

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 10th JANUARY 2007 AT 8:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

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

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence have been received from Parish Councillors
Telephone apology for absence has been received from Cllr. Mr. S. Galton, District Councillor.

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 6th
DECEMBER 2006

The Minutes of the Meeting of the 6th December were confirmed, and signed.

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

The Chairman read out a short report detailing the progress of issues already debated. The report was for information only (See Appendix 1).

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Accounts to be settled:

Remembrance Day war memorial flowers, Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath	£21.64
Trees and related materials for Village Planting Plan, James Coles & Sons (Nurseries) Ltd.	£591.00
Bulbs for Village Planting Plan, James Coles & Sons (Nurseries) Ltd.	£109.92
Trees and related materials for Village Planting Plan, James Coles & Sons (Nurseries) Ltd.	£521.94
Trees and related materials for Village Planting Plan, James Coles & Sons (Nurseries) Ltd.	£349.67

Planting related materials, James Coles & Sons (Nurseries) Ltd.	£10.81
Planting Scheme Labour, Marrams Gardens for Living.	£822.50
Clerk's Salary for December	£602.63
Clerk's Expenses from 15 th November/ 31 st December	£165.86
Book, "Local Council Administration" Charles Arnold-Baker 7 th Edition	£60.00
Hacker Young, Chartered Accountants – Audit	£141.00
Service Team – grass cutting	£1,597.53

Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath questioned the necessity for the purchase of the book "Local Council Administration", 7th Edition because the Council already has a copy of this essential reference book. When informed that the present copy is the 2nd Edition and consequently out of date Cllr. Mrs A. Sleath accepted the necessity for purchase of the 7th Edition but pointed out that expenditure needs the approval of the PC.

Cllr. R. Davis queried the grass cutting invoice and asked if the invoice included grass cutting for the St. Catharine's Way Green which is the responsibility of HDC. The Clerk informed him that the invoice presented did not list St. Catharine's Way Green.

The Clerk then presented cheques for signature. It was moved that these should be paid with one exception.

- *It was **RESOLVED** that the invoices presented for the Remembrance Day War Memorial flowers, trees bulbs and related materials for the Village Planting Plan, labour for the Village Planting Plan, Clerk's salary, legal reference book "Local Council Administration" Charles Arnold-Baker, external audit and grass cutting 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.

All accounts presented were paid except the Clerk's expenses despite a signed and witnessed contract, stipulating these expenses, having been in place since 15th November 2006. Payment was deferred pending the Chairman's confirmation of this expenditure with APLC.

Cheque no.100546 for £828.49 (total of Clerk's salary against a time sheet, Clerk's expenses as agreed by contract, and payment of the invoice presented for the reference book which had been paid for by the Clerk) was cancelled.

Cheque No.100549 for £662.63 replaced the cancelled cheque No.100546 and was signed in accordance with the Council's standing orders. This cheque was for payment of the Clerk's salary and settlement of the invoice for the book which had been paid for by the Clerk. Payment for the Clerk's expenses from 15th November to 31st December, £165.86, was withheld.

The Chairman, Cllr. Mr. M. Stevenson, made the following four proposals in order to enable the Parish Clerk/ Responsible Financial Officer, Ms. A. M. Davies, to execute her duties. These four proposals were each made individually by the Chairman and seconded individually.

- *It was **RESOLVED** that the name of Duncan R. J. Campbell be removed from the mandate list of signatories and that it be replaced by that of Anita M. Davies as Parish Clerk/ Responsible Financial Officer.*

(The vote was unanimous from all those present)

- It was **RESOLVED** that the existing bank accounts with HSBC be continued.
(The vote was unanimous from all those present)

- It was **RESOLVED** that all paper statements generated by the Houghton on the Hill Parish Council accounts be sent to the home address of the Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, Anita M. Davies.
(The vote was unanimous from all those present)

- It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, Anita M. Davies, be allowed to sign as sole signatory for the transfer of funds between Houghton on the Hill Parish Council accounts thus also enabling this internal transfer of funds through internet banking by the named Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer as the named Primary Internet User.
(The vote was unanimous from all those present)

6. TREE PLANTING SCHEME

Cllr. Mr. S. Blackwell, Councillor designated to head the village tree planting scheme as part of the Village Plan, gave a verbal report on the project:

The four main planting areas up to present have been:

1. St Catharine's Way Green.
2. The area off Chapel Close walking in the direction of the newsagents by the rear gardens of houses fronting St Catharine's Way.
3. The small green on St. Catharine's Way fronting Nos. 27,25,23,21 &19
4. The cricket field which is part of the Stretton Lane approach to the village.

Also the "odd tree or two", direct quote from verbal report, has been planted on the small green near the junction of Northway and Winckley Close.

Cllr Mr. S. Blackwell gave the Council the following verbal assurances:

1. TRANSCO had been contacted in October 2006 in respect of clearance for underground services issues.
2. HDC, who were involved in the actual planting of the trees, had already previously cleared all the present planting sites in respect of underground services. Clearance in respect of underground services issues for potential future planting sites would have to be sought.
3. A number of quotes had been considered before deciding on James Coles & Sons Nurseries as "best value". This particular nursery offered wholesale prices, is used by HDC, and is local hence making delivery charges favourable. The whole Council were not consulted for their consideration and approval of the quotation because time was of an essence owing to the season of the year dictating that the planting should be commenced as quickly as possible. This was also the case with quotes in respect of the labour costs submitted by Marram Ltd.

(Cllr. Mr. R. Davis asked if the normal three quotations had been considered.)

4. Residents living near the planting sites had received notification prior to the implementation of the planting.

An article will be placed in the Houghton News informing parishioners of the progress and details of the planting scheme. This will include a map of the village giving the locations of the new existing planting sites and future potential sites.

Cllr. Mr. S. Blackwell was asked to provide the Council with the following information:

1. Cost of each individual existing planting site and estimated cost of individual future, potential planting sites, when and if these have been approved by the whole Council.
2. Type and number of trees on existing and potential future planting sites.
3. An indication of the order in which any new potential planting sites will be planted.
4. Sight of any quotations received in connection with existing and future planting sites.

Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath commented on the boggy area around some of the trees on St. Catharine's Way Green. The tree warden will be consulted for advice on this situation.

Cllr. M. Stevenson and Cllr. R. Davis both made a declaration of interest in respect of the Cricket Club. Cllr. M. Stevenson is a member of the Club and Cllr. R. Davis has a long standing close association with the Club. Neither Councillor commented or participated in any discussion in respect of the Cricket Club or any ensuing proposal or vote.

Written permission had been received from the Cricket Club giving permission for both the planting and future access for maintenance of Village Plan trees on the cricket field. This permission was granted because the trees are part of the Village Tree Planting Scheme which is for the benefit of the whole village.

Having been proposed and seconded

- *It was **RESOLVED** that the trees planted on the cricket field are part of the Village Plan to enhance the appearance of this approach to the village and that these trees are for the benefit of the whole village.*

*(The vote was unanimous from all those present with the exception of Cllr. Mr. M. Stevenson and Cllr. Mr. R. Davis who had each made a declaration of interest in the Cricket Club)
Expenditure made under authorisation of Local Government Act 1972 s137*

7. VILLAGE SEATING & HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath reported that as the result of a site visit by Mr. Trevor Bishop, Highways Engineer, the proposed locations of six seats have been given approval according to Highways regulations but to obtain license for the installation of the seats the Council will need to decide upon the submission of the disclaimer form now required by LCC prior to the granting of the license. The submission of the disclaimer form is now standard practice for LCC. The PC has the appropriate indemnity limit of £5,000,000.00

The locations of the seats which are approved by Highway regulations are:

Seat to be positioned on the corner of Scotland Lane and Linwal Avenue.

Seat to be positioned on the small green area on the Linwal Avenue side of the Newsagents in St. Catharine's Way.

Seat to be positioned on the small green in St Catharine's Way approximately opposite Nos. 28 and 30 St. Catharine's Way.

Seat to be positioned next to the bus stop outside the Village Hall.

Seat to be positioned outside the rectory and close to the Pharmacy in Main Street.

Should the Council, at some future time, resolve to locate a seat on the large green area on the Ingarsby Lane side of the A47, past the letter box, this would also be acceptable by Highways regulations - but again license for installation would only be granted following the submission of the disclaimer form to LCC.

