

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 DECEMBER 2013, AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT:

Members: Cllr. Mr. H. Francis (Chairman), Cllr. Mrs. A. Sleath (Vice Chairman), Cllr. Mrs. H. McSweeney, Cllr. Paul Hart.

Clerk: Mr. S. Derry

Members of the Public: There were 5 members of the public present at the start.

		ACTION
01-12/13	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Mrs. R. Hamilton and Cllr. Mr. S. Sims.	
02-12/13	NOTIFICATION OF DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Councillor Sleath, as a committee member of Houghton Field Association and Councillor McSweeney, as Acting Chairman of Houghton Field Association declared an interest in respect of agenda item 5 (complaints relating to resolutions following requests to release the 2012/13 grant for Houghton Field Association) and agenda item 7b (consideration of items to be included in the 2014/15 precept). Councillors involved in a position of general control or management of organisations but not appointed or nominated by the Parish Council have no such disclosure obligations in accordance with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct. The declarations were made voluntarily.	
03-12/13	CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2013 It was resolved that the minutes be confirmed. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.	
04-12/13	INFORMAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION Three residents raised matters concerned with Houghton Field Association (HFA). It was felt that there was a conflict of interest where Councillors were involved in the administration of HFA and displeasure at the resolutions of the Parish Council at its meeting on 10 October 2013 following the request to release the 2012/13 grant.	

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05-12/13 HOUGHTON FIELD ASSOCIATION 2012/13 GRANT

Three Councillors had submitted a Notice of Motion in accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Orders to enable the resolutions made at the meeting of the Parish Council on 10 October 2013 in relation to the request to release the grant of £2,300 to Houghton Field Association (minute 13-10/13d refers) to be reversed if necessary.

It was **resolved**:

- to pay the balance of the requested grant (£2,000) to Houghton Field Association (HFA) with immediate effect.
- to notify HFA accordingly.
- to notify HFA that release of the balance had been considered in accordance with the Grants Policy pertaining at the time of the decision to award the grant on 2 November 2011.
- to notify HFA that release of the 2013/14 grant would be considered in accordance with the Grants Policy pertaining at the time of the decision to award the grant on 10 January 2013.
- to notify HFA that the Parish Council recognises in retrospect that it could and should have handled the request more sensitively and it would like to take the opportunity to apologise for inadvertently acting in a way which some saw as questioning the integrity of those members of the HFA committee who had subsequently resigned. This was never its intention and it has not said so publicly.

Clerk

06-12/13 PARKLIFE 2012/13 GRANT

It was **resolved**:

- to pay the requested grant (£1,500) to Parklife with immediate effect.
- to notify Parklife accordingly.
- to notify Parklife that release of the balance had been considered in accordance with the Grants Policy pertaining at the time of the decision to award the grant on 2 November 2011.
- to notify Parklife that release of the 2013/14 grant would be considered in accordance with the Grants Policy pertaining at the time of the decision to award the grant on 10 January 2013.

Clerk

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07-12/13 GRASS CUTTING

Nurture Landscapes Ltd. had submitted a quotation for grass cutting and associated works for 2014.

It was **resolved** to:

- accept its quotation for 2014 grass cutting (maximum 14 cuts)
- accept its quotation for collecting up cut grass and placing to one side for composting on two occasions at St. Catharine's Church
- indicate to the contractor that the Parish Council will advise the contractor, following consultation with representative(s) of St. Catharine's Church, as to when the operation referred to immediately above is to be undertaken
- accept its quotation for spraying around headstones, tablets and the like at St. Catharine's Church on two occasions using a safe, non-hazardous chemical that, once in the ground, becomes inactive, forms a strong bond with the soil and does not leach easily and is not harmful to animals or children walking nearby.
- indicate to the contractor that the operation referred to immediately above is to be undertaken once at the beginning of the cutting season and on another occasion as advised by the Parish Council which will consult with representative(s) of St. Catharine's Church.

Clerk

08-12/13 FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) 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

b) Items to be included in the 2014/15 Precept

It was **resolved** to:

- make no further amendments to the provisions made at the meeting of the Parish Council on 14 November 2013 pending notification by Harborough District Council of the government grant.
- waive paragraph 10 of the Grants Policy which provides for the Clerk as soon as practicable following the Parish Council's December meeting to provide written notification to the applicant of the decision as to whether the application is to be included in the budget.
- notify applicants accordingly.

Clerk

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13-12/13 ROADSIDE SEATS

At its meeting in November 2012, the Parish Council had resolved to invite a quotation to clean and treat the village seats with wood preservative or similar and a quotation was subsequently accepted at the Parish Council's meeting in February 2013. Despite reminders being sent, the work had not been undertaken and the contractor had indicated that it was preferable for the Parish Council to invite another contractor to carry out the cleaning and treating.

It was **resolved** to:

- Confirm to the contractor that the Parish Council was willing for it to be released from its obligation.
- Invite Harborough District Council's Quick Response Team to provide a quotation and to indicate that the Parish Council does not require the work to be undertaken until spring 2014 at the earliest.

Clerk

14-12/13 REPORTS FROM VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL BODIES

Cllr. McSweeney, acting Chairman of Houghton Field Association, provided a verbal update. New residents were becoming involved in the administration of the association, a table tennis club had been formed and had enjoyed a successful first evening of play and the tennis club lease was being dealt with.

15-12/13 CORRESPONDENCE

The list of correspondence, as circulated by the Clerk with the agenda, was received and accepted. The following issues for action were considered:

- a) An Email had been received from Mary Dakin, Finance Assistant, Rural Community Council requesting completion of a survey in connection with Good Neighbour Schemes and providing details of an event which was being held in March 2014 at The Coplow Centre in Billesdon.

It was **resolved** to forward the information to Judy Read, Houghton Helpline.

Clerk

- b) An Email had been received from Nyasha Dire, Community Engagement Officer, Leicestershire County Council offering to provide a presentation on community engagement.

It was **resolved** to forward the information to Jan Knox (Head Teacher - Houghton on the Hill Church of England School), Barbara Scase (Parklife) and Reverend Rob Miles (Vicar of St. Catharine's Church).

Clerk

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- c) An Email had been received from John Wright, Team Leader, Planning, Leicestershire County Council inviting responses to a consultation in connection with a review of current planning policies dealing with mineral extraction and waste management in Leicestershire.

It was **resolved** that Councillor Paul Hart would respond if appropriate.

Cllr. PH,
Clerk

- d) An email had been forwarded from Jonny Hodgson, Warm Homes Officer, Harborough District Council notifying the Parish Council of his availability to run and organise energy saving workshops. Funding was available to help pay for locations and refreshments, or he will be able to attend already established groups/meetings to offer helpful advice.

It was **resolved** to:

- Forward the information to Geraldine Feehally (Organiser, Ministry for Older People in Houghton).
- Invite Mr. Hodgson to provide a presentation at the Annual Parish meeting on 1 May 2014.

Clerk

- e) An email had been received from Hayley Cawthorne, Parish Liaison Officer, Harborough District Council notifying the Parish Council of a second opportunity to apply for New Homes Bonus District Wide funding for which £50,000 had been allocated. The Grant window was open from the 2 December 2013 to noon on Monday 13 January 2014 and was open to constituted community and voluntary groups (including parish councils) for projects which supported specific criteria.

It was **resolved** to forward the information to Hazel McSweeney, Acting Chairman of Houghton Field Association.

Clerk

- f) An email had been received from Hayley Cawthorne, Parish Liaison Officer, Harborough District Council notifying the Parish Council of a free event to be held in January 2014 at the Methodist Church, Northampton Road, Market Harborough to provide information about starting an active befriending/mentoring group.

It was **resolved** to forward the information to Geraldine Feehally (Organiser, Ministry for Older People in Houghton).

Clerk

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g) An email had been received from Hayley Cawthorne, Parish Liaison Officer, Harborough District Council providing additional information following a series of Planning and Enforcement events, one of which had been attended by Cllrs. Francis and Sleath, and inviting responses to the following questions relating to the Parish Council's role as a consultee in the planning process.

- i) What are the key documents needed by parishes around planning e.g. all applications or just larger developments and not domestic adjustments?
- ii) Would the parish agree to electronic consultation with the provision to ask for paper copies of key documents if they were needed having viewed the electronic document?
- iii) Would A3 size plans be acceptable instead of larger scale (A1-A0)?

It was **resolved** to respond and agree to i) above (to continue to receive all planning applications).

Clerk

16-12/13 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE NEXT AGENDA

It was **resolved** to include the following in the agenda for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 9 January 2014:

- a) **Councillor Vacancy**
- b) **Complaints procedure**
- c) **Precept**
- d) **Houghton Games**
- e) **Grants Scheme**
- f) **Cleaning and painting roadside seats**

Clerk

17-12/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 9 January 2014, commencing at 7.30 p.m. in the Methodist Church Schoolroom, Houghton.

The meeting closed at 9.25 p.m.

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Chairman
9 January 2014