



HELMDON PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING



Minutes of a Meeting of Helmdon Parish Council held in the Helmdon Reading Room, Church Street, Helmdon on **Wednesday 25th June 2025 at 7:30 pm.**

Present: Cllrs Harris, Hart (Chair), Moody, Plunkett, Shepherd, Marchant, Sharman, Fitzroy-Ezzy, and the Clerk.

Members of the public: 8 members of the public present, Unitary Cllr Eastwood.

- 394. To receive and approve apologies for absence** – None.
- 395. To fill remaining vacancy by co-option** – It was noted that a vacancy remains due to the fact that Jennie Smith who had been co-opted at the last meeting chose not to accept the office of councillor. It was **RESOLVED** to co-opt Leigh Sparrow. Leigh will complete his Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the end of the meeting.
- 396. Declarations of Interest** – Cllr Moody declared an interest in item 414b as he is part of the Friends of the Helmdon Churchyard. Cllr Sharman declared an interest in item 406 as the area in question is directly outside her house.
- 397. To confirm additional members for the following committees:**
 - a. Finance** – It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Plunkett will join the committee.
 - b. Planning** – It was **RESOLVED** that no further members will be added to the committee currently.
- 398. To Review the Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee** – It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the updated Terms of Reference with an additional amendment taking away the ability of the Committee to co-opt members and allowing the Full Council to co-opt members at any meeting as required.
- 399. To confirm parish representatives:**
 - a. Allotment Working Group – 1 further member required** – Cllr Fitzroy-Ezzy.
 - b. Parish Plan Working Group – 1 further member required** – Cllr Sharman.
 - c. School Liaison** – Cllr Hart. It was **RESOLVED** to rename the role School and Pre-school Liaison. It was noted that Cllr Hart would make contact with the school and pre-school to arrange a visit.
 - d. Weekly Play Equipment Inspections** – Cllr Shepherd, and Cllr Hart.
 - e. PC attendee(s) at the Good Food West Northants Food Summit** – None.
- 400. Approval and signature of the minutes of May 7th, 2025** – It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved and duly signed.
- 401. Matters arising** – It was noted that Andy Smith agreed at the last meeting to be the Speed Indicator Device Officer. The equipment has not yet been passed on to Andy as it is quite an old device with no instruction manual available so Cllr Hart is trying to get hold of the instructions from the manufacturer. Cllr Hart would also like to put in place a Risk Assessment, and remit to be agreed at the next meeting before the equipment is passed to Andy. **Clerk to put adoption of a Risk Assessment, and remit on the next agenda.**

It was noted that the West Northants Council (WNC) Parish Conference was postponed until October.

Cllr Harris has not yet arranged to get his Parish Council (PC) e-mail address set up. **Cllr Harris to contact Cllr Plunkett to get support with this.** Cllr Marchant has not yet cancelled the forwarding on his e-mails. **Cllr Marchant to get this sorted asap.**

WNC does not have any further updates that they share relating to Priory Barn. It was agreed that **if nothing more has been heard about this by the end of 2025 it should be raised again for the January meeting.**

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

Representations were made on:

- A resident raised concerns about noisy tractors and industrial trailers driving up and down Wappenham Road at night and asked if there are rules about what times these vehicles can be travelling through the village. **Cllr Marchant** advised that he has a meeting planned with Blackpits soon so **will raise this** with them.
- Parking issues which will be covered under item 406.
- A resident reported that he had asked WNC whether the lawful development certificate issued to repair the goods office included its use. WNC had responded that it did not and that it was possible that its commercial use could be considered abandoned. This appears to indicate that a planning application would be required for any future intended use
- Unitary Cllr Eastwood advised that a Cabinet Meeting has been held and the first meeting of the Full Council will be the following day. WNC will be sending out a request for information about what residents want in the way of adult social care.
- A brief discussion was held about the broadband options in the village. Starlink was suggested but it was advised that this is very expensive.
- Two residents who could not attend had requested that the PC take action on the following issues raised by them in an e-mail:
 - i) HGVs coming through the village and ensure Helmdon has suitable infrastructure to manage such vehicles,
 - ii) Speed issues on Station Road,
 - iii) The handover of the Speed Indicator Device equipment,
 - iv) The overgrown state of the hedgerow bordering the path down from Station Road crossing Grange Lane,
 - v) A lack of dog waste bins in certain areas in the village,
 - vi) Review options to provide safe access to path AP35 (Helmdon Road Bridge).

