

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON-ON-THE-HILL PARISH COUNCIL,
HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM,
VILLAGE HALL, MAIN STREET, HOUGHTON-ON-THE-HILL,
WEDNESDAY 3rd OCTOBER 2007, AT 8:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

In the chair: Vice-Chairman Cllr. Mrs. A. Sharman
Cllr. Mrs. E. Bent
Cllr. Mr. P. Duke
Cllr. Mr. W. Scott
Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath
Cllr. Mrs. S. Swann
Ms A. M. Davies (Clerk)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies from Chairman Cllr. Mr. M. Stevenson had been received and accepted
Apologies from District Cllr. Mrs. A. 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 5th SEPTEMBER 2007**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the 5th September 2007 were confirmed and signed.

It was noted, at the request of Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath, that the Council had agreed a budget of £25.00 for the purchase of flowers for Remembrance Day Sunday, and that Cllr. Mrs Ann Sleath's offer to be responsible for the purchase and subsequent placement of these flowers on the War Memorial had been agreed at the PC Meeting 05/07/09.

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

The Chairman read out a report, primarily detailing the progress of issues already debated. The report was for information only. 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).

5. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

Accounts to be settled

Clerk's variable expenses for September 2007	£23.55
HDC Quick Response Team – installation of 7 seats	£802.23
UHY Hacker Young, external audit fee	£158.63
Houghton Field Association Grant 2006/07	£2,300.00

- ***It was RESOLVED that the invoices presented for the clerk's variable expenses, HDC Quick Response Team, and UHY Hacker Young external audit fee be paid in full.***

After some deliberation and discussion:

- ***It was RESOLVED that payment of the 2006/07 grant of £2,300.00 to Houghton Field Association be approved.***
- ***It was RESOLVED that the clerk draw up a draft copy of "Houghton on the Hill Parish Council Policy on Grants", that the draft copy be circulated to all Councillors before the***

PC Meeting 07/11/07 and that the draft copy form the basis for Council discussion and decision for the approval of such a policy at the Meeting 07/11/07.

A cheque for £30.00, payment of the Land Registry fee for the first time registration of the Allotment Garden, had been signed by two Councillors between PC Meetings and needed to be formally approved by full Council.

- ***It was RESOLVED that cheque no. 100583, for £30.00 made out to Land Registry, 17/09/07, as payment for voluntary first time registration fee for the Allotment Garden be approved.***

6. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter from LCC asking the PC “*Can you help us find a Heritage Guardian for your Parish?*” The letter was presented for discussion.

The clerk has displayed the advertising poster, received with this letter, on the village notice board.

2. Letter from the Trading Standards Dept.

Re: Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. Spray Paint Sales and Graffiti

On the 1st July 2005, Section 35 of the above Act came into force. This places a duty on local Trading Standards authorities to consider whether enforcement is necessary with respect to the underage sale of aerosol paint and to carry out enforcement action if it is.

It is an offence to sell an aerosol paint container to a person under the age of sixteen.

In order to gauge the extent of graffiti problems and progress this further the PC had been asked to provide any information it may have in connection with problem graffiti within the parish. Once data has been collected it will be assessed for any evidence of graffiti associated with under sixteen's with a view to organising a test purchase operation working with an underage volunteer.

The clerk was instructed to submit relevant information to The Trading Standards Enforcement Department.

3. Letter from 16, St. Catharine's Way requesting information about three current issues:

[a] Important Open Land at 8A, St. Catharine's Way - the recent pollarding of the mature oak tree on this land and any future building proposals for this land.

[b] The current trend of property owners to enclose open plan fronts.

[c] The detrimental effect of the vastly overgrown Leylandii hedge at 18, Chapel Close not only on the Chapel Close play area but also on the back garden of 16, St. Catharine's Way.

The parishioners had also sent a copy of this letter to the Chief Planning Officer, HDC, and the Houghton Tree Warden. The letter was presented at the PC Meeting.

The clerk had already answered the parishioners' questions by telephone and email.

The parishioners had sent a letter thanking the Council for their swift reply and for “putting our minds to rest”. Copy of this letter was also presented at the PC Meeting.

All correspondence is filed with PC records.

