



HELMDON PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING



Minutes of a Meeting of Helmdon Parish Council held in the Helmdon Reading Room, Church Street, Helmdon on **Wednesday 23rd July 2025 at 7:30pm.**

Present: Cllrs Hart (Chair), Moody, Plunkett, Shepherd, Marchant, Sparrow, and the Clerk.

Members of the public: 3 members of the public present, Unitary Cllr Eastwood.

- 415. To receive and approve apologies for absence** – Apologies were received from Cllr Fitzroy-Ezzy, and Cllr Harris. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the apologies.
- 416. To note the resignation of Lindsey Sharman** – The resignation was noted. The Notice of Vacancy has been published with a closing date of 23rd July 2025. Once West Northants Council (WNC) have confirmed if an election has been called or if the Parish Council (PC) can co-opt then the relevant notices/adverts will be published. **Cllr Moody to publish councillor vacancy adverts if the PC is able to co-opt.**
- 417. Declarations of Interest** – Cllr Hart declared an interest in item 426 and will leave the room when that item is discussed.
- 418. To appoint another representative to the Parish Plan Working Group due to the resignation of Lindsey Sharman** – It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Fitzroy-Ezzy to the Parish Plan Working Group.
- 419. Approval and signature of the minutes of June 25th, 2025** - It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved and duly signed.
- 420. Matters arising from the minutes**
- a. **Update re Cllr Harris and Cllr Marchant getting their e-mail issues resolved** – Not yet completed. Defer to next meeting.
 - b. **Feedback from Cllr Marchant re contact with Blackpits regarding noisy vehicles travelling at night** – Cllr Marchant has spoken to a representative of Blackpits and has discussed the issues raised about vehicle noise late at night with them. They don't believe the vehicles are theirs as the timings don't match their own vehicle movements. **Cllr Marchant to look into this further and bring back a report to the next meeting.**
 - c. **B4525 (Welsh Lane) – Update re Cllr Moody's contact with West Northants Council regarding the reduction of the speed limit to 40mph** – Cllr Moody has been in touch with WNC and they hope to complete the signage for the speed limit in Oct 2025 and to install the double yellow lines along the grittings store as soon as possible.
Cllr Moody advised that the action from item 407 re forming a small group to consider 20 mph limit through the village hasn't yet taken place. Cllr Marchant advised that he has already contacted WNC to request they consider a speed reduction in the parish.
- 421. Open Forum (15min max, 3 min per person)** –
Representations were made on:

- A parishioner noted that in the past a number of volunteers would monitor change of home ownership in their neighbouring roads in the parish and would deliver Welcome Packs to new residents.
- Unitary Cllr Eastwood provided a report about recent activity at WNC. A copy of the report can be found on the PC website.

Cllr Eastwood left the meeting at 7:55pm.

- 422. To receive the annual play equipment inspection report and consider any actions required to rectify any issues raised** –It was **RESOLVED** to accept the report. It was agreed that the Working Group should get together on 17th August 2025 to complete the minor works and vegetation removal raised in the report. An issue was raised about the bench which has since been removed. The remaining stump and concrete need to be made safe. **Clerk to obtain a quote from Dan Phillips for all of the woodwork repairs required. Clerk to obtain quote from Playdale for the remaining repairs. Cllr Moody to arrange notices to go on Facebook to advertise the working group day.**
- 423. To consider quotes from West Northants Council (WNC) re bollards at the layby and wall at the entrance to Helmdon from the B4525:**
- **Option 1 – 31 timber posts - £6,234.84 + VAT**
 - **Option 2 – 20 timber posts - £4,369.50 + VAT**

Questions were raised about who would be the legal owners of the posts (WNC or the PC) and therefore responsible for insurance, and repairs should they be damaged.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept option 2 in principle but the PC will not make a final decision on this proposal until confirmation has been received about ownership.

Cllr Moody to speak to WNC about ownership and bring back to September meeting for consideration.

- 424. Response from Midlands Rural Housing re their Housing Needs Survey** – The responses from Midlands Rural Housing were noted.
- 425. To consider whether the provision of dog bins in the village is adequate** – It was noted that the provision of dog bins in the village is part of the Parish Plan Action Plan therefore this item will be left with the Parish Plan Working Group to consider. It was noted that dog waste can also be disposed of in litter bins. **Clerk to make resident who raised this issue aware of the PC's decision.**

Cllr Hart left the meeting at 8:25pm.

- 426. To note resident's correspondence regarding AP35 and consider any next steps** – It was noted that the path has always exited onto a main road without a pavement and there are other footpaths that lead out onto roads with no pavements so to get a pavement installed that would join up with existing pavements would require a complex and costly process to acquire land which could then set a precedent for all footpaths. Due to planning applications from landowners to change entrances and the current Definitive Map Modification Order application there could be further changes that would mean that any new pavement may not be of any benefit in the long term. It was **RESOLVED** that this should not be considered further until the planning applications and DMMO application have come to fruition. **Clerk to inform parishioner who raised this item of the PC's decision.**

Cllr Hart rejoined the meeting at 8:30pm.

- 427. To consider how to ensure resident feedback/questions at the Annual Village Meeting (AVM) are recorded and discussed and fed back to the**

village – It was noted that some of the issues raised at the last AVM were actioned immediately by a councillor and therefore did not go on the next PC agenda. It was **RESOLVED** that any questions captured at the AVM that cannot be resolved or actioned immediately should be considered at the following full council meeting.

