



HELMDON PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING



Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Committee of Helmdon Parish Council held at The Reading Room on **Monday 19th January 2026 at 7.30pm**

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

In attendance: None.

42) Apologies for absence- None. Cllr Marchant's resignation from the Finance Committee was noted. A new member will be appointed at the next meeting of the Full Council.

43) Declarations of Interest – None.

44) Approval and signature of the minutes of the meeting of 13th November 2025 - It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved and duly signed.

45) Matters arising – None.

46) Open Forum – None.

47) To consider a response to the West Northants Council Budget Consultation – It was RESOLVED to recommend to the full council to make responses in relation to an increase in charges for bins, charging for parking in Brackley, and the Road Safety Fund. **Cllr Moody to write the responses for proposal at the full council meeting. Clerk to put on full council agenda.**

48) To receive quotes for advice on best actions to take re repairing/replacing the surfacing in the play area and consider next steps – There doesn't appear to be a service currently offered by play inspection or installation providers but one company contacted was willing to provide a quote to complete a review and report on possible options for repair of the play equipment. Concerns were raised about whether an inspection provider is the most suitable organisation to provide repair options. The Clerk has a contact who is an ex play equipment inspector and installer, so seems to be a suitable person to provide the information needed. **Clerk to ask contact to provide a report including suggestions for suitable repair options.**

49) To receive, and note the Contracts Register, and update where necessary – It was agreed to add the dog waste bin emptying contract, the War Memorial and Pump Garden contract, and the new E-on streetlight maintenance contract. **Clerk to update the register.** It was **RESOLVED** to renew the website contract with Parish Online for another year.

50) To consider whether a Request For Quote/Tender should be put out for a new grass cutting contract, and consider the specification required – It was **RESOLVED** to put out an Invitation to Quote for a new 3 year contract. The following changes will be made to the existing contract:

- All areas that currently state monthly or quarterly as the frequency for cutting will be changed to fortnightly.
- The description against item 6 on the document should be clarified to confirm that the requirement is to trim the laurel hedge into a firm square hedge and change the requirement from an annual clearance of the brambles to a requirement to keep the area around the laurels clear all year round.

- Remove item 11 – Trim the hedges on both verges at the entrance to Hintons Close annually.

Clerk to put out request for quote asap with a deadline for response before the February Full Council meeting to allow the full council to make a decision on the new contract.

- 51) To confirm completion of the second and third quarterly (Jul to Sep, and Oct to Dec) Internal Controls Councillor's Checks** – Cllr Moody confirmed the checks have taken place and all was found to be in order.
- 52) To consider any amendments required to the Asset Register** – It was **RESOLVED** to make the following removals and additions:

Ref No.	Description/Location/Identification	Asset Value	Date acquired	Date disposed
SF016	Northamptonshire Flag	-£57.31	25.02.20	26.11.25
SF017	Northamptonshire Flag	-£51.43	09.02.22	26.11.25
LD004	The Green	£1.00	03.07.25	
LD005	Station Road Green	£1.00	03.07.25	
SF024	Northamptonshire Flag	£73.65	26.11.25	

When the last inspection of assets took place it was noted that there are a number of assets that do not appear on the Parish Council (PC) Asset Register and may belong to ex residents. To ensure the items are kept in a safe condition for residents to use, confirmation of their ownership and ongoing maintenance should be sought. If the owners no longer wish to maintain the items the PC may wish to take these assets on. It was agreed that an **item should be placed on the next Full Council agenda** to ask councillors to identify any items in the parish not on the Asset Register where ownership is not the landowner on which the item is sited, and consider whether the PC would want to take these on if it is found that the owners no longer wish to maintain them.

- 53) To consider changing contractor for the emptying of dog waste bins to Shield Group, at a cost of £3 per bin per week, on a 2 year contract** – It was **RESOLVED** to cancel the contract with Marcus Young Landscaping with immediate effect, and to cancel the order for larger bins, and to agree to the new 2 year contract with Shield Group to start asap. It was agreed to defer the purchase of larger bins for 6 months to see if they are still required. **Clerk to make necessary arrangements.**
- 54) To consider how to approach the maintenance of the War Memorial Garden and Pump Garden in 2026** – The existing contractors have advised that they can no longer continue with the work due to a change in their circumstances. They have suggested another couple in the village who may be willing to maintain the areas. **Cllr Moody to speak to the residents to find out the basis on which they would be interested in taking this on.**
- 55) To review the spend against budget for 2025-26 to date** – The report was noted.
- 56) To review the effectiveness of Internal Audit – Assertion 6, Annual Governance Statement** – A number of challenges have been raised by a councillor about the Internal audit in Helmdon. The committee agreed the responses to all challenges received and agreed that it should be shared with all councillors for their information, but cannot be shared publicly due to the fact that it contains some personal information about staff and councillors. The detail of the requirements of Assertion 6 on the Annual Governance Statement were reviewed to ensure the committee are confident that the PC can tick 'yes' to that statement in the next audit. The committee agreed that they are happy with the current provider of Internal Audit and agree that the PC can tick 'yes' to Assertion 6, but feel the decision as to which Internal Auditor to appoint for the

2026-2027 financial year should be a decision made by the Full Council, therefore the committee will recommend to the Full Council that they choose between the NCALC Internal Audit Service, and Lydia Cox Finance. **Clerk to put item on Full Council February agenda.**

57) To consider the draft budget for 2026-27 to be submitted to the full council for consideration at the meeting on 28th January - It was **RESOLVED** to set a budget of £37,300.75.

58) To consider the precept demand for 2026-27 to be submitted to the full council for consideration at the meeting on 28th January - It was **RESOLVED** to set a precept of £32,618. **Clerk to submit precept request form.**

59) To agree dates of meetings for the Finance Committee in 2026 – The following dates were agreed:

12th March

1st July

10th September

12th November

14th January 2027

Meeting closed @ 9:16pm

Next meeting date – 12th March 2026

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