

HELMDON PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the meeting of Helmdon Parish Council held on Wednesday 24th January 2007 in the Reading Room, Church Street, Helmdon at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Councillors Bearman, Brookhouse, Burns (Chair), Earl, England, Moody, Spendlove, Smith, Watson. Parish Clerk: Liz Hart

Eight members of the public were present.

		Action
1	<p>Apologies</p> <p>None received.</p>	
2	<p>Approval and signature of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 22nd November 2006</p> <p>Cllr Moody proposed, seconded by Cllr Earl that the Minutes be signed as a true and correct record with the following amendments: 3) second "27th September" corrected to "1st November" 5) <i>Recycling Site</i> - "likely" amended to "unlikely" 8) second "general" substituted with "for" 9) "attide" corrected to "attitude" 12a) and b) "attende" corrected to "attender" All in favour. Cllr Burns duly signed the Minutes.</p>	
3.	<p>Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November</p> <p>3a) Cllr Bearman confirmed that he had had no response from John Robertson, the Highways Representative. Carried forward. 7) Cllr Burns had not been able to attend the Government White Paper Conference. 9) Clerk confirmed that she was chasing up SNC regarding the potential TPO on Church Street.</p>	<p>Cllr Bearman</p> <p>Clerk</p>
4.	<p>Open Forum</p> <p>The following points were raised by members of the public:</p> <p><i>Poor condition of the footpath opposite Church Street:</i> Cllr Bearman confirmed that Margaret Andrews from SNC had previously inspected the area and found it to be acceptable. This was not felt to be satisfactory especially with issues regarding liability should an accident occur. Cllr Bearman agreed to draft a letter for Clerk to follow up to be sent to Cllr Brookman. This would also reference the state of the path at the bottom of Wappenham Road prior to the bridge.</p> <p><i>Poor condition of Church Street, Falcutt:</i> – the verges are very muddy. Lower down the road building work has caused damage to the footpaths and verges and the road is dangerous due to pumping of water on to it.</p> <p><i>Fence repairs to the playground:</i> noted that these were outstanding.</p> <p><i>Incident at The Square involving a delivery lorry and resident's car:</i> Clerk to acknowledge</p>	<p>Cllr Bearman</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>

letter received from the Gulliver family.

HPPMG – query regarding funding and expenditure. Cllr Moody confirmed that no funding was received from the Parish Council; the School had been used for the consultation rather than the Reading Room as this was not one of the amenities being considered and parking was easier.

Parish Paths Warden – commented on good support and progress.

A request for details of the Budget 2007-8 to be discussed under “Open Forum” was turned down by Council.

5. Finance

a) To receive the financial statement

Cash & Investments	
Current Account (Coop)	20825.50
To Be Presented	5.00
Deposit Account (closed)	0.00
Nottingham Bond	500.00
Total	21,330.50

b) Bills for Payment

Cllr Brookhouse declared an interest in the Brackley Cottage Hospital donation.

Accounts Payable		Cheque
Brackley Cottage Hospital - donation	1000.00	500005
ABB	110.92	500006
Village of the Year	15.00	500007
NALC – training day for clerks	65.00	500008
Clerk’s Wages (Nov and Dec)	337.38	500009
Clerk’s expenses (stationery and phone calls)	22.36	500009
Churchyard of the Year (The Wildlife Trust)	5.00	500010
Total	1555.66	

c) **Payments Received**

Accounts Received	
Yorkshire Bank – cheque for closure of account – pd into Coop	8228.15
Interest (Coop)	15.24
Allotment key deposit – receipt no A/002 Helen Cook	5.00
Total	8248.39

Cllr Earl proposed, seconded by Cllr Moody, that Council accept the financial statement, bills for payment and payments received as a true and accurate record. All in favour.

d) **Grass cutting and fencing tenders**

The grass cutting tenders were opened and read out; Cllr Moody proposed, seconded by Cllr Earl, that the tender of £740 by C+E be accepted. All in favour. Clerk to write to all companies which had tendered.

Clerk

Clerk reported that she required more details from Cllr Bearman regarding the fencing tenders; these would be presented at the March meeting.

Cllr Bearman

e) **£125 prize money from Village of the Year**

Cllr Moody reported that an honours board would cost £345 with the possibility of further discount. Cllr Earl suggested more dog fouling bins/signage would be useful. Cllr Burns raised the possibility of replacing some/all of the notice boards. It was mooted that HYHO may consider donating additional funding to facilitate this. Cllr England proposed, seconded by Cllr Moody, that we wait to see if funding can be agreed. 6 in favour, 1 abstention.

f) **Agreement of budget and precept proposals for 2007-8**

Cllr Brookhouse declared an interest in the Brackley Cottage Hospital donation – line 501 of the budget. Cllr Smith queried the wisdom of continued support; payments are to be split into 4 donations of £250 in case of closure.

