

Houghton on the Hill Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE METHODIST CHURCH SCHOOLROOM, MAIN STREET, HOUGHTON ON THE HILL, ON THURSDAY 12th MARCH 2015, AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT:

Members: Cllr. Mr. H. Francis (Chairman), Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath (Vice Chairman), Cllr. Mrs. R. Hamilton, Cllr. Paul Hart, Cllr. Mr. P. Lutman.

Clerk: Mr. S. Derry

Members of the Public: There were 6 members of the public present at the commencement of the meeting including county/district Councillor Simon Galton.

ACTION

01-03/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Mrs. H. McSweeney.

02-03/15 NOTIFICATION OF DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Francis and Sleath declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 5 (Allotments – Uppingham Road) and, in accordance with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct, did not vote or participate in discussions on the matter.

03-03/15 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2015

It was **resolved** that the minutes be confirmed. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

04-03/15 INFORMAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

An allotment holder spoke in support of a letter which he had written to the Parish Council which was addressed under agenda item 5 (Allotments – Uppingham Road).

Ian Hill, Chairman of Houghton Village Hall, reported that a planning application in respect of improvements to the front entrance had been submitted.

A resident drew the Parish Council's attention to inconsiderate parking on St. Catharine's Way which had caused difficulties for buses using the road. It appeared that the police call centre had incorrectly advised complainants to contact the District Council. It was suggested that the school could be advised, PCSOs could be requested to visit and that the police call centre could be reminded of police responsibilities in relation to parking enforcement.

Houghton on the Hill Parish Council

05-03/15 ALLOTMENTS – UPPINGHAM ROAD

At a meeting of the Parish Council on 8 January 2015, the Parish Council had agreed to send a letter to landowners to enquire as to whether they might want to consider selling land for use as an alternative allotment site. One reply had been received to the effect that the organisation's property did not directly adjoin the village and that it did not own any assets in the village.

It was **resolved** to further investigate land availability and to obtain relevant related information.

Cllrs.

An allotment holder had requested that consideration be given to a series of questions concerning any potential alternative allotment site. It was **resolved** to respond as follows:

- a) How many responses have been received from how many letters sent out regarding a potential alternative allotment site?

Response: One response from two letters.

- b) How far away would each of these alternative sites be from the existing A47 site?

Response: Not relevant as the responder did not own any assets in the village.

- c) Would all these possible alternative sites have direct vehicular access?

Response: Not relevant as the responder did not own any assets in the village.

- d) Also with reference to possible Land Registry expenditure, could the Council indicate what typical fee may have to be found?

Response: A fee of approximately £3 per enquiry to determine who owned particular parcels of land applied.

Clerk

Houghton on the Hill Parish Council

06-03/15 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Councillors Francis and Sleath and Ian Hill, chairman of the Houghton Neighbourhood Planning Working Party, had attended a meeting of Hungarton Parish Council to consult with them concerning the inclusion in the Houghton Neighbourhood Plan of an area of land close to the allotments but which was in Hungarton Parish. As part of Houghton's Neighbourhood Plan process, Hungarton Parish Council's consent was necessary to include the area. In discussion they were informed that Hungarton Parish Council was itself considering producing its own Neighbourhood Plan and felt that it was unable at present to provide a definitive answer to Houghton's questions and would give further consideration to these in the context of its own Neighbourhood Plan.

It was **resolved** to write to Harborough District Council with a progress report. Ian Hill's offer of assistance with the content of the report was accepted.

Clerk

A draft constitution and terms of reference had been prepared by the Working Party for the Parish Council's consideration. It was **resolved** to:

- i) approve the document subject to revision of item 3 beneath the heading 'Neighbourhood Planning Group Constitution' to the following:

The Group will comprise no less than 10 members of the village community. These members will be volunteers.

- ii) publish the constitution on the Parish Council's website.

Clerk

The Working Party had prepared a pamphlet, the detailed layout, content and quality of which were to be finalised, to be distributed to households in advance of the Annual Parish Meeting on 30 April. It was **resolved**:

- iii) to allocate £250 from the 2014/15 general contingency budget for this purpose which would include travelling expenses.