HDC do not operate the standard disclaimer form system adopted by LCC. Two of the Council's proposed locations for seats which need to be approved by HDC are:

1. Replacement of damaged seat already positioned on the small green in Field Close.
2. Two benches on St. Catharine's Way Green, close to the back edge overlooking the Green and the fields.

HDC do not have any problem with the replacement seat in Field Close but are very reluctant to grant permission for two benches on St. Catharine's Way Green. This reluctance is based on both past and recent objection letters received by HDC from residents of Houghton living near the Green. HDC want reassurance that all potentially affected residents have been in receipt of courtesy letters and that a significant body of parishioners have requested the seats and consequently support their installation.

Given the reaction of HDC and since the PC are in receipt of a small number of objection letters to some seats and because one parishioner, who considers that they live close to a proposed location site, had not received a courtesy letter, it was suggested that the whole village be circulated with information leaflets re.the proposed locations of the seats.

Having been discussed, proposed and seconded

- *It was **RESOLVED** that the whole village be circulated with information leaflets in respect of the Parish Council's proposals for the installation of village seating as part of the Village Plan.*

(The vote was unanimous from all those present)

- *It was **RESOLVED** that the resolution recorded in the Minutes 04/10/06, No. 5.0 position 4 , that a pair of benches be positioned on St Catharine's green close to the back edge overlooking the green and the fields be amended to the positioning of only one such seat at this location.*

(The vote was unanimous from all those present)

(Clerk's note: Standing Orders. 35. Alteration of Resolution)

It was suggested that correspondence received by the Council should be reviewed by the Chairman and the Clerk, at their regular meeting prior to the monthly PC Meeting. Letters considered to be of

significance should then be circulated with the Meeting Pack. No resolution was passed to this effect but it was decided to give the suggested procedure a trial run.

Progress in respect of Highways issues is as follows:

1. The relaying of the white lines around the War Memorial will be done within six to eight weeks.
2. The sunken BT cover on the pavement near the junction of St. Catharine's Way and Main Street has been repaired.
3. Mr. T. Bishop, Highways Engineer, is aware of the poor condition of the pavements in Main Street will discuss this further with Mr. Clive Howe, Chief Highways Engineer.
4. Stretton Lane verge. The situation remains much as before, but when the weather improves, Mr. T. Bishop will return to take photos of the site and then discuss further action with Mr. Clive Howe.
5. Highways are well aware of the unresolved safety issues on the A47, in front of the two garages and the Rose & Crown, and the poorly defined side entrance to the garage from Main Street. The expense of this project puts the village on a waiting list for work to be done. However, towards the end of the financial year funds sometimes become unexpectedly available and should this be the case we will receive notification of this from Highways.

Minutes before the PC Meeting Cllr. Mr. S. Galton, District Councillor, rang the PC to remind us that should we receive such notification it will be necessary to inform the Landlord or relevant Brewery of any impending work because it will affect the public entrance to the Rose & Crown and also the present parking facilities in front of the Rose & Crown.

8. DOG WASTE BINS

Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath informed the Council that decisions needed to be made in respect of the holding capacity of the dog bins and frequency with which the Council would like them to be emptied.

No decisions were made because of the present uncertainty of the status of the Field Association.

Prior to the Charities Commission confirming the status of the Field Association the Council cannot know if they are within their legal rights to spend public funds in respect of the Field Association.

9. VILLAGE PUMP

Having been proposed and seconded:

- *It was **RESOLVED** that the Cllr. Mrs. A. Sharman and Cllr. Mr. R. Davis be the designated Councillors to head the Village Pump Restoration project.*

(The vote was unanimous from all those present)

Cllr. Mrs. A. Sharman reported that considerable progress with this project had already been made since its resumption in December 2006.

There have been three site visits:

One with Ms. Rosalind Willatts, Conservation Officer from HDC and two with Mr. Trevor Bishop, Highways Engineer LCC.