Clerk

Council considered the summary paper submitted by the Clerk (Appendix A).

Cllr Burns highlighted that the exceptional expense of the election meant that the budget was in excess of £10 000 (£10 775). Cllr Bearman, seconded by Cllr Smith that the budget of £10 775 be adopted but that £1000 of its cost be absorbed by the monies available at the end of March 2007 to give a precept of £9775. 7 abstentions; motion carried.

6 **Correspondence**

Listed separately: Appendix B.

Letter from Helmdon Primary School regarding comments made by Cllr Brookhouse referring to Mrs Sue Blackburn. Clerk confirmed that there was no record in the Minutes. Cllr Brookhouse felt that any comments he had made were referred to out of context; his primary concerns had been and continued to be the improvement of the safety aspects of the school by erecting a secure fence around it. Clerk was actioned to respond to the school.

Clerk

Myriad Contracts – details passed to Cllr Earl.

Wildlife Training sessions – details passed to Cllr Moody for HAFWEG.

Letters to Clerk from Cllr Burns – Cllr Burns explained that his email was not working and so he had written to the Clerk regarding his wish to expand on the recycling statement (see 7).

7 Recycling Plant Statement

Cllr Burns read out the following statement:

“Following a number of complaints, including involving the Clerk of the Parish Council, Cllrs Brookhouse and Burns visited the site to express the concerns of the parishioners. They were met by the lady manager and later joined by Douglas Humphrey who provided an email address for those concerns to send in their comments. On return home this was forwarded to the Helmdon website. Cllr Moody responded to this by suggesting that the message be altered and that the inference that Cllrs Brookhouse and Burns had been “entertained” and that their conduct might be viewed with suspicion by the public. Cllr Burns assured Cllr Moody that they had not been “entertained” nor did he believe that there would be public suspicion as both Councillors were well known and had many years’ service for the village and that you are elected for this type of action. As a result the website entry should go forward in its original state.”

Cllr Moody emphasised that attending such a meeting was in itself not the issue; Standing Orders stated that visits not agreed in advance by the Parish Council were in fact “unauthorised”. Cllr Burns maintained he was there as an individual; Cllr Moody pointed out that his response was as Webmaster of the Helmdon site. Cllr England highlighted the need for common sense to prevail; Cllr Moody responded that Cllrs cannot be seen to act unilaterally. Cllr Earl queried the distinction between a “visit” and an “inspection”. It was pointed out that some roles have tacit approval in advance to make visits, for example Highways Rep. Cllr Smith maintained that rules are there to be adhered to; if they are considered too constrictive then Council should consider reviewing and changing them.

8 Councillors’ Undertaking to Work within the Code of Conduct

Cllr Spendlove emphasised the importance of Councillors working within the Code of Conduct at all times, regardless of any health issues which may make this difficult. Specifically she highlighted the instance where the Chairman of the Planning Committee refused to leave the room whilst his own planning application was discussed. This was against the Code of Conduct and also put all other Councillors present in the same position as all were implicated. She felt it important that electors vote for candidates who will keep to their word as well as public-spirited men. Cllr Brookhouse commented that he felt serious allegations had been made and he wished to respond to members of the public and Councillors who had not been present. As recorded in the Minutes, he had declared an interest, handed over the Chair, declared that he would not speak and had withdrawn from the discussion. He had not left the room as he was in a great deal of pain and felt that this issue highlighted the stupidity of the Code of Conduct where common sense could not prevail.

9 Proposal that planning applications be received by the Clerk (as per Standing Order 71b)

Cllr Brookhouse confirmed that he was happy for this to take place; Cllr Moody proposed, seconded by Cllr Smith, that this should happen in future.

Clerk

10 Proposal that for planning and finance meetings, the Clerk, if available be present to take the Minutes

Clerk agreed to do so.

Clerk

11	<p>Village of the Year 2007</p> <p>a) It was suggested that Clerk fill out the application for the VoY and circulate to the Council prior to submission; Cllr Spendlove volunteered to pass on the cheque and form for the Churchyard competition to Will Adams. Cllr Burns proposed, seconded by Cllr Moody, that this be agreed. All in favour.</p>	Clerk/Cllr Spendlove
12	<p>School Playground update</p> <p>a) Lease Agreement Cllr Burns thanked the Clerk for her efforts in obtaining the document. Clerk was actioned to check whether our public liability insurance was for £5 million as required in the lease. Cllr Earl proposed, seconded by Cllr England, that legal opinion be sought by the Playground Committee before Council agreeing to the terms. All were in favour. Cllr Burns agreed to forward details to the Clerk with the Playground Committee reporting back to the March Meeting. Cllr Smith suggested reviewing the lease annually in future.</p>	Clerk Cllr Burns Cllr Bearman
b)	<p>Outstanding Repairs/Improvements Cllr Bearman confirmed that all outstanding repairs would be completed before the next meeting.</p>	Cllr Bearman
13	<p>Jenner's Piece – removal of lower branches of copper beech.</p> <p>Cllr Spendlove praised Peter Payne's work on keeping Jenner's Piece tidy but lamented the loss of some branches on the copper beech. Cllr Burns explained they had been removed due to safety concerns of the contractors when mowing the plot. Clerk was actioned to write to Peter Payne, thanking him for his work.</p>	Clerk
14	<p>To receive decisions of the Planning Committee on applications since 22nd November</p> <p>Application No: S/2006/1480/P - Land adjacent 27 Church Street Proposal: Single Detached, Garage Decision: Support (<i>Cllr Brookhouse had declared an interest in the above application</i>)</p> <p>Application No: S/2006/1497/P – 17 Church Street Proposal: Single and two storey extension Decision: Support</p> <p>Application No: S/2006/1578/P - Building adjacent to 48 Wappenham Road Proposal: Conversion of workshop to dwelling with attached garage Decision: Helmdon Parish Council strongly support this application as it clear up a site in the village</p> <p>Application No: S/2005/0900/P – 72 Wappenham Road Proposal: Amendment to windows and doors Decision: Amendment noted – application not considered as timescales over the Christmas period did not allow statutory notice timetable to be adhered to.</p> <p>Application No: S/2006/1296/P – land off Church Street Proposal: Amendment to plot 1 proposed French doors and rear door to garage Decision: Amendment noted</p> <p>Application No: S/2006/1183/P – Grange Farm Barn Proposal: Amendment to re-siting of garage Decision: Amendment noted</p>	

15	<p>Update on Local Government White Paper from NCC</p> <p>Clerk had circulated this prior to the meeting; Council awaits further details of the next conference.</p>	
16	<p>Consideration of Dog Control Orders from NCC</p> <p>Cllr Burns summarised the affected area and commented that DCOs are not enforceable by the Parish Council. Clerk was action to respond with no further proposals.</p>	Clerk
17	<p>Northants Police – request for funding for PSCOs</p> <p>Clerk was actioned to contact the Police for more details.</p>	Clerk
18	<p>Post Office Consultation Paper</p> <p>All Cllrs to submit answers to Clerk for collation by mid February.</p>	Clerk
19	<p>To consider actions required to ensure a contested election in May 2007</p> <p>Cllr Burns invited Richard Wray (Talkabout editor) to comment. Richard wishes to use Talkabout both to publicise the election and to encourage candidates to stand; he will contact SNC to ensure that no rules are contravened as the process must be fair and open to all and will report back to the Clerk.</p>	
20	<p>Allotments Update</p> <p>Cllr Watson reported that the Allotments Committee had considered how to divide up the workload regarding paperwork and enquiries. Clerk agreed to action all paperwork whilst the Committee dealt with any disputes.</p>	Clerk
21	<p>To form a Working Party to organise the Annual Parish Meeting</p> <p>Cllrs Burns and Spendlove will form this year’s Working Party.</p>	
22	<p>The condition of Church Street due to the ongoing building works</p> <p>Concern was raised by Cllr Smith due to the water on the road; Clerk to write to Groves to express concern and to speak to Planning Control.</p>	Clerk
23	<p>HPPMG – Village Amenity Consultation</p> <p>Cllr Burns commented that no “decision” had yet been made regarding whether the application would be made as it depended on trustee agreement; Cllr Moody to amend this prior to forwarding the report to Dave Bridger for submission. Cllr Moody confirmed to Cllr Spendlove that the report emphasised that parishioners do not view the Chapel as an amenity.</p>	Cllr Moody
24	<p>Risk Assessments</p> <p>Carried forward as Cllr Earl had accidentally submitted November’s report.</p>	Cllr Earl
25	<p>Notice Boards and Benches- Repair Schedule</p>	

26	Councillors' Questions Clerk was asked to request that Bernie Wadeson delay painting the boards until Council is informed whether HYHO wish to fund new ones. Repairs are to be completed regardless. Clerk to chase up NCC regarding the outstanding repair on gravel path.	Clerk Clerk
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The meeting closed at 10:15 p.m.

**The date of the next meeting is
Wednesday 28th March 2007**