- iv) that any travelling expenses incurred by non-Councillors, would be paid under the provisions of section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 and that such expenditure would be in the interests of and would bring direct benefit to the area for all or some or the inhabitants.

Clerk

Councillor Hart and Ian Hill, chairman of the Houghton Neighbourhood Planning Working Party, reported on a Neighbourhood Planning event which they had attended which had been organised by Uppingham First Community Partnership.

Houghton on the Hill Parish Council

07-03/15 GRASS CUTTING – VERGES

In accordance with the agreed timetable, tenders had been submitted and subsequently evaluated by the Grass Cutting Working Group at its meeting on 26 February. This evaluation had considered price in addition to other factors including quality assurance, health and safety and recent contracts. Lot 1 (mowing) formed the principal element of the contract and Lot 2 comprised Hedge Cutting, Trees Trimming, Trees Planting, Litter Picking, Footpath Strimming and Top Soiling and Seeding. The preferred contractor was Turney Landscapes whose price was most competitive. Detailed references were now being obtained to enable the evaluation to be finalised for recommendation to and resolution by the various Parish Councils.

It was **resolved** to

- i) Accept the quotation from Turney Landscapes subject to satisfactory references being received.
- ii) Agree Key Performance Indicators with the successful contractor.

Leicestershire County Council had provided a Service Level Agreement for signing by the Parish Council and returning by 1 March 2015. This included an annex comprising a map illustrating grassed areas to be mown. Unfortunately this was incomplete as maintained jitties had not been indicated despite requests and reminders being submitted. The other consortium parishes had also experienced anomalies in the maps (for example, parish boundaries; missing/incorrectly designated areas and lack of clarity of areas to be cut/strimmed). As a result the submission deadline had not been met although the respective Clerks were using their best endeavours to resolve the difficulties.

It was **resolved** to authorise the Clerk to sign the Service Level Agreement only after a complete and acceptable map had been provided.

08-03/15 FINANCIAL MATTERS

Invoices received and approval of payment.

It was **resolved** to approve the payments detailed in the Schedule of Payments as circulated by the Clerk with the agenda.

Clerk

Houghton on the Hill Parish Council

- c) An email had been received from Steve Goodman, Chairman – Houghton Field Association requesting a meeting with the Parish Council to discuss the current state of the playing field, its facilities and the strategy options for the future.

It was **resolved** that:

- i) Councillors would meet with Mr. Goodman for information gathering and to remind him that Councillors could make decisions only when meeting as the Parish Council.
- ii) The meeting should take place in advance of the Annual Parish Meeting on 30 April 2015.
- iii) Councillor Francis would ascertain Councillors' availability.

Cllrs.,
Clerk

- d) An email had been received from Mr. J. Sharman, Chairman – Houghton Hot Friends, seeking information relating to the retention and storage of Village Achievement Awards following an understanding that the Village Hall Committee was planning to break up the historical collection.

It was **resolved** to assure Mr. Sharman that any items for which the Parish Council had a responsibility had been wrapped and packed securely.

Clerk

- e) An email had been received from a School Governor requesting the Parish Council to exert its influence for the erection of more robust barrier protection adjacent to the pathway directly outside of the school on the bend.

It was **resolved** to support the school's proposed actions.

Clerk

- f) An email had been received from Mr. J. Sharman, Chairman – Houghton Hot Friends, in response to the Parish Council's invitation to litter pick on the A47.

It was **resolved** to thank Mr. Sharman for his response and to indicate that his comments had been noted.

Clerk

13-03/15 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE NEXT AGENDA

The following items were agreed:

- a) **Councillor Vacancy**
- b) **Annual Parish Meeting**
- c) **Neighbourhood Planning**
- d) **Notice Boards**
- e) **Houghton Games**
- f) **Clerk's appraisal**

Houghton on the Hill Parish Council

14-03/15 | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 9 April 2015, commencing at 7.30 p.m. in the Methodist Church Schoolroom, Houghton.

Clerk

The meeting closed at 9.04 p.m.

.....
Chairman
9 April 2015