As a result of these site visits the following has been established:

1. Before restoration on the pump and the pump housing can commence Highways will need to clear the vegetation on their strip of land, the area from the pavement up to the retaining wall. Vegetation here is contributing to the damage being caused to the pump housing and is also constituting a visibility hazard to drivers. Mr. Trevor Bishop has agreed that this is the case and will inform Mr. Clive Howe, Chief Highways Engineer.
2. The retaining wall and the embankment beyond this, which is subsiding onto the retaining wall and the pump housing, is the responsibility of HDC. Sheltered Housing will also need to acknowledge that some of the responsibility for this land slippage rests with them. This earth slippage, partly due to the poor condition of the retaining wall, is causing continuous damage to the pump housing. This situation will need to be rectified before the restoration of the pump and pump housing can be undertaken. The Sheltered Housing Department will also be approached in respect of the poor state of repair of the short, wooden boundary markers along the Scotland Lane edge of their boundary.
3. Application forms for grants to restore the village pump have been obtained but will not be sent until the situation in respect of the earth slippage and clearing of damaging vegetation has been resolved.
4. The white railings and posts in the conservation area along the embankment in front of the cottages on Scotland Lane will receive a new coat of white paint. This will be done by Highways between six to eight weeks, weather permitting. In their present state they do not serve the purpose for which they are intended – to draw motorists' attention to the presence of pedestrians who are using the pavement on this embankment. Lamp post No.8, on the furthest edge of the conservation area in Scotland Lane, may also finally receive a coat of green paint.

Cllr. Mrs. A. Sharman and Cllr. Mr. R. Davis offered to cut back the ivy from the roof of the pump housing so that the roof slates would not be damaged any further by the encroaching, creeping ivy. The chairman thanked them for their offer.

The Council agreed that letters need to be written to Highways, HDC and the Sheltered Housing Department in respect of the correction of the earth slippage, the poor condition of the retaining wall and the damage being caused to the pump housing by the overgrown vegetation.

10. VERBAL REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES IN RESPECT OF:

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- **School Governors** – The School had been in touch with the Parish Council asking if it intended to put up a candidate for a governorship. The school had found a suitable candidate in the village but wanted 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

decided to ask the School if, when they appoint a new governor from the village, they would make one of his duties that of liaising between the school and the Parish Council. The Clerk has sent a letter to this effect, 8th December. There has not yet been a reply.

- **Village Charities** - nothing to report
- **Village Hall** – nothing to report
- **Allotments** – Cllr. Mrs. A. Nunan gave a verbal report on the allotments and also informed the Council that after giving this report she wished to have a declaration of interest recorded in the minutes in respect of the allotments because she was about to become an allotment holder.

Cllr. Mrs. A. Nunan reported as follows:

Houghton Gardeners' Club now understands the new Tenancy Agreement and is happy with the arrangement re. charges for non resident plot holders. Invoices to members of the club have been sent out. The Gardeners' Club has asked for two more fence posts to complete the fencing to meet their requirements. The posts would cost £30 for the pair.

From the register of interests, it was noted that Cllr Mrs A. Sleath and Cllr. Mr. S. Blackwell had previously declared interests in the allotments. Consequently, they took no part in the following discussions and vote.

The cost of the requested posts was discussed by the Council and a decision was made.

- *It was **RESOLVED** that the Council would pay £30 for the additional pair of fencing posts requested by Houghton Gardeners' Club.*

(The vote was unanimous from all those present with the exception of Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath and Cllr. Mr. S. Blackwell who had previously recorded declared interests in the Allotments)

Expenditure made under authorisation of Highways Act 1980, s.116 –provision of trees and verges.

There has been repeated vandalism of the bottom gate of the allotments and Cllr Mrs. A. Nunan had tried to use the given incident number for the previously reported vandalism but this had not registered on the police computer. The clerk will check the number and then advise the Councillor accordingly. The damage will be repaired by the Gardeners' Club who also plan to plant a hedge to protect the gate from future vandalism. Cllr. Mr. R. Davis questioned the positioning of this hedge as it would close off an access point which might be needed in the future. Cllr. Mrs. A. Nunan said that she will pass on this comment to the Gardeners' Club.

Cllr. Mrs A. Sleath, after the conclusion of discussions and voting in which she had taken no part because of a declaration of interest, informed the Council that a letter had been received by the Gardeners' Club Treasurer from two non-resident plot owners who thanked the Club for the polite way in which they have always been treated by the parish.

- **LRAPLC** - nothing to report
- **Field Association** – a meeting was held on the 18th December. The Council had 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.

The Chairman Cllr. M. Stevenson and Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath attended the meeting.

Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath reported on various areas where repair, improvement or replacement of old structures had been discussed – the side and roof guttering, the play area, the goal posts etc.

The Sports and Social Club took £600 at the bar. The reason being that the Scouts organise and hold a Bonfire/ Fireworks/ BBQ and the attendees use the bar.

A scout report was given.

Bank account holds £5,500.

The Tennis Club has 220 members with a good number of juniors.

The Field Association is pro the provision of a dog waste bin.

The repair and/or renewal of the barrier which, when functional, blocks vehicular access to the pavilion is under discussion. When this has been replaced it will solve the problem of the cars currently being driven on the footpath up to the pavilion. The state of the car park surface is also under discussion.

Cllr. Mrs. A. Sharman suggested that a, flat folding barrier with two independently mobile sections meeting in the middle might be more user friendly for pedestrians wishing to use the footpath.

Mr. D. Wood, Chairman of the Field Association, is not happy with the recycling bins because they are not fenced in. This can only be done if the bins are to be permanent fixtures and if the parish agrees to have paper, glass and cardboard recycling bins. Mr. D. Wood asked that a contact number be placed in the Houghton News specifically for the recycling bins. The contact numbers, and email addresses where these exist, of all Councillors and the Parish Clerk are already listed in each issue under the heading "Contact Point". It was suggested that if another contact number is needed specifically for the recycling bins then logic would suggest that of Mr. G. Antill of HDC.

It would appear that there is no lease in existence between the Field Association and the Tennis Club, merely a good will arrangement.

This report lead to questions in respect of the annual grant paid to the Field Association. The Council has still not had sight of the audited and certified accounts for 2005/6. The deadline for presentation of these accounts is 31st March 2007. If these accounts are not presented within the time limit does the Council, given the uncertain status of the Field Association, earmark the grant for future payment or will this grant be permanently withheld? The Council is still waiting for the Charities Commission to report their findings in regard to the status of the Field Association. A copy of the original Field Association Conveyance has also been sent to APLC for their comments and advice. A reply has not yet been received.

- **Billesdon Community Forum** - Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath informed the Council that "Billesdon Community Forum" is now known as "Have your Say".

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

SIGNED.....

CHAIRMAN

DATE.....

Appendix 1

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

Highways.

Highways will be relaying the white road markings around the War Memorial within six to eight weeks – weather permitting.

The request for wooden guard posts on the pavement across the road from the War Memorial has been refused. The restricted width of the pavement does not make this a feasible proposition.

On 22nd December, there was a visit from Mr. Trevor Bishop, Highways Engineer. The primary purpose of this visit was to establish approval of the locations and subsequent installation of the various seats proposed as part of the Village Seating Plan.

Mr. Trevor Bishop was also given a copy of a written report detailing the issues discussed on the previous village walk visit, 23rd March 2006, with his predecessor Mr Ian Skinner. Consequently, unresolved issues arising from this previous village walk visit were also discussed. Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath will give us a verbal report on these matters when making her progress report on Village Seating.

Planning.

Application 06/01448/FUL - Erection of two storey rear extension, 8 Ingarsby Lane, Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire - Planning Permission granted 30th November 2006

Application 06/01534/FUL- Erection of single storey extension to the front and side, 1 Forsells End, Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire - Planning permission granted 14th December 2006

Application 2006/1558/03- Felling of an ash tree T6, 13A, Chapel Close, Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire - Consent granted 19th December 2006

Application 06/01748/TC – Pruning of Yew Tree, 8 Scotland Lane, Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire. Last pruned 1994, taking sun from land, touching adjoining property and possibly the roots go to the foundations of No.10, Scotland Lane.

End of consultation date 02/01/07.

On 18th December the Houghton Tree Warden, having been given the details and the end of consultation date of the application, was requested to make a report on the proposed pruning situation.

Black Bag

Will Councillors please pass on the black bag in good time so that every Councillor has the opportunity to view the contents before the next P.C. Meeting. Please see web site information.