit	£240.00

RESOLVED: To approve the above bills for payment.

053. To receive an update from the HS2 Liaison Officer

Cllr Marchant reported on concerns regarding the state of Radstone Road in Brackley between Flanders Way and Poppyfields Way and the increase in vehicle movements there, particularly when the A43 is closed. Preparations are underway for the Radstone Road overbridge, which will be approximately 100 metres west of the line of the current road. It was agreed that Cllr Marchant should produce a 100-word monthly report to go on the council's web site and Facebook page.

RESOLVED: To note Cllr Marchant's report.

054. To consider next steps in the repair or replacement of play equipment

A quote dated 5 August 2022 in the amount of £2,639.13 for the replacement of 4 wooden posts and associated fixings had been received from Playdale Playgrounds. The works are to repair faulty posts as identified in the recent safety inspection. It was noted that the quote was only valid until 15 September 2022, so a new quote will need to be obtained, should the council wish to proceed. It was suggested that the School Liaison Councillor, Cllr Gray, should meet with the school to discuss the long-term plans for the play area.

RESOLVED: To proceed with the repairs in principle, subject to the new quote being not significantly different, and to ask Cllr Gray to meet with the headteacher.

055. To create a working group to draw up a remedial plan for the allotments

It was noted that several allotments are overgrown, which is not in compliance with the terms of the tenancy agreement. It was suggested that a working group be established to review the overall operation of the allotment site.

RESOLVED: To create a working group and to appoint to it Cllrs Hosea, Moody, and Wheeler and to task it with bringing a report and recommendations to the November meeting.

056. To consider the council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England consultation on West Northamptonshire Council wards

A report on the boundary review had been circulated. The number of councillors for West Northamptonshire Council will be reduced from 93 to 77. Each councillor will represent approximately 4,227 electors. It was agreed that single-member wards would be preferable and that in terms of the geography of the preferred ward, Helmdon tends to look south and west, towards Radstone, Greatworth, and Sulgrave.

RESOLVED: To respond to the boundary commission consultation suggesting a single-member ward covering Helmdon and parishes to the south and west.

057. To review the terms of reference and operation of the planning committee

It was noted that for some time the planning committee has not operated as efficiently and effectively as it should. The committee does not have a vice chair, so there is a void in the

absence of the chair, so a vice chair should be appointed at the next meeting of the committee. The agenda, minutes, and submission of representations to West Northamptonshire Council should all be the responsibility of the clerk, even if members of the committee are providing assistance. The terms of reference of the committee were reviewed and were considered suitable to be re-adopted, with a couple of very minor corrections.

RESOLVED: That the planning committee elects a vice chair at its next meeting, and that the terms of reference be re-adopted.

058. To review methods for intra-council communications

There have been occasions recently where better or more timely communication between councillors, or between clerk and councillors, would have been desirable. It was suggested that those use WhatsApp could communicate informally that way. The formal communication channel will still be email. The clerk should set up an out-of-office message so that councillors and members of the public understand when to expect a response to messages, and that the clerk's working pattern should be discussed as part of her forthcoming appraisal.

RESOLVED: That councillors who wish to use WhatsApp, and that Cllrs Moody and Marchant discuss working patterns with the clerk.

059. To consider any arrangements or delegations of authority required to be put in place during the short-term absence of the clerk

The council wished to record its formal condolences to the clerk. The planned return to work is well before the next meeting of the council and so it was thought that no special arrangements needed to be made. Cllr Moody said that he had been unable to find the payroll information and so asked council to approve in principle the monthly salary payment in lieu of a report being made at the October meeting.

RESOLVED: That no special cover arrangements be made, other than taking steps to ensure that salaries are paid in line with contractual obligations.

060. To receive the external auditor report and certificate and decide what, if any, action is required

There were no matters raised by the external auditor in respect of the year ending 31 March 2022. The council congratulated the clerk for the successful completion of the audit, it being the first time she has managed the process.

RESOLVED: To note the external auditor's report.

061. Close

RESOLVED: To close the meeting (8:59 p.m.)

The next meeting takes place at 7:30 p.m. on **Wednesday 26 October 2022.**