

## HELMDON PARISH COUNCIL

### Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Helmdon Parish Council held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2014 in the Reading Room, Church Street, Helmdon at 7:30 p.m.

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

members of the public were present.

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Election of Chairman for 2014/15</b></p> <p>Cllr Coatsworth proposed, seconded by Cllr Adhemar that Cllr Burns be nominated for Chairman. All were in favour and Cllr Burns was duly elected Chairman.</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 England had sent apologies due illness; these were accepted by the meeting.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Election of Vice Chairman for 2014/15</b></p> <p>Cllr Barnes proposed, seconded by Cllr Garner that Cllr Coatsworth be nominated for the position of Vice Chair. All were in favour and Cllr Coatsworth was duly elected Vice Chairman.</p>	
<b>5</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 2014/15 was resolved as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Finance:</b> Cllrs Burns, Barnes, Garner, Coatsworth, Moody (and RFO) The elected Chairman to act as Internal Control Councillor</li> <li>b) <b>Planning:</b> Cllrs Burns, Coatsworth, Duncombe, Garner, Adhemar</li> <li>c) <b>Road Safety:</b> Cllrs Duncombe, England, Garner</li> <li>d) <b>Playground:</b> Cllrs Garner, Adhemar, Duncombe</li> <li>e) <b>Allotment:</b> Cllrs Moody, Coatsworth, Adhemar, Garner</li> <li>f) <b>Wind Farm :</b> Cllr Coatsworth, Burns</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 Adhemar 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
- 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 –Phillip Ward.

The Clerk will inform the Primary School of the appointment of Cllrs Adhemar 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 – Cllr Burns** informed the meeting that the Finance Committee had met recently and would present their recommendations to the next meeting.
- b) **Planning – Cllr Burns** commented that there were no outstanding issues and of the many applications reviewed during the year, there was one which was out of the ordinary for which support had been sought and received from the District Councillor to enable it to be called in to Committee..
- c) **Road Safety – Cllr Moody** reported as Highways Representative: I attended an induction session run by MGWSP in January and was given the appropriate contact details for the Area Team and the MGWSP office staff. I have inspected the majority of the road network on a weekly basis and I am keeping an eye on several developing potholes, notably on the road out of the village between the church and Falcutt cottages. I have reported two defects via Street Doctor:
  - The multiple potholes just past the Astwell turn on Wappenham Road, which appeared during the winter and are getting steadily worse because of water run-off. This is earmarked for attention and I am expecting work to commence soon.
  - The blocked gully between Jeffs bridge and the War Memorial. MGWSP attended on the day of report and put up “Flood” signs but nothing has happened since. I have contacted Helen Howard at MGWSP to chase it up and she said she would do some digging.

The road and footway network in the parish is generally in very good condition. Any defects can be reported to highwaywarden@helmdon.com or direct to Street Doctor ([www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/highways](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/highways)).

Cllr England reported as Road Safety Committee member: The big issue in the village is speeding. This was raised as an issue at the April Parish meeting and although the Police representative said he would look into the details of the Speedwatch scheme and report back, no response has yet been forthcoming. This is disappointing particularly as there were volunteers to be trained on the equipment.
- d) **Playground – Cllr Garner** noted that the issues raised in the RoSPA report had been addressed with the biggest issue being the replacement of the slide steps. An inspection of the work done had highlighted an issue with an exposed concrete post base which the Clerk was asked to report to the contractors.
- e) **Allotments – Cllr Coatsworth** commented that all plots were let and a recent visit had revealed no neglected plots. The presence of rats had been highlighted as an issue

and open food in sheds was felt to be a contributory factor.

- f) **Helmdon Parish Plan – Cllr Moody** reported: The HPPG met three times during the council year. The focus continues to be on the FiSH Project (superfast broadband), the Helmdon to Brackley cycle path and the Core Strategy and Local Plan for South Northamptonshire. All aspects are progressing slowly but surely. Superfast broadband from BT is expected in the village by the late summer and will be available to all. The cycle path to Brackley continues to progress at two steps forward, one step back, although recent developments linked to HS2 mitigation measures look very promising. In January 2014 the HPPG responded to SNC's consultation on the Local Plan (details on SNC web site). An action remaining from the Parish Plan Refresh was to establish a Wildlife & Environment Group, and this has now been achieved on an informal, ad hoc basis by forming links with the Brackley & District Wildlife Group. An interesting moth-trapping evening was held in the autumn. Further talks and activities are planned.
- g) **Parish Paths Warden - Roger Miles** reported: My role is to monitor and where possible to improve the accessibility of the 44 paths that provide some 31 kilometres of public footpaths and bridleways within the Parish. I liaise with the Rights of Way officers at Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) on behalf of the Parish and respond to queries from residents. The RoW team at NCC was reduced and relocated during 2013 but they have continued to be helpful, for example in advising landowners of their responsibilities when issues have arisen, particularly about temporary electric fencing for sheep pastures. An enforcement order was made for one path.

NCC installed some new gates and bridges, including a set on path AP18 as a result of a complaint from a walking group who had visited this area. Since AP18 is rarely walked by local people, I used this example to urge that our outstanding requests for other works on popular paths should be given priority. As anticipated in last year's report, the discretionary public access to some fields near Allithorne Wood under the Countryside Stewardship scheme has expired. The current landowners were not willing to consider making a new agreement to continue this benefit to the community. However, the new owners of the land that includes the old railway viaduct have sought my advice on how informal public access to the track across the viaduct might be continued under a permissive path agreement. They have also drained a problem area on path AP14, and NCC will be installing a kissing gate nearby. During the year a gate funded by the HYHOs was installed on AP28 and volunteers continued to help with various path maintenance and improvement tasks; some steps were made on AP23, several stiles repaired and hardcore was added to a wet path (AP29).

#### Paths Group

My monitoring work is very greatly assisted by the active Paths Group, chaired by Cllr Mike Barnes, which developed from the Parish Plan. The Paths Group's practical work has continued to include maintaining our three permissive paths which are well used. The village footpaths map was reprinted last year and is freely available together with the four leaflets describing attractive circular walks around Helmdon. They are particularly appreciated by new residents. Two more circular walk leaflets are being prepared.

#### Health Walks

The Ramblers Association and Macmillan Cancer Support sponsor the national Walking for Health 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 cancelled for bad weather. It is pleasing to report that more Helmdon residents have joined the 15 - 20 regular walkers this year.

Several landowners kindly assist the planning of varied routes for these walks by very generously allowing diversions from the official paths for these led groups to complete circular routes.

The longer summer evening walks will start on Monday 9th June and continue until 11th August. It is hoped that one or two volunteers will come forward to train as walk leaders so that more walks can be organized.

### Spring Ridge Windfarm

The increased popularity of our Health Walks and the continued good usage of our paths were the basis of my evidence at the new inquiry in October 2013. I accompanied the Inspector on his formal site visit, which included walking several of the paths where there would be a significant loss of public amenity.

Cllr Burns thanked Roger for all his hard work, particularly relating to evidence for the Windfarm appeal.

- h) **Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr England** reported that in the period Dec 2013 – end of January 2014 there were 7 reports of main crimes received, 4 relating to Helmdon. There were no reports of antisocial behaviour. The police continue to concentrate on burglary as a priority, issuing tips for preventing crime.
- i) **School Liaison** – it was hoped to have a meeting with the new Headteacher in September.
- j) **Reading Room – Cllr England** reported that the Reading Room continued to be a popular venue with little evening availability and many daytime bookings being made as well. The AGM was booked for 19<sup>th</sup> June and the issue of damp in the cottage would be discussed. Councillors were asked to submit any items for consideration by Mnday 19<sup>th</sup> June.
- k) **Tree Warden - Phillip Ward** reported: the main works undertaken were the maintenance of the Jubilee Wood; most trees were flourishing although mowing is an issue. A new sign funded by the Parish Council had been erected. The tree on Station Road which had been removed due to honey fungus being present had been replaced by a private individual with a suitable species (black walnut). It was noted that the fungus was still present in the area. Cllr Coatsworth queried the liability relating to the new tree.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm.