



HELMDON PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING



Minutes of a meeting of Helmdon Parish Council held in the Helmdon Reading Room, Church Street, Helmdon on **Wednesday 26th February 2025 at 7:30 pm.**

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

Members of the public: 4 members of the public present.

339. **To receive and approve apologies for absence** – None.
340. **Declarations of Interest** – Cllr Hart declared an interest in item 349.
341. **Approval and signature of the minutes of January 22nd, 2025** - It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved and duly signed.
342. **Matters arising** – None.
343. **Open Forum** (15min max, 3 min per person) –
Representations were made on:
- A parishioner raised concerns about overgrown vegetation in a number of areas of the village.
 - A parishioner suggested that the free wood chippings offered recently by West Northants Council could be used to improve the area near the Jubilee Wall (agenda item 346) and suggested a 'No Parking' sign.
 - A parishioner asked if the Clerk could make a complaint to Anglian Water about the damage they have done to the War Memorial plants due to them placing signs and sandbags on them.
 - A parishioner raised concerns about the state of the footpaths and roads in the village. **Cllr Moody agreed to report the particular areas of concern to WNC.**
344. **B4525 (Welsh Lane) – Update on the proposed 40mph speed limit and consideration to request further areas to be proposed for a 40mph limit if the previous consultation has now closed** – WNC have advised that the consultation was sent out in July. Unfortunately despite them e-mailing the consultation to the Parish Council (PC) the PC did not receive it so did not make any response to the consultation. As the consultation has closed and was agreed by WNC the only way to get an extension to the 40mph area is to submit a new request which will need to go through the same process. It was **RESOLVED** that the PC should request that the implementation of the currently approved scheme be put on hold to allow for a new proposal to be made which would include the extended area at 40mph and solid white lines to try to prevent road users overtaking in that area. **Clerk to submit this request to WNC asap.**
345. **To consider whether to write again to West Northants Council (WNC) Planning Enforcement regarding the dilapidated state of Priory Barn** – It was noted that Priory Barn is one of the most significant historic agricultural properties in the parish and it is in a very poor state. It was **RESOLVED** that the **Clerk should write to the Historic Environment Team at WNC advising that it has been noted that another section of wall seems to have**

recently collapsed and the PC are concerned about the safety of the building and ask them to look into this.

- 346. To consider what action can be taken in response to parishioners' concerns about the poor state of the area around the Jubilee Wall on the road into Helmdon from the B4525** – This issue has been discussed numerous times over the last few years and previously it was felt that the best option would be to install oak bollards with reflectors on them but last time WNC were asked for permission to do this they refused. It was agreed that the **Clerk should make the same request to WNC to see if they are of a different view now due to staff changes since the last request was made along with a request for the PC to plant shrubs in that area.** It was felt that if WNC turn reject the bollards option then chippings would be considered.

347. Finance:

- a. **To note the bank balances of £30,595.63 and £25,422.83 as at 19.02.2025** – Cllr Moody checked the statements provided by the Clerk and confirmed the balances are correct.
- b. **To receive report from Internal Controls Councillor** – The report was received. The points made were noted and it was agreed to proceed with recommendations 1 and 4. **Clerk to complete the required actions.**
- c. **To note and approve receipts and payments:**

Payments made since the last meeting using delegated powers/Direct Debits:

Date	Pyment Type	Payee	Invoice No	Description	Amount
16.01.25	DD	Lloyds Bank	N/A	Card fee and ink	£11.49
31.01.25	DD	Unity Bank	N/A	Banking fee	£6.00
10.02.25	DD	Yu Energy	02318291	Electricity	£55.22
10.02.25	DD	Yu Energy	02318288	Electricity	£18.91
17.02.25	DD	Lloyds Bank	N/A	Credit card fee	£6.00

Invoices to be paid:

Payee	Invoice No	Description	Amount
Staff costs	N/A	Salaries and associated costs	£865.37
Start Traffic Ltd	SO297705	Flooding signs	£95.40
Marcus Young Environmental Services Ltd	4449	Annual dog bin emptying	£692.64
Friends of the Helmdon Churchyard	N/A	Grant to village organisation	£50.00
Playdale	59250	20 plastic plugs	£17.28

Receipts:

Date	Received from	Description	Amount
31.12.24	Unity Bank	Interest	£12.79

It was **RESOLVED** to approve all payments and note the receipts.

348. Churchyard Extension Working Group

- a. **To consider and approve Terms of Reference (ToR)** – It was RESOLVED to adopt the ToR as provided.
- b. **To consider recommendations from the meeting held on 4th February 2025** – The recommendations were:
 - Continue to ring-fence funds amounting to £14,000 for a cemetery extension, noting that the cost of obtaining planning permission would be substantial and that a minimum of an additional £500 per year should be budgeted to be added to the designated reserves. *Questions were raised*

about the target amount. It was thought it would be around £40k. It was agreed that the annual amount to be put into the fund should be £1k.

- Deposit the ring-fenced funds in a high-interest account, given the lack of urgent expenditure needs. *The Finance Committee agreed to put £30k in a high-interest account at the January meeting but an item should be placed on the next Finance Committee agenda to consider whether the interest earned on the £14k currently held in reserve for a Churchyard Extension should be allocated to the Churchyard Extension reserve or become part of the PC general reserves. **Clerk to put item on Finance Committee March agenda.***
- Continue to monitor the potential availability of neighbouring land parcels with a view to future purchase

349. **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 meeting at 8:29pm.

Lorna Loveridge at WNC has recently returned to work and has agreed to try to arrange a meeting with Cllrs Moody and Marchant asap.

Cllr Hart returned to the meeting at 8:35pm

350. **To receive a report and update from the Parish Plan Working Group** – The group is continuing to work on getting the survey out around Easter. The questions are now in the Survey Monkey software but in order to get the features needed a paid upgrade is now required. There is an option to pay £75 per month by credit card on a monthly rolling contract, or pay £396 per year which can be paid on invoice. The Parish Plan Working Group expect to need the facility for around 3-4 months. Due to the payment options available it was proposed to sign up to the annual plan. It was **RESOLVED** to sign up to the annual plan at a cost of £396. **Clerk to arrange payment asap.**

2 members of the public left the meeting at 8:37pm.

351. **To agree theme and arrangements for the Annual Village Meeting to be held on Wednesday 23 April 2025** – It was agreed to invite the following speakers:

- Sgt Micky Simmons or someone in a similar role from the police to talk about current crime trends and offer advice on ways people can try to protect themselves – 40 mins
- Unitary Councillor Alison Eastwood – 15 mins
- 2 of the groups who have received grants from the PC to talk about how the grant has made a difference to their organisation (10 mins each)

Clerk to contact the relevant organisations to invite them to attend.

352. **To consider a date for the annual litter pick** – 23rd March 2025 from 10am to midday. **Clerk to order the relevant equipment from WNC. Cllr Minshall to collect the equipment from WNC. Clerk to publish information regarding the litter picking event.**

Meeting closed @ 8:52pm.

Next meeting date – 26th March 2025

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