As the PC cannot make decisions on items raised under Open Forum the PC noted the concerns raised and will consider them to put relevant items on the appropriate future agendas for discussion. **Clerk to respond to the residents advising them of this.**

403. To receive the final report of the Parish Plan Working Group and to agree next steps in the development of an action plan – Thanks were expressed to the group for the hard work involved in producing this report. It was **RESOLVED** to note and welcome the report of the Parish Plan Working Group and to instruct the **Working Group to hold a further meeting to create a more detailed action plan with what/who/how/when columns**

added to be presented to a future PC meeting, provisionally in September.

404. To note the following correspondence and consider next steps:

- a. **Housing Needs Survey to be conducted in Helmdon** – It was noted that some residents have been concerned that the survey is a scam due to it having come from an organisation unknown to most residents asking for information about themselves. Cllr Moody advised that a Housing Needs Survey (HNS) is a known process that the PC has considered as necessary to feed into the Parish Plan. The survey is not to decide if there is going to be new housing in the parish but provides information about what the types of housing needs are (Private rented, owner occupied, rented from a Housing Association etc) in the village. If any new housing was put forward any development would be guided by the needs identified. Some residents are concerned that the survey is a tactic for a developer to build lots of housing in the parish but Cllr Moody advised this is not the case. The organisation who sent out the survey have advised that they will attend a future PC meeting to give feedback on the needs identified. Cllr Moody advised that, under current planning law a developer could not come in and build a large development in the parish but they may gain permission for a small exception site which includes affordable housing. The PC considered whether it was appropriate for it to have commented on Facebook on the validity of the HNS given that the PC had not discussed it at that point. It was noted that the PC has not adopted a Social Media Policy so there were no guidelines to benchmark the appropriateness of the comment.

It was **RESOLVED** not to remove the comment but to **adopt a Social Media Policy at the July meeting**. Existing posts can then be checked to ensure they comply with the policy.

It was **RESOLVED** that the **Clerk should send questions and concerns raised by the PC to Midlands Rural Housing. All councillors to e-mail their questions and concerns to the Clerk before the end of Monday 30th June.**

Cllr Harris left the meeting at 8:58pm.

County Cllr Eastwood left the meeting at 9:01pm.

- b. **Notification of a Rural Housing Roadshow on 17th July 2025 in Nassington Village Hall from 11:30am to 1pm** – Noted. No attendees.
- c. **Fibre broadband rollout in the parish** – Cllr Moody provided information about the various broadband schemes currently being looked into in the parish by various people. City Fibre put in a planning application around 4 months ago and are looking at installing broadband using a government funded scheme. It is likely that it could take around 2 years before this service will be available in the village. A resident would like to get Broadband sooner than 2 years so he has contacted a small ISP who will build their own broadband in the village. It was asked if the PC would like to support this as a solution and encourage parishioners to sign up to this as a solution until City Fibre get here – it was noted that if another company provide Fibre Broadband provide a service before City Fibre get here then City Fibre say they will not offer their government funded broadband in the parish but it is felt that this may not be the case and may be a deterrent for people to not go to other providers. The report was noted.

1 member of the public joined the meeting at 9:11pm.

405. B4525 (Welsh Lane) – Update on the request for minutes of the meeting when the decision was made on the locations for the new 40mph limit – The report was received and it was **RESOLVED** that the Highways Officer should write to WNC.

Cllr Sharman left the room at 9:13pm.

406. To discuss parking issues at the junction of Field Way and Wappenham Road – A sign has been placed on the wall in that area asking drivers not to park there as it obstructs the view for other road users. The sign has no legal standing and the only way to legally enforce no parking there is to get double

yellow lines put in but there are other residents who would not support double yellow lines in the area. It was agreed to wait and see if the sign has any impact. **Clerk to inform complainant.**

Cllr Sharman returned to the meeting at 9:16pm.

- 407. Proposal for Cllr Marchant to form a small team to approach WNC (Highways) to formally request the introduction of a permanent 20mph speed limit, on Station Road – Helmdon** – The proposal was amended to 'form a small team to consider the possibility of a 20mph limit'. The amended proposal was **RESOLVED**. Cllr Moody as the Highways Officer will join Cllr Marchant to consider this proposal further.
- 408. To note that Zeta Lighting has gone into administration therefore the warranty on the streetlights is now invalid, consider what is required from a streetlight maintenance service, and review quotes received** – It was **RESOLVED** to delegate power to the Finance Committee to consider this at their meeting next week and to delegate power to the committee to accept any of the quotes on behalf of the PC.
- 409. To readopt the following policies with no changes made other than dates for review:** It was **RESOLVED** to readopt all policies listed below.
- a. Data Breach Policy**
 - b. Subject Access Request**
 - c. Staff privacy Notice**
- 410. To review and adopt the Risk Assessment Policy** – It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the policy with the proposed amendments.
- 411. To review the Flag Policy and to consider adding VE Day to the list of dates on which the Union Jack is flown** – It was **RESOLVED** to add VE Day to the list of dates on which the Union Jack is flown.
- 412. To adopt an IT Policy** – It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the policy as presented but it was noted that councillors can bring back a tabled amendment in future if required.
- 413. To consider security arrangements at the allotments** – There have been some incidents at the allotments including a shed being broken into, a chair being broken although it is possible this was done by the wind, and a group of youths going in there on at least two occasions. Two signs to try to deter unauthorised access to the allotments have been ordered. It was **RESOLVED** to review the activity over the next few weeks and bring back to a future meeting if required.
- 414. Finance:**
- a. To note the bank balances of £570.74 and £35,508.06 as at 18.06.2025** – Cllr Hart checked the balances and confirmed they are correct.
Cllr Moody left the meeting at 9:37pm.
 - b. To confirm the grant of £500 to the Friends of Helmdon Churchyard for maintenance of the churchyard** – It was **RESOLVED** to make the grant of £500. **Clerk to arrange payment.**
Cllr Moody returned to the meeting at 9:39pm
 - c. 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
30.04.25		Unity Bank		Account fee	£6.00
08.05.25	DD	Yu Energy	02563156	Electricity Apr 25	£41.60
08.05.25	DD	Yu Energy	02563158	Electricity Apr 25	£15.67
29.05.25	BACS	Kirsty Buttle		Stationery and software reimbursement	£21.52
31.05.25		Unity Bank		Account fee	£6.00

09.06.25	DD	Yu Energy	02695274	Electricity May 25	£40.69
09.06.25	DD	Yu Energy	02695276	Electricity May 25	£15.64

Invoices to be paid:

Payee	Invoice No	Description	Amount
H.Tims Environmental Services	PumpWarGarden7	War memorial tidy and Pump garden	£100.00
Texprep	27424	Booklets Welcome	£41.80
R&G Grounds	121804	Grass cutting May	£457.20
H.Tims Environmental Services	PumpWarGarden8	War Memorial and Pump Garden	£200.00
NCALC	INV-4650	Finance for councillors course	£42.00
Various		Staff costs June	£926.44

Receipts:

Date	Received from	Description	Amount
02.05.25	CCLA	Interest	£110.03
06.05.25	Binns	Allotment fee	£20.00
07.05.25	Shepherd	Allotment fee	£20.00
23.05.25	Wheeler	Allotment fee	£20.00
23.05.25	Nash	Allotment fee	£40.00
03.06.25	CCLA	Interest	£110.36
03.06.25	Vicars	Allotment fee	£20.00

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

Meeting closed @ 9:40pm.

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