



HELMDON PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING



Minutes of a meeting of Helmdon Parish Council held in the Helmdon Reading Room, Church Street, Helmdon on **Wednesday 22nd January 2025 at 7:30 pm.**

Present: Cllrs Harris, Hart, Holloway, Marchant, Minshall, Moody (Chair), Wheeler, Plunkett, and Shepherd.

Members of the public: 6 members of the public present. Unitary Cllr Eastwood was also in attendance.

It was agreed to discuss item 332 after 321 open forum as there are a number of members of the public here to talk about that item.

The new decoration in the reading room was noted and it was agreed that the **Chair should write a letter of thanks** to the reading room committee for their hard work on this

317. To receive and approve apologies for absence – None.

318. Declarations of Interest – Cllr Hart declared an interest in item 332 and will leave the meeting when that item is discussed.

319. Approval and signature of the minutes of November 27th, 2024 - It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved and duly signed.

320. Matters arising – Cllr Plunkett noted that he is missing from the attendee list on the last minutes. Cllr Hart advised that a meeting of the Burial Ground Working Group has been arranged for 4th Feb.

321. Open Forum (15min max, 3 min per person) –

Representations were made on:

- Cllr Eastwood gave an update about the devolution plans currently being discussed by West Northants Council (WNC) who now plan on forming a single cabinet with a number of other authorities.
- A parishioner provided some information regarding their concerns about the LDP applications on the Station Road HOSLWS.
- A parishioner raised concerns about overgrown vegetation in the village affecting the Highway.
- A parishioner raised some questions about the new website and whether information about meetings can be posted on Facebook.
- A parishioner advised that the Fireworks Committee have purchased a pump and hoses so the Parish Council (PC) no longer need to consider purchasing a pump but they wondered if the PC could consider purchasing a trolley up to a cost of £100 to transport the pump.
- Cllr Eastwood gave some information about the grittings area/layby off the B4525 and the planned double yellow lines.

322. B4525 (Welsh Lane) - Update on proposed reduction to 40mph – Helen Howard at Highways has confirmed that the PC letter regarding the proposed speed limit reduction has been passed to the Traffic Regulation Order Team for their information as they are carrying out the consultation on the reduced limit. It was **RESOLVED** that the **Clerk should go back to WNC to find out when the consultation will start.**

323. To agree a response to the West Northants Council (WNC) proposal to put a parking restriction on the Chipping Store on the B4525 - It was

RESOLVED to respond to the proposal giving full support to the proposal as presented to the council. **Clerk to respond to WNC.**

- 324. To consider and respond to the government's consultation on strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England** - It was **RESOLVED** to respond supporting the proposal that councillors who are found to be in breach of the code are suspended and disqualified after more than 1 suspension. **Delegated to the Clerk and Chairman to make the response.**
- 325. To receive recommendations from the Finance Committee**
- a. To delete the words 'up to the sum of £10,000' from item 6.9 (iv) in the Financial Regulations to allow the clerk to internally transfer any funds required** - It was **RESOLVED** to make the amendment as proposed.
 - b. To agree the budget for 2025-26** - It was **RESOLVED** to set a **budget of £35,090.50**
 - c. To agree the precept demand for 2025-26** - It was **RESOLVED** to set a **precept of £31,926**
 - d. To consider the timetable for the Small Grants Scheme 2025-26** - It was agreed that the Grants Scheme should be published on 19th May, with a deadline for response of 30th June, and applications to be discussed at the July meeting.
 - e. Proposal to change the maximum grant value on the Small Grants Scheme to £400** - It was **RESOLVED** to make the amendment as proposed.
- 326. To receive quotes for repairs to the public benches and noticeboards** - It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Brent Harris - total cost £761. **Clerk to inform Brent of the PC's decision.**
- 327. To consider whether to increase the number of grass cuts in 2025 at a cost of £127 per additional cut** - It was **RESOLVED** to instruct the contractor to complete 5 additional cuts between May and July ONLY if required. **Clerk to inform contractor.**
- 328. Finance:**
- A. To receive the financial statement: note payments received and consider invoices to be paid.**

Invoices paid since the last meeting using delegated powers:

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Invoice No</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Staff costs	N/A	Salaries and associated costs	£380.38
Staff costs	N/A	Salaries and associated costs	£1,033.44

Direct Debits paid since the last meeting:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
30.11.24	Unity Bank	Banking fee	£6.00
09.12.24	Yu Energy	Electricity	£17.40
09.12.24	Yu Energy	Electricity	£50.02
16.12.24	Lloyds Bank	Credit card fee and ink	£11.49
31.12.24	Unity Bank	Banking fee	£6.00
08.01.25	Yu Energy	Electricity	£18.25
08.01.25	Yu Energy	Electricity	£52.02

Invoices to be paid:

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Invoice No</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Do It For Defib	N/A	Donation re defibrillator	£1,200.00
Thomas Kirkham	140291	Water pump hire	£135.00

DCK Payroll Services	24970	Payroll provider	£24.00
KPS Tree Care	1111	Tree work on Jenners Piece	£1,100.00
Helmdon Community Foundation	465	Room hire Oct to Dec 24	£102.50
Helmdon Primary School	E2047000016	Playing field rental	£398.00
Staff costs	N/A	Salaries and associated costs	£865.37

Receipts: None

It was **RESOLVED** to note the financial statement and approve the payments.

Cllr Eastwood left the meeting @ 8:32pm.

329. To review the following policies - It was **RESOLVED** to approve all of the amended policies listed below.

- a. **Code of Conduct**
- b. **Complaints Procedure**
- c. **Expenses Policy**
- d. **Flag Policy**
- e. **General Privacy Notice**
- f. **Data Protection Policy**

330. To consider adopting a Helmdon Parish Council Sexual and General Harassment Policy - It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the policy as presented.

331. To receive the report and consider the recommendations from the Flood Event Debrief meeting – It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following recommendations from the flood group meeting:

- Purchase sandbags to be kept on the verge just to the northeast of the Grange Lane Tunnel. For convenience it is proposed to purchase 80 x 10Kg filled sandbags at an approximate cost of £220 plus delivery (e.g. see <https://thesandbagco.co.uk/products/sandbags-pre-filled-black-uv-protected-80x10kg>).
- Purchase 2 x "Flood" warning signs at a cost of £15.23 + VAT each (e.g. see <https://startsafety.uk/products/metal-sign-flood>).
- Notes that Helmdon Fireworks has purchased a 1,000 L/min pump and it will be kept in a property near The Green.
- Talks to the new owner of the land above and to the south of the Grange Lane Tunnel to ask what plans he has for the catchpit and whether he will consider building a headwall and cleaning out the pipe under Grange Lane.
- Find out who all the riparian owners are from the Viaduct to Astwell Mill and asks them to ensure that their stretch of the brook is clear and free flowing. If any landowner cannot be identified or if any are uncooperative, to ask the Environment Agency what enforcement powers there are.
- To contact West Northants Highways and ask for all the gully pots on Station Road to be cleaned out and whether Highways would investigate the pipes to and from the gully pot by Bridge House.

Clerk to arrange purchases and Cllr Moody to arrange completion of all other actions.

332. To receive an update (if any) from WNC Planning Enforcement on matters related to the Helmdon Old Station Local Wildlife Site (HOSLWS)

Cllr Hart left the room whilst this item was discussed.

WNC were asked for an update on what is happening and the response received was very limited only providing the information that the LDP applications have gone in which the PC are already aware of. It was **RESOLVED** that the **Chair of the PC and the Chair of the Planning Committee arrange a meeting with Lorna at WNC to try to get more detailed information about what is going on at the site.**

- 333. To receive a report and update from the Parish Plan Working Group –** There will be another meeting on 3rd February.
- 334. Helmdon Welcome Pack –** Cllr Holloway advised that she agreed to take this on last year but due to personal circumstances has not been able to work on this and asked if anyone else would like to take this on. Cllr Shepherd agreed to take this on.
- 335. To agree activities to promote candidacy for the local elections to be held on 1 May 2025 –** Closing date for nominations is 2nd April. Papers can be submitted to West Northants Council between 14th March and 2nd April. It was agreed to publish information on Facebook, the PC website, noticeboards, in the school newsletter, and as an A5 leaflet. Cllrs Moody and Minshall agreed to deliver the leaflets. **Clerk and Chair to put together notices for publication.**
- 336. To consider the offer of wood chippings from West Northants Council (WNC) –** It was agreed to register the PC's interest and when more info is available can figure out where they could be delivered to. **Clerk to register interest with WNC.**
- 337. To consider whether the parish council wishes to do anything for the COVID-19 Day of Reflection to be held on Sunday 9 March 2025 –** It was agreed that the PC do not think they should arrange an event for this occasion.
- 338. To consider what information items should be published on the Parish Council Website –** It was agreed that anything parishioners can sign up to directly should be listed in the contacts page and only items specifically relating to Helmdon or that is likely to impact Helmdon parishioners should be published on the website.

Meeting closed @ 9:09pm

Next meeting date – 26th February 2025

Signed..... Date.....