

HOUGHTON AND WYTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Parish Council Meeting** held on Wednesday 2 November 2022, 7:00pm.

Present: Cllr P Boothman - Chair
Cllr B Gilmour
Cllr Z Hunter
Cllr A Skinner
Cllr R Baxendale
Cllr R Guinea
Cllr D Keane
Cllr N Elborn

Staff present: Lois Dale, Parish Clerk.

There were also 13 members of the public present.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Goodger, due to work commitments.

2. DECLARATIONS

Cllr Guinea declared a non-pecuniary interest item 9.2 as a neighbour.

Cllr Elborn declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9.4 as a neighbour.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Due to the nature of some of the items that the public might want to contribute to it was agreed that their comments would be more pertinent at the time of discussion.

There was no other public comment.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 5 October 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

Proposed: Cllr Elborn; Seconded: Cllr Gilmour. All in favour

5. MATTERS ARISING

Ditch and hedge at the cemetery – Cllr Goodger will get some quotes; the Clerk will ascertain if any of the local gravediggers are able to dig out the ditch and contact a tree surgeon about the hedge.

Ecological assessment of the cemetery extension – more quotes are needed.

White lines at the centre of the A1123 – will be reported again.

Tree planting – the planting of trees via HDC will be organised **(Clerk)**

Tree maintenance – quotes have been requested.

Fire Risk Assessments – another quote is needed for the Clock Tower **(Clerk)**. Christmas Lights were reminded that they had been asked to provide a Risk assessment for their use of the Clock Tower.

Warm Rooms -this has been registered with HDC and funding might be available.

Holiday activities – HDC have availability for February half term and the school have been informed.

6. DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT.

D Cllr Keane reported that HDC are now offering pre-application planning advice again.

The 12 week Active for Health programme is available.

District Council meetings are being live-streamed and are available on YouTube.

There are consultations on proposed changes to the Black Cat Roundabout on the A1.

A Parliamentary boundary review has been carried out and is available?

7. CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICERS REPORT

7.1. To authorise payments due

RESOLVED: The payments be approved and paid. **(LD)**

Proposed: Cllr Baxendale, Seconded: Cllr Guinea. All in favour.

The budget report to date and bank balances were noted.

7.2. Investment/Savings Accounts for reserves

A report from Cllr Elborn was noted.

A meeting will be arranged for a small Working Party to gain further advice.

7.3. Pavilion repairs

Some electrical, plumbing and emergency roofing repairs have been carried out. Further Plumbing and heating work is required and will be arranged. **(Clerk)**

7.4. Cricket Club request for alcohol licence at the Pavilion

The Cricket Club would like to apply for a licence to serve alcohol at the Pavilion after training and during matches. No alcohol will be stored in the Pavilion.

There were no objections from councillors.

The Club will take it to their AGM for members comments and find or produce a building plan.

8. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Vision Workshop

8.2. Playing Field

8.2.1. Field maintenance

A meeting will be arranged with the football and cricket clubs to discuss a maintenance programme. **RG & PB**

Thanks were expressed to John Pink and Paul Boothman for clearing the fallen trees in the south-east part of the Playing Field, and to John Pink and Mike Plunkett for trimming trees and scarifying the football pitch.

8.2.2. To discuss and make a decision on the protocol for the use of the Pavilion during Feast Week

Feast Week would like to hold a village Sports Day as part of Feast Week on 2 July 2023. The Bowls, Cricket, Football and Tennis Clubs were invited to take part; no specific plan for the day has been decided yet. Three clubs have responded positively to the invite; Bowls have not yet replied. Bowls have requested to book the Pavilion for 2 July for an open Bowls tournament.

The Feast Week Committee feel that Bowls are in breach of the conditions 4 and 14 of their booking terms, where all clubs are asked to work together and with Feast Week and other users. Feast Week suggested that another condition be introduced – “Any sports club wishing to organise a fund raising event during Feastweek must request in writing beforehand to the Feastweek Committee agreeing their terms”. It was stressed that Feast Week is only run for one week a year.

The Feast Week committee were thanked for all the hard work they put into organising an event that encompasses the entire parish population.

Cllr Boothman had acted in a private capacity to facilitate discussions between the Feastweek Committee and the Bowls Club, suggesting several alternative ways of running both events successfully.

It was noted that it could be viewed as a failure of the village spirit and those involved if there was a need to strengthen booking conditions in this way, which was effectively sub-letting the pavilion through Feastweek during that event. No councillors supported the suggested additional condition.

RESOLVED: Further efforts should be made to come to an amicable agreement between Feastweek and all the sports clubs to enable an inclusive event to take place. The Parish Council is willing to support those efforts and is able to offer grants to village clubs to allow them to continue to operate successfully.

Proposed: Cllr Boothman, Seconded: Cllr Hunter. All in favour

9. PLANNING MATTERS

- 9.1. [Change of Use of the Mill House from a Dwellinghouse \(Class C3\) to an Office for National Trust staff, \(Class E\(g\)\(i\)\)](#) Mill House Mill Street Houghton Huntingdon PE28
2AZ Ref. No: 22/02049/FUL

RESOLVED: Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend that this application be **APPROVED** for the following reasons:

Although this will be the loss of a family home in the village, this proposal involves very few changes to the internal structure of the house, which would allow it to be reinstated as a dwelling in the future.

This will improve the working conditions for the staff and volunteers at Houghton Mill. There was concern expressed about whether this use of the building would increase parking pressure on the site and therefore the village.

Proposed: Cllr Gilmour, Seconded: Cllr Hunter. All in favour

9.2. Construction of a dwelling with associated garage and workshop Houghton Hill House Houghton Hill Houghton Huntingdon PE28 2BS Ref. No: 22/02068/FUL

The applicant read a prepared statement. This included mention that they could open temporary access to the site during the build through the grounds of Houghton Hill House. She stressed that they had a legal right of way on the land that forms the access track to the neighbouring houses.

RESOLVED: Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend that this application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

The PC recommends **REFUSAL** for the following reasons:

The original application (30/9/22) stated that the applicant was the sole owner of all the land to which the application relates it was amended (24/10/22) so that requisite notices could be given to adjoining land-owners. The owners of the private lane, and the strip of land between the private lane and the boundary of the Applicant's land, report that there was a lack of pre-submission consultation under NPPF guidelines.

Despite the application being for a high quality, well designed, 21st Century building, which once built will operate with near zero carbon running costs, we feel that on balance the chosen location and accommodation offered breaches key planning and development policies contained within the Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan, without meeting the needs of the village, or delivering sufficient additional benefits to the community to warrant departing from the Neighbourhood Plan.

To approve the application requires the Parish Council to break its own Neighbourhood Plan Built Up Area policy HWNP 1 and recommend a departure from the Neighbourhood Plan.

The application is for a large property set back some 45m from the proposed access lane into the countryside, and approximately 110m downhill from the main house. This would break the defined built-up area, moving the building line east of the village.

The village of Houghton & Wyton is situated within very close geographic proximity to the pretty market town of St.Ives, in between which exists very little countryside to separate the two settlements.

To make a very clear distinction between built areas and the countryside and help prevent un-necessary sprawl or creep, somewhat uniquely within Huntingdonshire, this particular Built-Up Area policy defines the built-up area of the village by a very carefully positioned hard boundary line.

The Neighbourhood Plan policy was hard fought for, which together with an anti-coalescence policy HWNP 3, passing through two examination stages before finally being made, underlining the importance of the countryside especially in this sensitive area.

The hard built-up area line where this proposed development would be situated, is deliberately set on the west side of the private lane proposed for access to the new property.

The policy states that breaking this will be acceptable where a proposal can comply with relevant policies for building in the countryside. Inspecting the relevant policies HLP policy 20 - Homes for Rural Workers, and HLP policy 28 Rural Exception Housing, shows that the required criteria are not met and do not support the application or provide justification to break the Built-Up Area policy HWNP 1.

Working together with HWNP1 is HWNP 3 – Anti coalescence policy, which seeks to protect the village character and distinctiveness by retaining and enhancing a clear and obvious open land gap between the village and neighbouring town of St.Ives. It states that development will not be permitted if, individually or collectively, it would result in the loss of the visual and physical separation between these two settlements or would lead to their coalescence.

The policy justification carefully describes how the fields, gardens, wooded area between the eastern edge of the village, through and around Houghton Grange and the Thicket wood, all contribute to the actual and perception of a countryside separation gap between the settlements and serves as another reason not to break the purposefully hard defined built-up area boundary.

NPPF allows for a departure from a Neighbourhood Plan if doing so can be demonstrated to deliver a greater benefit to the community than sticking to that plan. Whilst this application would provide an additional property within the parish, the Neighbourhood Plan makes very clear that the village needs smaller 1 and 2 bed starter and more affordable homes, as well as properties for older people to downsize to release the family homes, already in the village.

