Helmdon Parish Council
Policy on Motor Vehicles on Parish Council Land

1. Purpose and scope

Helmdon Parish Council holds its land for the benefit and enjoyment of the whole village. Vehicles damage the grass, leave ruts, create safety risks for people using the land and spoil its appearance. This policy sets out when, if ever, motor vehicles may be driven or parked on council land, and what the Council will do if the policy is not followed.

The policy applies to all land owned or managed by the Council, including:

- Station Road Green, Station Road (opposite Hinton's Close)
- The Green, Station Road (south of Jeffs Bridge)
- The War Memorial, at the junction of Wappenham Road and Sulgrave Road
- Jenner's Piece, Wappenham Road

It also applies to any land the Council acquires or takes on in future.

In this policy, “motor vehicle” means any mechanically propelled vehicle, including cars, vans, lorries, motorcycles, quad bikes, tractors, plant and machinery, and any trailer, caravan or skip they carry or tow.

2. The basic rule

No motor vehicle may be driven onto, parked on, or left on any Parish Council land, unless one of the exceptions in Section 3 applies.

This includes driving across council land to reach a property, to load or unload, or to make a delivery, and parking for any length of time, however short.

The rule does not apply to mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs used by people with limited mobility, or to the Council's own contractors carrying out work for the Council (for example, grass cutting or tree work).

3. Exceptions

Emergencies. Emergency service vehicles (police, fire, ambulance) and vehicles responding to an emergency affecting public safety or utilities may use council land without permission.

Permission in advance. The Council accepts there may be occasional, short-term reasons to have a vehicle or skip on its land, for example:

- placing a skip for a few days while a property is cleared or renovated
- a one-off delivery of heavy or bulky materials that cannot reasonably be made from the road
- access needed by a utility company for planned works
- vehicles supporting an approved community event

In these cases, written permission must be obtained from the Clerk to the Council **before** the vehicle or skip is placed on the land. Requests should be sent to clerk@helmdonparishcouncil.gov.uk at least 10 working days in advance, and should state:

1. who is making the request, with contact details
2. which piece of land, and exactly where on it
3. the vehicle(s) or skip involved
4. the dates and times required, and the reason

The Clerk, in consultation with the Chair where appropriate, may grant permission with conditions, such as limits on dates and location, use of ground protection mats, or a requirement to make good any damage. Permission is specific to the request and may be withdrawn if the conditions are not met.

Anyone given permission is responsible for any damage caused, and must restore the land to its previous condition at their own cost. Where works would require it (for example, a skip on the

highway verge), the applicant must also hold any separate licence required by West Northamptonshire Council.

4. Breaches of this policy

Driving or parking on council land without permission is a trespass. The Council's aim is to stop it happening, not to punish, and it will take account of the circumstances of each case. However, it will act firmly where the policy is ignored.

First occurrence. The Clerk will contact the vehicle owner or occupier (in person, by letter, or by a notice left on the vehicle), explain this policy, and ask for the vehicle to be removed straight away. Where damage has been caused, the Council may ask the person responsible to pay for repairs.

Repeated occurrences. If the same person, household or business breaches the policy again, the Clerk will issue a formal written warning on behalf of the Council. This will set out the breach, the cost of any damage to be recovered, and the action the Council may take next.

Persistent breaches. If breaches continue after a formal warning, the Council may decide, at a council meeting, to take one or more of the following steps:

- recover the full cost of repairing any damage, through the small claims court if necessary
- install bollards, posts or other barriers, and seek to recover the cost from those responsible
- take legal advice and pursue civil action for trespass, including seeking an injunction

Other action. Vehicles that appear to be abandoned will be reported to West Northamptonshire Council. Vehicles causing an obstruction or danger will be reported to the police.

Residents who see a vehicle on council land are encouraged to report it to the Clerk, with the date, time, location and (if possible) a photograph.

5. Adoption and review

This policy was adopted by Helmdon Parish Council at its meeting on [date], minute reference [xx]. It will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if circumstances change.

Signed: _____ (Chair) Date: _____