- 428. To note correspondence relating to the verge opposite the school and determine next steps** – It was suggested that the PC could get this area cut as part of the PC grass cutting contract as this is a main walkway in the village. **Clerk to obtain a quotation from the grass cutting contractor for this area.**
- 429. Correspondence relating to diverting traffic using the village: to consider** – It is believed this issue is due to sat navs diverting road users through the village when other roads are blocked. There were also issues during the Silverstone weekend when lots of vehicles including double decker buses were using the village due to congestion elsewhere. WNC Highways have been contacted to see what could be done about this but they say that when roads are closed sat navs will redirect through villages and it is a public road that road users have a legal right to use so there is nothing can be done about this. **Clerk to advise original correspondent of WNC's response.**
- 430. To receive correspondence relating to accessibility (gravel path)** – A parishioner has asked if the Church Street end of the gravel path could be made more accessible for wheelchair and mobility scooter. **Cllr Shepherd agreed to report these concerns on Fixmystreet. If that doesn't work Clerk to take this up with Highways.**
- 431. To agree attendees for the 78th Northants CALC Annual Conference on Saturday 4 October 2025 at Moulton Community Centre from 10am to 1pm** – No one was able to commit to this event at the meeting so it was agreed that **if any councillors can attend they should let the clerk know asap** so she can book them a place.
- 432. To receive verbal report relating to school and preschool liaison** – Cllr Hart has arranged to meet with Acorns soon and will follow up with the school with the intention of bringing back a report to the September meeting.
- 433. To consider a proposal from Helmdon Community Foundation regarding the parish council's notice boards on the front wall of the Reading Room** – It was **RESOLVED** to allow the Helmdon Community Foundation to share use of the single HPC noticeboard. **Clerk to inform Helmdon Community Foundation.**
- 434. To receive and consider the following recommendations from the Finance Committee:** It was **RESOLVED** to approve all items listed below.
- a. To adopt the updated Standing Orders**
 - b. To adopt the updated Financial Regulations**
Cllr Marchant declared an interest in item 434c and left the room at 8:50pm.
 - c. To approve the grants to the value of the applications for all four applicants to the Small Grants Scheme**
Cllr Marchant returned to the meeting at 8:51pm.
 - d. To appoint E-on as the streetlighting maintenance contractor at a cost of £8 per streetlight per year (further charges will be made for repairs required) – Clerk to arrange.**
- 435. To consider a response to the West Northants Council (WNC) consultation on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

for WNC's Planning Service – It was **RESOLVED** to submit a response highlighting that there appears to be an omission from the document in that the proposals don't mention how WNC would support any parish councils if a parish decided to put together a Neighbourhood Plan, that the PC believe developers should need to engage with the relevant PC as soon as possible, that consulting in an electronic format only could cause problems for those who live in villages with poor internet connectivity and those who choose not to have access to the internet, and only consulting via a site notice rather than neighbour consultations is likely to mean that neighbours are unaware of an application, particularly those with limited mobility who are less likely to be going out for a walk locally. **Clerk to submit response.**

436. Welcome Pack – To consider the most appropriate way to identify new parishioners who should receive the Welcome Pack – It was noted that the electoral register cannot be used for this purpose. It was agreed that councillors should try to be aware of changes of householders in the village and if when there are any changes of ownership they should contact Cllr Shepherd for a copy of the Welcome Pack for the Cllr to deliver to the new occupants.

437. To appoint a Climate & Nature Champion to represent the council in matters relating to the climate, nature, and the environment – It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Sparrow. **Cllr Sparrow to complete registration.**

438. To adopt the following policies/documents:

- a. Social Media Policy** – It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the policy and to appoint Cllr Moody as the designated Social Media Councillor. **Cllr Moody to check all posts currently on Social Media to check they comply with the policy.**
- b. Vehicle Activated Sign Officer – Role remit** – It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Role Remit.
- c. Vehicle Activated Sign Officer – Risk Assessment** – It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Risk Assessment. **Clerk to provide the VAS Monitor with all documents and Cllr Moody's contact details so he can arrange to collect the equipment.**

439. Finance:

- a. To note the bank balances of £514.15 and £33,991.73 as at 16.07.2025**
– Cllr Hart checked the bank balances and confirmed they are correct.
- b. To note and approve receipts and payments:**

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

Date	Pymt type	Payee	Invoice No	Description	Amount
01.07.25	BACS	Kirsty Buttle		Signs for allotments	£36.74
30.06.25		Unity Bank		Account fee	£6.00
08.07.25	DD	Yu Energy	02784792	Electricity Jun 25	£37.45
08.07.25	DD	Yu Energy	02784794	Electricity Jun 25	£14.40

Invoices to be paid:

Payee	Invoice No	Description	Amount
NCALC	INV-4746	Village Greens Training	£36.00
Friends of Helmdon Churchyard		Donation	£500.00
R&G Grounds	121706	Grass cutting April	£152.40
Helmdon Community Foundation	489	Room hire Apr to Jun	£97.50

R&G Grounds	121894	Grass cutting June	£304.80
Clerk's salary		Salary July	£737.18
HMRC		Tax and NI July	£128.27
NEST		Pension July	£60.99

Receipts:

Date	Received from	Description	Amount
30.06.25	Unity Bank	Interest	£183.67
02.07.25	CCLA	Interest	£101.92
02.07.25	CCLA	Interest	£3.52

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

Meeting closed @ 9:09pm.

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