

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON-ON-THE-HILL PARISH
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, VILLAGE HALL, MAIN
STREET, HOUGHTON-ON-THE-HILL ON WEDNESDAY 5th APRIL 2006 AT
8:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Cllr. Mr M. Stevenson (Chairman)
Cllr. Mrs A. Sharman
Cllr. Mrs A. Sleath
Cllr. Mr S. Blackwell
Dr. D. Campbell (Parish Clerk)

1. PRESENTATION BY MRS M. WOODCOCK - NEIGHBOURHOOD
WATCH CO-ORDINATOR

Before the Parish Council meeting opened, the Council was pleased to hear a short report from Mrs M. Woodcock, the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator. She was able to report that over half of the houses in the village are now in the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. The next phase of the project was to contact the remaining half and to increase the total number subscribing to the project. She said that this was going to be achieved through leaflets posted to these houses and the encouragement and recruitment of local co-ordinators. New metal signs have been ordered and will soon be delivered and strategically placed throughout the village.

The Parish Council thanked Mrs M. Woodcock for her report and her work on this project. The Council added that if she needed any help they would be pleased to help in anyway it could.

Following this presentation the Chairman opened the meeting at 8:15 pm.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mrs A. Nunan and Mr R. Davis.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 1st MARCH 2006

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 1st March 2006, were confirmed, and signed.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

1. Charity Commission

The Parish Clerk was asked to draft letter to the Charity Commissioners expressing the Parish Council's concern over the Field Association (see agenda item 14).

Action - Completed

2. Low Flying Aircraft

The issue of low flying aircraft was to be brought up at the next Billesdon Forum (see agenda item 16).

Action – Completed

3. Annual Highway Patrol

The Clerk has been asked to list highway issues and to ask if members of the Parish Council could accompany the Council Highway Officers on their annual highway patrol through the village (see agenda item 9).

Action - Completed

4. Neighbourhood Watch

The Parish Council asked the Clerk to write to Mrs Woodcock her giving her permission to purchase new signs for neighbourhood watch.

Action - Completed

5. Planning issues

An application for a double garage at 25 Uppingham Road was discussed and the Clerk asked to prepare a report to reflect the Parish Council's objection to this development.

Action - Completed

6. Allotment Deeds

The Clerk is to identify where the allotment deeds are kept and who has them before any land registration can take place.

Action – Completed

7. Allotment Contributions

The issue of the negative response from Parish Councils regarding contributions and the loss of the Garden Club's representation on the Parish Council is to be discussed with them before the next meeting.

Action Continuing - Cllr M. Stevenson

8. School Governors

The Clerk was asked to write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors to resign and ask if they could see a way to maintain a close link with the Parish Council without a full governorship.

Action - Completed

9. Policy on travellers

The Council felt that a unified policy on travellers was sensible but would like to see the Field Association's draft document before giving final approval for them to use the contents of the Parish Council's document.

Action - Completed

6. CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 HSBC

A letter from the bank drew attention to a possible high rate interest accounts for the Parish Council funds. The Clerk was asked, with the help of Cllr S. Blackwell, to look the situation and effect a change if the Council could benefit.

Action - Parish Clerk and Cllr Blackwell

6.2 Consultation on Community Involvement

A letter offering consultation on Leicestershire Statement of Community Involvement was received. The Parish Council decided not to respond.

6.3 Grass Cutting

The Council had received notice of a 3% increase in the maintenance service for Houghton on the Hill. A discussion on the grass cutting quality of the service ensued and the Clerk asked to write a letter to the grass cutting company about damage seen in the Churchyard.

Action - Parish Clerk

6.4 Highway Patrol

Notice of the Annual Highway Safety Inspection by HDC & LCC was received early in February. The action on the Clerk to respond to the contents of this letter was completed, and overtaken by events (see agenda item 9).

6.5 Electronic Consultation

The County Council would like to send planning consultations electronically where possible. The Clerk had responded to this request and the expectation was that such communication would start soon.

6.6 E-Mails

A series of e-mails had been received in the month:

- Field Association – notification that accounts will be ready before the July meeting
- Confirmation that weights limit of 7.5 tonnes is set through the village
- Crime number received for damage to Allotment Gardens
- Invitation of Community Consultation Seminar
- Many e-mails concerning planning applications at 25 Uppingham Road had been received and because of their quantity have been filed in date order and circulated in the 'black bag'.

7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Three planning applications had been received concerning a development at 25 Uppingham Road. The first was an application concerning a demolition and the building of a new dwelling, the second was for a detached garage, and the third was for revisions to the plans for the detached garage. As the date for submission for comment on the demolition and building of a new dwelling was before this present meeting, a response had already been submitted with the agreement with all Council members.

Other applications concern an extension to the Service Station and Garage at the top of Main Street and the other was the demolition of two houses and the building of two new ones on the Uppingham Road. A site meeting to consider these applications was arranged for Friday 7th April 2006 at 12:00.

Cllr Mrs A. Sharman declared an interest at this point and said that because of family ties she was excusing herself from the site visit to the Garage.

The Clerk complained of the poor service and lateness of applications sent to the Parish Council from the planning department. The Clerk was asked to detail some examples and send them to Mr L. Wiggins at HDC to see if anything could be done to improve matters.

Action - Parish Clerk

8. FINANCIAL MATTERS

8.1 Payment of hire of Committee Room of Village Hall for Parish Council meetings - £110 **to be paid**.

8.2 Annual Subscription for 'aplc' - £270 **to be discussed**

8.3 Footpath Association - £5 **to be paid**

8.4 Local Council Review Subscription - £13.60 **to be paid**

8.5 Salusbury Solicitor - £58.75 **to be paid**

Action - Parish Clerk

9. HIGHWAYS, A47, & SCHOOL SAFETY

Cllr Mrs A. Sleath gave a report on the two Highway Patrols undertaken on the 16th and 23rd of March 2006. During this report, she identified a range of actions and decisions needed from the County, District and Parish Councils. The following are the main aspect to come from her report and the discussion that followed:

9.1 The Council discussed the state of the grass verges along the A47 due to traffic parking off road. HDC had indicated that bollards and re-seeding would solve the problem and repair and maintain the verges, however LCC took the view that this would not provide a long-term solution and hence would not be undertaken. They were unable to offer any other solution.

9.2 The Council discussed the issue of whether a footpath alongside the Rose and Crown or a hatched area along side of the A47 would be most appropriate. HDC and LCC would review both options and let us know what their decision will be.

9.3 An examination of the footpath outside Sunnybrae showed that the boundaries of the garage and highways need identification before a solution for a footpath position outside these premises could be determined.

9.4 The state of Linwal Ave. footpath was discussed including the possibility of some encroachment. The Council asked the Clerk to send a letter to John Thompson in the Planning and Development Control at Glenfield to have the situation looked into and sorted out.

Action - Parish Clerk

9.5 The Council has received a response to the query on weight restriction of HGV's through the village by the e-mail response of the 22nd March.

9.6 The bus stop move should go ahead and the Clerk was authorised to write to Biddy Small of the Public Transport Dept., Glenfield to initiate the necessary action.

Action - Parish Clerk

9.7 Agreement was reached that safety fencing could be erected on the bend to solve the problem of cars mounting the kerb.

(Clerk's Note: *this has already been measured up and laid out.*)

9.8 The difficulty of crossing the road to the footpath that leads to Freer Close on the second bend became obvious when shown. If a crossing warden would be stationed on the footpath side then this would solve the problem. HDC suggested that the School's Travel Plans should be consulted and amended, if necessary, to include this as well as flashing lights to warn drivers of the hazard. The Council asked the Clerk to contact the Head Teacher at the School to see if this was included in the School's Travel Plans.

Action - Parish Clerk

9.10 A debate on traffic calming issues showed the Council split on the efficacy of an additional hump at the start of the 20 mph zone. The Clerk was instructed to write to Michael Hay of TPI Department or Angy Dunn of Highway Transport and Waste management (both at Glenfield) to see what options were available.

Action - Parish Clerk

9.11 Signs from the police asking for no parking in the area of the school were disintegrating. Cllr Sleath had spoken to the police and they had renewed them but they were again quickly deteriorating. The police were going to re-new them once more.

9.12 The verge outside the cricket field was discussed in detail. The preferred solution was to put in a kerb and a bund. The Parish Council discussed this

and allowing for the School Head's requirements, believed that in the interests of safety, visibility and to stop the unsightly mess this should be adopted. The Council awaits the formal response from LCC on this issue.

9.13 A discussion took place concerning the positioning of wooden bollards to stop people driving on the pavement in order to pass on coming traffic. In view of the damage to property and the danger to pedestrians, it was approved.

10. A REPORT FROM THE WORKING PARTY ON THE PARISH PLAN

Cllr Mrs A. Sleath presented a report on the results of a working party meeting arranged for the 15th March. The meeting was attended Mr S. Carding from the RCC who has been tasked with getting Parish Plans underway. He came to review progress and to offer any help.

The meeting started by a review all of the proposed actions from the Parish Plan.

Of the 31 activities mentioned:

2 no longer relevant (6%)

14 completed or are underway (45%)

4 cannot be a Parish Council responsibility (13%)

6 need more research and clarification (19%)

5 would form good project and need to be considered (16%).

The discussion in the Parish Council meeting then centred on the five suggestions that were identified as potential projects:

10.1 Action 6.5 Village Seating

The Working Party had concluded that extra seating in the village was both desirable and an asset to the village. It was recognised that there may be some local difficulty but this must be faced up to and appropriate seating be provided. Cllr Mrs A. Sleath undertook to co-ordinate activity and to take the lead on this project.

10.2 Action 6.13 A 'Welcome Pack'

The provision of a 'Welcome Pack' for new arrivals would be an important introduction to village life. If such a pack were sent to everyone in the village as an initial action, it would bring them up to date on village facilities. It would then be a simple undertaking to issue updated packs to new residents when they arrive. Cllr Mr M. Stevenson undertook to co-ordinate this project and to take the lead in setting it up. He felt that Cllr Mr R. Davis, Mrs C. Davis, and the Houghton News should also be involved and he would get them together to start the process off.

Action Cllr M. Stevenson

10.3 Action 6.15 Re-cycling of Plastics

HDC is not going to recycling plastics until at least 2007/8 and there is a general feeling in the village that this is required now. RCC could provide a plastic recycle bin for village use and the Council suggested the Sports Field Car Park for its location. The Clerk was asked to send a letter to the Field Association in time for its Monday meeting (10th April) informing them of this suggestion and to try to contact

RCC about sizes, colours and emptying arrangements before then. No councillor was appointed to lead this project yet.

Action Clerk

10.4 Action 6.16 Litter bins

The Council discussed the provision of litterbins, especially around the Co-op and the Sports Field. After some discussion, the Council took the decision that litter is not a major problem and this project is not needed at this stage.

10.5 Action 6.23 Village Web site

Initial thoughts on this subject were that it could undermine the effectiveness of Houghton News if not properly organised. After discussion with RCC, it was decided that it could provide features that Houghton News does not and be complimentary to it. To ensure that this does not happen it would be sensible to put the Web site under Houghton News Editorial control. The Clerk was asked to write to Houghton News outlining the idea, possible contents and seeking the response from them.

Action Clerk

Cllr Mr S. Blackwell undertook to co-ordinate and take a lead in this project. He suggested Mr S. Carding (RCC) and Houghton News Editorial staff be involved following the initial contact by the Clerk.

Action Cllr S. Blackwell

11. ALLOTMENTS

11.1 Declaration of Interest

Cllr Mr S. Blackwell declared his interest in this matter, as he was an allotment holder.

11.2 Vandalism

The Parish Clerk reported that the remaining fence post has been pulled down and all but the gate is now destroyed. The ineffectiveness of the police in stopping this vandalism has meant that there has been no stop in halting this costly action. Cllr S. Blackwell wanted the subject of the provision of the allotment gardens to be completely reviewed. He felt that the village had spent too much money already on this area. Cllr Mrs A. Sleath felt that the suggested provision of a close-boarded fence would be both expensive and result in more vandalism such a further damage and graffiti. The conclusion of the Council's discussion was to seek a better solution to this problem. The Garden Club was going to be spoken to see what other solutions were available.

Action – Cllr. M. Stevenson

11.2 Responses from four Parish Councils regarding donations

Only three out of four Parish Councils have responded to the request of the Parish Council asking for a donation in support of non-resident persons using a Houghton amenity. All three responses have been negative and with a refusal to consider any such donation. Some discussion took place between Councillors and it was decided to ask the Clerk to draft a second letter to the other Parishes.

Action – Clerk

In the meantime, the Garden Club was to be asked to review their rules concerning the supply of plots to outside residents and to possibly increase the rent to these people.

Action – Cllr. M. Stevenson

11.3 Garden Club representation

A replacement as the Parish Council representative for the Garden Club was discussed and Cllr M. Stevenson undertook to find a suitable person.

Action – Cllr. M. Stevenson

11.4 Land Registry

The Parish Clerk confirmed that a letter had been sent to Salusbury's asking confirmation of the deed to the Allotment land. He had not yet received a reply.

12. DOG FOULING

Cllr Mrs A. Sleath had made enquiries concerning the new dog fouling act. Her report is not repeated in these minutes but appended as Appendix 1. After her description there was no suitable comment that could be made by the Parish Council.

13. VILLAGE PUMP AND WELL HOUSING

The Clerk confirmed that a letter had been sent to HDC concerning the earth embankment against the well housing. He had had no response yet, although he believes that it has been redirected to a different department at County Hall. If he hears nothing in a week or so, he will repeat the process and send the note at some named individuals.

Action - Clerk

RCC have indicated that there may be some Heritage money available for refurbishment of the village pump and housing.

14. CHARITY COMMISSIONERS

The Clerk presented a draft letter written to the Charity Commissioners. The Council wanted to study it in more detail and decided to discuss it in a Working Party meeting. Cllr Mrs A. Sleath felt that a replacement representative on the Field Association Working Party would be useful and Cllr S. Blackwell volunteered and was appointed. The Working Party was to meet within the next fortnight to discuss the letter.

Action Field Association Working Party

15. UNAUTHORISED ADVERTISING SIGN IN MAIN STREET

Two advertising signs are still affixed to the side of the house in Main Street. An appropriate time had now elapsed if the sign advertised Companies undertaking work on the premises. The Council decided to write a letter asking for their removal. The

Clerk asked under what byelaws, planning, or conservation rules was the infringement taking place. Cllr Mrs A. Sleath said that she had all of the relevant documentation and would forward it to the Clerk.

**Action Cllr Mrs A. Sleath
Action Clerk**

16. REPORT OF REPRESENTATIVES

- School Governors – Nothing to report
- Village Charities – Nothing to report
- Village Hall – Nothing to report
- LRAPLC – Nothing to report
- Field Association – Nothing to report
- Billesdon Community Forum – The Billesdon Community Forum was held Houghton’s Methodist Church Hall. Present at the meeting was a total of 15 people which included four District Officials or Councillors. The main topics of discussion were:
 1. £3.5m for transport schemes
 2. Enforcement teams to be recruited for graffiti, dog fouling and small items of planning
 3. NEMA
 4. Burial sites
 5. Stoughton AirportThe usefulness of the Forum was commented upon and although it was recognised that it was not very useful it had to be done under a government directive.
- Garden Club – As Cllr Dr. D. Campbell was the Parish Council’s representative at this club and he has resigned from the Council, another representative has to be found. (see 11.3 above).

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 22:00 pm.

SIGNED.....
CHAIRMAN

DATE.....

APPENDIX 1

DOG FOULING

At present under the Fouling of Land Act (1996), the Local Authority can take action. However, the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act comes in on April 6th 2006 and repeals the 1996 Act.

It puts a duty on the Local Authority to go through the land designation process again. If we do nothing then action can be taken if an area currently designated is fouled, but new areas cannot be added without going through the whole designation process again.

Therefore, HDC do not want to do anything at present because they would end up with two different systems. This would be a problem because the Fouling of Land Act (1996) carries a £50 fine and the (2006) Act a £75 fine.

The plan is to contact all PCs in June or July and designate all the areas in the Harborough district at that time. All areas will then be controlled by the (2006) Act. From April 2006 the PC can designate areas of its own land but if they do that then only a person authorised by the PC can enforce the rule - no one else can.

If we go with Harborough then other bodies will also be able to enforce the rules. The plan is to train PC people in matters of enforcement once the new act is in place and all areas are designated.

Dog bins are £200-£300 each and emptying costs are not known. Emptying is done by the service team and a cost could be ascertained.