

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF HOUGHTON-ON-THE-HILL
HELD IN THE METHODIST CHURCH SCHOOLROOM,
MAIN STREET, HOUGHTON-ON-THE-HILL,
WEDNESDAY 5th MAY 2010, AT 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

PC Chairman Cllr. Mr. Mort Stevenson (In the Chair)

20 members of the public including Guest Speakers:

County Councillor Mr. Simon Galton

Mr. Henry Whatley, Community Co-ordinator Harborough & Lutterworth Police

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies from PCSO Matthew Kiff had been received and accepted.

Apologies from Cllr. Mrs. Ann Sleath and Cllr. Mrs. Susan Swann had been received and accepted

2. CHAIRMAN'S OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR 2009/10

The Chairman addressed the public as follows:

I would first like to welcome you all to this Annual Parish Meeting; it is always gratifying when villagers take an interest in local affairs.

We had expected three guest speakers tonight, County Cllr. Mr. Simon Galton, Mr. Henry Whatley, Community Co-ordinator for Harborough & Lutterworth Police, and Police Community Support Officer Matthew Kiff.

Unfortunately, PCSO Matthew Kiff has been called out on unexpected police business and his apologies have been duly received and accepted.

I am very grateful to our guest speakers for giving up their time to attend this meeting.

I shall start by giving a short overview of the Parish Council's activities during the year, and then each guest speaker will give a ten minute presentation. Can I ask that any questions are raised after each speaker has finished their presentation.

As this is not a Parish Council Meeting, any questions for the Council will be noted by the clerk and considered at a future Parish Council Meeting.

Can I therefore begin by thanking all Councillors for their valued contributions throughout the year, and for their support of myself during some very testing times.

I am particularly grateful to the Vice-Chairman Ann Sharman whose continued unwavering support and wise counsel has been of great comfort to me.

It would also be appropriate to record my thanks to our clerk Anita Davies. Throughout the year she has not only coped with all the general administration work, but has also had to deal with some unexpected challenging issues.

It is worth reminding everyone that Anita is employed as a part time clerk. But I know that the amount of effort and attention to detail in ensuring the Council operates is worth a lot more than a part time salary. I am confident that any information, procedures or advice to the Council is accurate, lawful, and honest. She is dedicated and extremely professional in all she does, and we are very fortunate to have her as our clerk.

Eileen Bent, as a committee member of CASCET, has been able to keep us fully informed on relevant CASCET issues that affect Houghton and other villages. Fortunately the immediate threat of large scale developments by the Co-Operative Group has been averted for now. However CASCET continues to be vigilant, and is now known as Campaign Against Stoughton Co-Op Expansion Threat. I am grateful to Eileen for all her work on that committee and also her valuable contribution to the Council.

Thanks are also due to Peter Duke for his regular contribution on Parish Council business in the Houghton News and for his co-ordination of the Remembrance Sunday events. Peter has also undertaken the updating of Houghton Village Directory and is organizing a re-visit to the Parish Plan.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by Sue Swann and Bill Scott, Council Representatives on the Village Hall and Field Association respectively. They have carried out their duties with laudable reliability and commitment.

Thanks also to Bill Scott for being the PC Planning Representative to HDC.

Between 1st April 2009 and 31st March 2010, the Parish Council has considered and reported on 35 planning applications.

We have a Parish Council Website and my thanks go to Ann Sleath for undertaking the administration for this site. As a result of her dedication, considerably more information regarding Parish Council affairs is available to the public.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our Tree Warden, Francesca Wall-Bray, who has overseen the village tree planting and maintenance scheme for the last 4 years, and also to the teams of village volunteers who have often worked in extreme conditions. I think everyone can see the enormous improvements in the village.

We have submitted an entry into the RCC Village/Community Achievements Awards 2010. This project was undertaken by Eileen Bent, Peter Duke, Ann Sharman, Francesca Wall-Bray and the clerk.

I understand that RCC judging will take place during June.

It is pleasing to see the village seats are being well used. An additional village litter bin has been installed next to the A47 village seat. A cleaning operation has been undertaken on the seats and is also being planned for the War Memorial.

On the subject of the Memorial, the Council is very grateful to those local residents who keep the grass under control. I know who they are, but I understand they would prefer not to be identified. My thanks to them.

The Field Association now has an additional street light which is greatly contributing to safety on the footpath and car park. This light was funded by the Parish Council.

The Council is continuing to be fully committed to supporting the Field Association, and the Park Life Project, and is in ongoing discussions with both parties to explore ways in which we can offer practical help.

The Council was again pleased to make a contribution towards the restoration of St Catharine's Church tower. I would like to congratulate Friends of St. Catharine's for their continued committed effort in raising funds for church projects.

The historic issue of speed control within the village, and approaches to the village, has been the subject of ongoing dialogue for many years. LCC Highways has assured the Parish Council that many of the issues raised will be addressed during the year.

Finally, can I thank all members of the public who continue to take an interest in the work of the Parish Council, either by their attendance at meetings, through the Houghton News, or by e-mail or web sites. I can assure you that we are committed to making our village as pleasant an environment as we can, and any input from the public in helping us achieve our aims is welcome.

Thank you.

I would now like to introduce our first guest speaker, County Councillor Mr. Simon Galton.

3. INVITED SPEAKERS

County Councillor Mr. Simon Galton addressed the public on relevant District and local issues.

Having thanked County Councillor Mr. Simon Galton for his extensive and informative address, Chairman Cllr. Mr. Mort Stevenson introduced the second guest speaker, Mr. Henry Whatley, Community Co-ordinator Harborough & Lutterworth Police.

Mr. Henry Whatley addressed the public on the work of the District and local police, mainly in regard to safety and security.

Chairman Cllr. Mr. Mort Stevenson thanked Mr. Henry Whatley for his extremely informative address.

4. ANY QUESTIONS

Members of the attending public were invited to ask questions.

County Councillor Mr. Simon Galton and Mr. Henry Whatley, Community Co-ordinator Harborough & Lutterworth Police, comprehensively answered questions asked by the attending public.

Chairman Cllr. Mr. Mort Stevenson concluded the meeting by thanking all present for their attendance

The meeting was closed at 7:50pm

SIGNED.....

CHAIRMAN

DATE.....