



HELMDON PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING



Minutes of a Meeting of Helmdon Parish Council held in the Helmdon Reading Room, Church Street, Helmdon on **Wednesday 28th January 2026 at 7:30pm.**

Present: Cllrs Hart (Chair), Moody, Plunkett, Marchant, Fitzroy-Ezzy, Minshall, Sparrow, Fitton, Shepherd, and the Clerk.

Members of the public: 6 members of the public, and Unitary Cllr Eastwood were present.

- 497. To receive and approve apologies for absence** – None.
- 498. Declarations of Interest** – None.
- 499. Approval and signature of the minutes of November 26th, 2025** - It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved and duly signed.
- 500. Matters arising from the minutes**
- a. To receive an update on the actions agreed in relation to Play Area repairs** – The Clerk has contacted a local contractor and requested he complete a report on the outstanding issues raised by the annual inspection, providing advice on what options are available to the Parish Council (PC) for extending the life of the equipment.
 - b. Update on communications with Amplus regarding land registry of the Station Road land** – Amplus have taken advice from the solicitor who completed the transfer of the land and they have advised that an RX4 is not required and that the PC should contact Land Registry to ask them to remove any restrictions on the land. It was **RESOLVED** that the **Clerk should go back to Land Registry with the information provided by Amplus to ask them to register the land.**
 - c. Article re e-mail scam awareness and diligence** – Cllr Plunkett advised that he has sent the document to the webmaster who is going to publish it on the website.
 - d. Update re bollards to be installed in the layby near the B4525 entrance to Helmdon** - The bollards have been installed. It has been suggested that reflectors could be put on the bollards and that wildflower seed could be planted in the topsoil put in by West Northants Council (WNC). Highways have given permission for reflectors to be placed on the bollards if they are paid for by the PC. It was **RESOLVED** to delegate authority to the Clerk to purchase reflector tape and a wildflower seed mix up to a total cost of £50. **Cllr Hart to send details of possible flower seed mixes to all Cllrs for their consideration. Clerk to place orders once mix is confirmed.** Thanks were expressed to WNC for getting the bollards installed so quickly and for the landscaping they did which wasn't part of the contract and was done purely as a favour to Helmdon PC.
 - e. Update re dog waste bin provision on Church Street** – Thanks were expressed to Cllr Minshall for emptying the dog waste bins twice over the last few weeks. The Finance Committee agreed at their recent meeting to hold off on

the replacement of the dog waste bins on Church Street, due to the fact that a new contractor has been appointed to empty the dog waste bins and they will be emptying the bins more regularly, therefore the larger bins may not be necessary.

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

- Unitary Cllr Eastwood provided a brief report and encouraged the PC to respond to the WNC Budget Consultation. **Clerk to copy the PC response to the consultation to Cllr Eastwood.**

District Cllr Eastwood left the meeting at 7:51pm.

- A resident advised that they would like two stiles near their property changed to kissing gates as they are more suitable for the elderly, the disabled, and those with dogs. Cllr Shepherd has contacted WNC on the resident's behalf and WNC has asked for the request to be formally raised on Fixmystreet by the resident. The Rights of Way Officer will then come out to see the resident and look at the site and decide whether they could fund kissing gates. **Cllr Shepherd will help the resident with submitting the request on Fixmystreet.**
- A resident noted that a local memorial mason has offered to clean the Jubilee wall free of charge. The PC agreed to this and the resident agreed to let the memorial mason know it is ok to go ahead. The resident also raised concerns about wildflower seeds being planted near the wall as they believe wildflowers only look nice in the first year and then look a mess.
- One of the Church Wardens advised that the Church path is uneven so the Church Committee are applying to the Diocese to get a faculty approval to replace the footpath and if they get the permission they will be seeking a grant from the parish council under the small grants scheme.

502. To appoint a new member to the Finance Committee – It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Fitton to the Finance Committee.

503. To consider reallocation of the role of Tree Warden – It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Philip Bridger as the Tree Warden.

504. To confirm the remits for the following roles: It was agreed to first vote on approving items a, b, c, and e. Cllr Marchant requested that the votes for this item are minuted – the votes were as follows:

Cllr Marchant – Against	Cllr Minshall – In favour
Cllr Shepherd – In favour	Cllr Fitton – In favour
Cllr Fitzroy-Ezzy – In favour	Cllr Sparrow – In favour
Cllr Plunkett – In favour	Cllr Moody – In favour
Cllr Hart – In favour	

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the remits in items a, b, c, and e.

In relation to item d, the Clerk raised questions on items 3, 4, and 5 as listed on the proposed document. It was **RESOLVED** that those items be removed from the policy and instead to add in a line stating 'To support the Clerk as required to help with the management of the allotments', and to approve the document.

- a. Blackpits Monitoring Group Representative**
- b. Station Road Working Group**
- c. Tree Warden**
- d. Allotment Working Group**

e. **Parish Paths Warden**

505. HS2

- a. **Review of External Liaison Protocols (HS2): To note the HS2 project's transition into technical highways and safety phases and to resolve to transfer the role of HS2 Liaison Representative to the Parish Clerk to ensure centralised administrative tracking, compliance with information-sharing protocols, and to maintain the council's professional standards regarding the distribution of public information –** It was **RESOLVED** to transfer the HS2 Liaison role to the Clerk. **Clerk to contact HS2 to update the details of their PC contact.**
- b. **To note further delays to the reopening of Radstone Road and consider next steps –** Concerns were raised that there is already excessive pressure on the Welsh Lane, and Church Street is also taking a significant amount of additional traffic due to vehicles driving up Church Street to avoid the crossroads. There were also concerns about the poor communication about the closure. It was **RESOLVED** that the **Clerk should e-mail EKFB and copy in Richard Butler raising concerns about the extra traffic on Welsh Lane, and Church Street, and the poor communication.**

2 members of the public left the meeting at 8:30pm.

506. To receive recommendations from the Finance Committee

- a. **To submit a response to the West Northants Budget Consultation –** It was **RESOLVED** to submit the response as proposed by the Finance Committee. **Clerk to submit response.**
- b. **To agree the budget for 2026-27 –** It was **RESOLVED** to set a budget of £37,300.75.
- c. **To agree the precept demand for 2026-27 –** It was **RESOLVED** to set a precept of £32,618. **Clerk to submit precept request.**
- d. **To consider the timetable for the Small Grants Scheme 2026-27 –** It was agreed that the Grants Scheme should be published on 18th May, with a deadline for response of 23rd June.

507. To review the following policies – It was **RESOLVED** to approve all of the policies listed below subject to a change to the date of the King's Official birthday in the Flag Policy, and the dates changed in the Small Grants Awarding Policy as per item 506d.

- a. **Code of Conduct**
- b. **Flag Policy – King's Official birthday**
- c. **Sexual and General Harassment Policy**
- d. **Small Grants Awarding Policy**

508. To receive a report and update from the Parish Highways Representative following the meeting with West Northants Highways on 20 October 2025 – The report was noted.

509. To identify any items in the parish not listed on the PC 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 – There is a tree on Jenners Piece, a bench on the War Memorial, a bench on Station Rd Green, and an oak tree by the crossroads that were approved at the time but there is no one left in Helmdon connected to those things to ensure they are maintained in a safe condition. It was **RESOLVED** that the **Clerk should send a letter to the owners to ask if they would like to pass the items on to the PC to ensure they are maintained going forward.**

510. To review quotes received in relation to planning consultant advice to support the Parish Council (PC) in making a response to a planning

application on Priory Fields, consider whether the support is necessary, and if so, agree which consultant to appoint – It was **RESOLVED** to defer this discussion until such time as the PC has received a planning application as it is difficult to understand if support is required if it is not known what the application is.

511. To receive the Tree Inspection Report and consider next steps – Defer to next meeting when the new Tree Warden should have had time to review the report.

512. To confirm the council’s policy on external communications – It was **RESOLVED** that the following guidance should be followed by councillors when receiving any communication from external sources:

If the item is something that is a request for the full council to consider, or is not directly related to your liaison area you should reply copying in the parish clerk stating 'This is an issue for the full council therefore should be sent to the Parish Clerk. I have copied the Clerk into this e-mail so she can take the appropriate action.'

If the query directly relates to your liaison role you should reply providing any requested information but copy in the Clerk to ensure the Clerk is aware of the issue and can help and/or put the item on an agenda for discussion if required.

513. Parish Plan

- a. To note progress and to take any questions** – The report was noted.
- b. To approve the Terms of Reference for the Village Shop Working Group** - Thanks were expressed to Cllr Fitzroy-Ezzy for putting this together. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Terms of Reference.
- c. To agree Helmdon’s participation in Community Speed Watch (CSW) 2026, approve expenditure on a speed gun, and appoint a CSW Coordinator** – The PC is required to buy a speed gun from Northants Police at a cost of £150 which will then be owned by the PC so Speedwatch can take place at times that are suitable for the group. It was **RESOLVED** to approve Helmdon’s participation in CSW, to approve the expenditure, and to appoint Cllr Minshall as the CSW co-ordinator.
- d. To agree a date and make arrangements for the spring Community Litter Pick** – It was **RESOLVED** to organise the spring community litter pick for 1st March @ 10am. **Clerk to make arrangements for the Community Litter Pick.**

514. Finance:

- a. To note the bank balances of £142.91 and £31,442.41 as at 21.01.2026** - Cllr Hart confirmed the balances stated 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
28.11.25	BACS	Luke No Further Handyman	1116	Swing repairs	£239.00
28.11.25	BACS	WNC	424003116878	Installation of timber bollards	£5,243.40
30.11.25		Unity Bank		Account fee	£6.00
24.12.25	BACS	R&G Grounds	122355	Grass cutting Nov 25	£152.40
24.12.25	BACS	Helmdon Primary School	E2047000019	Licence to use playing fields	£398.00
24.12.25	BACS	Luke No Further Handyman	1120	Reset posts, and fix swing	£234.00
24.12.25	BACS	Luke No Further Handyman	1123	Repair steps near slide	£570.00
24.12.25	BACS	Staff costs		December	£759.71

24.12.25	BACS	HMRC		Tax & NI Dec	£138.43
31.12.25	DD	NEST		Pension Dec	£63.14
08.12.25	DD	Yu Energy	03280545	Electricity Nov 25	£56.54
31.12.25		Unity Bank		Account fee	£6.00
08.01.26	DD	Yu Energy		Electricity Dec 25	£62.13

Invoices to be paid:

Payee	Invoice No	Description	Amount
Helmdon Community Foundation	510	Room hire Oct to Dec	£65.00
E-on	6018814007	Replace photocell LP3	£42.00
E-on	6018814004	Replace photocell LP2	£42.00
E-on	6018814008	Cut back vegetation LP19	£36.00
E-on	6018814006	Replace photocell LP14, LP15, LP18	£126.00
E-on	6018814005	Replace photocell LP26	£42.00
H.Tims Environmental Services	PumpWarGarden12	War Memorial and Pump Garden	£100.00

Receipts:

Date	Received from	Description	Amount
02.12.25	CCLA	Interest	£98.16
31.12.25	Unity Bank	Interest	£211.57
05.01.26	CCLA	Interest	£99.51

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

Meeting closed @ 8:58pm

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