

HOUGHTON AND WYTON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the **Annual Parish Meeting** held on 15 May 2019

Present: Cllr R Baxendale (Parish Council Chairman)
Cllr D Bonny Cllr M Curley
Cllr N Elborn Cllr B Gilmour
Cllr S Hodgson Cllr C Spearing
C Cllr I Bates Miss Lois Dale - Parish Clerk
Mrs V Graham – Timebank Co-ordinator
There were also present 12 electors of the Parish

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D Keane.

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 20 JUNE 2018

RESOLVED: that these minutes be signed as a correct record.

Proposed: Cllr C Spearing

Seconded: Cllr D Bonny

3. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Parish Council Chair, Ray Baxendale, welcomed all the attendees to the meeting and encouraged others to come to the Parish and Parish Council meetings held on the first Wednesday of each month.

He reported that a biennial report was being produced which would be distributed to all households in the parish. This would cover all projects that had been completed in the past two years and the plans for the future.

The Parish Council has no vacancies at present and is working well with a healthy bank balance.

4. DISCUSSION ON ELECTRIC VEHICLE SURVEY

A survey had been circulated to all residents on their current or potential use of electric vehicles. All those who had completed it were thanked.

Due to the growing evidence of climate change, there is global governmental will to reduce carbon emissions and the UK government plan to ban sales of new petrol or diesel vehicles by 2040. Electric vehicles can use significantly fewer fossil fuels and also create less noise and particulate pollution.

The survey results showed at less than 2% of households in the parish had electric vehicles, although around 30% would consider buying these in the near future. Grants are available for households charging, but off-street parking is required in most cases. Houses with no off-street parking would need access to an on-street charging point before they could consider buying an electric vehicle.

There are currently grants available to local councils to install chargers. There are many different styles available and some can even run from lampposts. But the location of these where they can be easily accessed by the households that need them could be difficult in the village. More advice and research is needed before a decision can be made.

5. A1123 SPEED REDUCTION INITIATIVE

The speed limit on this road is 50mph throughout most of the parish. Circumstances have changed dramatically since this was introduced and it is felt that a reduction would improve road safety and resident's well-being. It was noted that the new bus stops have been installed on the A1123 and they are just inside the 50mph area so that traffic from St Ives is speeding up as buses are slowing down to stop.

A petition has been produced to request the reduction of the speed limit on the A1123 from 50mph to 40mph along its length through the parish. This will give evidence of the support for this reduction and a mandate to the Parish Council to push for this. People were encouraged to sign and to spread the word to get more signatures.

6. GUEST SPEAKER, PHIL ROTHWELL FROM THE GREAT OUSE VALLEY TRUST: THE THREAT OF THE NEW BRIDGE ACROSS OUR MEADOWS

Mr P Boothman provided an introduction to the current proposals and studies on the building of a new river crossing from the A141/B1090 south across the flood meadows to the A14 near Godmanchester. This is still in a modelling stage and is closely tied to potential development at RAF Wyton.

Phil Rothwell, a trustee of the Great Ouse Valley Trust (GOVT), spoke about the importance of protecting this important landscape.

An application has been made to list the Great Ouse Valley as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Although the application was quite successful, a government commission is now looking at the process of determining National Parks and AONBs, so the process has stalled. The Great Ouse Valley has a diverse landscape which provides a 'green lung' and quiet respite for the high population and many visitors.

The Great Ouse Valley currently has five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 24 County Wildlife sites and provides habitat for recreation and the conservation of many nationally important species. It also contains 15% of English flood meadows, although many have been drained, leaving only 2% of the original area. Although much of the land has been changed by agriculture, there is still a diversity of habitats to support many important species.

Public access is provided by the Great Ouse Valley Way, a long-distance path that passes through this parish. Many stretches of the path are neglected and GOVT want to improve that access and signage.

The recreational value of the river can also provide an economic value through tourism, and also through local use and crafts, eg rush harvesting. This area of the valley has long been associated with artists, and there are many historic buildings all of which contribute to the tourism value. The importance of green space to improve physical and mental health, can be important in reducing health care costs.

GOVT identified a risk to this area with a lack of strategic thought and planning from regional government. The added pressures of habitat and species loss and climate change, the increase in housing and infrastructure has prompted the formation of this group. GOVT aims to protect, promote and enhance this special landscape within Cambridgeshire. They have developed an action plan, which includes working with other groups, responding to consultations from government and councils where it is relevant. They welcome new members, both individuals and interest groups.

7. PUBLIC FORUM

Thanks were expressed to the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk for their work for the parish and residents over the past year.

8. DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The next Annual Parish Meeting will be held in May 2020 on a date to be confirmed in the St Mary's Centre.

Signed: Date :