

Helmdon Village Shop Working Group (VSWG)

1. Mandate and Purpose

The Working Group is established by the Helmdon Parish Council to fulfil the ambition, stated in the Helmdon Parish Plan 2025, to explore the feasibility and practical options for establishing a new village shop within the parish.

2. Status and Authority

The Working Group is an advisory body of the Parish Council.

- **Authority:** The Working Group has **no executive or decision-making authority**. Its role is purely investigative, analytical, and advisory.
- **Reporting:** All findings, recommendations, and options must be presented to the full Helmdon Parish Council for debate, resolution, and action.
- **Budget:** The Working Group does not hold a separate budget and must seek approval from the Parish Council for any proposed expenditure.

3. Objectives and Scope

The primary objective of the Working Group is to provide the Parish Council with a comprehensive analysis of the issues and options related to a new village shop.

The scope of work shall include, but not be limited to:

Objective	Description
3.1 Model Identification	Investigate and document potential operating models (e.g., community-owned, commercial tenancy, volunteer-run, mixed-use).
3.2 Site & Infrastructure	Identify and analyse potential locations within the village for a new shop, considering availability, access, parking, and associated infrastructure requirements.
3.3 Viability Assessment	Explore potential financial viability, including estimated startup costs, operational overheads, potential revenue streams, and required capital funding.
3.4 Community Interest	Gather preliminary, informal views from Helmdon residents regarding the type of shop required, desirable services, and potential usage/support.

3.5 Issues and Constraints	Identify all potential obstacles, including planning requirements, legal issues, staffing/volunteer needs, and any potential risks.
3.6 Next Steps	Develop clear, costed, and actionable options for the Parish Council to consider as a way forward.

4. Membership and Composition

The Working Group shall comprise a minimum of three and a maximum of five members.

- **Council Members (2):** Two Helmdon Parish Councillors shall be appointed by the Parish Council to lead the Group, one of whom will act as Chair.
- **Public Members (1-3):** One to three members of the public shall be co-opted to the Working Group, selected for their relevant skills, experience, or demonstrable commitment to the project.

5. Meetings and Reporting

5.1 Meetings:

Meetings will be held as required, at the discretion of the Chair, but shall take place at least once every six weeks. Minutes of all meetings shall be taken and shared with all members and the Parish Council Clerk for information.

5.2 Reporting Schedule:

The Working Group shall provide two mandatory reports to the Parish Council:

1. **Interim Report:** To be presented within three months of the Working Group's first meeting, outlining progress, preliminary findings, and any immediate challenges encountered.
2. **Final Report:** To be presented within six months of the Working Group's first meeting. This report must contain the full analysis of options, a summary of issues, and clear recommendations for the Parish Council's next steps.

6. Duration

The Working Group is established with a fixed term of six months from the date of the Parish Council resolution and will be automatically dissolved upon presentation of the Final Report, or as otherwise resolved by the Parish Council.