

## HELMDON PARISH COUNCIL

### Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Helmdon Parish Council held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013 in the Reading Room, Church Street, Helmdon at 7:30 p.m.

**Present:** Councillors Barnes, Burns, Coatsworth, Simpson, Duncombe, England, Moody, Garner  
Parish Clerk: Liz Hart

Six members of the public were present.

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Election of Chairman for 2013/14</b></p> <p>Cllr England proposed, seconded by Cllr Coatsworth that Cllr Burns be nominated for Chairman. All were in favour and Cllr Burns was elected as Chair.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Signing of Chairman's declaration of acceptance of office</b></p> <p>Cllr Burns duly signed the declaration which was countersigned by the Parish Clerk.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>Cllr Adhemar had sent apologies due to another commitment; these were accepted by the meeting.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Election of Vice Chairman for 2013/14</b></p> <p>Cllr Moody proposed, seconded by Cllr Garner that Cllr Coatsworth be nominated for the position of Vice Chair. All were in favour and Cllr Coatsworth was elected Vice Chairman.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>To appoint the Responsible Financial Officer</b></p> <p>Cllr Burns proposed, seconded by Cllr England that the Parish Clerk, Liz Hart continue as RFO. All were in favour.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<p><b>To appoint an Internal Auditor</b></p> <p><i>Cllr Moody declared a prejudicial interest in the following item.</i></p> <p>It was resolved that NorthantsCALC be retained as the Internal Auditor Service provider.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<p><b>The appointment of committee members</b></p> <p>The membership for 2013/14 was resolved as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Finance:</b> Cllrs Burns, Barnes, Garner, Coatsworth, Moody (and RFO)</li> <li>b) <b>Planning:</b> Cllrs Burns, Coatsworth, Duncombe, Garner, Adhemar, Simpson</li> <li>c) <b>Road Safety:</b> Cllrs Duncombe, England, Garner</li> <li>d) <b>Playground:</b> Cllrs Garner, Simpson, Adhemar</li> <li>e) <b>Allotment:</b> Cllrs Moody, Coatsworth, Adhemar, Garner</li> <li>f) <b>Wind Farm :</b> Cllr Coatsworth, Burns, Simpson</li> </ul>	

## 8 The appointment of Parish Representatives

The following were appointed with all in favour:

- a) **Parish Paths Warden** – Roger Miles
- b) **Parish Highways Representative** – Cllr Moody
- c) **Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator** – Cllr England
- d) **School Liaison Councillor** – Cllrs Simpson and Moody
- e) **PC Rep on Reading Room Committee** – Cllr England
- f) **PC Reps on Parish Plan Monitoring Group** – Cllrs Moody, Barnes and Coatsworth
- g) **Poppy Organisers** – Cllr Coatsworth, Burns, Simpson
- h) **PC Reps on Blackpits Monitoring Group** – Cllr Coatsworth and Burns
- i) **Health and Safety Officers** – Cllrs Coatsworth and Garner
- j) **Tree Warden** – Phillip Ward – Clerk to confirm with Phillip Ward.

The Clerk will inform the Primary School of the appointment of Cllrs Simpson and Moody as School Liaison Councillors.

Clerk

## 9 Updating of Register of Interests

The Clerk reminded all Councillors of the need to update to produce copies of the Register of Interest forms within 28 days for submission to SNC if they had acquired a new interest in land or changed job role.

## 10 Committee & Representative Reports

- a) **Finance – the Clerk** informed the meeting that the Finance Committee had operated as usual in 2012/13 making recommendations to the main Parish Council meeting. There had been no matters of concerns raised by either the Internal or External Auditor.
- b) **Planning – Cllr Burns** highlighted the fact that there was a perception that all was not progressing smoothly in the planning department. He and Cllr Coatsworth had met with Cllr Digby to ask him to arrange a meeting with the officers which was still awaited. Cllr Burns commented that the Committee worked hard during the year, Cllr Barnes resigned from the Committee, dissatisfied with certain outcome of applications where he felt the Parish Council's comments had not been taken into consideration.
- c) **Road Safety – Cllr Moody** noted that the Highways Representative Scheme had not yet been refreshed by NCC. Northamptonshire Highways formed to streamline processes. He noted that Street Doctor is a good system and he is happy to report any issues. Helen Howard had had input into the Jubilee Wall project.
- d) **Playground – Cllr Garner** noted that some repair work had been completed but yet to satisfactory standard. Prices for additional work (new steps) were very high and other options were being considered.
- e) **Allotments – Cllr Coatsworth** commented that all workable plots were let, with a plan to manage the area by the brook.
- f) **Helmdon Parish Plan – Cllr Moody** confirmed the group had continued to meet throughout the year. He noted that Natural England has objected to the proposed Cycle Path to Brackley and that the fact that the Joint Core Strategy won't be signed off until after another consultation is preventing Neighbourhood Plans being formulated. There had been an excellent response to the survey for Superfast Broadband with Helmdon now top of the list. NCC has appointed BT with implementation guaranteed by end 2015. It is hoped to reform HAFWAG either as before or affiliated with Brackley and District Wildlife Group
- g) **Parish Paths Warden- Roger Miles** – the task of the Paths Warden is to keep under review the 44 paths that provide some 31 kilometres of footpaths and bridleways in the Parish, and to liaise with the Rights of Way officers at Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) on behalf of the Parish.  
NCC help has been needed to resolve a few problems but generally the landowners are very cooperative when issues arise. At present there is discretionary public access to some fields near Allithorne Wood under an agreement that expires in 2014; the current

landowners have indicated that this benefit to the community will not be renewed.

Some work was done to prepare an application for a new path to be created on the former Great Central Railway track but at the request of NCC this was withdrawn to facilitate negotiations for the work on the bridge on Station Road.

During the past year NCC have rejected some requests for stile improvements but did replace the kissing gate just behind the Bell, at the start of path AP39. There is a list of outstanding requests on file at NCC, for instance a roadside fingerpost is needed opposite Astwell Mill.

Meanwhile a village volunteer, Julian Partis, has again taken on several stile repair jobs and some fencing of the permissive path around the churchyard. Also the HYHOs have funded two new gates for paths AP27 and 28.

#### Paths Group

The work of the Path Warden is very greatly assisted by the active Paths Group, chaired by Mike Barnes, which developed from the Parish Plan. The Paths Group's practical work has included digging out a drainage ditch, cutting back hedges and improving the permissive path along the old railway route towards Astwell. This continues to be well used.

The Parish Trees Warden attends the Paths Group meetings and the Paths Group is pleased to support his work; especially pleasurable was assisting with the planting of the Jubilee Wood in November.

The village footpaths map that the Paths Group produced in 2006 was updated and reprinted in October; also completed was the fourth in the series of leaflets on circular walks around Helmdon. A fifth circular walk is being prepared but meanwhile there are good stocks of the large map and the four leaflets. These are available free to villagers, on request.

#### Health Walks

The Ramblers Association and Macmillan Cancer Support sponsor the national Health Walks scheme, which is facilitated locally by South Northants Council, and which has been active in Helmdon since March 2009. Thursday afternoon walks have continued throughout the year, with only a few cancellations for bad weather. It is pleasing to report that several more Helmdon residents have joined the 15 - 20 regular walkers this year.

Several landowners assist the planning of varied routes for these walks by generously allowing some diversions from the official paths for these led groups.

Unfortunately one of the walk leaders, Lesley Kinghorn, has moved away and so there will be a shorter programme of Monday evening walks this summer. It is hoped that one or two volunteers will come forward to train as walk leaders.

#### Spring Ridge Windfarm

The increased popularity of our Health Walks has enabled the preparation of further evidence for the new inquiry in October. Mention will also be made of the recent SSSI improvements, which have enhanced the views from AP35. However, the main concern is that the path AP16 through Grange Farm becomes AN10 at the boundary with Greatworth Parish and then runs very close to the proposed positions of the wind turbines. Their impact on AN10 is a focal point in the argument but there is also concern about the loss of amenity for users of the attractive paths between Helmdon and Stuchbury.

h) **Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr England** noted that of the 20 -25 reports he had received, only 3 were in Helmdon. Some cars had been damaged in the village. The police did attend at the school after complaints regarding poor parking. Cllr England

emphasised that he was not informed by the Police of their planned activity in the village.

- i) **School Liaison** – Cllr Simpson reported that the Councillors continues to focus on building relationships with the school.
- j) **Reading Room** – Cllr England confirmed that the Committee Room had been redecorated, the floor sanded and a new dishwasher installed. A minor roof repair had been required. In the main room a pull down screen and projector had been donated, with stage lighting donated by Sue Wallace in memory of Willie Watson. The year closed with £14,624 in the accounts.
- k) **Tree Warden - Report from Phillip Ward**

The post of Tree Warden was formally created at the Parish AGM in 2012 initially at the suggestion of Northampton County Council Officers. In the event they have not developed the programme of activities they expected to and I have, therefore, tried to focus on suggestions for activities generated within the village.

The main project for 2012 was the creation of a Jubilee Wood to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. This came to fruition in November on land at the Wappenham edge of the village owned by Leigh Sparrow, but generously made available.

Four Hundred trees were supplied free of charge by the Woodland Trust as part of their successful campaign to plant 6 million trees around the country to mark the Jubilee. Four Hundred end of life carpet tiles were donated by Clean Stream – a not for profit recycling company in Wales – for use as mulch mats. And an estimated one hundred villagers turned out to help plant the trees on 10 November. Many took the opportunity to buy a tag to name a tree for themselves or a relative and the proceeds from that and the sale of refreshments covered the other costs of the project, leaving a surplus of £53 which has been placed in the fund managed by the Footpaths Committee, to be available for future maintenance or new projects. The day was a great success and I am very grateful to all those who gave their time and support to it. I am grateful too that the Parish Council has made provision in the budget for this year for a sign to commemorate the event.

Less happily it was necessary to arrange for the Horse Chestnut tree on the Green on Station Road to be removed because it was badly affected by honey fungus. This was carried out by South Northants Homes who are the owners. Unfortunately they do not intend to replace the tree. However, the Parish Council has decided that it will pay for a replacement and I have been asked to oversee the project. A replacement tree will be purchased for planting this autumn.

I have been canvassing for suggestions for projects for this year including looking for suggestions of further pieces of land that might be suitable for additional tree planting. I have been asked to investigate the possibility of doing a project on a piece of allotment land that is not suitable for vegetable growing and there has been some interest in the possibility of creating a community orchard.

There will be an on-going maintenance task at the Jubilee Wood and I would welcome any offers of help with that.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm.