

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 6th DECEMBER
2006 AT 8:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Cllr. Mr. M. Stevenson (Chairman)
Cllr. Mr. S. Blackwell
Cllr. Mr. R. Davis
Cllr. Mrs. A. Sharman
Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath
Ms A. M. Davies (Clerk)

The Chairman thanked the outgoing Clerk, Dr. Duncan R. J. Campbell, for his invaluable service to the Parish Council and welcomed the newly appointed Clerk, Ms. Anita M. Davies.

1. APOLOGIES

Written apologies had been received from Cllr. Mrs A. Nunan

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 1ST NOVEMBER 2006

The Minutes of the Meeting of the 1ST November were confirmed, and signed.

4. TO RECEIVE THE RESIGNATION OF THE OUTGOING CLERK AND
TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW CLERK

- It was **RESOLVED** that the resignation from the Clerk's position of Dr D. R. J. Campbell be accepted and that Ms A. M. Davies be confirmed as the new Clerk to Houghton-on-the-Hill Parish Council.

(The vote was unanimous from all those present)

5. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM CLLR. MR. M. STEVENSON ON
PROGRESS ON MINOR ITEMS ALREADY DISCUSSED

The Chairman read out a short report detailing the progress of minor matters for the benefit of the Council. The report was for information only (See Appendix 1). There was some short discussion on each topic with minor clarification of some points, except for one topic. The discussion on this is minuted below.

The Chairman gave a short report on the progress on village seating. To ensure being up to date he asked Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath and the Clerk to bring the latest information to the attention of the Council. They provided detailed information on letters sent and received. In view of two villagers objecting to the position of a seat Cllr. Mr. R. Davis and Cllr. Mrs. A. Sharman wanted to propose that the seat in question be left out of the installation programme. The Clerk pointed out that there had already been a vote for the seat's inclusion in a previous minute and that the resolution for the installation of the seat was already in place. The Councillors wished their objection to this to be minuted.

(Clerk's note: Standing Orders. 36. Rescission of Previous Resolution)

6. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Accounts to be settled:

Payment for Hire of Village Hall for Parish Council meetings	£120
Cleaning of Bus Shelter	£26.00
Refreshments for Remembrance Sunday reception	£11.64
Parish Clerk's November Salary	£329.44
Parish Clerk's Expenses	£62.75

The Clerk presented cheques for signature, to pay for the hire of the Village Hall, cleaning of the bus shelter, refreshments and the Clerk's salary and expenses. It was moved that these should be paid.

- *It was **RESOLVED** that the invoices presented for hire of the Village Hall, cleaning of the bus shelter, refreshments and the Clerk's salary and expenses should be paid in full.*

(The vote was unanimous from all those present)

The cheques were then signed in accordance with the Council's standing orders.

7. TO RECEIVE A DRAFT BUDGET FROM THE CLERK AND TO DISCUSS AND SET THE PRECEPT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2007-08

The Clerk presented a provisional budget for 2007-08 to the Council. In addition to the general items, it identified other projects that had been scheduled for next year. Following some discussion on the relative values assigned to these elements and after some modification to the content, it was seen that the precept needs to be set at £23,000 if all the funding was to be derived from that source (and the other minor contributors). The Council was aware that its reserves are considerably higher than the 125% of current precept as indicated by the internal auditor, it was decided that use would be made of the reserves to fund the high value project content of the budget.

(Clerk's note: This had been previously indicated as an option agreed during the debate following the internal audit in September – see minute 6.0 for September 2006.)

The precept has been kept constant over the last 5 years and it was observed that it was not keeping up with inflation and had thus eroded its value. Therefore, an

increase to £14,500 on the precept was proposed that would eliminate this erosion and maintain the usual precepts spending power.

- It was **RESOLVED** that a precept of £14,500 be set for the coming financial year (2007-08).

(The vote was unanimous from all those present)

A copy of the agreed budget and precept calculation is given in appendix 2

8. TO DISCUSS AND DECIDE ON THE RESETTING OF THE 'REST' MONTH FROM AUGUST TO JANUARY

The Chairman introduced a discussion concerning the 'rest' month of the 'Parish Council'. The 'rest' month, always traditionally August, was previously based upon agricultural, and holiday constraints. In recent years the agricultural aspects have diminished, and holidays are now taken over a longer season. The Chairman pointed out that the January meeting of the Parish Council is very close to the seasonal fortnight break and a working period of only about two weeks exists between the December and January meetings. He thus suggested that the 'rest' month should be switched to January.

The Council discussed the issue and was reluctant to abandon the August 'rest' month. The Council however, recognised that the January meeting was too soon after the Christmas break. It was therefore decided that the August 'rest' month be retained and that the January meeting date be put back until the Wednesday of the second week in January.

- It was **RESOLVED** that the August 'rest' month be retained and that the January meeting date be put back until the Wednesday of the second week in January from now on.

(The vote was unanimous from all those present)

9. VERBAL REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

- School Governors – The School has been in touch with the Parish Council asking if it intends to put up a candidate for a governorship. The school has found a good candidate in the village but would like to ask the Parish Council first if they would like to put someone forward. The Council agreed that there was no candidate at present and in view of the impending elections it would be inappropriate to put one forward. It was thus decided to ask the School if, when they appoint a new governor from the village that they make one of his duties as a liaison between school and Parish Council. The Clerk was asked to prepare a letter to this effect.

- Village Charities - nothing to report
- Village Hall - a meeting was held on the 20th November in which, as well as domestic issues, brought up a specific point concerning Remembrance Day. Cllr. Mrs A. Sharman reported that the Village Hall Committee had expressed a concern that there was no single manager of the complete event to co-ordinate all the various aspects. It was suggested that a Parish Councillor might be designated as such an overall co-ordinator. The Council agreed that

this would be sensible and the Clerk was asked to note that following the elections in May, a Councillor should be so designated.

- LRAPLC - nothing to report
- Field Association – a meeting is to be held on the 18th December. The Council asked the representative to bring up two specific issues, the state of the Car Park surface and, the instances of cars driving up the footpath to the pavilion.
- Billesdon Community Forum – nothing to report

There being no further business to transact the meeting was closed at 21:30 pm.

SIGNED.....

CHAIRMAN

DATE.....

Clerk's Note: PC Keith Purkiss, Houghton's new beat officer was in the audience and the Chairman realising that business was going to continue for some time decided to close the meeting following the acceptance of the minutes of the 1st November 2006 so that his business may be heard and that he could return to duty quickly. Thus, the meeting was closed at 8:15 and reopened at 8:30.

N.B. PC Purkiss's contact number is 0116 2485675 voice mail 1198.

Appendix 1

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

Allotments

Following the decision on the provider of the fence, the Clerk has written to the Company chosen and ordered the fencing. Cllr. Mrs A. Nunan has been given as the contact point but as of last week had not heard from the Company on a start date. The Garden Club has been informed of the Council's decision to charge non-resident gardeners double rent and is implementing that change from the 1st April 2007. There was some discussion as to where the extra money was going and if the non-residents could have a few years easy payments steps up to the final sum. Cllr. Mrs. A. Nunan confirmed to them that the money came to the landlord and there was to be no discussion on any easy payment scheme. There has been no further development on the involvement of the police and Harborough in respect of the village nuisance.

Planning

There have been two planning applications this month as well as a request to fell a tree that has a preservation order on it. The tree Warden has seen the tree and has written a report for Harborough. The planning applications are for Uppingham Road and Forsells End. Site visits have been conducted and comments sent to Harborough.

Seats

Letters have been sent to residents that are affected and some comments have been received. Cllr. Mrs A Sleath and our new Clerk will bring us all up to date with the situation and apprise us of progress. It will be interesting for us to know what the next step will be.

Black Bag

A few Councillors are still complaining that they are not seeing the Black Bag. The Clerk is now including in the bag some important and relevant documents that need to be seen by all of the Councillors. It is given out at the Parish Council meeting but then does not, for some unknown reason, successfully circulate to all Councillors. The importance of the documents included in it is such that it needs to be seen by all – no exceptions. Please pass it on in good time.

Appendix 2

PRECEPT AND BUDGET