7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Planning Application/s PERMITTED:

1. Planning Application 07/01104/FUL

Proposal: Erection of log cabin for use as a 40 seater tea room and widening of access (re-sub of 07/00353/FUL)

Location: County Gardens, Tilton Lane, Billesdon, Leics.LE7 9FG

Planning Application 07/01104/FUL permitted 13th September 2007

2. Planning Application 07/01303/TCA

Proposal: Works on trees

Location: West Cottages, 4, Stretton Lane, Houghton on the Hill, Leics. LE7 9GL

Planning Application 07/01303/TCA permitted 18th September 2007

3. Planning Application 07/01073/FUL

Proposal: Installation of pitched roof

Location: 7, Firs Road, Houghton on the Hill, Leics. LE7 9GU

Planning Application 07/01073/FUL permitted 24th September 2007

Planning Application/s REFUSED:

1. Planning Application 07/01011/FUL

Applicant: Everards Brewery

Proposal: Erection of a pergola

Location: Old Black Horse, 36, Main Street, Houghton on the Hill, Leics. LE7 9GD

Planning Application 07/01011/FUL refused 19th September 2007

Planning Application/s RECEIVED & CONSIDERED BY PC

1. Planning Application 07/01355/FUL

Proposal: Erection of a single storey side and single storey rear extension and creation of new access (revised scheme of 07/00976/FUL)

Location: 5, Ingarsby Lane, Houghton on the Hill, Leics. LE7 9JJ

Date received by PC: 13/09/07

Date of End of Consultation: 02/10/07 (Council has been granted a time extension)

The PC had considered that the proximity and mass of the two storey side extension of the original, withdrawn building proposal, 07/00976/FUL, would have had a detrimental effect on No.9, Ingarsby Lane in terms of oppression and restriction of access to light. The revised scheme, 07/01355/FUL, proposes a reduction in mass to a single storey side extension; consequently the PC no longer considered any necessity to make further comment on the building proposals of the current application 07/01355/FUL.

However, since the proposed new front boundary of this property will extend to the pedestrian pavement running adjacent this boundary, the Parish Council considered that a height restriction on any fence or hedge erected between the two proposed access points would be appropriate. This request to be made on the grounds of public safety in terms of visibility and the retention of the appearance of the prevailing street scene.

The clerk was instructed to inform HDC Development Control Team accordingly.

8. TREE PLANTING SCHEME

The Clerk reported:

Notification received by PC this morning, 03/10/07.

As of 27th September 2007 the oak tree at 8A, St. Catharine's Way is under the protection of an official Tree Preservation Order.

The owner of the land on the other side of the Northern boundary of the allotments is no longer willing to give permission for the planting of hedging whips on his side of this boundary. Houghton Tree Warden, Mrs. Francesca Wall-Bray, will be informed of the withdrawal of this permission.

The Clerk confirmed that the Council is in receipt of:

[a] Written confirmation from Mr. Clive Howe, LCC District Engineer, that all except one of the individually named planting sites on LCC land have been cleared in respect of easements of Public Utilities and Highways Regulations. (For list of named sites see Minutes 05/09/07)

EXCEPTION: Linwal Ave / Scotland Lane verge in front of sub-station - there are so many underground cables running into the sub station that there is no room for planting proposed for this small verge. Mr. Clive Howe is not opposed to the planting of bulbs but, since sub-station maintenance crews and their equipment need periodic access across this verge, the planting of bulbs may not be a practical proposition in terms of flower survival.

Advice from Houghton Tree Warden, Mrs. Francesca all-Bray, is to be sought on this matter.

[b] Written confirmation from Mr. Peter Kenyon, LCC Arborist, that the suitability of specific species of tree/s and or shrubs for each named planting site has been approved by LCC Forestry Section.

The estimate for tree planting supplies from Wistow Nurseries has been obtained, but this nursery is unable to supply some of the specialist trees which the Council wish to order.

The Tree Warden had advised the Council that there may be slight fluctuation in any estimates for tree planting supplies depending on the availability of supplies at the time of ordering and on circumstances presented on the planting days. Having approved James Coles & Sons Nurseries Ltd. as best value suppliers for Phase 1 of the Tree Planting Scheme and having been completely satisfied with the service provided (free delivery, reliability and, being local, the facility to effect last minute changes including replacement trees on the day of planting and/or last minute changes necessitated by the nature of tree planting work) the Council decided to continue to approve James Coles & Sons Nurseries Ltd. as best value suppliers for Phase 2 of the Village Tree Planting Scheme.

- ***It was RESOLVED that James Coles & Sons Nurseries Ltd. continue to be approved as best value suppliers for Phase 2 of the Village Tree Planting Scheme.***

9. VILLAGE SEATING

The Council decided that the two original wooden village seats are in need of refurbishment. This is to be achieved by sanding and re-staining, colour of stain to match that of the seven new seats. The HDC contracted labour force the Quick Response Team had submitted an estimate of £167.50 NET of VAT. The cost includes time to carry out the work and cost of materials. This is the same two man labour force who installed the seven new seats. The Council had been completely satisfied with the standard of work, attention to detail and reliability of the HDC contracted labour force the Quick Response Team.

- ***It was RESOLVED that the estimate of £167.50 NET of VAT submitted by HDC contracted labour force the Quick Response Team be approved as best value for the sanding and re-staining of two wooden village seats.***

The clerk was instructed to make arrangements for the undertaking of this work.

10. LITTER BINS

All Councillors present at this PC Meeting agreed to meet at 10:30 am, Saturday 6th October, to conduct a village walk in order to ascertain:

[a] The condition of the existing village litter bins.

[b] The adequacy of the emptying frequency of existing litter bins.

[c] The possible need for extra litter bins to be located near some of the new village seats.

Findings to be reported and discussed at the PC Meeting 07/11/07.

11. VILLAGE PUMP

Cllr. Mrs. Ann Sharman reported:

A site visit took place on Monday 1st October. Present were Mr. Peter Clipstone, HDC Manager of Sheltered Housing, Mr. Clive Howe, District Highways Engineer, and the HDC contractor who is to undertake the correction of the land slippage, removal of tree stumps, vegetation and excess soil. The clerk has been informed that work is to start within the next three weeks, after Mr. Peter Clipstone and Mr. Clive Howe have finalised the relevant costs, and precise amounts of the costs, which fall within their respective domains. The Council will be notified of dates. It is expected that the setting aside of the well housing, the correction of the land slippage and the erection of safety barriers, including the safety cover of the exposed well access, will take one or possibly two days. The safety barriers securing the site will be left in place for at least six weeks, at no cost to the Council. Negotiations, in respect of who will bear the cost of the rebuilding of the well housing, are still in progress.

12. PAVEMENT PARKING IN THE VILLAGE

Concern about the dangers presented to both pedestrians and motorists by the ever present problem of pavement parking in the village was, yet again, deliberated by Council.

The problem reaches its peak at school opening and closing times. The school is well aware of the problem. Councillors were pleased to note that Mrs. Sheila Curran, Community Governor for the Primary School, was in attendance at the PC Meeting. Under agenda item No.15, "Verbal Reports of Representatives in respect of: School Governors", Mrs. Sheila Curran would be able to inform the Council of any current proposals that the school may have to alleviate this problem and also to pass on the Council's concerns at the next Meeting of The Board of School Governors.

Various suggestions were made, deliberated, discussed and considered by Council.

All Councillors present at this PC Meeting had agreed, under agenda item No.10 "Litter Bins" to meet at 10:30 am, Saturday 6th October, to conduct a village walk. It was agreed by Council that this walk would also include visits to pavement parking hot-spots and on site discussion of the specific problems peculiar to each site, i.e. width of pavement, width of road, location of bends, visibility obstruction to both pedestrians and motorists etc.

Findings to be reported and discussed at the PC Meeting 07/11/07.

The Clerk was instructed to explore the possibility of acquiring police assistance with this problem, e.g. visual police presence at several school opening and closing times in order to promote motorist awareness of unlawful and obstructive parking. The Clerk was also asked to enquire if there are any other current police community schemes which may provide help relevant to this problem.

13. ALLOTMENTS LAND REGISTRY

The Clerk reported:

As of 18th September 2007 the allotment land, Houghton Allotment Garden, is officially registered with the Land Registry Office.

Houghton Parish Council is the registered proprietor and the class of title is "Title Absolute".

The Official Copy of Register of Title is filed with the Parish Council's records.

14. CHANGE OF VENUE FOR PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council considered and discussed the change of venue for PC Meetings.

- ***It was RESOLVED that as of November 2007 the monthly Houghton Parish Council Meeting be held in the Houghton Methodist Church Schoolroom.***

15. VERBAL REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES IN RESPECT OF:

• **School Governors**

Mrs. Sheila Curran, Community Governor for the Primary School, reported:

The School welcomes good relationships with the Parish Council and hopes that the Council’s invitation for the attendance of a School Community Governor at PC Meetings, in the capacity of liaison person between School and PC, will be of benefit to both the Primary School and the Parish Council.

The next Meeting of the Board of School Governors is on Mon. 8th October.

“School Parking” is on the agenda and the Council’s concerns would be passed on. At present it is unknown whether the new landlord of The Old Black Horse will continue to allow the public house car park to be used for school parental parking. The PC will be informed of any progress or proposals made to address parking problems.

Mrs. Sheila Curran also extended an invitation to any Councillor who might be willing to give a talk to the children about the role of the Parish Council in local government.

• **Village Charities**

Cllr. Mr. Peter Duke gave a detailed report on progress with arrangements for Remembrance Day Sunday. All aspects of the arrangements are progressing according to plan and are under control. The Council is grateful for the contribution of time and effort willingly given by various small groups of parishioner volunteers. This volunteer help is recognised as being an indispensable contribution towards the success of the event.

- **Village Hall**
- **Allotments**
- **LRAPLC**
- **Field Association**
- **Have your Say**

There being no further business to transact the meeting was closed at 9:35 pm.

SIGNED.....

CHAIRMAN

DATE.....

Appendix 1

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE PARISH COUNCIL 03/10/07

Development at the top of Elizabeth Close

Corlett Housing Ltd. has applied to HDC for access to the HDC sewer drains. HDC are aware that currently only three houses are still council houses, Numbers 8, 7 and 2.

In these changed circumstances, HDC's solicitors will advise Corletts that they must negotiate with all 8 owners (7 private plus HDC) for the grant of the necessary rights.

Corlett's fallback position is to requisition a public sewer - Severn Trent would have a statutory obligation to lay one from the development down the adopted highway to reach the nearest Severn Trent maintained pipe. This would be very expensive but if No. 10 (or anyone else) refuses to give permission there would not seem to be any alternative. Agreeing compensation with 8 owners, getting them (and possibly their mortgagees) to sign a deed (plus paying all their legal and valuation costs) would be a logistical nightmare. Going to Severn Trent would be infinitely easier, but the relative costs of the two options is likely to decide matters at the end of the day, unless time is more important of course.

This information is to be conveyed by HDC solicitors to Corlett Housing Ltd. No further action can be taken until Corlett Housing Ltd has made a decision on these alternatives.

This matter now falls within the remit of HDC, HDC Solicitors and District Councillors.

The oak tree located on Important Open Land at 8A, St. Catharine's Way.

Outline Planning Application 07/01050/FUL, refused 03/09/2007, brought to light that the old oak tree located on this site does not enjoy the protection of a Tree Preservation Order. A site visit was conducted on Mon. 23/09/2007 in order to establish if this mature old tree, although pollarded the previous week, is deserving of a Tree Preservation Order. Present at the site visit were Mr. Gareth Jones (Development Control Manager HDC), Mr. Peter Kenyon (LCC Arborist) and Mrs. Francesca Wall-Bray (Houghton Tree Warden).

Mr. Peter Kenyon is to write a report on this tree. The report will be forwarded to Mr. Gareth Jones, who will then decide if the tree is to be given a priority Tree Preservation Order. Council will be informed of the decision.

This planning application also brought to light that there is a Severn Trent adopted brown Foul Sewer running adjacent to number 8 and under plot 8A St. Catharine's Way. The clerk has obtained an underground map from Severn Trent showing the exact location of this sewer. Also confirmation from Severn Trent that a Building Over Agreement for a new build on this plot is unlikely to receive authorisation. This is in order to prevent pressure from damaging the sewer in any way. Copies of this email communication with Severn Trent, and the map, have been sent to Mr. Gareth Jones, Development Control Manager HDC.

Street Name Sign on Scotland Lane.

The damaged street name sign for Scotland Lane has been removed and replaced with a new one.

Scotland Lane, Sheltered Housing wooden boundary markers.

Repair work to the short wooden boundary markers, edging the Sheltered Housing verge along Scotland Lane, is currently in progress.

Excessively overgrown leylandii hedge in Chapel Close area.

The Council is still awaiting action which was due to take place last month, September.

The Clerk is to pursue the matter.

Black Bag

Will Councillors please remember to circulate the "black bag".