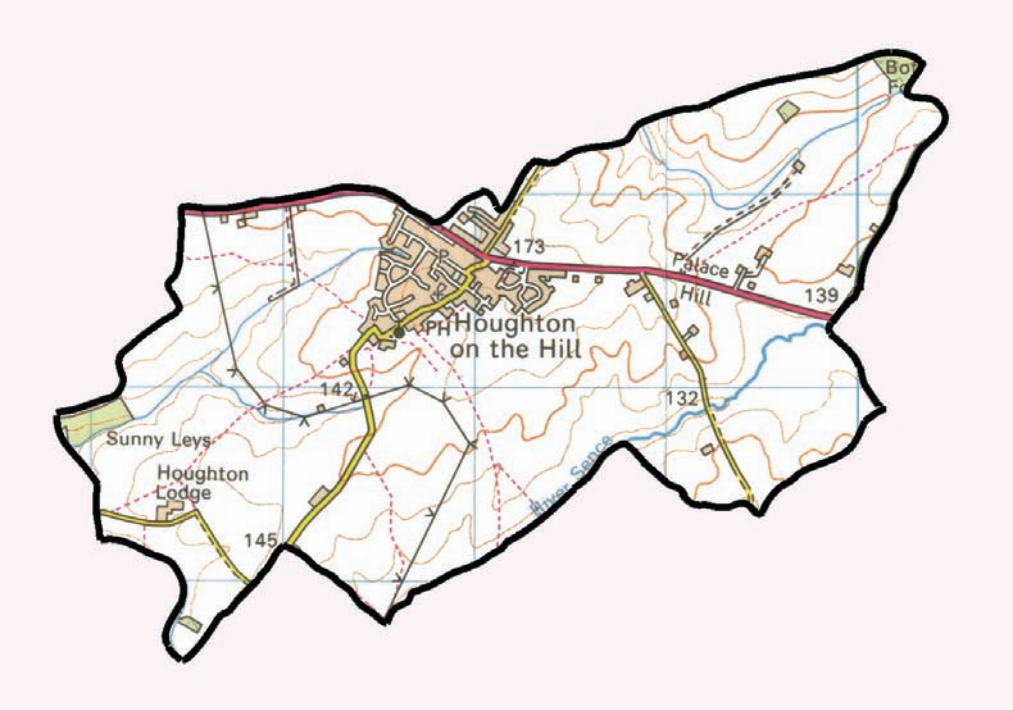
Houghton-on-the-Hill

Parish Plan



Prepared 2004

The Countryside Agency

Houghton-on-the-Hill
Parish Plan
Steering Group

Houghton-on-the-Hill Parish Plan

Contents

Houghton-on-the-Hill Parish Plan

1. Introduction to the Parish Plan

1.1 What is a Parish Plan? A Parish Plan is a statement, produced in consultation with the Parish Council, and all the village community, that records the way in which the community would like to see the parish develop. It includes comment on features and facilities which people would wish to be preserved, and those which should be modified plus potential developments which might be encouraged and those which would be received less favourably. Recommendations are formulated reflecting the views of the parishioners.

The Parish Plan has set out, in the Village Design Statement, the features, characteristics and formation of the village and the criteria which should be applied when considering proposals to change them. The Parish Plan Steering Group in concert with the Parish Council will seek to have these adopted as supplementary planning guidance by Harborough District Council.

A Parish Plan can also facilitate access to funding support for community projects.

2. Executive Summary

The Parish Plan was produced by a Steering Group comprising a group of volunteers from the community, including a representative of the Parish Council.

2.1 Communication and Consultation. Communication with parishioners was primarily via the monthly village magazine "Houghton News". With a circulation approaching 500, a large proportion of households in the parish receive this publication on a regular basis. Steering Group members also played a key role by passing on information to friends and neighbours, and reporting informally to the Parish Council. Consultation included: -

1. A written invitation to all businesses, clubs and societies in the village to submit questions that they would like to have considered for inclusion in the main questionnaire.
2. An open invitation (via Houghton News) to everyone in the parish to join the Steering Group and contribute to the Parish Plan process.
3. A Parish Plan exhibition held in the Village Hall on 6th September 2003. The objectives being:-
   a) to acquaint people with the aims of the Parish Plan.
   b) to demonstrate the activities and progress of the Steering Group.
   c) to prepare parishioners for the task of completing the questionnaire so that when it was received it would be viewed more objectively and enthusiastically within the overall context of the Plan and the objectives of the Steering Group.
4. A pilot questionnaire to a sample of parishioners to test for ease of understanding, and appropriateness of content.
5. A detailed questionnaire delivered to every household during October 2003 (which included an invitation to ask for more if required).
6. A shorter questionnaire inviting young people in the village to submit their views separately.

This document summarises the views of the residents as reported via the consultation processes.

The Village Hall Exhibition was visited by 150 people, and a total of 342 completed questionnaires were returned from the just over 600 delivered; i.e. almost 60% of households responded. Not every question was answered by every respondent, indeed some questions were not relevant to some households. In addition to the pure statistical analysis, respondents had the opportunity, for some topics, to provide their own comments. Those comments have also been analysed and the results incorporated with the rest of the data.

2.2 Identified Action Areas

From the results of the consultations conducted for the plan, some 31 issues have been identified as suitable to be pursued.

The plan is owned by the Parish Council. The council will recommend acting upon an issue and seek a group(s) of volunteers to support them. The group(s) will take over from the Parish Plan Steering Group and will continue to receive support from the Rural Community Council in respect of the aims of the Plan.

Details of the identified action areas, how they may be pursued and who might be involved are set out in section 6.

Roads. A study to determine how the problems identified with the A47 through the village may be alleviated by permanent speed cameras, flashing speed signals or a light controlled crossing. Also improvements to be sought for wheelchair and pushchair users, and to reduce roadside and overhead wiring clutter.

Transport. Acknowledging the uncertainty about the future of a scheduled bus service into the heart of the village, to seek to enhance transport for access to healthcare and to meet expressed community requirements especially to other popular destinations.

Village Facilities. To pursue opportunities raised by having a Parish Plan to access funding to support local societies and interest groups. Funding opportunities will also be accessed for different amenities, such as those associated with the Weir Lane Playing Field, which could become designated as defined important open land under the Harborough District Local Plan.
Also to review litter bins, re-cycling facilities and the number of seats available for public use.

Crime. Although crime is not a major issue for the village, there is interest in meeting with the local police and re-vitalising the 'Neighbourhood Watch' scheme.

Field footpaths. Walking is popular but in general the field footpaths are not well maintained. Means to improve these will be explored especially relating to stiles.

Metalled footpaths. There is concern about the state and lighting of the various passages through the village and these are to be looked into. Also the possibility of a cycleway along the A47 is to be pursued.

Heritage. To promote and focus the interest that already exists in the natural history of the parish and surroundings. To seek to protect the heritage of the village through the planning process. See under Housing and Development below.

Housing and Development. To progress adoption by the Harborough District Council of the Village Design Statement (VDS) as supplementary planning guidance in order that the views of parishioners, as expressed in the consultation process, are taken into consideration when planning applications are reviewed. The VDS is section 3 of the Parish Plan and sets out factors particular to Houghton for consideration, in addition to the usual criteria when evaluating planning applications

Wildlife conservation. Although not included in the survey, the consultation has revealed an interest in this subject. A local interest group might be established to promote interest in, and pursue issues related to, local wildlife.

Communication.

General. Despite having an excellent village magazine, the survey revealed that some people in Houghton are not aware of activities and events already available. This will be discussed with the relevant interest groups.

Website. There is interest in a village web site which can be pursued with external support

Broadband. There is also considerable interest in broadband communication for the village. Although this is now nominally available on demand not all are finding installation of it straightforward. The intention is to explore the formation of a mutual interest and support group.

Computing. To pursue interest in making available guidance on the use of computers, possibly linked to having a publicly available computing facility in the village

Caring. This proved to be an issue for carers as well as those requiring care. It is intended to initiate some work to ensure that all channels of assistance are identified and accessed.

Childcare. Before / after school care for young children, and the provision of holiday care, are issues to be followed up.

Young people. Explore Youth Worker led activities for young people, investigate the provision of local study support, and investigate problems with school transport reported via the consultation process.

It should be noted that a number of the issues raised by residents, and reported in this plan, were already under consideration by the Parish Council. The results from the consultation process add weight to the importance of addressing these.

2.3 Acknowledgements

The Parish Plan Steering Group acknowledges the assistance provided by:-

The Countryside Agency for their funding of the project

Diana Cook and Julie Nottingham of the Rural Community Council

Susan Garbutt and Ryan Dawson of Harborough District Council

Leicestershire County Council for providing statistical data

Houghton Parish Council members, past and present, for their support of the project

and the many people who have assisted with the production of the Parish Plan either as a member of the Steering Group or as a helper.

3. Houghton Village Design Statement (VDS)

3.1 Background

3.1.1 Brief history. The village of Houghton-on-the-Hill lies some 7 miles east of the centre of Leicester, straddling the A47. It is part of Harborough District. Built on a high ridge formed of sand and gravel on top of Leicestershire clay, the original village followed the line of the ridge running in a south-westerly direction, using the many local springs as a water source. In 1086 the population of "Hohton" was reported as 10, but the village rapidly developed until in the 19th century it became a prosperous community with 3 Public houses, 2 bakers, 2 butchers, 2 tailors and 2 wheelwrights. The Main Street contains many 17th, 18th and 19th century houses. In 1911 the population was 271 (somewhat less than it had been in previous decades). Development along the A47, and elsewhere, then began to significantly extend the housing stock and, from having 662 inhabitants in 1951 the village grew rapidly, until by the time of the 2001 census there were 1548 people occupying 606 dwellings.

3.1.2 Facilities within Houghton. On the A47 are two petrol stations, a fish and chip shop and a Public House (The Rose and Crown), all located close to the junction with Main Street. Near to the petrol stations are a number of vehicle repair businesses, and a car sales business. On Main Street itself is the Village Store (Co-op), a chemist's, and the second Public House (The Old Black Horse). A combined Post Office / Newsagents, and a hairdressing salon, are situated on St Catharine's Way.

Places of worship are St. Catharine's Anglican Church and a Methodist Chapel, both on Main Street.

Indoor community activities are served by the Village Hall, the Sports Pavilion on the Weir Lane Playing Field, and a Meeting Room attached to the Methodist Chapel. The local village primary school is used for community activities in the evening.

Sports enthusiasts can use the main Weir Lane Playing Field for soccer and for tennis (3 courts, 1 floodlit). The Houghton Bowls Club has its green adjacent to the Village Hall, and the village Cricket Club its own grounds, with pavilion, on the southern boundary of the village along Stretton Lane.

Smaller children are catered for by a purpose built fenced-off play area with swings on the Weir Lane Playing Field. Young people can play on the Weir Lane field, the field adjacent to the Village Hall, a green

area on St Catharine's Way near to Freer Close (St Catharine's Green), and a smaller one just off St Catharine's Way accessed from a footpath near to the Post Office.

Parish Notice Boards are located on Main Street outside the Village Store (Co-Op), on Linwal Avenue, and on Uppingham Road near to Home Close Road.

As well as the facilities recorded above there is a wealth of interest groups, societies and sporting clubs in the Parish. These can mostly be identified in the Houghton News and the Village Directory. Scouting and Guiding are also available. The value of the contribution made by the people who organise and run these groups cannot be commended too highly.

Overall the village is well served by the existing facilities, though as in any community some residents with particular interests might welcome other facilities. Worthy of mention is the Village Hall, the largest meeting room for the community, with a seating capacity of 200 theatre-style, and only 100 seated at tables, serving a population of 1548 (2001 census). Being only some 16 metres by 8 metres, with height restricted by structural steel work to between 2.4 and 3.3 metres, the main hall is not adequate for indoor sports. No other facility for indoor sports exists in the village.

3.2 Introduction

The Village Design Statement within the Houghton Parish Plan sets out to provide detailed supplementary planning guidance for those contemplating developments, to ensure that any such developments are carried out in a way that sustains the existing character and essential features of the village. This guidance will be relevant to developments both within, and beyond the current Limits to Development so embracing the established village and the immediate surrounding areas. It is supplementary to the policies contained within the current adopted Local Plan 1991 –2006. The following Policies will be relevant:-

- EV /1 Safeguard and enhance the environment
- EV /2 Green Wedges
- EV /3 Separation of settlements (reference will be made to this Policy although Houghton is not specifically mentioned in it)
- EV /5 Development in the Countryside
- EV /11, EV /12, EV /13 Conservation Areas
- HS /7 Settlement Character
- HS /8 Limits to Development
- HS /9 Important Open Land
- LR /2 and LR /3 Leisure, Recreation and Sporting Facilities

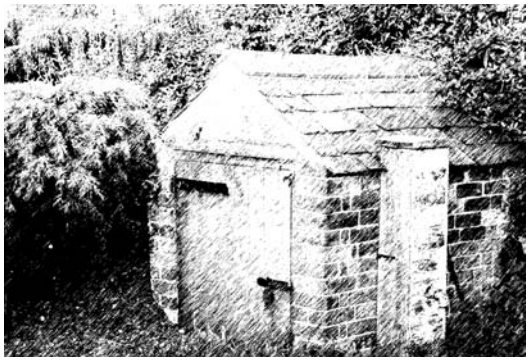
3.3 Rural Character

Setting. Although only some 7 miles from the centre of the City of Leicester, Houghton is the first settlement when travelling east that has managed to retain its true village character and identity. Set in rolling Leicestershire countryside, surrounded by open fields, the village has attractive views from, and towards, it from all approaches. Most residents wish this to continue and are understandably concerned that developments in the nearby villages of Bushby and Thurnby might extend those settlements further to the east. There is therefore a risk that Houghton might be swallowed up into the environs of the City itself.

From analysis of the consultation questionnaire 203 of the 348 respondents (58%) expressed appreciation of the beautiful countryside around the village. Specifically mentioned were the view across the fields from the back of the church, those from the Weir Lane Playing Field, the views towards Thurnby from St. Catharine's Green / Deane Gate Drive / Freer Close. The attractive view along Ingarsby Lane, and those around Stretton

Lane were also mentioned. There are also beautiful and valued views from the footpaths within the village, such as the path across the Playing Field, and especially the footpath from Weir Lane to the church (For further details of the questionnaire analysis see Section 4.8)

Within the built-up village, its old core buildings (Main Street / Conservation Area) were specifically mentioned as attractive, as were the views of the church from Main Street /St. Catharine s Way, the War Memorial, and features such as old walls and the village pump. As the old buildings now represent a little over 10% of Houghton's housing stock it is probable that they could be swamped by any major extension of the village.



Gateways. The A47 running east to west is virtually on the northern boundary of the village of Houghton. Apart from the houses adjacent to the A47 itself, the only other housing developments to the north are on Ingarsby Lane and Ingarsby Close. Ingarsby Lane enters the village from the north rising steeply from a valley so little of the village is visible on this approach until reaching the A47 / Main Street junction.

Similarly the A47 from the east rises steeply as it approaches Houghton so again the extent of housing development is not evident from this direction either. In contrast the approach along the A47 from the west (Leicester) sweeps around a wide curve offering a panoramic view across the Linwal Avenue / Deane Gate Drive area, and St. Catharine s Way and adjacent roads, to the church in the distance. The approach from the south along Stretton Lane, provides an alternative view of the church, though again with little indication of the extent of the various housing developments. Remnants of Medieval ridge and furrow field working can be seen in the fields on this approach.

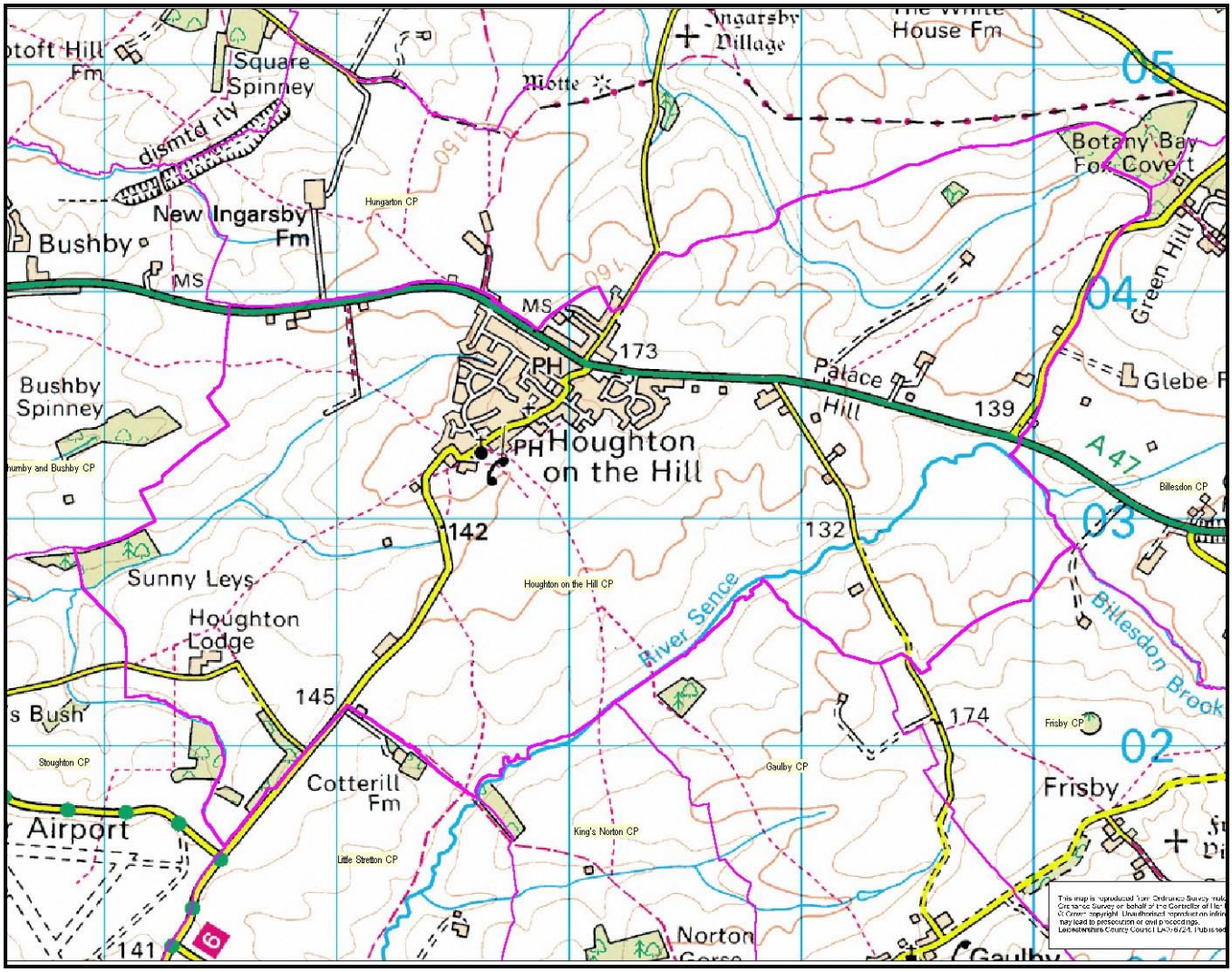
The other gateways are from field footpaths, which as shown on the maps, pages 7 and 20/21, converge on St. Catharine's Church from nearby villages of Gaulby, King s Norton, Little Stretton, Stoughton, Bushby and Thurnby, Scraptoft and Keyham. The views from these footpaths are much appreciated by parishioners as recorded at the Village Hall Exhibition and in the main questionnaire. Any building development outside the present boundaries should be sensitive to preserving these aspects.

The Parish Plan Steering Group, taking its lead from the parishioners, fully supports the objectives of **Policy EV/4 (Countryside Character), Policy EV/5 (Development in the Countryside) and Policy HS/7(Settlement Character)** with a wish to see these continue forward into the future production of Local Development Documents (LDDs) within the forthcoming Local Development Framework (LDF)

Limits to Development Policy HS /8 of the adopted Local Plan 1991—2006, sets defined boundaries of a number of villages, including Houghton, within which developments may be acceptable subject to other planning criteria. **Policy HS /9** protects defined "important areas of open land", which in Houghton includes the Church Yard, the Village Hall field, the grassed areas on St. Catharine s Way near to the junction with Main Street, the St. Catharine's Way play area, the grassed area off St. Catharine s Way near to the shops, and the grassed areas at the sides of the built-up sections of Uppingham Road and at the entrance to Ingarsby Lane.

The limits and controls afforded by these Policies are supported by the villagers, as demonstrated by the results of the consultation process, and therefore it is hoped that they will remain as Important Open Land within the forthcoming LDF. Other open spaces (though not designated "open areas" in the context of the Local Plan) highly valued by the villagers include the Weir Lane Playing Field and the school playing field. If these could be protected against development, in a similar way to that in which defined "open land" is protected under HS/9, this would have the support of the residents.

Ordnance Survey Map of Parish
Showing Houghton as it is set within the surrounding countryside



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As a consequence of its long history Houghton has distinct areas of housing development reflecting the growth of the village over the decades from its largely agricultural origins. The oldest part of the village is contained within the Conservation Area. Subsequent developments then took place along Uppingham Road, Ingarsby Lane and Close. School Lane and Scotland Lane have seen degrees of development, and in the 1960s the Linwal Avenue / Deane Gate Drive development, provided the first significant increase in dwellings with common styles, design features and building materials. This was followed in the early 1970s by the Heights development, then later in the 1970s by the larger developments to the south west of the village in what was to become St. Catharine's Way (and roads off it) together with the separate Freer Close development. Each of these developments has its own unique features and character, and it is hoped that any future developments respect the character of the area in which they are situated.

Houghton Church and approaches to the village

Approaching Houghton from the A47

Houghton from Stretton Lane

St Catharine's Church

Countryside from Ingarsby Lane

Countryside from Weir Lane Playing Field

3.4 Guidelines for new developments in order to maintain the character and essential features of Houghton-on-the-Hill

Taking its lead from the views of villagers, as collected via the consultation processes, the Parish Plan Steering Group has developed a number of recommendations which recognise the diversity of the village, and are based on the following:

A set of detailed recommendations to deal with the most complex, and sensitive, part of the village, the conservation area. The other distinct areas of the village are no less subject to the general provisions of these recommendations, but each has its particular characteristics highlighted for special consideration within the broader provisions of the guidance.

In all considerations of proposals for change, existing features that would be substantially altered or taken away by a development must be considered equally with the new construction.

A further and most important objective is that the recommendations seek to limit developments and changes to those that will maintain and enhance the overall character not only of the distinct areas, but also of the village as a whole. The relationship of each area to the rest of the village has to be properly managed such that "the whole" is not spoilt by disproportionate piecemeal developments.

3.4.1 The Conservation Area

Main Street, the adjacent arms of Scotland Lane, including The Rise, Elizabeth Close, Weir Lane, Hollies Close, School Lane and part of Stretton Lane, together forming most of the Conservation Area, are under pressure from development and there is a risk of their character, visual history and rural charm being diluted to a level that becomes unattractive to the residents of the village, and anyone seeking to move into Houghton.

Properties on Main Street tend to occur in small groups separated by a distinctive feature, such as a gated farm style entrance. Proposed developments should be considered in the context of the whole group into which the change will be set, or the impact on adjacent groups if the change is to a separating feature.

Frequently, the presence of space around a building, its boundary wall, style of gateway and established planting area are more important features than the building itself and vital to the aspect of the street. Indeed, in some instances the actual dwelling cannot readily be seen from the road. To preserve the overall character and appearance of the Conservation area any proposed changes need to be considered not just in the context of what they will add, but what they will also take away. This includes taking away not only open spaces but also open aspects which, for example, can occur when a bungalow is replaced by a large, multi-storey house. Scotland Lane contrasts with Main Street in that the lane is small and the buildings and boundary features are in scale with it. This compactness makes the aspect very vulnerable to even small, unsympathetic changes.

There are examples of earth banks, some topped with a tall hedge, between the road and property boundaries of Scotland Lane all of which contribute to the rural aspect of this attractive part of the village. Their loss would substantially alter its character. At the loop of Scotland Lane is the Village Pump, part of the heritage of Houghton, and important to preserve. At the time of preparing this plan it is in need of some renovation work.

The following supplements the provisions contained within **Policy EV/11** which seeks to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of a Conservation Area.

Size and density of properties....Developments in the Conservation Area that increase the height of an existing property should be discouraged. Similarly those that substantially alter its relationship to the roadway, or result in domination of the plot, including in-filling, should also be discouraged in favour of ones, which reflect, and blend with the existing character of the street.

Roofs... height, pitch and material, which in the Conservation area are of a wide variety, should always be sympathetic to the established and adjacent ones. The appearance and size of any proposed dormer window should be considered most carefully, so that it is in keeping with the existing area.

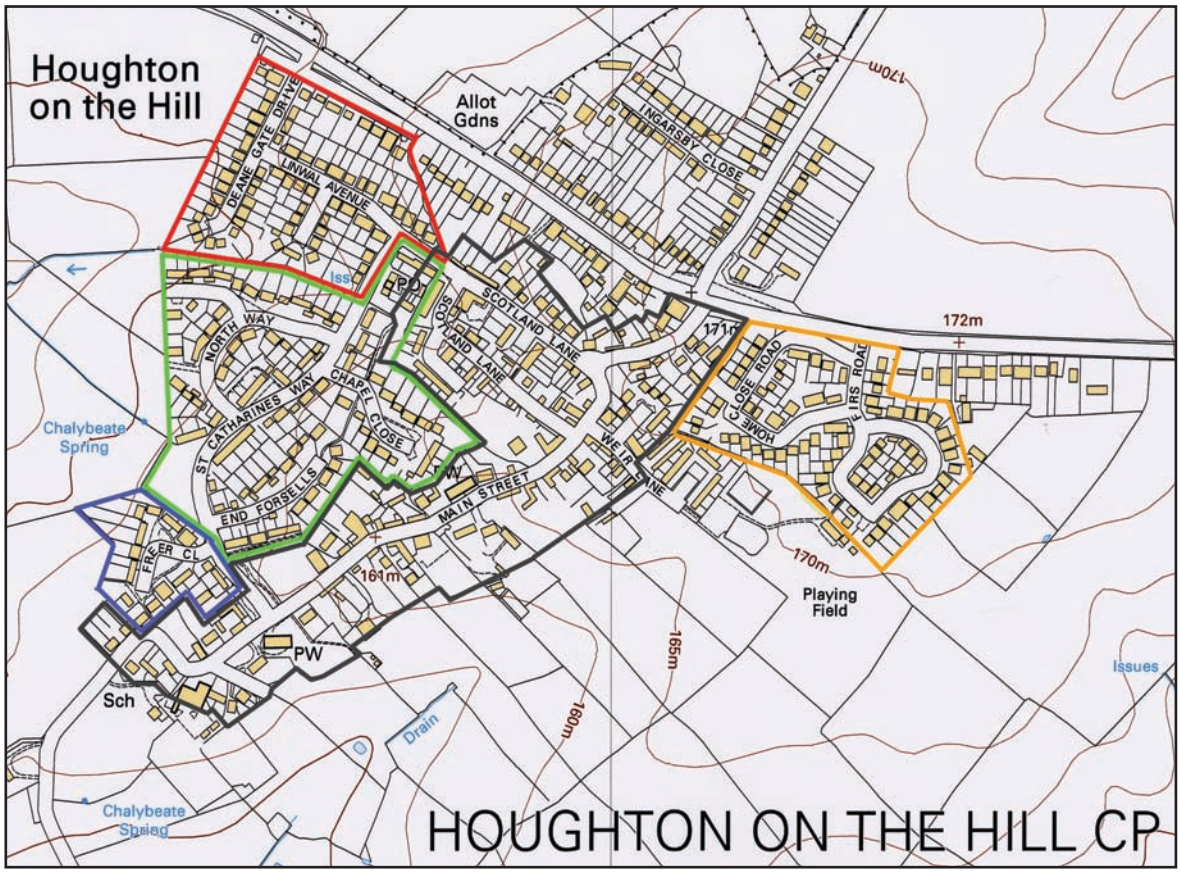
Walls of buildings.... are in a variety of materials including rustic brick, painted brick, stone and painted rendering. Any proposed construction or modification should use materials that blend with those adjacent, and when painted should also be sympathetic with adjacent properties with extremes of colour discouraged. Features, deliberately introduced to promote harmony with the existing should be encouraged. Examples include arches to openings, or an external chimney breast to relieve what would otherwise be a 'slab' wall.

Window... styles, materials and arrangement should always take cues from those of adjacent buildings, particularly in terms of size in proportion to the aspect into which they are set and their positioning within that aspect.

Boundaries.....proposals, which would remove or alter an existing boundary wall, fence or planting, must be carefully considered to ensure that the change will not detract from the appearance and character of the street. New constructions that harmonise with adjacent boundaries, can often contribute to the character of an area. Examples are the use of reclaimed bricks in walls, boundaries produced with a rustic appearance, hedges, or a mixture of walls and hedges, or earth banks topped with hedges, similar to a number of the existing boundaries. Size (height and width), nature of coping, and solidity of construction can also be important considerations in this context.

Spaces... between the boundary and a dwelling, depending on how they are treated, can add to the overall character of the streets. In contrast developments that result in the total, or almost total, elimination of such spaces can detract from the overall character, particularly where they become the exception. Trees and shrubs, with a mixture of evergreen and deciduous species, mature over time to enhance the appearance of the village and would be welcome within any new development.

Limits of the Conservation Area…. the consultation process did not produce any noticeable views about the boundaries of the Conservation Area. The Parish Council, mindful of the need to protect the heritage of the village, continues to explore a number of options. It is hoped that if any such changes are suggested the residents will be prepared to become involved and examine and comment on the proposals.



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Linwal Avenue / Deane Gate Drive	1960 s
The Heights	Early 1970 s
St. Catharine s Way, Forsells End, North Way, Winckley Close, Chapel Close	1970 s
Freer Close	1970 s
Conservation Area.	

Distinct Areas of the Village

3.4.2 Areas outside the Conservation Area

3.4.2.1 Specific considerations relating to each area

The map above identifies the newer (post 1960) areas of residential housing development outside the conservation area referred to in the following sections.

The Linwal Avenue / Deane Gate Drive Development, completed by local builders A. Walter Smart & Son in the 1960 s, comfortably represents the style of housing popular at that time. It enjoys some diversity of style and construction, and the whole comes together pleasingly due to all parts being in appropriate scale and placement to the plots and adjacent buildings. Proposals for change should be examined carefully to maintain scale, and sympathy with existing adjacent buildings as in 3.4.1. In particular, details of any proposed dormer windows should be examined carefully to ensure that they are in keeping with the surrounding area. Attention to details of boundaries and planting will help to ensure the appearance of the estate is maintained.

Views inside and outside the conservation area.

Main Street

Cottages in Scotland Lane

St Catharine's Green

Corner of Ingarsby Lane and Uppingham Road

St. Catharine's Way

Linwal Avenue

The Heights Development, St. Catharine's Way Development (including the roads off it), and the Freer Close development. Constructed in the 1970s these developments have matured with distinctive (although different) characteristics. They avoid uniformity by having a number of styles of houses and bungalows set in different ways on their plots and incorporating some open spaces. The open frontages and established planting contribute strongly to the general appearance. Within each group the detail of construction is very consistent. This is most important as it allows any aspect of these roads to be comfortable to the eye. Any introduced dissimilarities would jar very badly with the established continuum. Therefore, for these estates, as well as applying the general recommendations, paying particular attention to all the construction characteristics down to the most basic details of materials, formats and finishes will help to maintain the overall aspect. Within these estates the presence of bungalows provides a sense of spaciousness which would be lost if any were converted to houses.

Uppingham Road already encompasses a great variety of styles and sizes of properties, including commercial premises near to the junction with Main Street. The allotments are also on Uppingham Road (though outside the Parish) and it is recommended that an amenity such as this should be maintained for the benefit of the community, albeit not necessarily in exactly this location.

Developments here should fit comfortably with those adjacent to them, following the general guidelines below. Frontages should be treated carefully. Substantial boundary features of a timeless nature, which will mature to develop some semi-rural appeal, should be encouraged. Walls, metal railings, or fences of a disproportionate height should be discouraged in favour of low level hedges, fences and walls, examples of which are still evident along much of Uppingham Road. Fashionable features, if not scrupulously maintained, can deteriorate to become unattractive, and should be discouraged. Where changes to existing buildings are proposed, the incorporation of features to soften the more utilitarian of the commercial premises and help them harmonise better with their surroundings should be encouraged. Planting on all frontages generally enhances the rural character and should be encouraged. The use of over-vigorous, dense trees such as leylandii, should generally be discouraged in favour of more open slower growing varieties.

Ingarsby Lane and Ingarsby Close. Ingarsby Close is an unadopted cul-de-sac running north-west off Ingarsby Lane. The road surface is in a poor condition. The access to the Close is only single width.

Existing styles and types of housing are quite diverse, and careful management of change will be needed to ensure the overall appearance of Ingarsby Lane and Ingarsby Close is not adversely affected.

It is most important that extensions to houses here should not cause them to become out of scale with their plots as compared to adjacent properties, or indeed to be out of scale with the properties themselves. Once again, attention to the detail of the frontages and boundaries will help to enhance the area.

On Ingarsby Lane, immediately beyond the last dwelling, is a plot that has been used for various enterprises in the past Although this particular plot is outside the Parish, it is an example of the sort of location where small-scale rural pursuits, as discussed in 3.4.2.7, could be considered. Equally, this is an example of where inappropriate developments approved in an adjacent parish, could impact adversely on the rural aspect of Houghton, and the views of, and from, the village.

Weir Lane, Field Close, and the adjacent areas. Some parts of these roads lie within the Conservation Area and should be treated as in 3.4.1. The rest should be treated sympathetically and constructively to help the area to mature successfully within the general guidelines.

The consultation process produced a number of adverse comments which, if taken into account when developments are being considered, might help to avoid a repetition. For example, the unattractiveness of the Weir Lane garages area, the condition of the footpath from the Playing Field to Firs Road, the poor surface of the car park to the Playing Field, and keeping the lighting in good order for the safety of pedestrians.

Buildings outside the village building line encompasses the isolated dwellings on Gaulby Lane, Uppingham Road towards Thurnby, and towards the Tilton turn, and Houghton Mere cottages. New development in these areas is considered in 3.4.2.5. For the established properties the general considerations as in 3.4.1. will apply.

3.4.2.2 General considerations applying to areas outside the Conservation Area

Policy HS / 9, if carried forward Within the Local Development Framework, will prevent developments taking place on the larger existing defined "open spaces":- the Village Hall Green, the St. Catharine's Way Millennium Green play area, and the St. Catharine's Way play area near to the shops. As mentioned elsewhere in this Plan, similar protection would also be welcome for the Weir Lane Playing Fields, and for the School Playing Fields.

Size and density of properties....Developments that increase the height of an existing property, substantially alter its relationship to the roadway, or result in domination of the plot, including in-filling, should be discouraged in favour of ones which reflect and blend with the existing character of the roads. The positioning of the bungalows, particularly on Uppingham Road and Ingarsby Lane, provides some of the attractive diversity, and an important housing stock for ageing residents, which many hope will be retained.

Roofs... height, pitch and material, which are different on the different estates and roads, should always be sympathetic to established styles.

Walls of buildings.... are in a wide variety of materials including brick, painted brick, and painted rendering with conventional brick being the more usual. Any proposed construction or modification should preferably use materials which will blend with those adjacent, and when painted should also be sympathetic with adjacent properties. Constructional and decorative finishes e.g. tiling or cladding, such as that on the Heights, should be in the style and colour range of those nearby.

Window... styles and materials should always take cues from those of adjacent buildings in terms of size in proportion to the aspect into which they are set.

Boundaries..... new constructions that harmonise with adjacent boundaries should be a given preference. Where fences and walls are currently not permitted to the frontage of properties, such as on the Heights Estate, the open aspect this provides should be maintained.

Spaces... between the boundary and a dwelling, depending on how they are treated, can add to the overall character of the streets. In contrast developments that result in the total, or almost total, elimination of such spaces can detract from the overall character, particularly where they become the exception. Trees and shrubs, with a mixture of evergreen and deciduous species, mature over time to enhance the appearance of the village and would be welcome within any new development.

3.4.2.3 Street signs, street lighting and street furniture throughout the village

It is suggested that signs should be kept to a minimum, and presented in such a manner that they blend in with the surroundings. A number of respondents to the questionnaire commented on the desire to avoid signs obstructing visibility for motorists, particularly at road junctions.

Street lighting should be adequate and meet recognised safety standards but not brighter than guidelines indicate. Poles to be as sympathetic as possible to the rural nature of the particular road and because of the diversity of development they do not need to be uniform throughout the village. It is recognised that those on the A47 road will need to meet different criteria from those within the village. 90% of the 328 respondents to the Parish Plan question about street lights said they believe the existing street lights in the village, which have recently been brought up to standard, are adequate.

Street furniture should be adequately maintained, and generally sited where the residents see a demand, within the bounds of practicality and safety. From the consultation process more seats near to bus stops on Main Street would be welcomed.

The consultation also revealed that some parishioners would like to see more litter bins including dog litter bins, (discussed further in Section 4). The sizing, style and siting of additional, or replacement, bins should be carefully considered to ensure they are useful but not obtrusive, nor offending to the eye through

inappropriate design, material or colour. In some areas of the village, for example parts of Scotland Lane, there is a degree of clutter of overhead power and telephone services. It would be welcomed if power cables and telephone lines were tidied up or reduced where possible.

3.4.2.4 Leisure, Recreation and Community facilities

The Village Hall, although well used and highly valued for community activities, was built to serve a very much smaller settlement than the current 1548 people occupying 606 dwellings (2001 census). Neither the Hall, nor the Weir Lane Playing Field pavilion, has adequate internal dimensions for indoor sports such as badminton. Built in the early 1920s, the Village Hall main area is approximately 16 metres by 8 metres, with a height of only 2.4 to 3.3 metres to the steel roof structure. It has a seating capacity of 200 theatre-style, and only 100 seated at tables, so might be considered somewhat under-sized for large gatherings from within such a sizeable population.

Any development proposals for new facilities, or enlargement of existing facilities, should be given the same considerations as housing to ensure the character of the village is maintained, and views of the village and from it are not compromised. It is noted that **Policy LR /3** of the adopted Local Plan aims to avoid reducing the playing field facilities available to a community, and the Parish Plan Steering Group would recommend that current playing fields are protected for the benefit of the Houghton community. (see para. 3.4.2.2)

Similarly any housing development, that would significantly increase the population, should incorporate provision of leisure facilities, either new-build or by extending existing ones, suitable for the population of the whole village, not just for those residing in the new development.

3.4.2.5 Development proposals for areas beyond the defined boundaries

During the consultation process many residents commented favourably on views, of and from the village. Examples are those from the churchyard, from the play area on St. Catharine's Way, from the Weir Lane Playing Field, and from the footpath from Weir Lane to the church. It is hoped that when reviewing development proposals for areas beyond the defined boundaries (boundaries as set out under **Policy HS /8** of the adopted Local Plan) these aspects will be taken into consideration.

Care should be taken to exclude, if possible, proposals that might subsequently be re-submitted for residential development. For example, agricultural storage premises built in a style or construction readily convertible at some future time into a residential property. Any significant developments of isolated properties near the village should be discouraged, to preserve the rural setting of the village and the views of, and from it.

3.4.2.6 Parish development and the perceived demand for housing in Houghton

153 respondents said they would prefer no further development be permitted. However in the event that work undertaken in preparation of the LDF extends the current Local Plan's defined boundaries for development, any new-build proposals should be reviewed in the context of the future demand for housing types as identified via the consultation process. These are discussed in more detail in Section 4.

238 of the 348 respondents to the Parish Plan Questionnaire believe it is important to have housing which enables people to stay in the village, compared with 66 who thought it not important. If further development were to take place, then "Starter Homes" and "Retirement Homes" together received nearly 200 mentions from a total of 325 responses, and "Bungalows" a further 60 mentions. Together this could be interpreted as indicating reasonably strong support for ensuring, via the planning process, that a broad mix of properties is, and continues to be, available in Houghton, even if this relates to the existing housing stock. It is worth noting here that there were no suggestions as to how, or where, developments might be progressed.

3.4.2.7 Commercial, Industrial and Agricultural Developments

The rural character of Houghton is something that is highly valued by the parishioners, and from the consultation process many would see it as a retrograde step if developments were permitted which changed it significantly.

A number of commercial enterprises provide support to the local community and again these are valued by it. On the A47 are two garages plus separate car repair and car sales businesses, a fish and chip shop and a Public House (The Rose and Crown), all located close to the junction with Main Street. On Main Street itself is the Village Store (Co-op), a chemist's, and the second Public House (The Old Black Horse). A combined Post Office and Newsagents, and a hairdressing salon, are situated on St Catharine's Way. However any proposals for new businesses, whose primary role would be other than to support the community, are unlikely to receive support from that community. As reasonable transport links already exist, arguments for developments that might improve local employment opportunities are likely to be unconvincing. Considering the close proximity to the City of Leicester, with its industrial / commercial parks on the outskirts, any development proposals for Houghton of an industrial nature should be carefully considered.

Trades people resident in the village, who provide services that benefit the community directly, should be encouraged to establish their businesses locally, with the potential spin-off of some, albeit limited, local employment opportunities. Examples of the types of other business enterprise consistent with maintaining and supporting the rural community are facilities for home working, limited small-scale cottage type industries such as wrought iron working, horticulture or horse riding. Some, though not all, home working and small enterprise initiatives may depend on the guaranteed availability of broadband Internet connection – which the village does not universally enjoy at the date of the production of this Parish Plan.

One aspect of commercial premises commented on in the Parish Plan questionnaire responses is the difficulty some people experience when entering buildings with a wheelchair or pushchair. Together with satisfying the provisions of the Disability and Discrimination Act, planning applications for new premises, or refurbishments should pay particular attention to this.

Notwithstanding that Houghton is a rural community, it is recommended that proposals for sizeable agricultural developments such as grain processing plants, animal rearing pens, milking parlours and the like are discouraged. This also applies beyond the defined boundaries if such developments would impact on the views into, and out from, the village consistent with the provisions of **Policy EV /5**.

3.4.2.8 Pavements, Roads, and Parking

Pavements. The newer housing developments all have pavements, though some are in a poor state of repair (for example The Heights). Parts of the older village such as Main Street and Scotland Lane have narrow or no pavements at all but this is a consequence of the rural heritage of the village and not something easily resolved. Although a number of kerbs have been lowered for pushchair and wheelchair users, more need to be attended to, according to respondents to the Parish Plan questionnaire.

Roads and Parking. Roads range from the busy A47 running east to west, almost along the northern boundary of the village, roads through estates, and narrow country lanes, reflecting the various stages of development of the village. Main Street, south from the A47, is one of the original roads of the village, providing a convenient through route for commuters from further east of the county. Consequently it has higher levels of traffic, particularly in mornings and evenings, disproportionate to its width and village aspect. Parking on village roads, particularly on Main Street and near to the school, creates hazards, although it does contribute in a bizarre way to reducing vehicle speed. Increasingly motorists are parking on pavements with little or no regard to the difficulties this creates for pedestrians, let alone those with prams, pushchairs, or in wheelchairs. Traffic calming measures so far are limited to Main Street, where three speed tables combined with a 20-mph speed restriction have been introduced.

Road surfaces vary widely both in finish and condition, although generally they are in a reasonable state of repair. Resurfacing of Main Street, using red/brown chippings, has provided an attractive feature, spoilt by inconsistent finishing of repaired areas.

In the older parts of the village cars frequently have to be parked on the carriageway. The only public off-street parking is for those people living in Field Close. In the newer developments such as St. Catharine's Way and adjacent roads, and The Heights, driveway parking is generally adequate, though less so in the older Linwal Avenue / Deane Gate Drive area development. According to the 2001 census 54% of the 604 households in Houghton had 2 or more cars, with 12% having 3 or more.

Road markings are in keeping with the rural character of the village.

Recommendations:

Roads and pavements to be maintained to ensure safety of users, and to be in keeping with the rural setting of the village.

Kerbs to be consistent in material and design with those of the immediate area, and where appropriate reduced in height for ease of progress with pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Road markings to be adequate to ensure safety.

Off-street parking should be provided, either on private driveways or via the provision of communal parking areas such as that in Field Close.

3.4.2.9 Public Rights of Way.

This topic was addressed as part of the consultation process. More details on the responses can be found in Section 4.

Recommendations:

Existing rights-of-way should be preserved.

Rights of way should be kept clear of undergrowth and other obstructions and be well marked.

Stiles and footbridges should be built with consideration for all users in mind (e.g. height, ease of use) and be maintained in a satisfactory and safe condition.

Any building developments should be considerate of the needs of walkers: preservation of existing footpaths being an important consideration to ensure access to the surrounding countryside is not denied or made difficult.

3.4.2.10 Trees, hedges and verges.

The importance of the established planting to the built environment has been very strongly supported in the foregoing sections. Proposed changes to trees, hedges and verges that are not part of a specific housing or other development proposals were not specifically addressed as part of the consultation process, but some comments were made in response to free-form questions, and the following recommendations emerge:-

New developments, or road works, should retain and/or protect from damage existing trees and hedges, including those that are planted along the public highway. It is recommended that new planting be encouraged, particularly where previous established planting has been lost Along the public highway the appropriate authorities, including the Parish Council, should regularly review the condition of existing trees to ensure timely planting of new ones, so that they mature in time to take the place of old ones, and maintain continuity.

Trees and hedges should not be allowed to grow over walkways, or obscure signs, and residents should be encouraged to trim them where they are a cause of concern from the perspective of personal safety.

Beyond the village boundary, hedgerows and trees should be retained for their important contribution to the much-admired rural setting of the village, and for their contribution to the valued views of the countryside from within it.

Verges should be mown as necessary to keep the grass and weeds under control

3.5 Parish Boundary

Although housing development on the north side of the A47 is relatively modest, it does border on the neighbouring parish boundary. Indeed, the village allotments on the western end of the Uppingham Road development are outside Houghton parish. The Parish Council has for some time been considering the question of the Parish boundary at these sensitive points. If agreement could be reached with the Parish of Hungarton for a joint proposal to seek a re-alignment, Houghton's Parish Council might be better positioned to influence any development proposals that impact on the immediate environs of the established village.

4. Outputs from the Parish Plan Questionnaire and Village Hall Exhibition

The following sections summarise the analysis of the results of the 348 completed questionnaires, and the comments of the 150 visitors to the Village Hall exhibition. Where comments from a significant number of respondents indicate a need for further investigation or action, some recommendations are made.

Important note: Throughout this section reference is frequently made to "respondents" rather than to "residents" or "villagers" or "people". That is because 79% of the questionnaires were completed on behalf of families, and only 21% were completed as individuals. Not every item of detail is reported and therefore percentages will not necessarily total 100%.

4.1 Roads, Pavements, Road Safety and Traffic Management

The A47. 315 respondents ranked the acceptability of the A47 on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being very acceptable). 92 (30%) recorded a 1 or a 2, 106 (34%) ranked it a 3, and 117 (37%) a 4 or a 5 (5 being very unacceptable). 140 respondents then explained why they believe it is unacceptable. Excessive speed was mentioned 70 times, high volumes of HGV's and other traffic 27 times, and the absence of a safe place to cross on foot 17 times. These concerns were also expressed at the Village Hall Parish Plan Exhibition. Many people would welcome stricter enforcement of the existing 40-mph limit. Suggestions to achieve this include the installation of permanent speed cameras, or flashing signs indicating vehicle speed if it exceeds 40 mph, or roundabouts, or traffic lights as a physical means to slow traffic.

Absence of a safe crossing for pedestrians and for those in wheelchairs, at the Main St / A47 junction is a concern, as is accessing the A47 from Main St and from Ingarsby Lane (and crossing from Main St into Ingarsby Lane and vice versa). Restricted visibility, due to positioning of bollards, when looking from the Main St junction towards Leicester, creates a safety hazard for drivers wanting to cross into Ingarsby Lane or turn right towards Billesdon. A light controlled crossing at this point may be one of the options to be considered.

The Parish Plan Steering Group is not taking a particular position on this but believes that, in view of the levels of concern, the appropriate authorities should be requested to undertake a detailed study into all aspects of the A47 design and enforcement issues taking into account the significant concerns expressed by many parishioners affected by it, as summarised in this Parish Plan. This way some progress may be made before a serious accident and fatalities trigger post-event action. **See Action Point 6. 1**

Views of Main Street and some of the newer developments

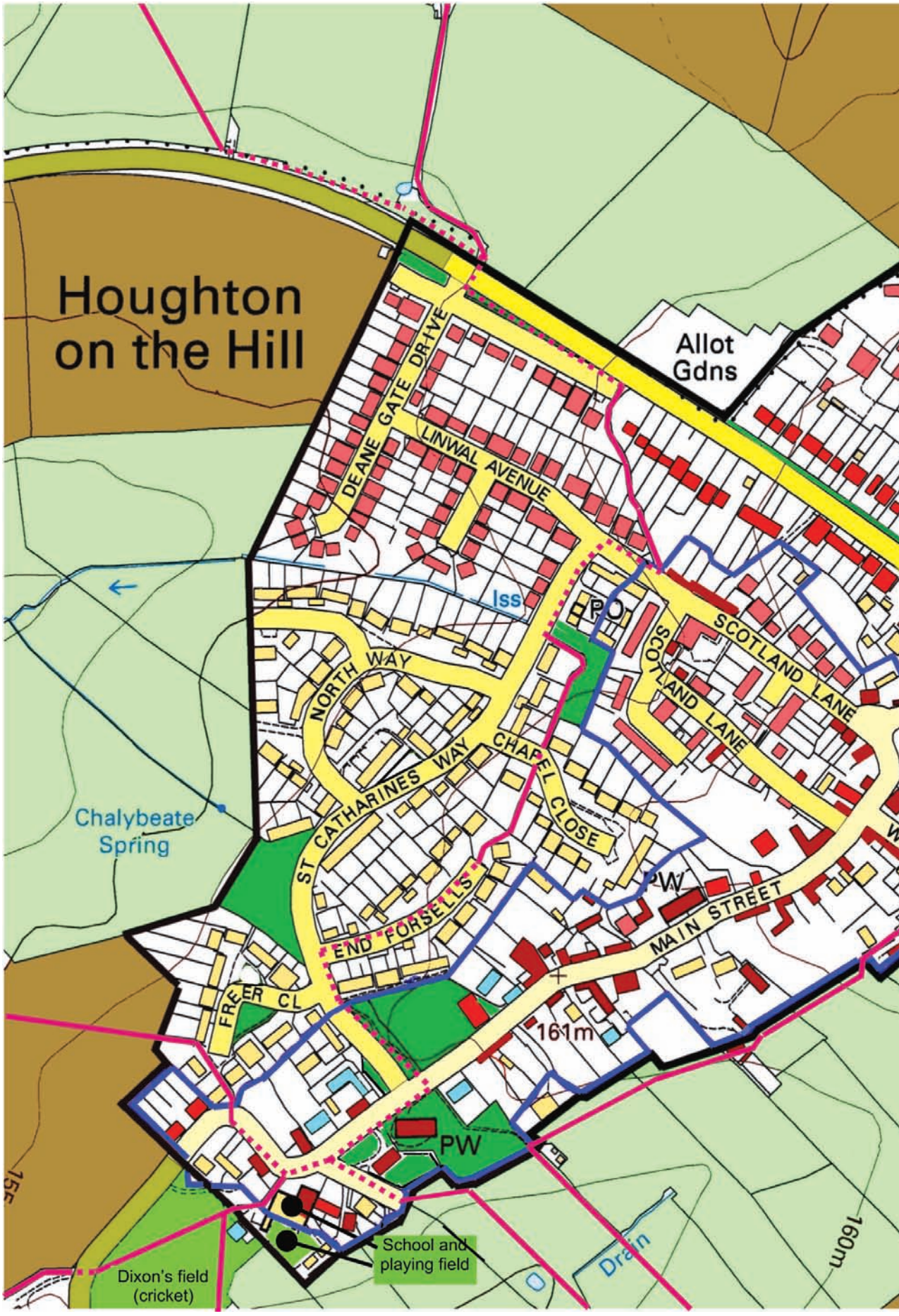
The Village Hall

The Village Store

Main Street towards the Memorial

Field Close

Home Close Road, The Heights



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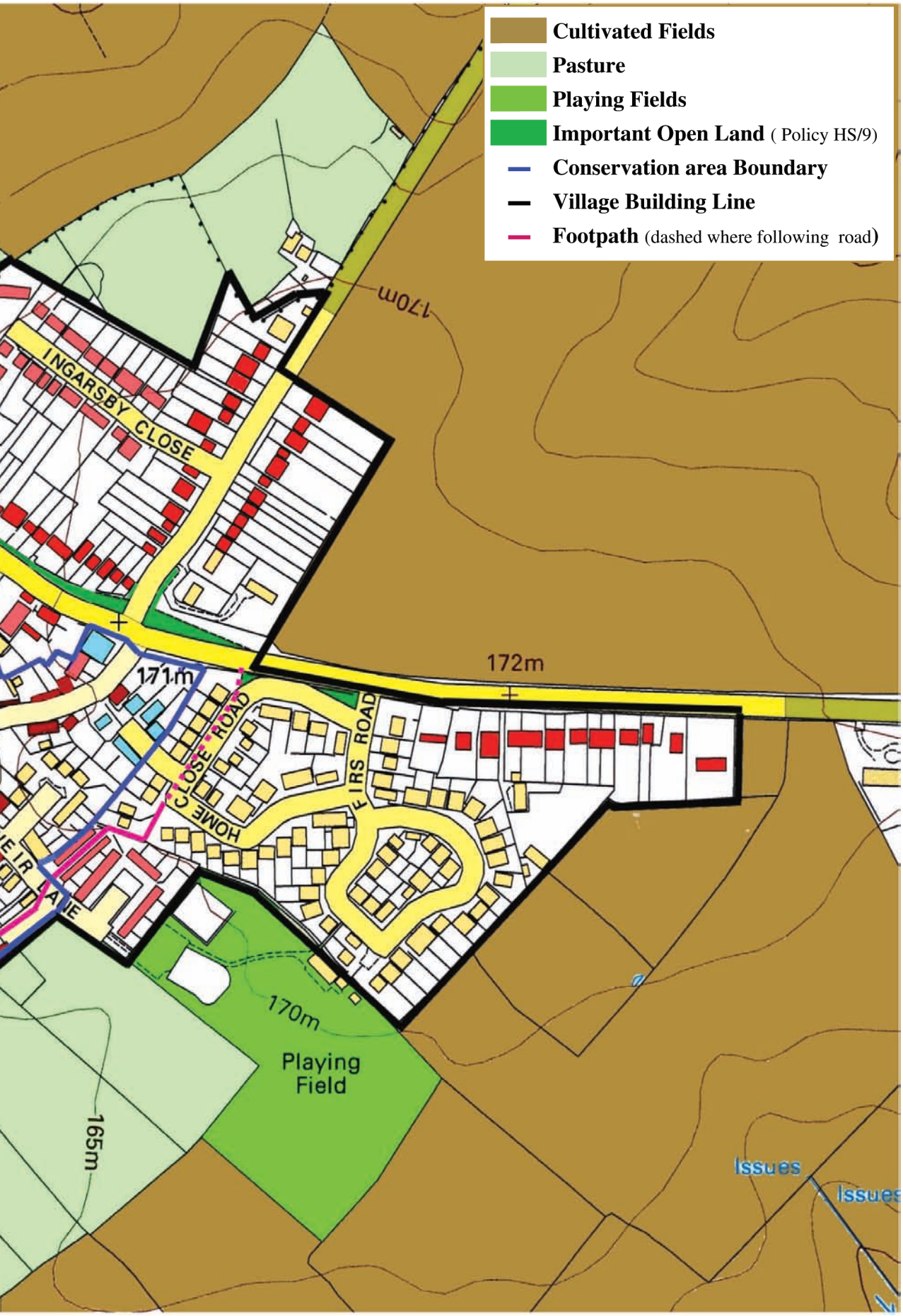

Cultivated Fields
Pasture
Playing Fields
Important Open Land (Policy HS/9)
Conservation area Boundary
Village Building Line
Footpath (dashed where following road)
170m
INGARSBY CLOSE
171m
172m
HOME CLOSE ROAD
FIRS ROAD
170m
Playing Field
165m
Issues
Issues

The A47 Crossroads, Cricket Field and Bowling Green

Cross roads A47 / Ingarsby Lane / Main Street

Parking In Main Street

Cricket Field and Pavilion

Sheltered accommodation, Scotland Lane

The Bowls Green

Car park, Weir Lane Playing Field

Other Road Safety issues. 243 respondents explained their concerns about road safety in the village. **Parking, and excessive speed** were both mentioned on 82 occasions, the major locations being on Main Street (55 mentions), around the school (36 mentions), the Main Street / Ingarsby Lane junctions (22 mentions), and St. Catharine's Way (17 mentions). **Difficult to cross** roads were mentioned on 37 occasions, primarily at the Main St / Ingarsby Lane / A47 junctions. **Poor visibility and bends** were mentioned 42 times, mainly around the school, and on Main Street.

Parking. 224 respondents said they believe there are parking issues in the village, and 187 went on to say what and where. **Inconsiderate parking** was mentioned 105 times, mostly around the school, on St. Catharine's Way, and at the Main Street / Weir Lane junction. "**Cars parked on pavements"** was mentioned 56 times, again around the school, on St. Catharine's Way, and in Freer Close. **Parking restricting road width and restricting visibility** was mentioned 56 times in total, covering a number of locations, though primarily on Main Street.

Consistently road safety and parking issues focus on the area around the school, on Main Street, and at the Main Street / Ingarsby Lane junctions with the A47. This is a sufficiently serious concern that it should be brought to the attention of the various authorities. **See Action Point 6.2**

Pavements. 187 responses addressed where better provision might be made for people using pavements. 51 of these related to **no, or narrow, pavements** in places well known to all, Main Street and Scotland Lane being singled out, as distinct from those merely identified as "many places". **Parking on pavements** featured again, but with most responses not specifying where. **The need for maintenance** was mentioned 15 times, but again without stating specific locations. **Kerb ramps** are provided in many places but more are needed by some wheelchair / pushchair users. Whilst not a large number of people are affected, those who are may conceivably find this to be a very important issue to be addressed. Initially this might comprise a survey by the appropriate authorities in conjunction with those most affected. **See Action Point 6.3**

Cycle Paths. 103 respondents to the questionnaire said they, or members of their household, would use a cycle path if provided between Houghton and Thurnby. 168 mentioned the road to Stoughton, 88 the A47 to Billesdon, and 83 Stretton Lane. Of these, the Houghton to Thurnby route already has a footpath, so as a first stage perhaps it could be officially designated as a path for cyclists and pedestrians. Longer term planning considerations might usefully include widening the path for cyclists to pass one another safely, as well as providing safe passage for pedestrians. **See Action Point 6.4**

Some respondents recognise, and mention, the impracticality of introducing cycle paths on narrow rural roads and on village streets; also the large investment nationally on what are often little-used cycle paths.

Seating. 314 respondents answered this question with 46 (15%) indicating that additional seating around the village would be of help to them. 39 then went on to say where, with the bus stops outside the Village Store, on the north side of the A47 near to the Ingarsby Lane junction, and near to the Village Hall receiving most mentions. Seats in the churchyard, and at the Weir Lane Playing Field would be welcome by some, so they could rest and admire the superb views. This is something the Parish Council may care to consider. (See note at 4.2 ref. local bus service). **See Action Point 6.5**

4.2 Transport. Important note*:* the Parish Plan survey was conducted at a time when a half-hourly bus service operated between the village and Leicester, and the buses travelled into the heart of the village. It now appears likely that the local service will be replaced by an hourly service along the A47 with only those outside peak times going into the village. Conceivably the responses might have been different had these circumstances prevailed. One example might have been the greater number of people having to cross the A47 after alighting from the bus, particularly at the busy Ingarsby Lane / Main Street junction.

22 respondents indicated an interest in taking part in a formal car-sharing scheme contrasting with 259 giving a negative response to this idea. 109 respondents (31%) indicated that lack of transport prevented them from accessing facilities they would like to in Leicestershire, in places such as Oadby, Market Harborough and Fosse Park. Most would like to travel on a weekly or monthly basis with a noticeable preference for doing so in the mornings.

18 respondents said they have used Houghton Helpline to access voluntarily provided transport, almost wholly on an ad hoc crisis basis. 46 respondents indicated that they had difficulty with transport to access healthcare. In nominating the healthcare destinations to which these difficulties related there were 99 responses, indicating that many of the respondents had multiple difficulties. **See Action Point 6.6**

Encouragingly 42 respondents indicated a willingness to take part in providing a voluntary transport system, again on an occasional ad-hoc basis. It could be worthwhile tapping into this resource .**See Action Points 6.7** Also if residents could be provided with advice, (or at least where to seek advice) about available benefits and allowances this may go some way to easing the situation.

In addition to the difficulties experienced by those responding to the survey, there is no public bus service between Houghton and Oadby, where most of the village's secondary school young people attend. The whole question of Community Transport needs, for whatever purpose, should be investigated along with the availability of funding for such schemes. Such an exercise should also consider the potential operational and cost benefits of a scheme operated in co-operation with other local communities. There may well be others experiencing similar difficulties. **See Action Point 6.8**

Just four people indicated that they could do with help to access social groups and services in the village. Largely this assistance is required weekly or just occasionally. **See Action Point 6.9**

4.3 Housing. 238 respondents (68% of all respondents) said they felt it was important to manage the housing stock in a way that enables people to stay in the village. 21 respondents (6%) said they do not expect to stay in Houghton, but as the direct question was not posed it would be unwise to conclude that all the other 94% do intend to stay.

316 respondents (91%) commented on the type of accommodation they would like to occupy in the future. Detached houses and bungalows, in that order, were by far the most popular, with most other types being represented in small numbers. 39 respondents indicated a preference for a retirement home. Of the 21 who volunteered a comment, most wished to stay in the house they occupy now. Again there was some interest expressed in sheltered/warden aided accommodation. It is clear that for some people, the availability of sheltered/warden aided housing will be important within the overall mix of housing stock. There were comments that the depletion of the stock of bungalows, by allowing them to be converted to houses, should not continue. (Note: some respondents mentioned more than one type, so the number of mentions totals more than the number of respondents).Nearly 90% of respondents would want a garden.

Availability of accommodation for rent was considered important by 182 respondents, while 126 thought it not important. Of those who felt it was important smaller/starter homes were the main requirement with 111 responses, followed by 96 responses stating medium-sized houses and flats. Social housing was mentioned by 29 respondents.

325 respondents gave their views on which type of housing they think could be added to the stock within the village or at its boundaries. 153 (47%) felt that no further development should be considered. The remaining 172 respondents listed various types of housing with starter homes being mentioned 110 times. Retirement homes and bungalows together were mentioned 144 times. (Note: some respondents mentioned more than one type, so the number of mentions totals more than the number of respondents).

Quite clearly the "no development" preference and the desire to manage the housing stock to meet the needs of the community, produces some conflict of interests. One of the key aims of the Parish Plan is to try to ensure that any change is relevant to the community's needs and is executed in a way that has minimum negative impact on the established village. **See Action Point 6.10**

Of the 120 respondents who have had dealings with the local council planning department, 85 have mainly found them to give helpful and straightforward assistance. The general view on planning decisions was that the freedom allowed to developers (including individuals) was about right, the balance believing too much freedom is allowed. An objective of the Parish Plan is to provide supplementary guidelines reflecting the views and wishes of the residents of Houghton, as collected through the consultation process, which should begin to address this concern.

4.4 Community activities, and venues

Sporting / practical activities are regularly participated in by many residents of Houghton. The largest numbers of responses mentioned rambling, DIY, swimming, cycling, playing tennis, football, or rugby. A few respondents participate in horse riding or fishing. Asked the question "If available locally, which sporting clubs and activities would you participate in?" those people in the over-18 age category mentioned most frequently yoga, badminton, horse riding, five-a-side football, and hockey. If a sports facility were available within Houghton, more than half of the 100 who answered said they would be prepared to pay more for them than if they had to travel to them. A third indicated up to 25% more. Some of the activities mentioned in this section of the questionnaire are already available in the village, so these groups might usefully consider if their methods of communicating details throughout the village need to be improved. Perhaps greater use of Houghton News might be a starting point, followed maybe, in time, by a Houghton Website (covered elsewhere in this document).

Those under 18, when asked the question 'If available locally, either free or on a pay-per-use basis, which sporting activities would you participate in?' mentioned most frequently tennis, skateboarding, and horse riding, followed closely by badminton and five-a-side football. Next were rugby, hockey and basketball. The Field Association may care to note these preferences when considering any changes or additions to the Weir Lane Playing Field (see below).

The **Bowling Green** at the Village Hall field, and the **Cricket Field** on Stretton Lane, complement the Playing Field facilities to provide an extremely wide variety of opportunities for people wishing to participate in outdoors sport in Houghton. **The Allotments**, at the western edge of the village (and outside the parish), provide many residents with another outdoor interest and some exercise

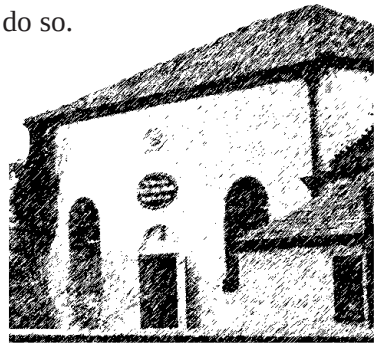
The Weir Lane Playing Field, with its football and tennis facilities, and extensive open spaces, is highly valued by the community, not just by those who play these sports, but by the many people who walk across the field and admire the superb views over open Leicestershire countryside. Parents and children value the purpose-built fenced-off play area with swings, this being the only such facility within the village. Most respondents felt the facilities in the children's play area are good or adequate, and that they are well maintained. A few people said they did not like to use the path across the field at night; others felt the parking area attracted anti-social behaviour, and a small number stated that functions at the sports pavilion resulted in too much late night noise. The Steering Group is aware that the Field Association is planning to explore options for improvement across a broad front, and encourages those involved to take into account the comments from the questionnaire and exhibition.

The Playing Field Pavilion. 215 respondents said they have used the pavilion in the past 2 years, but 171 (80%) said they were not aware that residents could hire it. More publicity about who to contact to arrange bookings, hire rates, etc. might encourage greater interest and generate more income. On a scale of 1 to 5, (with 1 being very adequate) 79 respondents ranked the facilities 1, 2 or 3. However a fair number of respondents identified some inadequacies, and those comments have been passed to the management committee.

The Village Hall is used extensively with 259 respondents (families as well as individuals) saying they have visited it within the last 2 years. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being very adequate) 245 (96%) ranked the Village Hall facilities 1 to 3 inclusive, and 206 (80%) ranked them 1 or 2. Interestingly, 129 respondents (40%) said they were not aware that villagers are permitted to walk / play / picnic on the Village Hall field beyond the Bowling Green.

Considerable interest was expressed in a range of social activities if they were to be run regularly in the Village Hall. Mentioned most often were regular concerts, quiz nights, wine tasting, disco dancing barn dances, keep fit, yoga, and dinner dances. Mentioned by considerably fewer people were bingo, whist drives, film society, plays / drama, sequence dancing, and scrabble. Societies arranging events in the Village Hall may like to note this interest However, willingness to help organise such events was less in evidence. 91% of the 188 respondents said they would not be prepared to help to do so.

The Methodist Chapel Meeting Room,
whilst not covered in the questionnaire does provide a valuable facility to the village, and is hired by many groups. It would be remiss not to mention here the significant contribution it makes to village community life.



The Village School. It was felt inappropriate to ask questions about the education children receive, so questions about the village school were restricted to its use within the wider community for further education or social purposes. Some respondents believe better use could be made of the existing school facilities, and would be interested in participating in new activities if they were to be provided. Most prefer evenings, but some would attend weekend workshops. Interests mentioned were computing, language (mainly French), accounting, leisure and crafts, healthy living and keep fit. 97 respondents believe there is need in Houghton for a publicly available computer (using broadband technology) and 137 the need for guidance and instruction in the use of computers. A number of people commented that they were not aware of what courses are available, possibly indicating a need for improved communication. Not everyone may realise that courses are listed on the back cover of the Judgemeadow prospectus, so using Houghton News and notice boards to remind people might be helpful. Those with a specific interest in providing greater educational opportunities for the community are invited to examine the results in detail. Bringing the village and the school closer together could be beneficial to the school and to the community. **See Action Point 6.12**

If a local library (with I.T. and reading room facilities) were to be provided 172 respondents said they would use it, although if another venue were available this would not necessarily have to be in the school. The Steering Group have passed this information to the Leicestershire County Council Library Service for their consideration.

Certain social, community or sporting activities are not participated in by all of those who would like to, take part primarily because the day, or time of day, is inconvenient. Only a very few mentioned high cost, or difficult physical access, as a barrier. 177 respondents said there are clubs they would be quite interested in joining but have not yet approached them; so most people seem content with the opportunities to access locally available activities. These include art, music, bridge, W.I. etc., to mention but a few, as well as the sports previously mentioned. Interest in possible new ventures included Buddhism, French twinning, film/book society, website, youth group. Some would be interested in joining a local history / heritage group, a book discussion club / reading circle, and a political discussion group, climbing/outdoor pursuits activity, youth club, photography club, theatre-outings group, and yoga/ Pilates group. However 90% of the 206 respondents said they would not be prepared to help with the organisation of a village community group, or religious organisation, leaving the remaining 10% with a substantial challenge.

Anyone wishing to start up, or become involved in a new activity or group, might care to publish their interests in Houghton News and invite others to contact them. **See Action Point 6.13**

Local groups and organisations needing to raise funds. Although not large in number, some local groups would welcome help and advice on fund-raising sources. The District Council could be asked to ensure that all local groups and organisations have ready access to literature on funding-support and the Parish Council might agree to be the conduit for the dissemination of this information, again using Houghton News if appropriate. **See Action Point 6.14**

Commercial organisations such as the various shops, the post office, garages, vehicle repair shops, public houses, etc. are well supported and it is therefore safe to assume they are highly valued by residents**.** When constructing the Parish Plan questionnaire it was decided not to ask questions about every facility in the village, nor was it felt appropriate to ask about the levels of service provided. No adverse comments were recorded, other than the difficulty a few people experience when entering some premises with a wheelchair or pushchair. A number of people believe more litter bins are needed near to shops, and cyclists would like to have more cycle racks available. These points are covered elsewhere in the plan.

One facility no longer available in the village, a doctor's surgery, was mentioned by only a few people.

4.5 Places of Worship. Asked if they would like more information to be available about activities provided by the Churches, 44 people, 21% of the 289 who responded to this particular question, said Houghton News is the preferred vehicle for this, followed by parish notice boards, then leaflets. Suggestions of matters that might be covered include church finances, affairs, meanings of festivals and a St. Catharine's story; together with details of any social functions and associated clubs.

Some support, albeit very limited, was expressed for inter-faith services and services more attractive to youth, more weekday activities for older people, discussion groups to help explore the basics of Christianity, services / activities for families with young children on Sundays, and activities for families with young children during school holidays.

Houghton Churches may care to take on board these comments, and possibly seek further input, as the interest may be broader than indicated here because not every family in the village returned a completed questionnaire. Better communication of events would be welcomed, so more use of Houghton News and Parish Notice Boards might be worth considering.

Regarding the best use of the limited space in the churchyard, requests for a Garden of Remembrance received the most responses (264) with 70% of these rating it the most important. Memorial Tablets received 200 responses of which 48% gave this as their second ranking of importance. Burial received 181 responses, 53% of which ranked this as the least important. This useful information will be passed to the Parochial Church Council.

4.6 Recycling and Litter Bins. 112 respondents (32%) said they would like to see other waste management arrangements introduced to the village, of which 75 mentioned the "recycling of plastic, in particular plastic bottles". An even larger number said there was a need for the recycling of "cardboard and garden waste", but this has since been addressed by the Harborough District Council fortnightly "green waste" kerb-side collection service. Although the number of responses is not a large proportion of the total residents, it does indicate a social awareness of the need for recycling facilities for plastic, a point that should be passed to Harborough District Council. **See Action Point 6.15**

92 respondents said there are not sufficient litter bins around the village. The main areas mentioned for locating more bins are the Playing Field / Pavilion area, the Post Office, along the A47 (including outside the chip shop), the Weir Lane garages, and near to the school. 15 respondents requested "more dog litter bins", but with no consensus view as to where. The Parish Council may care to consider this.**See Action Point 6.16**

4.7 Crime and Safety. Personal safety is not a major issue in Houghton. 40 respondents (12% of those who answered this section) sometimes feel nervous, particularly at night, and particularly on dark pathways. 206 (or almost 60% of all respondents) indicated that crime is a concern for them. In order of concern were: theft from houses, car crime, vandalism, and theft from garages. The very small number of people (22), who reported feeling unsafe due to potential aggressive or criminal behaviour, was twice as large as the number reporting they had been affected by actual crime. Anti-social behaviour, such as inappropriate use of fireworks and late night noise, irritates 60 respondents (38% of those who answered this section).

179 respondents said they would attend well-advertised opportunities to meet the Village Police Officer, and this is something that could usefully be explored. Interestingly none of the respondents mentioned the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, even though there were opportunities to do so

See Action Points 6.17 and 6.18

4.8 Field Footpaths and Bridleways. 280 respondents (80% of all respondents) occasionally use the field footpaths and bridleways around the village. About 30% used them at least once a week. The preferred length of a country walk is 4.7 miles (7.5 km). Respondents find maps of local footpaths, marked circular routes, and purchased leaflets of walks, useful walking aids.

About half the users of field footpaths and bridleways had experienced some difficulty in using them. The most significant problems were crops across footpaths, footpaths ploughed over, and route unclear or lack of signposts and waymarks. These problems were particularly experienced on the footpaths from Stretton Lane to Gaulby and King's Norton. Inspection of the field footpaths, with a view to identifying missing signs etc. could be worthwhile. **See Action Point 6.19**

Other significant problems identified were the presence of bushes/nettles on footpaths, and high stiles. These problems were particularly experienced on the footpath from Weir Lane to the church. During the consultation process this footpath was mentioned as having much admired views. If access could be made easier more residents would be able to enjoy these views. One option might be to consider converting high stiles to kissing gates. **See Action Point 6.20**

Many walkers enjoy not only the attractive countryside but the many and varied species of wildlife in and around the village. Although not covered in the survey a number of people have expressed an interest in wildlife conservation, and changes that might impact on habitat. **See Action Point 6.21**

4.9 Heritage and Environment. Knowing more about their village interested 231 respondents (75%). Local history was the most popular subject, with substantial interest also shown in both natural history and archaeology. The proposal of a project to record Houghton's heritage and special features was well supported. 43 respondents were interested in active participation. In order of popularity, features to be recorded were the general development and history of Houghton, including its social history, generating/ maintaining records of old buildings, including the church, changes to land use and landscape, and contemporary developments and events.

The opportunity to specify those aspects of Houghton that should be preserved was taken by 208 respondents (60% of the total). Appreciation of views of the beautiful countryside around the village accounted for most comments. The most frequently mentioned view was that across the fields from the back of the church, but views in all directions were mentioned. Within the built village, its old core buildings, including the church, and old structures (walls, war memorial), received many comments.

Fewer respondents (133) took the opportunity to state which aspects of Houghton are most in need of improvement. The range of comments made was very wide. The largest number (16%) related to keeping trees and hedges trimmed. Inappropriate development of existing buildings, the next largest category, was mentioned in 11% of comments.

The above views were in line with those gathered from visitors to the Village Hall exhibition in September 2003. At that time, appreciation was expressed of the views towards Houghton, as well as those from it. The floodlighting and bell ringing at the church were also favourably mentioned. On the negative side, dog fouling was given more prominence than in answers to the main questionnaire.

The 2004 Village Design Statement in this Parish Plan reflects the views of residents as to most / least favoured aspects of Houghton. It is important that any records made of Houghton's heritage and special features are filed with the appropriate public body, and with such a wide interest being expressed by residents, summaries in the village magazine, Houghton News, would be welcomed. It is recommended that careful scrutiny be given to planning proposals that might adversely impact on the 'recorded desirable features', to ensure any such impact is minimised. **See Action Point 6.22**

Primary School, Pavilion and Footpaths

Pavilion, Weir Lane Playing Field

Path across Weir Lane Playing Field

Village School

Footpath A47 to Linwal Avenue.

Field Footpath, Church to Weir Lane

Views around the village

St Catharine's Church

Countryside from rear of the church

War Memorial

Hedges in Scotland Lane

Notice board at Village Store

Children's Playground, Weir Lane

4.10 Communications. For general communications, Houghton News was thought to be useful by 315 respondents (97%), with 234 rating it as "most useful". A letter delivered to homes was thought to be useful by 291 respondents (93%), and most useful by 149 respondents: quite a way behind Houghton News. Village Notice Boards were thought to be useful by 206 respondents (84%), but relatively few (71) thought they were most useful. A notice in the Leicester Mercury was largely felt not to be useful.

A village web-site, if made available, was thought to be useful by 173 respondents (45% of replies). There was little support for a chat room, indeed some specific comments were made against having one. There were 26 volunteered comments with suggestions of web site content. These included Parish Council Meeting minutes and planning applications. Those interested in a web site might like to visit www.harboroughonline.co.uk and look at Billesdon's site amongst others. A small number of respondents indicated they would be willing to help maintain a site. 'Local information' was a popular comment, and there was some interest in advertising local businesses on such a site. **See Action Point 6.23**

143 respondents have a considerable interest in broadband. 99 indicated that it would enable them to work from home at least some of the time, including 36 indicating "most of the time". As at the date of this Parish Plan broadband is becoming more readily available in the village, but not everyone's experience of getting it has been straightforward. **See Action Point 6.24**

204 respondents (nearly 60% of the total) have access to a computer, with about 190 having access to the web, and having an e-mail address. There were 97 people who would like to see a publicly available computer, with web access, in the village. This rose to 137 if it was available with knowledgeable support and guidance. If there were a library facility available in Houghton with a reading room and IT facilities 172 people indicated they would use it, 68 of those once or more a week. **See Action Point 6.25**

4.11 Caring (Note: The following should not be interpreted as relating to residents of the highly valued, sheltered accommodation located on Scotland Lane.) Of those with a problem affecting day-to-day living 14 were receiving help from a family member living in Houghton, 6 from a family member living outside Houghton and 11 from a neighbour in Houghton. 4 said that they did not know where or how to get help and 2 said that no help was available. What form should this extra support take? Comments varied from "2-3 hours once per week" to "Emergency help".

20 out of 29 respondents needing support said that they did not think that their carer was getting all the help she / he needs. 21 people said that they were caring for someone (other than an infant) who is unable to look after themselves. 5 of these 21 carers said that they needed help. 13 of the 21 said that they expected to need help in the future. There were 9 comments ranging from "An extra paid carer to assist part time" to "Relief help for holidays, weekends, emergencies".

34 respondents have difficulty accessing transport to the doctor's surgery, and 65 reported difficulty accessing transport to the three main hospitals.

Ideally, vulnerable Houghton adult residents should be given the choice of care provision. They should be able to use the voluntary assistance available locally, to purchase their own assistance, or to purchase it with government funds. For those whose needs are increasing year on year, the ideal may be flexible use of all three. The challenge for the whole community is to make certain that everyone (including carers) feels comfortable, and has support in claiming the benefits and allowances to which they are entitled.
See Action Point 6.26

4.12 Childcare and children's issues

Childcare facilities within the village are limited. At the time of writing there is no registered childminder in the village. The toddler/play group 'Duck's Friends' (0-4 years), managed on a voluntary basis, meets once a week. The primary school's 4+ unit takes children during the term after their fourth birthday. There is no before/after school club at the school.

Young children may be taken to a playgroup in Stoughton, which meets four mornings a week. Working mothers may pay for care at the nursery at Glebe Farm. A further playgroup opened in Bushby whilst the plan was being prepared.

28 respondents (65% of the 43 household respondents in the 30-45 year age group) have difficulty in accessing childcare that suits their needs. The main problem is lack of local facilities, an issue deemed to be twice as important as facilities not being open at the time required, or expense. The sort of childcare needed, in order of importance is, after-school club, holiday care, pre-school playgroup, day nursery, and parent and toddler group. **See Action Point 6. 27**

90% of 163 respondents with children/grandchildren reported that they used the Weir Lane playing field. Much less use is made of other playing fields, the most popular of which is the St Catharine's Green play area.

Most respondents believe the facilities in the children's play area in the Weir Lane playing field are good or adequate, and that they are well maintained. 133 respondents believe there are enough play areas with equipment in the village, compared with 65 who do not. The play areas most favoured by this substantial minority are, almost equally, the Village Hall playing field, and the St Catharine's Green play area.

5. Young People's responses.

In a separate questionnaire Young People (up to 13 years of age) were asked to state their age and then answer 6 questions. 38 responses were received from a total of 42 young people and it is pleasing to see this number of responses.

5.1 Likes. The first question asked the young people to list three things that they liked a lot about Houghton "Parks and countryside" received most first choice mentions, followed by "proximity of school" and "friends". Second and third choice mentions included 22 further mentions of parks and countryside, 9 mentions of the shops in Houghton. Tennis courts, easy access to Leicester city centre, sports clubs/activities, the guides, scouts, community events, 'fun day' and village celebrations were also mentioned by some.

There were only three specific mentions about safety e.g. 'feel safe even when walking about on your own' but the combined positive points identified by the young people demonstrated them using facilities with confidence e.g. 'being able to go in the fields'.

5.2 Dislikes. Young people were asked to list three items that they did not like very much. Amongst first choice dislikes, the ten and under group mentioned 6 traffic/transport dangers ('A47 dangerous', 'fast cars on the way to school'). In the eleven and over group 7 mentioned the 'lack of things to do' (with two specific mentions of the lack of skateboard facilities) and 5 mentioned the poor provision of public transport. Further reductions to the bus local service will further disadvantage this group. In addition they will be less and less inclined to regard public transport as a viable option as they grow older.

5.3 Activities in Houghton. The question about activities in which people would like to participate if they were available, produced the following responses:-

Activities preferred by young people	1st choice	2nd & 3rd choice
Team games - Rugby/football for girls/hockey/basketball	6	6
Skateboarding	5	4
Horse riding	4	
Swimming	3	
Youth Club	2	
Indoor sports e.g. fencing, badminton	2	
Art club	2	4
Computer Club		2
Social activities for young people (youth club, disco, snooker etc.)		8
Tennis (including 'without having to join a club')		3

Young people expressed an interest in the free or pay - per - use approach to activities, and the feasibility of delivering some within the village, and developing youth activity programmes with partners such as the Leicestershire County Council, should be explored. **See Action Points 6.28 and 6.29**

Reference should also be made to Section 4.4 which records comments of those under 18 to the question 'If available locally, either free or on a pay-per-use basis, which sporting activities would you participate in?'

