



HELMDON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES



of the meeting of Helmdon Parish Council, held in the Reading Room, Church Street, Helmdon on Wednesday 22nd May 2024 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllrs Harris, Holloway, Marchant, Minshall, Moody, Plunkett, Shepherd, Wheeler and the clerk, Charmaine Jay

In attendance: 7 members of the public.

219. Election of Chair for 2024/25

Cllr Moody was proposed and seconded. All were in favour and Cllr Moody was duly elected Chair.

220. Signing of Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Moody signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

221. Election of Vice Chair for 2024/25

Cllr Wheeler was proposed and seconded. All were in favour and Cllr Wheeler was duly elected vice-chair.

222. Signing of Vice Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Wheeler signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

223. Apologies for absence

None.

224. To fill vacancies by co-option

There were expressions of interest, Nigel Hughes and Liz Hart.

Liz Hart explained that she had lived in the village since 2006, with three children.

Liz was the parish clerk for Helmdon until she had a career change and became an early years teacher. Liz is currently the clerk for Kings Sutton and has been for the past 5 years.

Liz has great knowledge of the local plan and understands the importance of responding. She also expressed a keen interest in projects and applying for grants.

Unfortunately, Mr Hughes was unwell and unable to attend the meeting but sent across some information about him:

Mr Hughes explained that he has lived in the village for 10 years, recently retired from being an Site Electrical technician working for SSE. Mr Hughes has a keen interest in not only giving back to the community but also in local planning.

Mr Hughes included his hobbies which were dog walking, gardening and keeping koi carp.

The council nominated both names and took a vote on who they would like to be coopted on.

The vote result was that Liz Hart would be the new councillor.

RESOLVED: Clerk to send across paperwork to Cllr Hart and send an email to Mr Hughes and thank him for his expression of interest.

225. Declarations of Interest

-Cllr Moody declared an interest in Item 232B.

226. To confirm members for the following committees:

The membership for Committees for 2024/25 was resolved as follows:

- a. Finance:** Cllrs Holloway, Marchant, Moody and Wheeler
- b. Planning:** Cllrs Harris, Marchant, Minshall, Plunkett and Shepherd
- c. HR:** Cllrs Holloway, Moody and Plunkett

227. To confirm Parish representatives:

RESOLVED: To appoint the following representatives for 2023/24:

- a. Internal Controls Councillor - **Cllr Hart**
- b. Parish Paths Warden - **Cllr Minshall**
- c. Parish Highways Representative - **Cllr Moody**
- d. Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator - **Cllr Moody**
- e. Police Liaison representative- **Cllr Marchant**
- f. Parish Council rep in Blackpits Monitoring Group- **Cllr Marchant**
- g. Health and Safety Officer - **Cllr Marchant**
- h. Tree Warden - **Mike Birchall**
- i. Flag Master and Deputy Flag Master- **Geoff Abbey and John Coatsworth**
- j. Webmasters- **Richard Farquharson and Cllr Plunkett**
- k. Recycling Warden - **Cllr Minshall**
- l. Speed Indicator Device Officer - **Cllr Wheeler**
- m. Defibrillator Officer- **Dissolved**
- n. HS2 Liaison Officer- **Cllr Marchant**
- o. Priors Farm Working Group- **Dissolved**
- p. Allotment Working Group- **Cllrs Moody, Shepherd and Wheeler**
- q. Any other representatives that may be considered necessary:
-School Liaison Cllr- Cllr Holloway

Cllr Moody and the rest of the council would like to thank Ross Vicars, Roger Miles and Phillip Ward for all of their hard work over the years volunteering for the council.

It was proposed that each of the above would get a thank you gift up to £30.

RESOLVED: To approve a gift each for Ross Vicars, Roger Miles and Phillip Ward for up to £30. Cllr Moody and Clerk to liaise.

228. Approval and signature of the minutes of the ordinary meeting of 27th March 2024

RESOLVED: That the minutes from 27th March 2024 be signed without amendment.

229. Matters arising

- Skip was delivered to allotments with compost and went back to Dial A Bin full.
- Station Road working group to give an update in June meeting.

230. To receive feedback on the Annual Village Meeting and note any matters arising

The meeting was successful with around 50 attendees.

It was questioned why the Parish Council don't put on refreshments for the Annual Village Meeting.

It is because it has been done in prior years but due to wastage and timings, its was decided not to put refreshments on.

231. Open Forum

It was mentioned:

- In King Sutton, they have a 'Freedom of the Parish' policy that enables them to give a gift for someone that has been nominated that has gone above and beyond for the village. **Clerk to put this on the June agenda to discuss**
- The village has one defibrillator down by the school and it doesn't reach the top of the village. It has been suggested that the new occupiers of 1, Field Way could be approached to see if they would have one of the side of their wall.
- A Whatsapp group was suggested for the village. It would take a lot of work to keep information current, the fact of GDPR and moderating the group.

232. Finance

A. To receive the financial statement: to note payments and receipts.

RESOLVED: Deferred to June meeting

B.To consider invoice(s) to be paid:

Payee	Invoice number	Purpose	Amount
NCALC	INV-3655	Annual Subscription	£799.23
Reading Room	INV-426	Room Hire	£137.60
Dial A Bin	INV- 98582	Skip Hire for Allotments	£140.00
Helen & Mikey Timms	PumpWarGarden2	Pump Garden Maintenance	£100.00
R & G	120704	Grass Cutting	£514.80

Cllr Moody left the room due to declaration of interest.

Cllr Wheeler took over the meeting

RESOLVED: To approve invoices to be paid

Cllr Moody returned to the meeting

C.To receive a report from ICC

Cllr Wheeler completed a quarterly report on finances with random invoices picked.

RESOLVED: ICC is satisfied with quarterly Internal Control

D. To review the effectiveness of the system of internal control

The council was satisfied with the effectiveness of internal control.

RESOLVED: To approve and sign the effectiveness of internal control.

E. To receive and note the recommendations from the report of the Internal Auditor for the year ending 31 March 2024

The internal report was received by the council and the three points of the report were noted:

- Helmdon Parish Council has a robust system of Internal Controls in place. However, it would be helpful if the internal controller was not an account signatory, so had not been involved in authorising payments before carrying out internal control checks.
- During my review I noted that Helmdon Parish Council do not display members Registers of Interests (ROI) on their website, but rather link to the West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) website. This is acceptable, however, the list of councillors displayed on WNC's website is out of date. The council should ensure that the WNC have the correct information on council membership and that all members have completed their Register of Interests. It is good practice for these to be reviewed annually
- In reviewing Scribe I noted that in a small number of transactions the VAT has been recorded incorrectly (NcALC membership and ICO registration.) There is no VAT on these services and so VAT should not be reclaimed on these.

RESOLVED: To note the report and to respond to Internal Auditor to let them know that the above has or is being actioned.

F. To approve the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31 March 2024

RESOLVED: To approve and sign the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31

G. To approve the Accounting Statements for the year ending 31 March 2024

RESOLVED: To approve and sign the Accounting Statements for the year ending 31 March 2024

H. To note the commencement date for the Period of the Exercise of Public Rights

RESOLVED: To note the commencement date for the Period of the Exercise of Public Rights

233.To discuss Community recycling scheme on 8th June 2024

Cllr Holloway has been liaising with the school and they are happy for the skip to go in the school car park.

It has been suggested that the council should purchase a generic banner for the sum of up to £100 that can be adapted for future recycling days.

RESOLVED: Clerk to explore options for purchasing a banner.

234.To discuss grass cutting contract

The grass cutting contract was discussed and due to confusion over another contractor cutting certain areas of the village for an uncertain amount of time, it has caused areas to not be cut.

Clerk has had discussion with current contractor and the confusion has now been ironed out.

RESOLVED: To monitor closely to ensure grass is being cut in timely manner.

235.To discuss the procedure of planning enforcement in West Northamptonshire

The development on Church Street has caused some concerns among residents due to a sewage pipe over sailing on to the public footpath.

A West Northamptonshire planning enforcement officer attended the site due to a report being sent in and found no issue with the sewage pipe.

The council are to write to Cllr Eastwood for more advice from the legal department to see if it is admissible.

RESOLVED: To approve writing to Cllr Eastwood.

236.To respond to West Northamptonshire Council regarding the local plan

The West Northamptonshire Local Plan are at the Reg 18 stage ,which is just before going to a planning inspector. It is very important that Helmdon Parish Council send in their feedback.

Responses from the council are to be received by the clerk by Monday 27th May 2024 to draft a letter.

RESOLVED: Approved.

237. To respond to Community Governance Review

There has been a recommendation that Helmdon Parish council reduce their councillor seats from 9 to 7.

The council did not agree with this due to:

- There have 9 seats in the council since 1894.
- The work load is distributed well amongst 9 councillors.
- The council are not struggling to fill vacancies.

RESOLVED: Clerk to respond to Community Governance Review with the above points.

238. To consider a form of Welcome pack for new residents

Due to the new Welcoming space in the Reading Room- it has been suggested that there be a 'Welcome pack' for new residents.

The council have explored this before but found it hard to keep things current.

It has been suggested that if there is are new residents in the village that the clerk sends a welcome card.

Cllr Holloway will start to put a welcome pack together to keep in the Reading Room.

RESOLVED: Approved.

239.To receive an update on the Helmdon Old Station Road site

There is no particular update on Helmdon Old Station site.

The clerk has been in touch with Barney's who are the auctioneers.

They told the clerk that the council could pay a £9,600 refundable deposit for a legal pack, but this was decided it was too much of a risk.

Clerk to email Barney's to see if there is anything else that can be done due to our circumstances as a public body with the public's money.

RESOLVED: Approved.

240.To receive an update on Welsh Lane

It was confirmed that there was no update on Welsh Lane, Clerk to chase

241.To receive an update on Priory Barn

It was confirmed that there was no update on Priory Barn, Clerk to chase.

242.Close

The meeting closed at 21.37

Next meeting is on Wednesday 26th June 2024