

HOUGHTON AND WYTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Parish Council Meeting** held on Wednesday 5 April 2023, 7:00pm.

Present: Cllr P Boothman - Chair
Cllr N Elborn
Cllr Goodger
Cllr D Keane
Cllr Baxendale
Cllr B Gilmour
Cllr R Guinea

There were also seven members of the public present.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Cllrs Hunter and Skinner.

2. DECLARATIONS

Cllr Elborn declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9.1 as a neighbour.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

A resident put forward an idea to encourage mobile food traders to visit the village on a regular/monthly basis for the benefit of residents. It was explained that the car park at the Playing Field could not currently be used for that, but with the right licences/permissions there were public highways that could be used. Concern was expressed that this should not take business from current food businesses within the parish. The National Trust Mill and campsite was suggested as a possible venue which might be interested and worth contacting.

A resident expressed concern about the correct width of cycle paths and shared used paths in the area.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:, The list of attendees was corrected and the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 8 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

Proposed: Cllr Gilmour; Seconded: Cllr Guinea. For: 5, Abstentions: 2

5. MATTERS ARISING

- Following completion of the extended compound on the Playing Field, the area available for storage buildings needs to be assessed and decisions on allocations made. **(Clerk & RG)**. It was noted that the Flood Group may be able to access funding for a storage unit.
- Cllr Hunter had reported that having assessed the Parish Council website updates were needed
- Anglian Water have been asked for a meeting about flooding and the drains in the village. No date had been proposed yet. The Clerk will follow this up. **(Clerk)**

6. DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT.

C Cllr Dew reported that the Highways Committee is aware that there are issues with the management of highways complaints, with some being reported as closed before work has been completed.

Highways are adopting a Non-Motorised Users policy and parishes will be consulted on this. In response to a public comment he noted the concerns about some shared use paths as well as the correct designation of certain routes.

LHI bids are now split to cover those applying for 20mph zones and other works. Parishes can apply for both funds. It was noted that the police no longer have a veto on setting up 20mph. Cllr Dew stated he is happy to support 20mph zones in his parishes if there is support from residents and councils.

Cllr Dew agreed to follow up the request for the central white lines on Houghton Hill to be renewed. This item is marked as closed and was due to be completed by end of March 2023, but has not been addressed.

The Combined Authority are continuing to support some bus routes through the county and have funded this specifically through the latest Council Tax increases.

The County has increased funding for adult Social Services and hopes to see improvements.

Cllr Dew aims to produce an Annual Report on what has been achieved by the County Council in this area over the past year.

D Cllr Keane reported HDC is taking up complaints about the new Luton Airport flightpaths with issues that were not fully covered in the consultation.

Council Tax bills have been issued by HDC.

Consultations are in progress on issues related to revising the HDC Local Plan.

HDC are responsible for issuing voter ID cards for those who need them.

7. CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICERS REPORT

7.1. To authorise payments due

Due to the increase in energy costs it was agreed that the Parish Council would accept additional user charges from the PCC alongside the annual rental agreement. As these are solely for energy use and based on actual bills, the clerk has queried the vat situation; an answer is awaited.

RESOLVED: The additional invoices for Jan – Mar 2023 will be paid, but a review of the annual rental agreement with St Mary's PCC will be requested.

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

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

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

The budget report to date was noted.

Final confirmation of the donations received by the Community Fund up to 31 March 2023 is awaited. The Parish Council will match fund these donations.

7.2. Investment/Savings Accounts for reserves update

Councillor details are still needed from some individuals to allow for completion of the applications for these accounts.

7.3. Feast Week Grant application

Three members of the new Feast Week Committee attended to support this application. The committee was thanked for stepping up to run this annual event. The Chair confirmed the Parish Council's support for this pivotal village event.

The Feast Week treasurer confirmed the bank balance and that the previous Committee had made donations to Timebank and Christmas Lights and asked the Parish Council to hold funds for the possible building of a Petanque Court. It was confirmed that they do have a Reserves Policy and are operating within it.

RESOLVED: a grant of £500 be made to Feast Week towards the cost of a band at the Finale event.

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

Current and previous Feast Week Committee members are keen to install a pétanque court on the Playing Field. The Parish Council did not feel it could commit to supporting this yet without evidence of wider public support, and having taken account of balancing factors, such as the usable space/capacity of the playing field, and accommodating demands from the existing as well as other new and future uses we have been made aware of through recent consultations.

7.4. To consider renewing affiliation to CAPALC

RESOLVED: The Parish Council will renew its affiliation to CAPALC for 2023-24 (£540.16)

Proposed: Cllr Gilmour, seconded: Cllr Elborn. For 6, Against: 1

7.4. Defibrillators within the village.

Following a training event on CPR and use of Defibrillators organised by Timebank, it was realised that there is only one publicly available and registered defibrillator (AED) in the village on the external wall of the Memorial Hall. This is situated centrally and closer

to Houghton residents, leaving Wyton residents vulnerable

RESOLVED: Up to £3,000 be allocated for the installation of an AED in a locked cabinet on an external wall of The Three Jolly Butchers pub. The pub has agreed to this if this proves to be a suitable site, and they were thanked for their support.

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

The locations and availability of other AEDs in the parish will be assessed and improved if possible to increase coverage across the village.

8. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Playing Field

8.1.1. Field maintenance

Works to improve the playing field surface will begin this week with a Vertidrain treatment, to reduce compaction and begin to level out the surface. Grass seed and weedkiller will be applied in a few weeks time. The contractor will be asked to look at remedying the surface damage by the main gate caused by vehicles.

8.1.2. Field Lease

There is no progress to report on this project.

8.2. Cemetery Extension

RESOLVED: the proposal to manage the cemetery extension site as a natural wildflower burial site be agreed. Only natural, biodegradable materials will be allowed to be buried on the site and embalming will be discouraged. Memorials on the burial plots will not be allowed, but alternative memorials will be offered. The site will be managed to encourage biodiversity.

Proposed: Cllr Elborn, seconded: Cllr Goodger. For: 6, Against: 1

Work will commence to clear, level and prepare the site with the help of The Conservation Volunteers Trust and local volunteers. It is hoped this can start as soon as possible. A timeline for the work will be drawn up with the aim of opening the site in Spring 2024. Timebank will be asked to help publicise the opportunity to volunteers.

8.3. To make a statement on the Parish Council stance on climate change and an ecological emergency

The Parish Council adopted a Climate and Ecological Environmental policy in early 2022 to help guide its' choices and decision making. Feedback from the recent workshop and public consultation events highlighted the real concerns residents have for environment and climate and how they wished to see greater action.

RESOLVED: Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recognise that there is a Climate Emergency and by doing so agree to strengthen their determination to take action where they can to address it through their own work and by influencing others.

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

On 13 May The Timebank Litterpick will link with an Eco pop-up shop and coincides with the visit of the Floodmobile to the village. The Parish Council felt it would like to support this by promoting ways that residents can be more environmentally aware and responsible and showcasing some of the work it is doing in recognition of the Climate Change Emergency.

Availability of subsidised compost bins and water butts will be investigated. **(Clerk)**

8.4. To discuss and make a decision on an application for a 20mph zone throughout the village area of the parish

A resident has agreed to make an application for CCC funding to introduce a 20mph speed limit in the village area of the parish. This needs evidence of public support for this and any known accidents. It was agreed he should proceed with the application and a petition/survey will be arranged to gauge public support across all residents and demographics, Cllr Keane offered to help.

RESOLVED: The Parish Council initially support the application for a 20mph speed limit throughout the village area of the parish. They will review this when evidence of public support has been gathered.

Proposed: Cllr Keane, Seconded: Cllr Gilmour All in favour

It was noted that the indicator signs for 20mph at school times are not working correctly. This will be reported **(Clerk)**

9. PLANNING MATTERS

9.1. Proposed replacement and enlargement of utility annexe, installation of external insulation with render and cladding finishes, and solar panel installation. 8 Rectory Lane Wyton Huntingdon PE28 2AQ Ref. No: 23/00310/HHFUL

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

- The application does not conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The application does not impact negatively on the street scene of Rectory Lane and respects the Conservation Area
- The application includes environmental improvements
- The application will make internal areas of the house more usable

Proposed: Cllr Gilmour; Seconded: Cllr Guinea. For: 6, Abstentions: 1

9.2. Parish Council response to the application to re-designate the Thicket Footpath as a Bridleway

The Parish Council submitted its views on the change of status of the Thicket footpath to the Public Inquiry on the creation of a CycleTrack in 2017 and application for a Bridleway in 2020. The Public Inquiry found that the narrow width of the path made designation to a CycleTrack unsafe. However Section 31 of the Highways Act 1980 and case law do not allow safety issues or the effect on the land to be taken into consideration if the route has been used 'as a right' for 20 years.

