

## HOUGHTON AND WYTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Parish Council Meeting** held on Wednesday 3 June 2020, 7:00pm.  
 This was the first remotely held meeting of the Parish Council under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 Using Zoom.

**Present:** Cllr R Baxendale (Chair)                      Cllr P Boothman  
                   Cllr D Bonny                                      Cllr N Elborn  
                   Cllr B Gilmour                                     Cllr D Keane  
                   Cllr C Spearing

Staff present: Lois Dale, Parish Clerk, Lane Thompson, Timebank Co-ordinator  
 There were six members of the public present, including C Cllr Bates and D Cllr D Dew.

### ACTION

<p><b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>          There were no apologies for absence.</p>	
<p><b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>          There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<p><b>3. PUBLIC COMMENT</b>          A resident expressed his personal concerns about lack of clarity on the setup of the Houghton &amp; Wyton Community Fund. He also informed the meeting that he had produced the latest in his regular weekly newsletters, to inform residents during the Covid-19 pandemic, which was being circulated. He was thanked for producing these newsletters which people have found informative.</p>	
<p><b>4. MINUTES</b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b> The minutes of the Houghton &amp; Wyton Parish Council meeting of 4 March 2020 were approved.          Proposed: Cllr Elborn; Seconded: Cllr Boothman. All in favour.</p>	
<p><b>5. MATTERS ARISING</b>          Cllrs Elborn and Keane are producing publicity material to help in recruitment of new Parish Councillors.          Cllr Elborn added some research on the status of mobile homes as permitted development. Cllr Boothman is putting together a letter to HDC Planning on this matter.</p>	<p>NE &amp; DK  PB</p>
<p><b>6. DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS</b>          D Cllr Keane reported that HDC are concentrating on support for people during the Covid-19 lockdown.          There was concern about a communication that was sent out via the many community groups giving details of the hotspots of infection locally. This was seen as being suspicious, although it was genuine and the feedback will be taken into account.          HDC are looking at budget measures and how opening leisure centres and car park charging will affect the local economy.          Recycling Centres are now open to commercial as well as domestic users and the domestic refuse collections have not been affected by the pandemic.          In response to a question, the District Council is looking at several projections on how the lockdown has affected income from services. This will also be affected by other funding available from Government.          The Timebank Co-ordinator has asked HDC to refer people in our parish to the Timebank for help as they have capacity to help more.          C Cllr Bates added that the recycling centres may have one-way systems in operation and there is a restriction on the number of cars.          C Cllr Bates is now the chairman of Highways and Transport Committee for CCC.</p>	

<p>There is also a new Environment Committee due to the number of issues this covers.</p> <p>CCC is committed to helping the shielded and is helping about 11,000 people currently. Cllr Bates recognised the input and help from HDC and local groups, he thanked the volunteers and the Timebank in the village for all the dedication and work they are putting in and recognised how important this was for the community.</p> <p>Many of the CCC staff have been re-deployed, but are now being called back as services start to return.</p> <p>CCC has had extra expense, especially in terms of providing their care responsibilities and is not sure what funds will be available from central government.</p> <p>In response to questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no update on the relocation of Marshall Aerospace from their Cambridge site.</li> <li>• The A141 Transport Study is on hold due to staff redeployment.</li> <li>• It was confirmed that the County Council is still on track to relocate to Alconbury, the building work is in progress. The majority of staff moving from Shire Hall are being relocated to the local areas within the county that they cover.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>7. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT</b></p> <p><b>7.1 To authorise payments due</b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b> All payments due be authorised.  Proposed: Cllr Spearing; Seconded: Cllr Elborn. All in favour</p> <p><b>7.2. Log of action taken in the emergency procedures</b>  The log was presented to the meeting.</p> <p><b>7.3. Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2019/20</b>  The Internal Auditor has approved all accounts and completed his section of the AGAR</p> <p><b>7.3.1. To approve the Annual Governance Statements for 2019/20</b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b> The Annual Governance Statements for 2019/20 be approved.  Proposed: Cllr Bonny; Seconded: Cllr Boothman. All in favour</p> <p><b>7.3.2. To approve the Accounting Statement for 2019/20</b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b> The Annual Accounting Statement for 2019/20 is approved.  Proposed: Cllr Bonny, Seconded: Cllr Boothman. All in favour.  The RFO and Cllr Bonny were thanked for their work on the finances throughout the year.</p> <p><b>7.4. Staff salary review</b>  It was agreed that a working group, Cllrs Bonny and Gilmour, be set up to review the salaries and wages of all staff. Recommendations will be presented at the next meeting.</p> <p><b>7.5. Parish Council grant to Houghton &amp; Wyton Community Fund to support those in need in the community</b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b> The Parish Council confirm the agreement made by email to donate £1,000 to the Houghton &amp; Wyton Community Fund.  Proposed: Cllr Gilmour; Seconded: Cllr Elborn. For: 6 Against: 1</p> <p><b>7.6. Sports Club invoices</b>  Due to the lockdown in place, the seasons of The Sports Clubs have been curtailed or delayed. Invoices will be prepared as normal and reviewed at the next meeting to decide on the way forward. A report will be prepared on the impact on the costs incurred by the Parish Council and the circumstances of the Sports Clubs.</p> <p>There are grants available to Clubs from Sports England. The clubs have been</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>DB &amp; BG</p> <p>Clerk</p>

informed of this and we are aware that Bowls Club have been successful in an application for this.

### **7.7.2019/20 budget outcome**

There was a brief discussion on the financial position of the Council at the end of 2019/20.

### **7.8. Investment Strategy**

Money was to be invested in higher interest short term investments. Recent dramatic drops in interest rates mean this is not the best strategy. It was agreed that no changes be made to savings or investments at present and that the situation be reviewed in about three months.

## **8. PLANNING MATTERS**

### **8.1. 4 x Goat Willows. Approx 4m to be removed on each tree. Trees 1, 2 and 3 have branches overreaching and into the pond area, these need trimming by 4m. Tree 4 has fallen into pond and requires removal.**

Land South Of  
Houghton Hall St Ives Road Houghton Ref. No: 20/00527/TRCA

The Parish Council were consulted on this application by the HDC Planning department, requesting a response by 1 June. They have already given permission for this work on 26 May. This was due to a misunderstanding of the necessary consultations by the HDC officers. The HDC Tree Officer told the clerk that there is no statutory consultation with the Parish Council as these are trees in a Conservation Area, but the applicant should consult the Parish Council as the landowner. It is noted that birds are nesting under the trees and there are young birds on the pond, so no work should be carried out until the end of the nesting season. It was suggested that a plan is needed for this area and the Parish Council should establish a policy for the management of the areas in the parish that could support wildlife. The Parish Council carried out a professional tree survey including the trees in this application. No work was recommended on these trees. The applicant has probably not seen this survey (which is available on the Parish Council website) and has already carried out some work here without consulting the Parish Council. It was noted that the applicant regularly cuts the grass around the pond and on Common Land west of Mere Way.

Cllr Dew confirmed that the applicant needs the landowners permission and HDC Planning Application approval for work in a Conservation Area.

It was confirmed that the approval has been issued to the applicant by HDC.

**RESOLVED:** The Applicant will be informed immediately that no work should be carried out during the nesting season. A further letter will be sent to inform him that while the Parish Council appreciates the work carried out is well intentioned, it needs to be consulted before any work is carried out on their trees and work will need to be in line with their policies.

HDC will be informed that we have not been consulted by the applicant prior to the application, even for the work already carried out. A complaint will also be made that the application was decided before the deadline for consultation that was issued to the Parish Council.

A policy will be written for the management of the Parish Council owned, or controlled, land. This can be used to guide for further work in these areas.

### **8.2. Area 1 - Ash and Oak tree - 7-8m of branches to be cut back with a chainsaw (See photo 1 and 2) Area 2 - Willow Tree - 7-8m of branches to be removed with a chainsaw to reduce the weight and therefore reduce the risk of the diagonally growing trunk breaking (See photo 3) Area 3 - Old Willows - Remove all damaged and brittle branches to prevent them snapping and falling off in large sections. (7-8 m removed with a chainsaw) (See Photo 4)**

Clerk

Clerk

Area 4 - Willow Trees - Remove damaged and dead branches which overhang the footpath to prevent injury to the public and/or damage to wood bridge. (approximately 7-8m removed with chainsaw) (See photo 5) Areas between 3 and 4 - A couple of willow trees also require safety removal of broken branches (see Photo 6) Land West Of Pumping Station Meadow Lane Houghton Ref. No: 20/00806/TRCA

**RESOLVED:** Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend **APPROVAL** of this application. We also feel that consideration be given to planting more trees to ensure tree cover in this area will continue as the current willows age.  
Proposed: Cllr Boothman; Seconded: Cllr Spearing. All in favour

Clerk

Cllr Bonny reported that there is a tree fallen across the Trout Stream on footpath 3. The Environment Agency will be contacted.

Clerk

Cllr Spearing reported that the Environment Agency has been informed about the trees leaning over the footpath on the Back Brook. The Clerk suggested this also be reported to CCC Highways.

A report of a dead tree on the land at the end of Manor Close will be investigated.

Clerk

### **8.3. Report from DMC 18 May**

Cllr Boothman attended this meeting to express the views of the Parish Council on two applications at New Manor Farm Equestrian Centre. One application is for an agricultural building and the other an industrial building. Both applications were approved, despite the objections from the Parish Council and D Cllr Dew. Cllr Dew is thanked for his work and oration on these applications.

The Parish Council is concerned about the size of the cattle shed approved and that it will be subject to a change of use application in the future.

The decision on these application cannot be appealed and the Parish Council has already been in touch with HDC to arrange meetings to clarify interpretation of policy regarding development in the countryside .

The officers' interpretation of policy used to approve the industrial building was questioned. D Cllr Dew also asked officers for review of policy and a masterplan of the site in question, which is a mixture of agriculture and industrial use.

The Neighbourhood Plan does have policies on the development along Sawtry Way but they were not taken in to consideration. Informal legal opinion is being sought on behalf of the Parish Council.

D Cllr Dew stressed that the policies were written to support businesses that need to be in the countryside, not to be used as a reason to allow businesses to further develop countryside sites.

### **8.4. Elm Tree on Playing Field**

The residents behind a large Elm tree on the Playing Field are concerned that the tree is dropping branches and may be diseased. A quote for £925 has been received to take the tree down to the height of the fence.

HDC have looked at the tree and can see no evidence of Dutch Elm disease, so would not allow the tree to be felled, but dead wood can be removed.

It was suggested that the residents remove the dead wood that is over their garden.

The Clerk will get a quote for the removal of the dead wood only.

Clerk

<p><b>8.5. Register Common Land</b>  The Clerk will look into the process and costs involved and report back.</p>	Clerk
<p><b>9. SCHOOL PARKING ISSUES</b>  A further meeting has been held to address this issue and the Action Plan updated.  As a result, a plan has been produced of the extent of double yellow lines around Victoria Crescent and the County Council asked for costs for this project.  <b>RESOLVED:</b> The Parish Council agree to contribute up to £1,000 towards the costs of installing double yellow lines on the junctions at and around Victoria Crescent, Wyton on the condition that this project is treated as priority.  Proposed: Cllr Spearing; Seconded: Cllr Boothman. All in favour  The Parish Council would be keen for these lines to be installed as soon as possible; the clerk will email C Cllr Bates to confirm the above resolution and a copy of the map. C Cllr Bates stressed that the regulatory process can be lengthy and expectations need to be managed.</p>	Clerk
<p><b>10. LOCAL HIGHWAYS INITIATIVE FUNDING – 2021/22</b>  The Council has applied for funding for work on Mill Street; the application form will be put on the website for residents' information.  Cllr Baxendale expressed concern over the potential costs of the work that is detailed. CCC have already agreed to the yellow lining and micro-asphalting the surface of this road, so it is hoped that these costs will not be part of the LHI application.</p>	Clerk
<p><b>11. GRASS CUTTING</b>  Earlier this year it was apparent that the County Council areas in the village were not being cut under their contract with HDC. This resulted in residents cutting the grass themselves. C Cllr Bates suggested that the Parish Council might think about taking on the cutting of these areas with a financial contribution from the relevant land owners. Concern was expressed that under this agreement the monies paid to the Parish Council for this work might gradually dry up or decrease. It was agreed that the Parish Council will not take this any further at this time.</p>	
<p><b>12. PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE</b>  <b>12.1. War Memorial and Cemetery</b>  An Expression of Interest has been submitted to Grantscape for a grant for this work. The deadline for this is approaching; the Clerk will contact Grantscape for an update. HDC were asked if a planning application was required; as there has been no response it is assumed this is not required.  <b>12.2. Local Highway Initiative application - A1123</b>  The LHI application above was not approved. The costings and discussion with Highways has provided more information. The police were asked to provide a report on the speeds of vehicles on this stretch of road, CCC Highways were also asked to update their data on road use. These reports are both awaited. It was felt that the residents who signed a petition to get this speed reduction will be disappointed and the result of this application will be made publicly available. Cllr Baxendale will contact some local traffic consultants for advice on if the idea is viable and costs for a potential survey. He will also speak further to C Cllr Bates on this matter.  While an LHI application cannot be submitted for the next year, it was felt that this project should be kept alive and further enquires continued.</p>	Clerk                    Clerk RB
<p><b>13. TIMEBANK UPDATE</b>  The Timebank co-ordinator updated the meeting on the work that the Timebank has carried out, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, this includes deliveries</p>	

<p>of food and prescriptions, telephone calls to shielding and isolated people, and 'line managers' for the village shop. Volunteers (105) came forward to help with this including about 70 new members. The Community fund has provided money to help with food boxes for those in need, and donations have been made by local supermarkets and individuals. The Timebank has provided manpower for this.</p> <p>The Parish Council allocated the Timebank £500, specifically to help with Covid-19 activities and HDC have made a grant of £1,000. A grant application to CCC of £3,000 was not successful. Cllr Spearing was thanked for his help with this. Thanks were expressed to Lane for the work done.</p> <p>In response to questions, it was reported that there is a problem in trying to identify those that might need help. It is hoped that HDC and other organisations will refer people to the Timebank if they need local help. It was suggested that Parish Councillors could contact people in their area to find out if help is needed. It was agreed that some further form of outreach and encouragement is needed to allow people to come forward to access the Community Fund. This could take the form of social media engagement. The co-ordinator asked councillors to interact more with the Facebook posts to raise the profile. It was pointed out that many of the volunteers and councillors will be aware of many of their neighbours' situations. This would allow many areas to be covered without too much effort, and allow areas not covered to be identified. Cllr Spearing agreed to look at this with the co-ordinator.</p> <p>The value of the Timebank was highlighted, especially at a time like this. It was felt that this has shown that the future of the Timebank must be assured. It was suggested that maybe the Timebank status needs to be looked at to allow it to be eligible for more grants and more have independence.</p> <p>A group will be formed to look at the best way forward. Acknowledging the current workload, this will be a future project.</p> <p>A report on the work that has been done will be sent out via Facebook, and the councillors were encouraged to interact as well. The use of other social media channels will be looked at.</p>	<p>CS &amp; LT</p>
<p><b>14. DATE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020.</b></p> <p>The Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council will be at 7pm on 1 July. This is permitted under the current regulations and will allow election of Chair and any other posts.</p>	
<p><b>13. CORRESPONDENCE</b></p> <p>Memorial Hall Committee: The Parish Council are Guardian Trustees of the Memorial Hall and can have up to three members on the management committee. There were no volunteers for these posts at the moment.</p>	
<p><b>14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There has been comment from a resident that holding the Parish Council meeting remotely does allow the public to engage more. This meeting is the first remote meeting that this Parish Council has held and it was acknowledged that improvements could be made in advertising it and operation during the meeting. The Parish Council has discussed setting up its own Facebook page several times over the past couple of years and it was agreed to look at this again to engage more with the community. It was pointed out that the Parish Clerk does post information from time-to-time on the Community Facebook page. More effort needs to be made to increase the engagement.</p> <p>Cllrs Bonny and Elborn have been looking at updating the website, which could also include links to Facebook, Twitter and other social media or websites.</p> <p>Cllr Gilmour asked if the responsibility for the maintenance of the ditch on the east</p>	<p>Clerk  DB &amp; NE</p>

side of Ware Lane could be established as it seems to be very overgrown. The Clerk will look into this and report back.	Clerk
It was noted that the bins on land owned by Houghton Hall Alpacas, east of the campsite are overflowing. These bins are placed there by and the responsibility of the landowner and are usually emptied quite regularly. The clerk will contact the owner; members of the public that had complained to the Parish Council had been made aware of the owner and encouraged to contact them also. The Parish Council would also like to acknowledge the residents that have been out helping their neighbours, also litter picking, mowing grass areas and cleaning around the village. These actions are much appreciated by the Parish Council and the residents.	Clerk
Following on from the incidents of anti-social behaviour and violence around Houghton Lock and Mill last week it was noted that the Parish Council have been in touch with the local policing team, who have been supportive, and the Houghton Mill custodian. A follow up meeting to the one organised in Sept 2019 about this issue will be arranged. It was noted that the Environment Agency are installing cameras at Houghton Lock which is an action from the above meeting and is hoped to increase the safety of this area.	Clerk
<b>15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>	
The next meeting, including the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council, will be on Wednesday 1 July 2020, 7:00pm, via Zoom.	

Signed:..... Date: .....