Policy HWNP 16 deals with windfall development which this site would be classified as were it suitable and supported by policy for development. However, for the same reasons as mentioned earlier, the policy does not fully support this particular application as the greater village need is not for 5-bedroom properties, but for 1 and 2 bed starter homes and for older persons accommodation.

The proposed development lies within the Houghton & Wyton Conservation Area and therefore the landscape area itself is considered to be a Designated Heritage Asset. Within this, the Houghton Hill character area assessment (HHCA), describes building such as Houghton Hill House as being set within expansive gardens to complement its higher status, open grained dispersed development plots, located well away from one another and set amidst dense screening.

Over many years the Houghton Hill House estate has shrunk from being a large estate of 89 acres now reduced to 35 acres. If passed, this planning application would remove a further 2.5 acres to create a building plot within the grounds of Houghton Hill House an historic listed building of local importance.

The conservation area character assessment states that New Development should:
5.3.1 preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and respect its morphology and settlement pattern.

The HHCA states that Houghton Hill House is the earlier of the houses and the open feel of informal parkland remains across a considerable area of the hill, despite the introduction of low-density housing on the western and northern fringes of the park in the latter part of the 20th Century.

Furthermore, the proposed site features small areas of ridge and furrow arable land of the medieval common land field system which will be lost from this development.

The application specifies the entrance to the property would be along the private access road/lane immediately to the west of the site requiring a new entrance to be formed in the field boundary.

We feel it is important that the special character of this lane is not spoilt. The lane has a non metalised surface and it, and area it runs along, is best described as a country lane, having a quiet, rural, untamed character bordered by field hedgerow and trees. The lane as it stands fulfils an important function in transitioning between the built environment and the natural countryside to the east, this could be eroded with more use.

Removal of the field boundary hedging to create an access and erect parkland style open metal fencing is not supported by Policy HNWP 6. Retaining and enhancing biodiversity in respect of the valuable hedgerow that would be lost. This access, while not creating new access to the A1123, is increasing the number of vehicles accessing and egressing the site onto this busy road

Policy HWNP 7 – Protection of best and most versatile land is also a consideration. Whilst not currently farmed as such, by remaining as countryside and not developed means that this land is usable, valuable agricultural land which is not lost forever.

The Design and Access report said that the survey indicates the area is “sterile” from a biodiversity perspective though it is understood that there are bats and owls in or close to the proposed site. 8 trees were felled on the western boundary of the site after approval by HDC in Sept 2021 despite PC concerns as to quality of application.

In considering this application, the Parish Council have been made aware of a complex neighbours' dispute over the ownership and responsibility for maintenance of the field hedgerow boundary and whether a right of access exists in law to break through it and create an entrance as proposed.

Given this is such an important feature of the application as it stands, we feel it makes sense to establish what the true facts are before a decision is taken by the District Council to approve or otherwise.

Finally, we are also aware of comments submitted by neighbours to the District Council in respect of the application and requests they have should the planning application be approved. In the event of such an outcome, we would urge officers to meet those requests through relevant conditions applied to permission and especially during the build process.

As this proposal is within the curtilage of a listed building, we would have expected to have seen a Listed Building Consent also.

Proposed: Cllr Baxendale, Seconded: Cllr Gilmour. For: 6, Against: 1, Abstentions: 1

9.3. T1 & T2 Willow: Fell to ground level The Moorings Chapel Lane Houghton Huntingdon PE28 2AY Ref. No: 22/02081/TRCA

RESOLVED: Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend that this application be **APPROVED** for the following reasons:

This work is necessary for the health of trees in this large garden.

Proposed: Cllr Boothman, Seconded: Cllr Guinea. For: 7, Abstentions: 1

9.4. T1 - Holly - Reduce height by 3 metres (too Tall) T2 - Lilac - Reduce height by 3 metres (To reduce shadowing) T3 - Feild Maple - Remove (Growing in midle of Lilac) T4 - Holly - Reduce by 2 metres (Growing Over Garage) 7 Rectory Lane Wyton Huntingdon PE28 2AQ Ref. No: 22/02219/TREE

RESOLVED: Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend that this application be **APPROVED** for the following reasons:

This work is necessary to allow the trees to remain in the garden, and for the health of remaining trees.

Proposed: Cllr Boothman; Seconded: Cllr Gilmour. For: 7, Abstentions: 1

9.5. Houghton Grange

HDC has advised the Parish Council to contact Cambs ACRE for training on affordable housing. **PB**

Phase 1 on the development is progressing. It was suggested that a site visit could be arranged.

