**HOUGHTON AND WYTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the **Parish Council Meeting** held on Wednesday 11 October 2023, 7:00pm.

**Present:**  Cllr P Boothman - Chair Cllr Baxendale

Cllr B Gilmour Cllr R Guinea

Cllr A Skinner

There were four members of the public. D & C Cllr Dew could not attend.

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| 1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**   There were apologies for absence from Cllrs Hunter and Keane. It was noted that Cllr Elborn has resigned from the Parish Council due to personal reasons. Councillors wished to formally record their thanks to Cllr Elborn for her valuable contribution over the past 5 years, and especially in relation to the cemetery extension and shaping the Parish Councils approach and policies towards climate, environmental and biodiversity issues. |
| 1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**   There were no declarations of interest. |
| 1. **PUBLIC COMMENT**   A member of the Houghton & Wyton Flood Action Group informed the council that he will no longer be able to prepare an Emergency Action Plan for the Parish.  It was agreed that the Flood Action Group will give a presentation to the Parish Council at the November meeting. |
| 1. **MINUTES**   **RESOLVED:** The minutes of 6 September 2023 were approved as a correct record.  Proposed: Cllr Baxendale; Seconded: Cllr Skinner. All in favour |
| 1. **MATTERS ARISING**   It is noted that the Cricket Club has been successful in its application to the ECB for a grant. The grant will be used to provide a gazebo and barbeque for the club’s use. It will also provide an awning for the eastern side of the Pavilion and a water boiler to be fitted in the Pavilion kitchen. As these latter items will be available for all users of the Pavilion, they will be gifted to the Parish Council who will therefore be responsible for the maintenance and insurance of these items. |
| 1. **DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS**   D Cllr Keane reported:  HDC is looking at the polling districts and polling stations. A survey at [Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2023 - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/consultations/polling-districts-and-polling-places-review-2023/) finishes on 28th November.  There is the active health programme with a free 90 day use of one leisure if eligibility criteria are met. Please see [Active for Health - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/leisure/active-for-health/) for more information.  HDC is looking to ensure the electoral register is up to date and they will be contacting people directly, or you can update your information online [Welcome to the household update service (householdresponse.com)](https://www.householdresponse.com/Home/Welcome)  Information on the new charge for green bins can be found at [Garden Waste Subscription Service - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/bins-waste/garden-waste-subscription-service/)  HDC are also looking to make sure those who are eligible for help are getting support [Offering a Helping Hand – Make Your Money Go Further - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/people-communities/helping-hand/)  Proposed strike action by some HDC staff has now been called off  C Cllr D Dew was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following report:  ‘Most of my work continues to be around highways issues. I'm pleased to advise that we have been appointed a local highways officer and also a local drainage officer for the area that I represent. Once these two offices are in place I will introduce them to you as your first point of contact. We should soon have rights if way officer also.  Other issues around Include the issue of weed management along with the highways.  The policy that has been in force is being assessed as to its original use and current position. There have been many complaints however.  I attended the Highways meeting which the bids from both Hilton and Houghton & Wyton for 20mph zones were recommended for acceptance.  On the 21st of September There was a countrywide flood action conference at St Ives.  The current transport strategy for Cambridge looks all but extinct. the CPCA are picking up the mantle of providing improved bus services which were a major part of the strategy. I will update you as this develops.  I am pleased that no local schools were included in the national concrete problem. |
| 1. **CLERK & RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICERS REPORT**    1. To authorise payments due and paid and note financial reports and bank balances   **RESOLVED:** Payments now due are authorised:  Proposed: Cllr Gilmour, Seconded: Cllr Guinea. All in favour  The budget report and bank balances were noted.   * 1. Budget and Precept request 2024/25   The Clerk had circulated an initial draft budget. Parish Councillors will meet on 25 October to prepare a final draft budget.  HDC will be asked for an extension for the precept request until the final tax base is known, due to the increase in housing at Houghton Grange. **CLERK**   * 1. Clerk’s Assistant recruitment.   Several applications have been received and councillors will meet to decide on an interview format. **CLERK, AS, RG**   * 1. Councillor vacancy recruitment   HDC will be informed of the resignations and the posts advertised according to the due process.   * 1. Insurance – policy renewal and pavilion flood cover   The policy for the Parish Council has been renewed, but flood cover is not provided for the Pavilion. Suitable policies will be looked at, including the National Flood Forum. Other buildings and structures are covered for flood damage. The cover provided for the Timebank and its operations will be verified and alternative provisions investigated as necessary. **CLERK**   * 1. Barclays Bank Account   There is no update on the change of account. The Clerk will contact Barclays. **CLERK** |
| 1. **REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS**    1. Playing Field       1. Play Area – repair work needed   The Annual inspection of the Play Area raised some issues to be addressed. The Clerk has recently attended a training course on play area inspections and would like to do a full review of the equipment in place and the best approach to ensure the area is suitable and safe. The Clerk will arrange to meet with a few councillors to discuss options. **CLERK**   * + 1. Suggestion for new item of play equipment   It was agreed to not progress this suggestion.   * + 1. Grass Cutting for sports clubs   The current grass cutting schedule for the Playing Field will be circulated to the Cricket and Football Clubs for their input. **CLERK**  A schedule will be sent to several contractors, including the current one, for quotes. **CLERK**  The Cricket Club thanked the Parish Council for the improvement work that had been carried out to the playing surface. A rolling program of works to maintain the field will be implemented.   * 1. Office Hire Agreement renegotiation   Cllr Baxendale and the Clerk met with a representative of the PCC.  It was agreed that the PCC would not increase the base rental (£3,500) but would continue to charge monthly for energy use.  The PCC are hoping to enter a fixed rate energy contract in January, and with the smart meters fitted for electricity use, they have been asked to set a annual combined fixed charge from then onwards.  They have increased their rates for other users.  They will continue to be asked to improve the energy efficiency of the building.  A suggestion was made that a digital screen could be provided in the hall of the St Mary’s Centre for users to access during their hire. The representative was happy to take this to the PCC and work with the Clerk to assess costs and suitability.   * 1. Clocktower and pavilion fire risk assessments   The Pavilion fire risk assessment has been completed. The recommendations will be reviewed and implemented. The Fire Service have asked to carry out a Fire Safety Audit, it is felt this will complement the risk assessment and work needed.   * 1. Meeting with Houghton School governor   Cllrs Baxendale and Skinner and the Clerk met with one of the Houghton School governors to discuss increased liaison between the school and community to benefit both sides.  It was agreed that Cllr Guinea would take on the role of liaison with the governors and the head teacher.  Specific items discussed included the use of the school hall and field by community groups and the continued problem of parking by those taking children to and from school.   * 1. LHI 2024-25   Cllr Skinner will look at whether this scheme can be used to improve the pavements in the village. Many are in a bad state and often narrow, increasing the risks especially for vulnerable users. **AS**   * 1. Policy statement on use of Parish Council assets   The draft policy was discussed. It was agreed that any use of Parish Council land, buildings or assets for commercial purposes must:   * Fit with Parish Council ethics and policies * Be subject to a Risk Assessment and holding Public Liability Insurance * have a benefit to the community * comply with any relevant regulations, including if also using Highway land. * be agreed through a formal process with the Parish Clerk.   The final draft will be confirmed at the next meeting. **PB**   * 1. Tree work on Parish Council land   Urgent work needed on trees on the Playing Field and in the Churchyard will be commissioned. **CLERK**  Replanting and tidying the area in the south-east corner of the Playing Field will be progressed. **CLERK** |
| 1. **PLANNING MATTERS**    1. [**Retention of operations comprising the laying of an engineered hard pad with paint-lining applied to demark parking bays and access clearance, on existing rough surfaced and grassed car park area serving the east bank of the marina campus.**](https://publicaccess.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=RSE4WBIKLPK00&activeTab=summary) Hartford Marina Banks End Wyton Huntingdon PE28 2AA Ref. No: 23/00586/FUL   **RESOLVED:** Houghton & Wyton Parish Council have the following comments:   * Given that the hardstanding surface element of the development is already in place, we are **minded to recommend approval**, but subject to conditions being put in place and that the car park is not used until the entirety of the development is properly completed and officers are satisfied that an adequate pollution control and mitigation system is installed and fully functioning. * Houghton & Wyton Parish Council would like to put on record their disappointment that this application is retrospective, especially as Tingdene state in their planning application that they are part of a long-established and well-resourced group that are capable of delivering their projects to a high standard. * We would also like to state that we are becoming increasingly concerned about the growing flood risk in the area, as well as the level of pollution to the River Great Ouse and its tributaries. * We note the Environment Agencies latest comments following the FRA in respect of a minor loss of volume to the flood plain from this development, however we are also concerned about the speed of run off which is exacerbated by adding more areas of nonporous surfacing. * Equally important to us is the potential run-off of pollutants from this large carparking area, which sits on a very narrow spit of land at the entrance between two bodies of water (the main river itself and the marina basin). * The Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of planning policies which combine to protect bio diversity and the natural environment, including the river, from significant harm - namely HWNP 2; HWNP 6; and HWNP 8. Importantly the latter actually exists to support quiet tourism in the area, but can only do so if any impacts from development on the natural environment are capable of being adequately mitigated. * With this in mind we note from section 4.3 of the Planning Statement submitted with this application which mentions that a ‘slit drain filled with appropriate granular material will be installed as an interceptor for vehicle drip residues between the closest hardpad edge length and the marina basin to trap insoluble drips’. It goes on to add the words ‘so far as possible’. * At the time of submitting the Planning Statement this mitigation is reported as ‘not yet installed’. However, given the proximity and position between two sensitive bodies of water, we would argue that it is essential that fully functioning pollution control measures are installed at the same time as part of this development and which can deal adequately with both the soluble and insoluble pollutants which otherwise will enter the marina basin, mix with the river and harm the environment.   Proposed: Cllr Baxendale, Seconded: Cllr Boothman. All in favour.   * 1. Enforcement actions – updates on any actions from HDC. To receive notification of any potential enforcement issues.   Application 23/00123/FUL for the fencing already erected at an area of riverbank near The How has been withdrawn. HDC have confirmed that the applicant has agreed in writing to replant trees that were removed from the riverbank by the end of the next planting season. They will not serve any formal notices, but say they will continue to monitor the site until the works are completed to their satisfaction.  A resident contacted the Council about a complaint they submitted to HDC about a building being erected at Daylock Marina. This will be monitored.  Concern had been expressed to the Council about earthworks in a field along Meadow Lane. Enquiries will be made with the landowner and the planning department. **CLERK**   * 1. Houghton Grange phase 2 update   The Parish Council is still waiting for a meeting with the leader of HDC about this site.  The Parish council appointed legal team are on stand-by, but no date has been set for the DMC to discuss this application as HDC have yet to recruit a landscape specialist to review the information.   * 1. Other Planning Matters, including planning applications received after the agenda was published * A resident of Hill Estate has reported damage to their perimeter wall and driveway by the suckers from a White Poplar on the green area there. One of the Parish Council Tree Wardens visited them and reported that HDC Tree Officer has given them the details to claim for the damage on the HDC insurance and will look at the tree involved. * Bellway are hoping to develop land to the north of the A1123 opposite Houghton Grange. They have made a presentation to St Ives Town Council although the land is on Wyton on the Hill Parish. D Cllr Keane is liaising the find a suitable date for a presentation to Wyton on the Hill and Houghton & Wyton. **DK** * HDC Development Management Training – Cllrs Boothman and Skinner will attend in person on 6 November. The Clerk and other councillors can attend via Zoom on 30 Oct or 6 Nov. **PB, AS, CLERK** |
| 1. **PROJECTS**    1. Clock Tower phase 2   Some designs for the extended paving have been received. Councillors will look at these at the meeting on 25 Oct. Quotes to expose the base of the supporting columns are costly in isolation. It was agreed to include this work in the entire scheme.   * 1. Playing Field storage sheds   A 8’ x 10’shed has been ordered for the Parish Council and Timebank use. Delivery and installation are awaited. Shelving and storage will be ordered. **CLERK**  The Flood Action Group are taking delivery of a shed provided by CCC at the weekend.   * 1. Defibrillators in the parish   There is no update on this item.   * 1. Cemetery extension fencing, trees and works   There is no update on this item.   * 1. Playing field – hedging and vegetation.   There is no update on this item.   * 1. 20mph speed limit initiative   CCC have approved a resident’s application for this. The Parish Council expressed its congratulations. The Council would like to carry out a more extensive survey of residents to ensure the project and its design are right for the village. C Cllr Dew will be asked to find out when the designs will be available and whether an effective consultation can be carried out. **DK** |
| 1. **CORRESPONDENCE**   It was agreed to not pursue an invite to join with other parishes installing electric charging points via Chargy at this time.  The Clerk will put information about the charging scheme to be introduced for ‘Green Bins’ on the website. Christmas refuse collection dates will also be advertised. **CLERK**  The Council is hoping to meet with the managers of National Trust Houghton Mill on 7 November. |
| 1. **ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS, DELEGATED ACTION OR FOR INFORMATION ONLY**   Complaints about car parking in the village will be discussed at the next meeting and the Flood Group will make a presentation. |
| 1. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**   Due to councillor absence the next Parish Council meeting will be **Wednesday 8 November 2023 at 7pm in the Sports Pavilion.** |
| 1. **MOTION TO EXCLUDE PUBLIC AND PRESS**   **RESOLVED:** The meeting will be closed to the public and press for item 15 in accordance with The Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 as confidential information may be discussed.  Proposed: Cllr Boothman, Seconded: Cllr Baxendale. All in favour |
| 1. **PLAYING FIELD LEASE**   Following prolonged negotiations with the landowners and between solicitors a lease will been produced that it is hoped will be acceptable to all parties.  **RESOLVED:** It was agreed to accept all amendments proposed to lead to the completion of a suitable lease, subject to sight of the final lease and all councillors giving their agreement in writing via email.  Proposed: Cllr Boothman; Seconded: Cllr Gilmour. All in favour |

Signature ………………………………………… Date…………………………….