



HELMDDON PARISH COUNCIL



Subsequent questions received from a resident after the 2026 Annual Village Meeting

Questions have been responded to by the Chair of the Parish Council.

**Please note – responses to questions 5 and 6 are from the landowner.*

As noted at the AVM last week, please see below the full detail of the issues and questions we have collated through people within the village whatsapp network

1. Speed on Station Road. As raised in the meeting and many times previously, the speed sign has not been kept with up to date software and is now bricked, this means that it is not "fully working" as reported in the last PC minutes. The sign should be recording the number and speed to vehicles which it is not. We understand the community speed watch is in place and this is positive, however particularly on station road, this is completely ineffective. You said that the camera picks up cars as they round the bend from the school however at this point they have not started accelerating yet, they round the bend and get to the straight before they go faster. Are you aware that the station road is referred to locally as the "runway" due to the speed of vehicles flying up the street once they have rounded the corner and got onto the straight? Sadly, the group of people in high vis stood on the road will be seen before the usual behaviour of drivers occurs so you won't be seeing this. What we really need, is the replacement of the sign, turned to face down station road for a 4 week period to show the true speeds being done. We have raised this so many times and really do want a response to where the PC are with the replacement of this device.

As stated at the meeting, the PC will decide whether to apply for a VAS for Station Road (replacement) or other location. The sign cannot easily go switched around without a contractor doing it which would probably cost around £350 but will investigate. It needs to be noted that recording speeds may not assist with proving a case for a 20 limit/zone. If a car is speeding excessively, that does not inform a case for asking for a 20. This paper is very helpful [20mph Zones and Speed Limits Factsheet - January 2020](#)

2. Dog mess bins on station road. We have raised this before as you know, there are no mess bins at all on station road despite all the walkers that use the area and the school. A bin by the kissing gate near the school would be ideal to try and ensure mess is picked up on (sic) this area, however as a minimum if the PC is unhappy to pick up the cost of an additional collection, changing the 2 current waste bins for

mess bins with lids which would at least manage the smells and flies would be a start that seems eminently sensible and at least show that some action has been taken.

Note that the waste bins do not belong to the PC (they are WNC's) and the waste from them is collected by WNC so switching over existing waste bins to be dog mess bins is not feasible. It would need to be a new bin entirely. A bin costs approx. £260 plus a post installation and fitting so probably around £450. The cost of the emptying to the PC is £2.75 each time. I will ask for it to be on the agenda in May. If it is to go on the kissing gate, we need the landowner's permission first.

3. Stakes have been placed at the top of the village to stop parking by the village sign. the minutes show an invoice to Keir for c£5k for this work. Did the PC get more than 1 cost for this work? It seems an incredible amount of money for poorly installed bollards. they are not reflective and we note that there is a plan to plant wildflowers in the area, this will likely hide them further and potentially lead to claims for damaged cars. Wee (sic) would also (sic) like to understand the reason for this work, was it to stop vehicles treating the area as lay by? If so, what is the view on the fact this seems to have made matters worse given vehicles now park adjacent to them and are therefore now blocking the actual road and causing a hazard.

The bollards had to be installed by Kier to their planned specifications as the works were on the highway verge. They are to stop motorists parking in the mud and leaving litter. The wild flower seed is behind the bollards so will not impact safety. There is reflective tape at either end. I would not say that it has made matters (sic) worse. There used to be vehicles up there often when I passed by and I have only seen one on the grass at the top since. The bollards do not belong to the PC so there is no liability to us arising from a point of view of claims.

4. Wild flower beds on station road. despite claims to the contrary there are a lot of houses on station road that were not aware of this work, even if the leaflets (sic) had been seen by residents (which they haven't) this (sic) doesn't really (sic) feel like full engagement on it. Who is going to maintain these beds and why has this area been chosen for a trial? The view locally is that it is a poor attempt by the PC to stop the occasional (sic) use of the green for loading and unloading vehicles (sic) closer to peoples homes, is this the case? There is a very large grass verge rounding (sic) the bent (sic) and in front of the school that would look pretty as a wildflower area, would consultation on best locations for this not be better rather than pressing ahead and alienating (sic) the community?

I personally hand delivered the leaflets so I know exactly where they were placed. Houses on Station Road as far down as gravel path. I was one leaflet short on the way up at the top so I texted that resident instead. The community as a whole cannot be alienated (as above) at the same time as having little objection (as stated below). I assume therefore that these comments were from

different residents and this just shows that we can never please everyone. The aim is to improve biodiversity but it will also look pleasing to the eye. If the PC had been trying to stop parked cars, then the beds would obviously have been placed very differently! The PC does not control many areas large enough for such beds and the other considered option (Station Road Green) is quite shady, smaller and tree covered. The PC will maintain them.

5. There is little objection to the environmental effort being made with the wildflowers, the issue is the location and also the apparent hypocrisy (sic) that these flowerbeds have been put into a location that will impact on residents where the chair of the PC has cleared a massive area of the SSSI to make way for a gravel driveway. There is full understanding that this had Planning permission for the new access to the road, however the amount of land that has been totally cleared here far eclipses a few flower beds. Some trees have been planted for privacy but this does not replace the natural habitat that has been destroyed. Can the PC please comment on this

I am going to comment on this personally. The land you are referring to is **not** a SSSI at all. The track is to allow access to carry on with returning the land to meadowland and to get to the boundary to maintain it and fence it. Northants Wildlife Trust has been consulted and sent me a management plan of what we need to aim for going forward with respect to keeping the land clear (as it is supposed to be). Stock cannot be kept on it without it being fenced and we had to clear the scrub to do that. "Some" trees – I planted 468 purchased from the Woodland Trust and am checking them regularly. There will be hedging and silver birch trees at regular intervals.

6. Further can the PC explain why when the scrubland at the other end of the line bank SSSI was cleared, the PC got involved and engaged with the authorities but they have not done the same in this instance? Whilst it's true that their end did not have PP for the new road access, the complaint made at the time included the removal of the trees and shrubs which has been done at the top end with apparent impunity

The Northants Wildlife Trust have produced two reports both of which state the land needs to be cleared. Meadowland is scarce in Northamptonshire and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is seeking to address that. The PC engaged with WNC regarding Plot A due to concerns re flooding (ditch being blocked due to a new access being made on to Grange Lane) and a caravan which had appeared.

7. Priory Fields Development. Do the PC plan to hold a vote of the residents as to whether the proposed development is supported by the PC or not? if not, what engagement will they undertake (sic) of the community before making their decision

The PC will engage with the community. The May meeting will probably discuss exactly how in detail. We can't engage before we know what the proposal is.

8. Can the PC explain why they have removed an elected PC as the HS2 liaison and replaced with (sic) the clerk who is a part time resource who does not live in the

(sic) village? Please advise how many of the meetings held since her appointment that the clerk has attended and how many missed? Do the PC plan to review this decision to put it back with the Cllr who has made such great efforts to represent the community in relation to the impact of HS2

The full reasoning for this has already been published.

9. Please provide details of all actions taken by the PC in relation to the dangerous fence at the hump back bridge, what emails, escalations and reports have the PC made in relation to this matter? It was reported a year ago now and whilst some barriers have been put in place, the remaining fence is extremely dangerous and liable to collapse with very little effort. There are many children crossing this bridge, as you will be aware the path is very narrow and it is a serious accident waiting to happen. the PC appear to have prioritised trying to stop parking at the start of the village and white line as across the main bridge, despite there being NO school children the other side and a wide path in place, but don't seem to have taken any action at all on this very dangerous path. Please confirm what actions have been taken by who and when. Please also advise what action will now be taken that the stated replacement on Friday 24th did not happen and the fence remains exactly the same as it was

The PC are not the highways authority. Highways did attend on Friday but once risk assessed it was deemed too dangerous to work with all the Russells lorries pulling out from the entrance. They have apologised for this as I am sure you would agree with me that any RA should have been done in advance not on the day. It now needs to be done at a weekend to avoid the HGV issue. Highways has said it will be done in May and promised to keep us updated.

10. What are the key actions from the Village Plan survey and what actions have been taken as a result. the survey was over a year ago now and there doesn't appear to be any summary of the findings published, where can this be found

This is on the website and has been for some time.

[Helmdon Parish Plan 2025 \(HPP3\) – Helmdon Parish Council](#)

As an aside, the Village meeting is billed as "Your meeting" to ask "Your questions" and whilst the invited speaker Mr Pothole was informative and interesting, we would suggest that the Chair could have managed this segment to ensure more time was available for the public participation, either that, or the meeting should have been allowed to run on until people had been able to raise their queries. It was disappointing that the chair opened the floor to public engagement at 8.45 with a comment that we had 10 minutes or so for questions. In future the PC may consider limiting these enlightening guests to a shorter slot so as not to curtail the involvement of the community that it's aimed for, as you are aware this is the 1 single meeting of the year where residents are free to ask questions and raise concerns so perhaps consider that this should be the primary focus of the session.

Noted. The PC does try different formats to try and attract the community. As an aside there is an opportunity at every PC meeting for items to be brought up and they frequently are.

I look forward to your response to the above which i will share with those who have raised with me once received

As mentioned at the meeting, these questions will be put on the website so everyone will be able to see them. For q 5 and part of 6 it will indicate that the response was made from the landowner. If you have any further questions, please raise at Open Forum usual.