It was suggested that the barrier across the path at the boundary of Houghton and St Ives that was only removed in 2013 and would previously have prevented access along the path to horse riders without them trespassing on neighbouring land.

While the Definitive Map designates the width of the Thicket Path as 30 feet, it is not accessible at that width in many areas due to barriers, vegetation, semi-ancient woodland, rising ground, drainage ditches etc. To mitigate flooding, it has been raised and shored up, therefore along the majority of the route it does not meet the 3 metre width required to be designated a bridleway.

Cllr Boothman will investigate correcting the definition on the Definitive Map to reflect the actual path width. The status of the land along the pathway, the evidence of use and its classification within the Conservation Area Assessment as a monument will also be reviewed and a response submitted to the consultation on this Modification Order.

9.3. Parish Council response to the HDC Local Plan outline stage consultation

There are consultations on three aspects of the Local Plan review. Councillors were asked to look at these and consider comments.

9.4. Community Land Trust and Housing Needs Survey

No progress.

9.5. Enforcement Actions

Photographs of the work at 1 Hill Estate have been sent to HDC Enforcement.

There have no further updates on any cases.

The houseboats at Hartford Marina are legally defined as static caravans for planning purposes. HDC Enforcement will be asked to investigate if the Marina have a licence for static caravans. **(Clerk)**

9.6. Other Planning Matters

The Council has been informed by Homes England that an application for 120 new homes as part of development of the field between Houghton Grange and St Ives will be submitted to HDC. The appointed legal team and landscape architect have been informed.

Cllrs Boothman and Baxendale plan to attend the planning meeting of St Ives Town Council on 12 April if this application is to be discussed. Cllr Boothman will also attend the AGM of Nobles Field on 20 April and inform GOVT.

10. PROJECTS

10.1. Playing Field Compound Extension and storage sheds

See Matters Arising

10.2. LHI – Mill Street improvements

There is no progress with this project.

10.3. LHI – A1123 speed limit within the parish and St Ives

The 40mph speed limit has been put in place on the A1123 from St Ives to Hartford. Poles for MVASs have been erected, but there has been no contact from CCC Highways about the equipment. This will be followed up.

10.4. Clock Tower

The work to repair and paint the woodwork and complete lead work at the top of the roof is almost complete. Thatching can begin after this.

10.5. Future projects – next actions.

Cemetery – See item 8.2

Houghton Grange - see item 9.6

Climate Emergency - See item 8.3

Improvement to the Village Green. The next stage is to continue with the Clock Tower restoration – stage 2 to carry out further work as detailed in the condition report and potentially extend and improve the paving. Cllr Baxendale will ask Chris McRae (architect) to produce a specification and work brief from the original condition report, to enable a planning application to be submitted. **(RB)**

Neighbourhood Plan Review – this is agreed to be a priority, but due to more urgent project work this will not be carried out yet.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

- John Wells and the Cricket Club were thanked for cleaning the Pavilion fence and other small maintenance jobs. **(Clerk)**
- The Football Club had recently informed the Clerk that they were letting another club use their pitch and the Pavilion for a one-off match. It was agreed that clubs will be informed that they should not sublet the pavilion without prior permission from the Parish Clerk. There will be an extra charge to the users and details will be needed for insurance cover.
- The Houghton Tea Room has asked to install a planter by their northern wall in memory of a regular customer. The Parish Council suggested the flower bed in this area may be more suitable for this purpose. Otherwise, a plan of the planter proposal was needed before it could be determined.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Parish Council is **Wednesday 3 May 2023**, 7pm in the St Mary's Centre. This will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

Signed:..... Date: