

MINUTES

MEETING OF HELMDON CHURCH COUNCIL ON TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 7:15 PM IN HELMDON CHURCH

Attendees: Cliff Netten (Chair), Revd Hugh White, Ann Netten, Bill Elkington, Judith Elkington, Fiona Mason, Rebecca Mount (from 19.45), Jenny Saunders, Wiggy Smith, Paul Stothard, Nikki Phillips, Vanessa Vicars.

Apologies: Penny Bonner

	Action
CN opened the meeting with prayer	
1. Minutes of previous meeting (2 July) and Matters Arising • The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July were approved. • CN confirmed that the Raffle tickets would be available for sale from the Race Night. • A Santa has been secured for the Christmas Fair • NP asked about the state of the electrics and the ambition to install Infra-Red Halo heating systems. CN Confirmed that Gilberts would be including a survey of the church electrics when they attend the church on Tuesday 15th September to fix a fault. • NP asked if a thank you had been sent to Eileen for the artwork. Confirmed that a thank you would be sent once the item(s) have been out into the church CN confirmed that one of the nativity sets could be disposed of as part of the church de-cluttering.	CN
2. Finance • Report had been issued in advance of the meeting. • £500n had been received from Helmdon PC for graveyard. • AN shared projections of HCC Benefice Share which suggested a shortfall of c£4k. Some discussion about possible actions but there would seem to be little more that can be done to close the gap at this stage. • HW/AN mentioned the Cornerstone teaching on generosity. There is an event at ST Peters, Brackley on Tuesday 22nd. CN and HW to attend.	CN/HW
3. Fundraising	
12 September Race Night and raffle • 5.30 set-up at the Reading Room • PRS to buy drink and review pricing • PRS and Helen Overson to run the bar • Fiona/Wiggy to run Tote • Bill to do the paying out • Ann to provide float	

• Vanessa/Ann to do the door. • Vanessa providing nibbles • Bill asked for more owners and riders	
28 November Christmas Fair • Will run from 2pm to 4pm. • Need to publicise a timetable. Ensure that there is a specific time slot for Santa. • Approach Brian Marshal to “do a turn” • Plant Stall. (Fiona) • Xmas Decorations (Wiggy) • Cloakroom tickets Raffle (Nikki) • Bottle stall/Tombola (Cliff/Ann) • Cake stall • Children’s games (Rebecca) • Jenny to do her usual stall No Bric-a-brac CN would convene a small sub-Committee to develop practical arrangements including advance publicity.	Ann Cliff
4. Faculty Application and DAC • Cliff introduced the item and referred to the report circulated by PS. • After some discussion it was agreed to proceed as recommended by PS in his report. • Fiona will enquire of David if he can give an indication of the cost of disposal of the organ. • It was noted that a separate faculty would be prepared for the electric works once we had received advice from Gilberts.	
5. Church de-cluttering on 5 September: what was achieved? • Council thanked Cliff, Vanessa and Paul for their hard work. • Council approved the cost of c £350-£450 for the disposal of the chairs and other bulk items. • Council approved the purchase of a movable bookcase for the children’s area. • Katherine House in Brackley had expressed an interest in taking some crockery, glass and cutlery. • It was decided that the cleaning of the church should be delayed until the current electric issues had been resolved.	
6. Safeguarding update • Fiona stated that PS would be taking on more responsibility in the short term to get training and DBS checks up to date. • Some debate about the need for the training. PRS reinforced the importance of doing the training, clarified the implications on	

Council membership of not completing the training and reiterated the offer from both him and Fiona to support anyone having practical difficulties in completing the training. • DBS checks are to follow	
7. Benefice Children's Young People and Families Worker • HW updated the meeting on progress and the formation of a committee to look at feasibility, funding and role description. • The Committee will be meeting with the Diocesan advisor in due course. • HW invited PS to be a member of the Committee.	PS
8. Future pattern of services at Helmdon within any revisions to Benefice approach • HW confirmed that this was being reviewed by BPCC.	
9. Church Fire Safety Policy • The Policy circulated in advance of the meeting and attached to these minutes was approved.	
• Any Other Business: • Bill informed the meeting that they had sold their house and plan to have moved to Brackley in November. • RM asked about Harvest. Confirmed that the Saturday afternoon event should be going ahead but date to be communicated • Some discussion about whether to also have a Harvest Festival service on Sunday. FM is a keen advocate for this • HW enquired if there was any appetite for a Midnight Mass service at Christmas. It was agreed that this service should be dropped from the schedule. • NP asked if the volunteers who looked after the churchyard were being thanked. Need to check with Danny Moody	PS HW HW Vanessa
10. Dates of Next Meetings • 20th October 2026	

ANNEX

HELMDON CHURCH FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY 2026

Fire Risk Assessment

<u>Identified Risks</u>	<u>Rating – 1 is low; 3 high</u>
<u>Furniture being mainly wood and wood with fabric</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Building fabric mainly stone, with wooden ceiling.</u>	<u>1 (stone)</u>
<u>Wooden wall to vestry entry from nave; wooden screen to belfry.</u> <u>Wooden pews and desks in chancel area; wooden main altar and Lady Chapel altar;</u> <u>Wooden stairs to bell ringing chamber with wood and glass window into nave; wooden floors and access to upper tower areas</u>	<u>2 woodwork</u>
<u>Wooden kitchen units and storage cupboards</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Electrical circuits and switchboards</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Oil burner in toilet area on south side of building</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Oil tank in churchyard to south west corner</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Church candles</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Evacuation routes</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Clutter in the choir robing area and vestry</u>	<u>3</u>

Risk management policy

- a. Improve routes to main exit points from building. Keep vestry door open during service and events to provide another route towards main door. Open exterior door in north east corner in emergency and ensure it can be used by choir/performers**
- b. Clarify verbal briefings given before services and events, so that as well as exit points, fire assembly point is announced as near the main churchyard gate.**
- c. In the event of fire, sidespersons should make a head count at the assembly point and compare with pre-service or event head count. This so that emergency services can be told of anyone possibly still in the building.**
- d. Nobody to go home until express permission has been given by churchwardens or service/event leader following the head count**
- e. Electrics inspected as part of the Quinquennial Review**
- f. Appliances to be PAT tested annually**
- g. Oil burner to be tested and serviced annually**
- h. Fire extinguishers to be tested annually**
- i. All lights switched off when building is not in use**
- j. Candles and oil lamps to be lit ONLY for duration of services. No candles to be used by members of the congregation except tea lights in glass pots**
- k. De-clutter the building and shed regularly**
- l. Keep radiators clear of flammable material, especially tea towels in kitchen area before people leave church**
- m. When any pews are removed from church, replacement chairs not to have fabric seat covers**
- n. Jigsaws table – move forward from the wall to improve airflow from radiator**
- o. CHURCHWARDENS TO REVIEW FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT EACH YEAR AND REPORT TO CHURCH COUNCIL THAT THEY HAVE DONE SO**

