

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON-ON-THE-HILL PARISH COUNCIL,
HELD IN THE METHODIST CHURCH,
MAIN STREET, HOUGHTON-ON-THE-HILL,
TUESDAY 2nd FEBRUARY 2010, AT 8:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Cllr. Mr. M. Stevenson (Chairman)
Cllr. Mrs. A. Sharman (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. Mrs. Eileen Bent
Cllr. Mr. P. Duke
Cllr. Mr. W. Scott
Cllr. Mrs. Ann Sleath
Cllr. Mrs. S. Swann
Ms. A. M. Davies (Clerk)

7 members of the public including Mrs. Francesca Wall-Bray, Houghton Tree Warden.

The Chairman welcomed Councillors and all members of the public and apologised for the change of venue to the adjoining room in the Methodist Church. This was necessary because the Council had received very short notice that the Methodist Church Schoolroom was in the process of being redecorated.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies from County Cllr. Mr. Simon Galton and District Cllr. Mrs. Amanda Burrell had been received and accepted

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were to be made when agenda items were being discussed and recorded accordingly.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THE 13th JANUARY 2010

The Minutes of the Meeting of the 13th January 2010 were confirmed and signed.

4. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN ON PROGRESS OF DEBATED ISSUES

The Chairman's report was presented primarily as an update for the Councillors' benefit. Issue arising out of this report that requires a decision from the Parish Council will be raised as agenda items as necessary (See Appendix 1, Chairman's Report to the Parish Council 02/02/10).

5. CORRESPONDENCE

1. NALC January 2010 Newsletter. - Noted
2. St. Catharine's Church Audited Accounts, signed and dated 26th November 2009 – Noted.
3. E-mail, 20/01/10, from Mrs. Francesca Wall-Bray asking the PC to consider posting her article/report, "A (sneaky) Look behind the Scenes of the Houghton Tree Project", on the PC website under "Current Issues". – Noted and to be considered under Agenda Item 9. Houghton on the Hill Parish Council Website
4. E-mail from Mr. Peter Hosking, Environmental Works Manager LCC Highways, confirming installation cost of new Streetlight for the HFA car park and footpath at £1,500.00 plus VAT, also PC's reply confirming acceptance of these charges. - Noted
5. E-mail, 21/01/10, from Mr. Ian Stanley, LCC Highways, giving notification of which of the four proposed salt & grit bin locations has been provisionally approved by LCC and which locations have been refused plus reasons for refusal. - Noted and to be considered under Agenda Item 8. Village Salt & Grit Bins.

6. E-mails from Mr. D. T. Wood, 20/01/10 and 30/01/10, requesting copies of all documentation regarding the Village Tree Planting Scheme. - Noted

7. Chairman's draft reply letter to e-mails 20/01/10 and 30/01/10 from Mr. D. T. Wood. A copy of this draft letter had been included in the Meeting Pack.

At the request of Cllr. Mrs. Ann Sleath, and with the approval of Council, the sentence, "*Cllr. Mrs. Ann Sleath, PC website administrator, will shortly be posting copies of the minutes of Houghton on the Hill Parish Council Meetings 2006-02/04/2008 on the PC website*" was amended to, "*The Parish Council will endeavour to post copies of the minutes of Houghton on the Hill Parish Council Meetings 2006-02/04/2008 on the PC website.*" With the exception of this amendment, Council approved the Chairman's draft reply letter to e-mails 20/01/10 and 30/01/10 from Mr. D. T. Wood.

8. E-mail from Mrs. Amanda Bennett, HFA Committee Member, giving notification that she does not wish to receive electronic copies of official correspondence from the PC to HFA. - Noted.

9. E-mail from Mr. Craig Bollard, Chairman HFA, acknowledging receipt of and thanking the PC for the PC Grant 2008/09 of £800.00. Mr Bollard also states that he is unable to understand from the PC letter, 19/01/10, why the PC has not released the full grant of £2,300.00 as in previous years. Mr. Bollard advises the PC that he will seek clarification on this matter from the PC Representative to HFA at the next Quarterly HFA Committee Meeting 08/03/10. Mr. Bollard also advises the Council that, "*as reported at our last HFA meeting (minutes not published as yet) our treasurer is resigning but will stay on until we find a replacement*". Mr. Bollard ends his e-mail with, "*FYI, I do not require a reply to this email*". - Noted

Council agreed that further detailed clarification be e-mailed by the PC to Mr. Craig Bollard and all HFA committee members who have not given notification that they do not wish to receive copies of official correspondence from the PC to HFA.

The e-mail is to give further clarification based on Appendix 1, Chairman's Report to the Parish Council 02/02/10, sub-heading "2008/09 Parish Council Grant to HFA".

10. E-mails and letter from parishioner Mr. D. T. Wood requesting that the PC apply for planning permission for the new HFA footpath/car park streetlight. - Noted

Council considered that planning permission for the additional HFA footpath/car park streetlight is not required; the installation is permitted development by a local authority.

See Appendix 1, Chairman's Report to the Parish Council 02/02/10, sub-heading "Installation of additional streetlight for HFA footpath and car park".

Mr. D. T. Wood is to be informed accordingly.

The Chairman temporarily adjourned the meeting to allow Mrs. Francesca Wall-Bray to give a verbal report on the progress of the Tree Maintenance Programme and Phase III of the Village Tree Planting Scheme. Having thanked Mrs. Francesca Wall-Bray for her report, the Chairman re-opened the formal PC Meeting.

6. TREE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME & PHASE III OF THE VILLAGE TREE PLANTING SCHEME

Council agreed to approve two tree planting/ maintenance days.

7. VILLAGE SALT & GRIT BINS

The clerk reported that, as stated in the e-mail, 21/01/10, from Mr. Ian Stanley, LCC Highways, the following locations were considered during the LCC site visit, 21/01/10, with the following LCC decisions:

Winckley Close: APPROVED.

Linwal Ave: REFUSED. Linwal Avenue is on a P3 provisional salting route and therefore does not qualify.

North Way: REFUSED. As LCC endeavours to try to minimise the number of new bins being placed throughout the county, LCC feels that the section of North Way can be served by the bin on the corner of Winckley Close. (Outside No. 15, North Way)

Chapel Close REFUSED. This is neither a known trouble spot/ sharp incline and as such does not qualify.

- ***It was RESOLVED that, pending the prior agreement of residents living within line of sight of a location approved by LCC Highways, the installation of a salt and grit bin to serve Winckley Close and North Way, at a cost of £200.00 plus VAT, be approved.***

8. FINANCIAL MATTERS

1. Accounts presented for payment:

St. Catharine's Church Tower Restoration Grant 2008/09	£1,500.00
F. Wall-Bray, Volunteer Planting Team travel expenses. (Claim form submitted)	£ 16.00

- ***It was RESOLVED that all accounts presented for payment 02/02/10 be paid in full.***
- ***It was RESOLVED that the purchase of a used replacement HP C6280 All-in-One Printer by the Clerk/RFO be approved, cost to be reimbursed against the presentation of invoices and be recorded under sub-heading "Legal & Financial, Office Equipment & Consumables" in the PC accounts.***

2. Revision of Budget 2009/10

In order to facilitate expenditure resolved by Council since previous budget revision 05/06/09, the clerk presented:

Budget 2009/10, Revised Budget and Forecast to 31st March, Revised 02/02/2010. A copy of this financial spreadsheet had been included in the Mtg. Pack. The spreadsheet also includes a budget update analysis of actual expenditure, income and balance as of 31/01/2010.

For Councillors' information, a second financial spreadsheet, "Budget 2009/10 Original Budget, Revised Budget 06/05/2009 and Revised Budget 02/02/2010", had also been included in the Mtg. Pack. This gives detailed analysis and comparison of the 2009/10 budget at each date of revision and includes an estimated Budget Forecast to 31st March for each revision.

- ***It was RESOLVED that the revised Houghton on the Hill Parish Council Budget 2009/10, presented to the Parish Council 02/02/2010, by the Clerk/RFO be approved.***

Copies of the Revised Budget 2009/10, approved by Council 02/02/10, and the Revised Budget 2009/10 Forecast to 31st March 2010 will be filed with Council's records.

- ***It was RESOLVED that any tree planting/maintenance related expenditure incurred to date in this financial year, 2009/10, for which other statutory power does not exist be coded to S.137.***
- ***It was RESOLVED that £1,500.00 be vired from "Grants" to "Contingencies" to facilitate direct payment to LCC Highways for the installation, at the request of Houghton Field Association, of the new Houghton Field Association footpath/car park streetlight, this expenditure being payment in kind as part of the 2008/09 PC Grant to Houghton Field Association.***

See Minutes 13/01/10, Agenda Item 5. "Correspondence" 3. & 5.

- ***It was RESOLVED that £1,392.00 be vired from "Parish Plan" to "S 137".***

The current total S.137 allowance for Houghton Parish is £7,779.75 (£6.15 x 1,265)

Estimated total Parish Council S.137 expenditure, including the vired £1,392.00, is £2,947.26.

9. HOUGHTON ON THE HILL PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE

Council reviewed the content of Houghton on the Hill Parish Council website.

Resolutions passed at the PC Meeting 04/06/08 approved the posting of confirmed PC Meeting minutes on the PC website.

Currently only minutes from 07/05/08 onwards can be accessed on the PC website; minutes before 07/05/08 are available in hard copy only and subject to published copying charges of 10p per sheet. Cllr. Mrs. Ann Sleath, Houghton PC website administrator, agreed, at her convenience, to begin the process of posting additional confirmed PC Meeting minutes on the PC website.

On completion of this process, electronic copies of PC Meeting minutes from 01/02/06 onwards will be accessible on the PC website.

- ***It was RESOLVED that audited accounts, from 2006 onwards, of Houghton on the Hill PC be approved for posting on the Houghton on the Hill PC website.***

Following some debate on whether Mrs. Francesca Wall-Bray's article/report be posted on the PC website, the Chairman temporarily adjourned the formal meeting to allow Mrs. Wall-Bray to present her case for requesting the web posting of her article/report.

Council having heard Mrs. Wall-Bray, the Chairman re-opened the formal meeting.

- ***It was RESOLVED that the article/report, "A (sneaky) Look behind the Scenes of the Houghton Tree Project" by Mrs. Francesca Wall-Bray, Houghton Tree Warden, be approved for posting, minus the accompanying editorial, as a download under "Current Issues" on the Houghton on the Hill Parish Council website.***

Carried by majority vote 5:2

Cllr. Mrs. Ann Sleath and Cllr. Mrs. Susan Swann requested that their objection be recorded.

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The clerk reported:

1. Planning Application/s PERMITTED:

1. Planning Application 09/01482/FUL

Proposal: Erection of chimney stack to side
 Location: 3, Forsells End, Houghton on the Hill, Leics. LE7 9HQ
 Date received by PC: 14/12/2009
 Planning Application 09/01482/FUL permitted 27th January 2010

2. Planning Application 09/01520/FUL

Proposal: Erection of a first floor rear extension and pitched roofs over existing flat roofs (revised scheme of 09/00447/FUL)
 Location: Eaton House, 57 Main Street, Houghton on the Hill, Leics. LE7 9GE
 Date received by PC: 18/12/2009
 Planning Application 09/01520/FUL permitted 29th January 2010

3. Planning Application 09/01521/LBC

Proposal: Erection of first floor rear extension and pitched roofs over existing flat roofs (revised scheme 09/00448/LBC)
 Location: Eaton House, 57 Main Street, Houghton on the Hill, Leics. LE7 9GE
 Date received by PC: 18/12/2009
 Planning Application 09/01521/LBC permitted 29th January 2010

2. Planning Application/s TO BE CONSIDERED BY PC:

1. Planning Application 10/00086/FUL

Applicant: E. Compton
 Proposal: Erection of tiled roof to rear extension (revised scheme of 09/00907/FUL)
 Location: 15A, Scotland Lane, Houghton on the Hill, Leics. LE7 9GH
 Date received by PC: 30/01/2010
 End of Consultation: 25/02/2010

Having considered the plans the Council instructed the clerk to inform HDC Development Control Team that the Council has no comment to make on this application.

11. VERBAL REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES IN RESPECT OF:

Chairman Cllr. Mr. Mort Stevenson reminded all PC Representatives to village organisations that, when attending committee meetings of the various organisations, the PC Representatives must give the Council's considerations on PC related matters and not the personal opinion of the individual Councillor who has been appointed as PC Representative to the particular organisation.

- **School Governors**
- **Village Charities**

- **Village Hall**

Cllr. Mrs. Susan Swann reported that various estimates for work on the Village Hall kitchen have been received by the Village Hall Committee.

The next meeting of the Village Hall Committee is scheduled for Monday 8th February 2010.

- **Gardeners' Club**

Vice Chairman Cllr. Mrs. Ann Sharman reported that the next HGC Committee Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 9th Feb 2010 at 16, Home Close Rd., Houghton at 7:30pm.

Houghton Gardeners' Club AGM is scheduled for Thursday 11th Feb 2010 - Houghton Methodist Church schoolroom at 7:30pm.

- **LRALC**

- **Field Association**

Cllr. Mr. William Scott, now being in receipt of the draft minutes of the HFA Quarterly Meeting 14/12/09, reported the following addition to his report 13/01/10:

At the HFA Quarterly Meeting 14/12/09, HFA Committee members expressed concern that they had no prior knowledge of the existence of the PC's "HFA Working Party Report" before the report was published as part of the PC Meeting Report in the December 2009 Issue of Houghton News.

Cllr. Mr. William Scott asked the clerk to confirm the sequence of events leading to the publication of the PC's "HFA Working Party Report" in the December Issue of Houghton News.

The clerk confirmed that:

A copy of the Parish Council's "HFA Working Party Report" was sent, 05/11/09, to the HFA Chairman and all HFA Committee Members for whom the PC has an e-mail address. Within days of receipt by HFA, the full "HFA Working Party Report" was posted as a download for worldwide accessibility by the HFA website administrator on the HFA's own website. This posting was several weeks before extracts from the report were published as part of the PC Meeting Report in the December 2009 Issue of Houghton News. The HFA website administrator can confirm that the posting of the report on the HFA's own website preceded the publication of the December Issue of Houghton News by several weeks. This download on the HFA website, together with another official PC document download on the original HFA website, appears to have been removed from the very recently revamped HFA website.

Council agreed that clarification of this issue be included in the same e-mail from the PC to HFA as that agreed by Council under Agenda Item 5. Correspondence 9.

The next Quarterly Meeting of the HFA Committee is scheduled for Monday 08/03/2010, Houghton Pavilion, at 7:30pm.

- **Rural East "Have Your Say"**
- **HDC Planning**
- **CASCET**

Cllr. Mrs. Eileen Bent reported that she had been unavailable for attendance at the CASCET Committee Meeting 20/01/10 and had sent her apologies.

When received, the minutes of the CASCET Committee Meeting 20/01/10 will be filed with Council's records

There being no further business to transact the meeting was closed at 9:40 pm.

SIGNED.....

CHAIRMAN

DATE.....

Appendix 1

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE PARISH COUNCIL 02/02/10

2008/09 Parish Council Grant to HFA

Since 2002, although under no statutory obligation to make any contribution to HFA, the PC has annually donated £2,300.00 of the parish precept to HFA for the stipulated purpose of maintenance. In addition the PC has also funded the grass cutting of the HFA Field at an annual cost of £700.00 - £800.00.

From 1986/2001 the annual PC grant to HFA ranged progressively from £1,542.00 to £2,265.00.

Since 1999, as recorded in the minutes of the PC Meeting 03/03/99, HFA has been informed that the PC grant is to be expended on maintenance.

A copy of Houghton on the Hill Parish Council Policy on Grants, adopted 08/11/07 and revised 04/11/2009, was sent to all village organisation grant applicants. All organisations were clearly informed of any conditions, for the release of a PC grant, that are applicable to their organisation.

HFA was again informed that the PC grant is to be expended on maintenance, i.e. maintenance of existing HFA facilities used by all parishioners and maintenance of the grounds.

Council has received the audited HFA Accounts 2008/09 and the more recently requested analysis of maintenance expenditure. Both the audited accounts and the analysis of maintenance indicate that only £704.00 of the previous PC Grant 2007/08 of £2,300.00 was expended on maintenance.

Therefore as recorded in the minutes 13/01/2010, in accordance with the PC Policy on Grants, the PC was unable to release the full PC Grant 2008/09 of £2,300.00 to HFA. The Council had not received substantiated evidence that the previous 2007/08 Grant of £2,300.00 was expended on maintenance. Council could have resolved not to pay any part of the 2008/09 grant to HFA in accordance with Houghton PC Policy on Grants.

At the PC Meeting 13/01/10, although only £704.00 of the previous PC Grant 2007/08 of £2,300.00 had been expended on maintenance, the Council resolved, for the benefit of Houghton parishioners, to release £800.00 as part payment of the 2008/09 Grant to HFA.

Council had received a request from HFA for the installation of an additional streetlight to serve the HFA footpath and car park. At the PC Meeting 13/01/10, Council resolved that, for the benefit of Houghton parishioners, the funding of the installation of an additional streetlight on the HFA field be approved and that the cost of this installation, estimated at £1,500.00, be payment in kind as part of the PC Grant 2008/09 of £2,300.00 to the HFA. Payment for installation to be made by the PC directly to LCC.

LCC has confirmed that the cost of the installation is £1,500.00 + VAT and the PC has confirmed acceptance of installation cost. Council considers this as contribution towards maintenance. The additional streetlight will serve to improve the safety of all users of the footpath and car park, the surface of both being in poor condition subsequently presenting risk to both pedestrians and motorist, particularly at night.

HFA has sent the relevant signed Wayleave Agreement to LCC.

In the December Issue of Houghton News, Mr. David Wood, announced his resignation as long standing Chairman of HFA and membership of the HFA Committee. This announcement included the statement, *"The Field does its best to provide for all members of Houghton society, but we have no paid staff and rely on donations or our own fund raising."* This statement is at best misleading. It should be remembered that the Field belongs to the parishioners of Houghton and is managed on their behalf by HFA. There was no mention of the fees charged and collected for rent of this village owned land. These fees are intended to be the basic source of income for HFA covering at least all in house running costs.

The PC Grant is therefore restricted specifically to expenditure on maintenance.

Park Life, sub-committee of HFA, is to be applauded for sterling, successful fund raising work, but a long memory is needed to recall fund raising undertaken directly by HFA specifically for HFA.

Installation of additional streetlight for HFA footpath and car park

Council has been advised by Adrian Eastwood, HDC Development Control Manager, that planning permission for the additional footpath light is not required. The installation is considered to be permitted development under Part 12, Development by Local Authorities, Class A. This advice has been received by e-mail and phone. Please see copies of e-mails.

Please also see copy of same e-mails forwarded to the PC by Mr. D. T. Wood, who has apparently yet again misconstrued information received, possibly to suit some personal agenda.

There does not appear to be any record of planning applications for the existing Field footpath lights. LCC has accepted public indemnity responsibility, maintenance and electricity charges for the existing Field footpath lights since their installation and has also accepted these responsibilities for the additional footpath light. Therefore, logic suggests that the existing lights were installed under the same legislation. If LCC considered the lights to be on private land then the responsibility for public indemnity, maintenance and electricity charges would be that of HFA. Although the Field footpath is not recorded as a public right of way, the Field belongs to the parishioners of Houghton and therefore, in these circumstances, it is considered as a public right of way.

Permitted development does not require consultation with residents. The precise location of the new light, decided by HFA, is at a considerable distance from dwellings, angled downwards and away from dwellings. This location, combined with its conventional street lighting design, not a "floodlight", will cause minimum light pollution - dramatically less than any that may be produced by the tennis court floodlights, for which presumably HFA sought planning permission that was subsequently permitted.

As recorded in the minutes of HFA Quarterly Meetings, HFA has wanted this additional light for a number of years, as have parishioners. Parishioners find this dark section of the footpath and car park intimidating with added potential risk of injury owing to the poor condition of the surface of both footpath and car park, which cannot currently be seen at night.

Minutes of Houghton Field Association Quarterly Meeting 07/09/2009, under sub-heading "Health and Safety", record the following: *"The question over a light was brought up again. Dave explained that he had contacted HDC many times. Suggested that maybe the Parish Council could get costs and push forward."* The reference to "Dave" being Mr. D. T. Wood, the then standing Chairman of HFA.

Had Mr. Wood contacted the appropriate authority, Leicestershire County Council not Harborough District Council, the light could have been installed at least eighteen months earlier. The PC has merely successfully followed up on Mr. Wood's own suggestion.

Please see parishioner, Mr. D. T. Wood's forwarded e-mail and letter attachment 30/01/10 insisting that planning permission for the Field streetlight is necessary, and e-mails 20/01/10 & 30/01/10 again in reference to the Village Tree Planting Scheme. Agenda Item 5. Correspondence 6. & 10.

Possibly Mr. Wood, the late long standing Chairman of HFA, is of the mistaken opinion that if the installation of the light is delayed beyond this financial year, HFA will receive the cost of installation as the balance of the PC 2008/09 Grant.

As Councillors are well aware, Council cannot lawfully release any more public funds to HFA in the form of the 2008/09 Grant.

Informal meeting of PC with Park Life Committee

Park life has acknowledged receipt of the Council's letter dated 08/12/09, inviting Park life Committee members to an informal meeting with some members of the PC to discuss funding and maintenance of the proposed new playground.

E-mail, 06/01/10, from the Chairman of Park life Committee advises the Council as follows: *"Following our next Park Life meeting, I will be in touch to organize a mutually agreed date for a meeting to discuss the contents of the letter."*