

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON-ON-THE-HILL PARISH COUNCIL,
HELD IN THE METHODIST CHURCH SCHOOLROOM,
MAIN STREET, HOUGHTON-ON-THE-HILL,
WEDNESDAY 4th FEBRUARY 2009, AT 8:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

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

County & District Cllr. Mr. Simon Galton
1 member of the public, Houghton Tree Warden Mrs. Francesca Wall-Bray

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies from Chairman Cllr. Mr. Mort Stevenson and Cllr. Mr. William Scott 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 14th JANUARY 2009

The Minutes of the Meeting of the 14th January 2009 were confirmed and signed.

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

The Chairman presented a report, primarily detailing the progress of issues already debated. The report was for information only and a copy of the report had been circulated to all Councillors 27/02/09. 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:

S. Clark, bus shelter cleaning (5 x £6.50)	£32.50
Veolia ES (UK) Ltd., Emptying of dog-waste bin (Oct. 08 to March 09)	£52.90

- ***It was RESOLVED that all accounts presented for payment 04/02/09 be paid in full.***

6. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter from Houghton Methodist Church thanking the PC for the 2008/09 grant towards the maintenance of the Methodist Church Schoolroom – noted.
2. Letter from HDC – Notification of change of date of Annual Parish Meeting and invitation to attend. New date, Tuesday 3rd March 2009 – noted.
3. RCC, Rural Community Council, invitation to attend “Rural Action Seminar”, March 12th 2009, 6:00pm Sparkenhoe Suite, County Hall, Glenfield – noted.
4. RCC advance notice of annual “Rural Services Survey” to be received by county Parish Councils with the request to complete and return by May 29th 2009.
When received by the PC, Cllr. Mr. Peter Duke offered to complete and return the RS Survey.
5. RCC Invitation - Leicestershire & Rutland Best Village Competition 2009 – noted.
Council agreed that Councillor Representatives to village organisations would, where relevant, notify these organisations of the invitation.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1. Planning Appeal IN PROGRESS

Planning Appeal APP/F2415/A/09/2093861/WF

Application 08/01456/FUL, Refused 29th December 2008. Alterations to access gateway (resubmission of 08/01131/FUL)

Location: 28, Uppingham Road, Houghton on the Hill, Leics. LE7 9HH

Date received by PC: 23/01/2009

Appeal Validated 15/01/2009

Overall expiry date 26/02/2009

The Clerk was instructed to submit additional Parish Council comments to the Planning Inspectorate. These comments being in support of the Refusal Decision, 29/12/2008, for Planning Application 08/01456/FUL, the removal by HDC, 18/12/2008, of unauthorised structures erected by the appellant contrary to the Refusal Decision 05/04/2005 and subsequently the Parish Council's request that Planning Appeal APP/F2415/A/09/2093861/WF be dismissed.

2. Planning Applications TO BE CONSIDERED BY COUNCIL:

1. Planning Application 08/01519/FUL

Proposal: Erection of wall and gates

Amended proposal description: Erection of wall and gates (**retrospective**)

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

Date of original proposal received by PC: 15/01/2009

Date of amended proposal received by PC: 19/01/2009

End of Consultation: 09/02/2009

Having considered the plans the Council instructed the Clerk to inform HDC Development Control Team of Council's reasons for objection to Planning Application 08/01519/FUL

2. Planning Application 09/00056/TCA

Proposal: Felling of two trees

Location: 4, The Rise, Houghton on the Hill, Leics. LE7 9GQ

Date received by PC: 23/01/2009

Overall Expiry Date: 05/02/2009

Although the Council had no specific objection to this application, the clerk was instructed to inform HDC Development Control Team that the Council continues to oppose any unnecessary felling of trees, particularly in the conservation area.

The Chairman temporarily adjourned the meeting enabling Mrs. Francesca Wall-Bray, Houghton's Tree Warden, to give a verbal report on the progress of the Tree Maintenance Programme. Having thanked Mrs. Francesca Wall-Bray for her report, the Chairman re-opened the formal meeting.

7. TREE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

Weather conditions had made it impossible for Council approved tree maintenance days to be used. Council agreed that previously approved, but unused, tree maintenance days be carried over to when weather conditions allowed for this work to be undertaken.

8. HOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE

Cllr. Mrs. Ann Sleath updated the Council on research on possible PC website uses and informed the Council that the website receives a substantial number of visits per month.

A direct link to HDC Planning Department now exists on the Parish Council website. This link provides detailed information on undecided planning applications in Houghton, Bushby, Thurnby and Keyham.

9. DOG FOULING

1. Council agreed to submit an article for publication in the March Issue of Houghton News, thanking responsible dog owners for their appreciated co-operation but reminding irresponsible dog owners of the consequences of their unacceptable and unlawful actions.

2. Council instructed the clerk to ask HDC for an additional yellow anti-dog fouling stencil on the footpath at the Linwal Avenue end of the Linwal Ave./Uppingham Rd. footpath.

3. Houghton Field Association had requested (as recorded in the written report submitted to the PC, 10/12/08, by Cllr. Mr. William Scott) that the PC might re-install the existing dog waste bin on the HFA Field at one end of the HFA Field footpath and that an additional bin might be installed at the other end.

Council agreed to accept HDC Waste Management Department's offer to install an additional dog waste bin, free of charge, at the car park end of the field footpath. Precise location to be agreed with HFA.

Council agreed that the existing dog waste bin on the HFA field would remain in its current location since moving it to the other end of the field would place it too close to residential properties.

4. Council agreed to accept the offer of Veolia ES (UK) Ltd. to empty the additional dog waste bin free of charge until 31st March 2009.

The clerk was instructed to make the appropriate implementation arrangements with HDC Waste Management, Veolia ES (UK) Ltd. and Houghton Field Association.

- *It was RESOLVED that the once weekly emptying of an additional dog waste bin be included in the Parish Council's service contract with any new service company that supersedes Veolia ES (UK) Ltd. after 31st March 2009.*

Council agreed that the clerk would obtain at least three estimates for the Parish Council's service contract, April 2009 – March 2010, for the weekly emptying of two dog waste bins, the grass cutting of the HFA field, the Village Hall field and St. Catharine's churchyard. All services currently provided by Veolia ES (UK) Ltd.

10. VERBAL REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES IN RESPECT OF:

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

Cllr. Mrs. Susan Swann reported:

Next meeting of Village Hall Committee: Monday 10th February 2009 – Houghton Village Hall, 7:30pm

- **Allotments**

Vice Chairman Cllr. Mrs. Ann Sharman gave a report on the Houghton Gardeners' Club Committee Meeting 22/01/09.

A copy of the minutes of the HGC Committee Meeting 22/01/09 is filed with Council's records.

Houghton Gardeners' Club AGM will be held on Thursday 5th February 2009 – Methodist Church Hall, Main Street, 8:00pm

- **LRALC**
- **Field Association**
- **Rural East "Have Your Say"**

Cllr. Mrs. Susan Swann reported:

Next meeting of the Rural East Community Forum: Tuesday 31st March 2009 - venue and time currently undecided.

- **CASCET**

Various Eco Town and CASCET press releases and e-mail up-dates had been circulated to all Councillors.

Cllr. Mrs. Eileen Bent gave an extensive verbal report on current CASCET issues, progress, potential legal actions to be undertaken and crucial forthcoming fund raising events.

Cllr. Mrs. Eileen Bent and County Cllr. Mr. Simon Galton had been part of a group of CASCET supporters who attended the first day, 22nd January, of the BARD Judicial Review hearing, Case No: CO/5990/2008 at the Royal Courts of Justice, London.

BARD Judicial Review: After a three day hearing, 22nd, 23rd and 26th Jan. 2009, the BARD challenge, that the government’s eco-towns policy and programme are unlawful, was dismissed. A copy of the “Summary of the Court’s Conclusions”, 27/01/2009, on Case No: CO/5990/2008 is filed with Council’s records.

The Oxfordshire Campaign Group and Marrons, CASCET solicitors, had submitted formal letters to the High Court of Justice in support of the BARD challenge.

The dismissal decision had been expected and predicted by Marrons, when CASCET first discussed the possibility of a legal challenge. Marrons had advised that it was too early at the initial stage and that CASCET should wait until a later stage in the whole consultation process.

CASCET is in urgent need of increased funding in order to finance well-timed future legal challenges. It is estimated that CASCET will need to raise at least a further £50,000 for this purpose.

DCLG has confirmed that DCLG eco-town roadshow events are to be held at the following venues and times: Friday 13th February - Parish Hall, Great Glen, 4pm - 8pm

Saturday 14th February - Parklands Leisure Centre, Oadby, 10am - 5pm

These events will be advertised locally.

An eco-town update article will be submitted for publication in the March Issue of Houghton News.

The next CASCET Committee Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 5th February 2009 - Great Glen Parish Office, 7:30pm.

When received, the minutes of the CASCET Committee Meeting, 05/02/2009, will be filed with Council’s records.

There being no further business to transact the meeting was closed at 9:00 pm.

SIGNED.....

CHAIRMAN

DATE.....

Appendix 1

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE PARISH COUNCIL 04/02/09

Burglaries in the village

There have recently been two burglaries in the village, one in Freer Close the other in North Way. Neighbourhood Watch will be submitting an article, for publication in the March Issue of the Houghton News, to promote village awareness of the recent criminal activity and to urge home security vigilance.

Eco Town.

Any new information received will be considered by Council under Agenda Item 11, CASCET.

LCC Highways issues

1. Concerns about the provisions made for the safety of pedestrians adjacent to the A47 in the area fronting the two service stations and the Rose & Crown public house.

LCC Highways has been out on site visits and Mr. Clive Howe, LCC District Highways Engineer, has confirmed that action to be taken will involve new white lines and very possibly a pavement. It is realistically possible that these actions will be implemented before the end of the financial year.

2. Maintenance of the LCC verge adjacent to 14, Scotland Lane

LCC Highways has inspected this area and has assured the Parish Council that appropriate remedial maintenance work is imminent.

Village grass cutting

Following justified complaints about the unacceptable standard of last summer's grass cutting throughout the county, Leicestershire County Council has agreed to increase the number of urban cuts, i.e. cuts in villages, from 9 to 12 cuts per growing season. There will be 4 rural cuts per growing season.

Harborough District Council recycling & waste collection

The company that provides most of HDC's "Street Scene" services is set to change in April after a re-tendering exercise. The current contracts for recycling and waste collection, street cleaning and ground maintenance, which are currently held by Veolia ES (UK) Ltd., expire on 31st March. The present cost of providing the services is £4m and the bids submitted by 3 companies were very close. The new contract has been awarded to FOCSA because this company scored highest on quality.

The collection methods and service standards have not been changed in the new contract, which requires the contractor to maintain and build upon the District Council's high recycling rate. Our District Councillors have been urging HDC to pursue the provision of a plastic kerbside collection and this is being discussed with FOCSA within the overall budget for the service. HDC is also exploring a weekly collection of domestic food waste.

The Parish Council is still awaiting details and estimates, for the financial year 2009/10, from FOCSA for the emptying of dog waste bins and the grass cutting of the HFA field, the Village Hall field and the churchyard. These are services currently provided by Veolia ES (UK) Ltd. and paid for by the Parish Council.

Dog fouling

Although village dog owners are generally good about picking up and removing their pets' waste, there has recently been a spate of some dog owners picking up dog waste but then throwing the plastic bag containing the waste into the nearest hedge or ditch. This has been particularly prevalent on the footpath that links Linwal Avenue with the A47, the Uppingham Road. The hedge bordering this footpath has been festooned with festering bags of dog waste. The Parish Council has received a number of phone calls from parishioners reporting this totally unacceptable practice.

Action taken:

- Mr. Martin Welford, HDC Enforcement Officer, has been out on early morning site visits, 7:30am onwards, hopefully to apprehend offenders in the act and to issue Fixed Penalty Notices of £50.00
- Mr. Alan Bridges, HDC Dog Warden, has also been alerted and will be making random visits.
- Since this practice presents a health risk, HDC Waste Management was informed and the unlawfully dumped bags have been removed.
- Additional anti-dog fouling notices have been posted on the lamp posts along the footpath.
- When the weather permits, the faded yellow anti-dog fouling stencil, at the Uppingham Road end of the footpath, will be restored.

Further Council consideration of this issue will be under Agenda Item 10, Dog fouling.