



# HELMDON PARISH COUNCIL



## MINUTES

*Of a meeting of the Council held in the Reading Room, Helmdon,  
at 7.30pm on Wednesday 25 March 2015.*

**PRESENT** Cllrs Burns, Adhemar, Coatsworth, Garner, Moody, Valentine, England, Barnes, Duncombe.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Simon Loake (Clerk)

7 members of the public were also present

**1 ) APOLOGIES:** There were none.

**2) DECLARATIONS of INTEREST:** There were none.

**3) MINUTES:** It was proposed by Cllr Coatsworth, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Cllr England, and unanimously agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2015 were a true record of the meeting. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman

### **4) MATTERS ARISING:**

4.1 The Clerk reported that he had received assurance that the transfer of land in Station Road was in hand. SNH had hoped to pass this to their solicitors for the beginning of the new financial year, but they are handling this in conjunction with other parcels of land in other parishes.

4.2 The Clerk reported that he had contacted Western Power, who are to remove 12 power poles from the village because they are in poor condition, and three of these bear streetlamps. The Clerk is instructed to ascertain the cost implications of taking over these poles in their current condition, or replacing them with new poles. It was suggested that the "sinking fund" could be increased in future years to accommodate the cost of replacing the poles if necessary.

4.3 Cllr Moody reported that he had had further discussions with Helen Howard regarding the raised pedestrian crossing outside the school, , and the recommendation is to keep the crossing, and put pressure on the Highways Department to resurface it The Clerk is to write to NCC Highways on this matter.

**5) OPEN FORUM:** There was brief discussion concerning the planning application at South Farm, to which the Planning Committee had raised objections, considering the proposed design inappropriate as a farm-worker's dwelling. A member of the public commented that South Farm is a working Farm. The Chairman stated that a building of the size specified is considered inappropriate.

### **6) FINANCE**

**6.1** Finance Report: The Clerk presented the Finance Report, showing a balance of funds at £8356.94. A copy of the report is attached to the file copy of these minutes.

**6.2** It was noted that there have been no receipts

**6.3:** Payments: It was proposed by Cllr Moody, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cllr Garner, and agreed that the payments listed by the Clerk be approved, and the cheques were duly signed

**6.4:** The Clerk reported that the grant for drainage at the primary school has now been approved by SNC. The grant is given in the name of the Parish Council, and the Clerk is to discuss the treatment of this with Liz Hart, who has administered the application.

**6.5** The Clerk confirmed that the on-line bank account would be operational for the new financial year.

**7) REVIEW of CORRESPONDENCE:** The Clerk presented a list of the correspondence that had been received and sent. A copy of the list is attached to the file copy of these minutes. In particular, the Clerk drew attention to the correspondence stating that the proposed railway development has been abandoned, the school drainage grant application has been successful, and the new SNC offices are to open soon, bringing an increase in parking difficulties in the centre of Towcester.

**8: PLANNING:** Cllr Coatsworth reported on the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 17 March 2015, at which no objections had been raised to the extension to an existing cattle housing, but objections were raised to the proposal to construct a four bed house. Apart from the proposal being inappropriate, it was considered that the land drainage in the area presents a flood risk, and the sewage capacity needs to be confirmed. In addition, the proposed dwelling would be outside of the line of the village.

**9) REPORT Re GRANGE LANE:** The Chairman gave a resume of the history of this, and stated that a meeting is now scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> April with Bulkhead and Anglian Water, and the Chairman will be meeting with Anglian Water after his return from holiday, so now all relevant parties are talking to each other. The Chairman is to write to Timms and Bullard to notify them of the progress.

**10) FOOTPATH ISSUES:** The Footpath Warden stated that in the past Helmdon PC had received greater support from NCC than many, but recently the resources and support had been declining, with no likelihood of improvement. The Warden scheme had previously been covered by NCC insurance, but this is no longer the case. It is considered unacceptable if volunteers working to maintain footpaths are no longer to be covered by this insurance, and unacceptable that there had been no official notification of this from NCC. The Clerk is to contact the PC's insurers to see if this is covered under the existing insurance arrangements.

**11 HIGHWEAYS ISSUES:** The raised crossing by the school had already been discussed under point 4.3, and there were no further issues.

**12: REPORT FROM PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE:** No comments

**13: ALLOTMENTS:** There is still an issue with rats in the vicinity of the plots where poultry is kept, and steps should be taken to encourage poultry keepers to address this problem. In general the plots are in good condition, except plots 1,3,7 and 8. Plot 1 is currently vacant, and the Clerk is to ascertain if the holders of plot 7 wish to continue their tenure.

**14 PARISH PLAN GROUP:** Cllr Coatsworth reported on discussions about access to the pump garden, and suggested that the Council should fund the completion of drawings by Clare Nash, and that the funding for the work should be taken from the New Housing Bonus Grant. It was proposed by Cllr Garner, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Cllr Duncombe and unanimously agreed to proceed with this proposal as soon as possible

**15 READING ROOM COMMITTEE:** There were no comments

**16 SCHOOL LIAISON COUNCILLORS:** Cllrs Adhemar and Moody had attended the school and presented the awards to the winners of the poster competition. The trophy is to be presented annually to the Young Citizen of the Year. There is a need to arrange further activities next term. The winning poster is to be printed and circulated around the village with The Voice.

**17 TRANSPARENCY CODE FOR SMALLER AUTHORITIES:** Cllr Moody stated that the website is already publishing most of the required information. The Clerk stated that he would prepare a suitable spreadsheet for the required financial information, and would modify the format of the minutes to include details of payments. The requirements come into force with effect from 15 April 2015. Cllr Moody pointed out that if the School Drainage Grant comes to the Parish Council, then the requirements will not apply as the turnover will be above the £25k limit.

**18: FORTHCOMING PARISH ELECTION** The Clerk explained the nomination procedure, and stated that, because the nomination period was so short and included the Easter weekend, it may be difficult for some candidates to deliver their nomination papers in person. The Clerk would arrange to deliver papers on behalf of candidates if required.

**19 GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY POLICY** The Clerk presented a draft document. It was proposed by Cllr Moody, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cllr Coatsworth, and agreed, that the policies be adopted by the Parish Council

**20: LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME:** The Clerk confirmed that the Council was registered at Foundation Level. The Chairman stated that it would be up to the new council, shortly to be elected, to decide whether or not to apply for higher status.

**21 ANNUASL PARISH MEETING:** The arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting were confirmed. The Clerk will invite SNC Councillor Rigby, NCC Councillor Morris, and will endeavour to obtain a report from the police, although as there is no longer a PCSO for the area following the departure of Clive Ashmore,, this may not be forthcoming

**22: COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS:** There were none

**23: CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS:** The Chairman stated that, after two decades on the Parish Council, he would not be standing for re-election. He thanked all those who had served on the current Parish Council for their hard work. During his time he had encountered many challenges, (including such things as flooding and wind-farm proposals) and had won the Best Village Competition in both 2011 and 2014. Although he had very much enjoyed his career as a Parish Councillor, he felt it was time for him to retire, and he extended good wishes to the incoming Parish Council.

Councillor Adhemar proposed a vote of thanks, stating what an excellent Chairman Cllr Burns had been for many years, and his hard work and support on behalf of the village had been exemplary. The Parish Council and members of the public were unanimous in their thanks to the Chairman for his long service.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.17pm