5.4 Study Support Centre. Asked if they would go to a homework study support centre at the school 10 said 'yes' and 24 said 'no'. Clearly the interest from the young people here is not from the majority but could be worth pursuing for those that are interested. **See Action Point 6.30**

5.5 School bus transport. Asked to comment about the convenience of the school bus service to and from the village, 8 respondents said that the service was convenient (but one commented that it was not well run) and 12 respondents said that the service was not convenient. Comments made included criticism that the service was not punctual, there was some poor behaviour, and that some safety issues cause concern. The responses will be passed to the bodies responsible for providing this service. **See Action Point 6.31**

5.6 Bullying. Young people were invited to leave the section blank if they wished, but the majority provided some response. Reassuringly no one felt threatened often. Eight felt threatened sometimes, 15 never and 6 said that they felt threatened at school. One felt threatened elsewhere (on the No 57 bus). Only one expanded the comments by saying 'when playing near a field footpath we got chased by some teenagers and had to hide in a field in the crops. We were terrified'.

6. Outcomes which might be pursued.

The following tables summarise the key outcomes from the Parish Plan. The remit of the Parish Plan Steering Group was to produce the plan, and residents are now encouraged to form new groups of volunteers, to work with the Parish Council, to progress implementation of the various action points. It will be for the new groups to decide how best to do this, but a number of small groups addressing only a few points each, might be appropriate.

In the following table '**L. C. C'**. refers to Leicestershire County Council (to avoid confusion with Leicester City Council).
'Timescale ' is the suggested time in which work is started on an action area after publication of the plan.

Action Area	**Proposed action**	**Priority**	**Partners**	**Timescale**	**Lead responsibility**	**Resource implications**
Roads:						
6.1 The A47 and road safety.	Conduct an in-depth investigation into the issues raised via the Parish Plan consultation processes. Formulate proposals for improvements and implement.	High	Parish, District & County Councils	6 to 12 months.	L. C. C. and the Parish Council + support	Highways funding
6.2 Road safety near to the village school, on Main Street, and at the Main Street / Ingarsby Lane junctions	Summarise the concerns as set out in the Parish Plan and send to the relevant authorities.	High	District/County Councillors and MP, District and County Councils, Parish Council, School Governors	6 to 12 months	L. C. C. The Parish Council with support.	Effort and financing from statutory agencies
6.3 Wheelchair access into commercial premises and along pavements.	Audit existing premises/facilities to identify requirements. Communicate to the district council.	Medium	Parish & District Councils, users of wheelchairs	12 months	H.D.C Disability Access officer. The Parish Council +support	Funding for identified improvements
6.4 Cycle path from Houghton to Thurnby.	Investigate widening, and designating as a cycle path and pedestrian footpath	Medium	Parish, District & County Councils	12 months	L.C.C.	Funding
6.5 Village Seating.	Explore having more seating, using the questionnaire responses when selecting locations.	Medium	The Parish Council	12 months	The Parish Council + support	Local funding.

Action Area	Proposed action	Priority	Partners	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Resource implications
Transport:						
6.6 Difficulties with transport to access healthcare.	Invite those affected to come forward to analyse the problems that exist and discuss them with the local Healthcare Trust and GP Practice. To research what support may be available from local authorities and the community.	High	L. C. C. Leicestershire Primary Health Care Trust	6 months	L. C. C. Leicestershire Primary Health Care Trust	Funding
6.7 Provision of enhanced voluntary transport scheme in Houghton.	a) Consult with Houghton Help Line, then ask, via Houghton News, for the 42 volunteers identified via the survey to identify themselves to the Helpline. b) Encourage those expressing an interest in car sharing to form a self-help group to develop this initiative	Medium	Houghton Helpline plus local people. Volunteer bureau.	12 months.	Houghton Helpline plus local people.	Volunteer effort and possibly statutory funding.
6.8 Public transport to areas not currently covered	Investigate:- a) support that might be available for local authority community transport schemes. b) possibility of linking into existing schemes. c) possibility of combining with other communities for a combined service. d) for Fosse Park if there a commercially supported service nearby?	High	District and County Councils. Local public transport undertakings.	6 months	L. C. C.	Local Authority funding /subsidy
6.9 Difficulties with transport to access clubs, societies or services.	Invite clubs and societies to participate in the Launch Communication and Exhibition exercises. Existing members of those societies might be able to provide a lift to and from meetings.	High (because there is a reasonable possibility of a positive outcome.)	Houghton-on-the-Hill Parish Plan Steering Group. Local people. Harborough Link	A "closure" communicati-ons exercise for the Steering Group.	The Parish Plan Steering Group	Local volunteer effort, Harborough Link resource.

Action Area	Proposed action	Priority	Partners	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Resource implications
Village Development						
6.10 Influencing developments in the parish	When reviewing local planning applications take into account the recommendations of the Village Design Statement (Parish Plan section 3) and village description (addendum). Provide better communication of proposals to the village.	Very High	Houghton Parish Council. Harborough District Council	As soon as the Parish Plan is adopted by Harborough District Council	Harborough District Council, Parish Council	The Parish Council + interested local people.
6.11 Adoption of section 3 of the Parish Plan by Harborough District Council.	To pursue adoption of the Village Design Statement as supplementary guidance to the development plan for Harborough District.	Very High	Houghton Parish Plan Steering Group & the Rural Community Council & Harborough District Council	In progress now.	Parish Plan Steering Group	Volunteer effort + Harborough District Council.
Village facilities:						
6.12 Village school… a) use for more community activities b) bringing the village and the school closer together	Advise Head and Governors of the results of survey. Work with the Head teacher and Governors to devise proposals for more involvement in the parish community and arrange event(s) for consultation between the school and the parishioners.	Medium	L. C. C. (Adult Education), The Parish Council, the village school, and the Church	6 months	The Parish Council + support	Volunteer effort, School officers time. L. C. C. input.

Action Area	Proposed action	Priority	Partners	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Resource implications
6.13 Sports and other community activities.	a)Advise clubs, groups and societies about the results of the survey, with a recommendation for improving communications regarding activities. b) For potential new groups, publish details from Parish Plan questionnaire in Houghton News to encourage interested parties to form self-help groups. c) Provide a "Welcome Pack" to be given to new residents to inform and encourage participation	Medium Medium	Parish Plan Steering Group plus organised groups in the village Parish Council, Churches, Clubs and Associations	12 months 12 months	Parish Plan Steering Group The Parish Council + support	Volunteer effort. Rural Projects Fund Printing costs (volunteers to produce text and distribute)
6.14 Funding sources for clubs and societies.	Improve accessibility to information about funding sources. Publish in Houghton News and communicate to clubs. Pursue any opportunities raised by the implementation of the Parish Plan	High	Parish and District Councils to act as conduit to District and County Councils. Consult South Leicestershire Council for Voluntary Services	6 months	The Parish Council + support	Volunteer effort. Lottery sports funding.
6.15 Re-cycling of plastics	Notify results of survey to District Council	Medium	Parish and District Councils	12 months	District Council, Parish Council + support	Part of general re-cycling provision
6.16 Litter bins.	Audit existing bins and identify potential locations for others.	Medium	Parish, District & County Councils, owners of commercial premises.	12 months	The Parish Council + support	Local precept funding.
People issues:						
6.17 Crime…increase information about police work.	Arrange opportunities to meet the Village Police Officer.	High	The Parish Council and Local Constabulary	Every year	Local Constabulary, The Parish Council + support	Volunteer effort, some police time.

Action Area	Proposed action	Priority	Partners	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Resource implications
6.18 Crime… increase awareness of need for vigilance, and reporting of suspicious circumstances.	Revitalise Neighbourhood Watch Schemes Undertake in conjunction with 6.17	High	The Parish Council and Neighbourhood Watch	6 months.	The Parish Council + support	Volunteer effort, some police time.
Fields and footpaths.						
6.19 Difficulties when walking field footpaths.	Walk the routes to identify issues and formulate recommendations. Focus initially on footpaths from Stretton Lane to Little Stretton, and from the churchyard to Gaulby/Kings Norton	Medium	Houghton on the Hill Rambling Group with the County Rights of Way Inspector	6 months	The Parish Council +support	Modest
6.20 Accessibility for more people to the footpath from Weir Lane to the Church	Parish Council to consult the County Rights of Way Inspector located at Harborough District Council as to practicalities, and to possible sources of funding (for example might the stiles be converted to kissing gates?)	Medium	District and County Councils	Initial consultation early 2005	The Parish Council +support	To be determined
6.21 Protection of wildlife habitats	Explore and record wildlife habitats in and around the village. Formulate ideas for protection of habitats. Invite interested parties to form a local group	Medium	Local, district and county wildlife enthusiasts	Summer 2005	L. C. C. and Local Interest Group.	Volunteer effort
Heritage.						
6.22 Protecting the most favoured aspects of Houghton.	a) emphasise in Village Design Statement b) consider potential impact when reviewing Planning Applications	High	Harborough District Council. The Parish Council	3 months	The Parish Council	Voluntary time

Action Area	Proposed action	Priority	Partners	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Resource implications
Communications:						
6.23 Village Website	To determine if a volunteer group can be put together to introduce/manage a web site with support from appropriate agencies.	Medium	Local Volunteers and L. C. C.	12 months	Parish Council + support group	Voluntary time and facilities offered by agencies.
6.24 Broadband Service	To determine if there is interest in the parish in forming a computer 'users' mutual support/help group.	Medium	Local people	12 months	Interested local people + agencies which provide support in this area.	Voluntary time and facilities offered by agencies.
6.25 Access to Computing	Possible as an adjunct to having a local library facility, in conjunction with the school or by other means explore the possibility of establishing a computing facility in this village, with user guidance available.	High	L. C. C, Village Hall or school .	3 months	L. C. C., Parish Council + support group	Rural Development Council.
Caring:						
6.26 Support for vulnerable people and their carers through increasing benefit and allowance take up.	Social Services and voluntary sector workers to communicate available support. A home-visit programme to advise prospective claimants on form filling. A central and permanent village information contact point for a full range of updated leaflets An annual Houghton benefits promotion exercise	High	Leicestershire County Council and Voluntary sector. Primary Care Trust's 'Anchor stay & put' initiative.	Ongoing	The Parish Council + support	Voluntary time with support from Leicestershire County Council Social Services department and the PCT.

Action Area	Proposed action	Priority	Partners	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Resource implications
Childcare & Young People's needs:						
6.27 Before / after school / holiday care.	The school should be asked to review the possibilities of before/after school/holiday care.	High	Parish Council, Houghton school, the Churches, Leicestershire County Council Education Authority	6 months	Parish Council plus support	Volunteer effort. Input from the school/local authority.
6.28 Provision of simple to use local facilities, e.g. a tennis net on the Village Hall field.	Identify suitable site(s) and appropriate activities	Medium	Houghton Field Association and local clubs	12 months	Parish Council plus support	Funding.
6.29 Explore youth worker led activities delivered through the school	Explore options, and invite participation of surrounding villages to improve viability	High	Volunteers, Leicestershire County Council, School Officers and Governors.	6 months	Parish Council plus support	Local Authority funding.
6.30 Local Study Support for young people	Explore provision of a facility to provide study support in the village, primarily for under 10s' homework and senior pupils' homework/tutorial, with facilities for more extended learning developed by the local family of schools and library service in concert.	Medium	Houghton School, the Churches, Leicestershire County Council	12 months	Local parents, School Officers & Governors, L.C.C.	Volunteer effort and funding.
6.31 School Transport	Investigate young people's comments about safety.	High	Involve Houghton school governors, Leicestershire County Council	3 months	L. C. C.	L. C. C. effort.

Further copies available by contacting The Clerk to Houghton-on-the-Hill Parish Council

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Houghton-on-the-Hill Parish Plan

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