9.6. HDC Market Towns Programme

Comment on this in relation to St Ives have been circulated and agreed. Comments on the Huntingdon part of the Programme will be circulated. Submission is needed by 14 November

9.7. Market Town Transport Strategy

It was noted that those councillors who attended the consultation exhibition at Waitrose in St Ives were disappointed with the consultation process. The officers did not seem to know the area; the displays were poor and there was no information to take away. The strategy makes no links with the current Market Town Strategy consultation and still includes the now scrapped Cambridge Metro. Comments have been submitted previously and will be resubmitted. A question was raised on the cost of the proposals and consultation and its effectiveness.

9.8. Enforcement Actions

The developers of The How have cleared vegetation from a part of the riverbank opposite the end of their land and fenced it, erecting a sign saying it will be a private mooring. This is not part of their planning permission and land ownership is unclear.

RESOLVED: The Parish Clerk will report a breach of planning control to HDC in relation to the vegetation removal and installation of a fence on the riverbank to the south of The How, with the proposal for a private mooring. **(Clerk)**

Proposed: Cllr Keane, Seconded: Cllr Skinner. All in favour

Some of the land to the south of The How will be gifted to HDC. GOVT has asked to be involved in the management of this land to retain it with a rural feel.

9.9. Other Planning Matters

The Corner paving stones around the Clock Tower have come loose and need repairing. **(Clerk)**.

10. PROJECTS

10.1. Playing Field Compound Extension

RESOLVED: Hilton Groundscape be appointed to carry out the work to extend the Playing Field Sports Compound. **(Clerk)**

Proposed: Cllr Skinner, Seconded: Cllr Guinea. All in favour

10.2. New Housing Welcome packs

The idea of an information pack for new resident, especially those at Houghton Grange, was generally supported by the feedback from the 'Vision' meeting.

Cllr Skinner presented the design so far. It is proposed to be a printed cardboard folder that can hold the details for the Parish Council, Timebank, the Church, Our Shop, a copy of the village magazine and the village directory. It was agreed the information should be available digitally to those who want it, potentially via a QR code, and physical packs to be available for new houses or residents.

10.3. CIL Grant Application

An application for CIL funding from HDC towards the renovation of the Clock Tower was unsuccessful, as it was deemed to not meet the criteria of 'enabling growth'.

RESOLVED: The project should go ahead using CIL funding received from Houghton Grange development.

Proposed: Cllr Baxendale, Seconded: Cllr Guinea. All in favour.

The thatchers will be asked to renew their quotations and other grants will be

researched. **(RB & Clerk)**

10.4. LHI – Mill Street

This is still in progress.

10.5. LHI – A1123

Cllrs Baxendale and Keane met with the Highways Officer. It was noted:

A delivery plan agreed, and the next step is a statutory consultation with interested parties and a public notice. If there are no objections the legal work to change the speed limit would be carried out and signage erected.

One Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign (MVAS) has been budgeted for, if a second one is requested that would be about £3,000. The Parish Council would have to be responsible for maintaining the MVAS, changing the batteries and moving it every 4 weeks.

It was agreed to continue with the project and carry out further research into the need for and number of MVASs

10.6. Workshop – plan for next actions

Following the workshop in October the initial findings were shared with the attendees, and a further Parish Council workshop was held to establish the priorities that come out of the meeting.

It was agreed that wider consultation is needed and Cllrs Gilmour, Hunter, Guinea and Boothman will look at initial proposals for this.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

- Meeting with the Scout Hut Committee: a meeting will be arranged with representatives to further the acceptance of a Heads of Agreement for use of the land on which the hut is sited and its environs. **(Clerk)**
- Bus service: The 904 service through the village has now terminated, the service now runs from Huntingdon to Peterborough only. The B bus will continue once an hour along the A1123, with two an hour serving RAF Wyton. It was noted that other routes have been replaced with alternative services by the Combined Authority. The CA will be contacted as there are now residents in the village who can no longer access a bus service. It was also noted that the timetable can be confusing as none of the stops on the A1123 are listed. **(Clerk)**
- The Tennis club have asked about erection of extra storage near their courts. It is believed this will be a small storage unit behind their hut.

RESOLVED: Further clarification of the size will be obtained. This is agreed in principle, providing the storage is not obtrusive in size or position.

Proposed: Cllr Guinea, Seconded: Cllr Skinner. All in favour

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Boothman will represent the Parish Council of the Remembrance Day service and parade, laying a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.

It was noted that there is a damaged tree in the wildflower garden. This is a long standing condition and is listed for work that is outstanding.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Parish Council is Wednesday 7 December, 7pm in the St Mary's Centre.

Signed:..... Date: