

## HOUGHTON AND WYTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Parish Council Meeting** held on Wednesday 5 June 2024, 7:00pm.

**Present:** Cllr P Boothman - Chair  
Cllr Gilmour  
Cllr D Keane  
Cllr A Skinner  
Cllr Baxendale  
Cllr R Guinea  
Cllr J Rodgers  
Cllr R Southworth

There was seven members of the public.

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Hunter was absent.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Baxendale declared an interest in item 8.2 as the applicant.

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

### 4. MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** The minutes of 1 May 2024 were approved as a correct record.

Proposed: Cllr Baxendale; Seconded: Cllr Rodgers. All in favour

### 5. MATTERS ARISING

- LHI 2024 – the application to install a footpath on the A1123 has been withdrawn.
- Annual Parish Meeting – this will take the form a community fair on Sat 29 June. So far nine groups have signed up to attend and publicity has gone out.
- Ten sites have been nominated as or renewals submitted for Assets of Community Value. HDC will inform the Parish Council of those which qualify.
- Policy review – this group has yet to meet. The Clerk will send electronic versions of policies. **Clerk**
- 20mph application, parking restrictions on St Ives Road, Bus stop at Hartford Marina – CCC apologised that there has been no progress with these projects.
- Renew CCTV at the Pavilion – no progress **Clerk**
- Transfer of footpath to Parish Council – no response from landowner. **Clerk**
- St Peters school bus – no meeting has been arranged. **Clerk**
- Extension of yellow lines at Victoria Crescent – no progress **BG**
- St Mary's Centre – energy audit of building by PCC and grant for large screen – no progress. **RB & Clerk**
- Neighbourhood Plan review – this will be displayed at the APM and volunteers recruited.
- Completion of cycle route on A1123 – Cllr Boothman will contact relevant parties to progress this. **PB**

### 6. DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS

#### 6.1. District Councillor report

HDC has small grants available to celebrate Huntingdonshire.

Local small businesses can get a free consultation to help them reduce their carbon footprint.

The Combined Authority is looking to improve bus services and map all bus stops.

#### 6.2. The Thicket Woodland

D Cllr Davenport-Ray explained HDC is still waiting for funds to coppice or fell trees deemed dangerous in The Thicket woodland. She suggested that if HDC removed the steps and path through the woodland there would be less need to remove trees that could potentially fall over the path. Access would not be prevented to the area, but there would be no formal path designated. The Parish Council agreed that a path should remain as this area is a destination and the woodland should be managed to allow for this.

St Ives Civic Society expressed concern that the trees in the area were not being replaced once they fell. They feel the ancient trackway and the surroundings should be better managed to preserve the character. It was suggested that a 'Friends of...' group be formed.

Cllr Boothman pointed out that the Parish Council had proposed that the woodland be extended up the hillside to the A1123. This increased area would allow for areas to be fenced off while still allowing public access. It was suggested a management plan for the entire area, to include Noble's Field, Berman Park and land at Houghton Grange, should be produced as part of the Neighbourhood and Local Plans.

It was noted that a resident had trimmed vegetation at the junction of St Ives Road and the A1123 to improve visibility when turning right here.

## 7. CLERK & RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICERS REPORT

**7.1.** To authorise payments due and paid and note financial reports and bank balances

**RESOLVED:** Payments now due are authorised:

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

Payee	Description	Amount (*inc vat)
T & S Gardening & Grounds Maintenance	Cemetery and Playing field grass cutting	£510
J & S Gardening	Green Area Maintenance	£1,170
CAPALC	Training	£180
SLCC	Training	£78*
Playsafety Ltd	Play Area Inspection	£112.80*
Online Playgrounds	Play Area repairs	£11,439.23*
Lois Dale	Pavilion repairs	£60
Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Managers	Annual Subscription	£100
Cambridge Trees Ltd	Tree safety work	£450*
Richard Buxton LLP	Legal advice – Houghton Grange	£1,107*

The budget report and bank balances were noted.

**7.2.** Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023-24

**7.2.1.** Approval of the Annual Governance Statement 2023-24

**RESOLVED:** the Annual Governance Statement 2023-24 be approved.

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

**7.2.2.** Approval of the Accounting Statement 2023-24

**RESOLVED:** The Annual Accounting Statement be approved.

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

Councillors expressed their thanks to the Clerk for her work on the annual accounts and the positive Internal Audit report.

**7.3.** Investments and bank mandates

It was noted that the £85,000 from the matured one-year bond with Cambridge and Counties has been reinvested with the same institution for another year. The interest earned has been added to the Redwood 95-day notice account.

It was agreed that all bank mandates should be reviewed to ensure they are up-to-date. Cllrs Southworth, Rodgers and Guinea agreed to be signatories if required. **Clerk**

**7.4.** To consider changing the Parish Council current account

**RESOLVED:** Subject to a review by Cllr Southworth and the RFO, the funds in both the Barclays and Santander current accounts will be transferred via the switching service to a new Unity Bank account. **Clerk & RS**

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

#### **7.5. Playing Field and Cemetery maintenance.**

The grass cutting contract for the Field and Cemetery has been terminated by the contractor. HDC are stepping in to cut the field until a full contract can be let. This will lead to cost increases. Cricket and Football Club will be informed of this. The costs of buying and maintaining equipment and employing staff to carry out the work will be looked at. **Clerk**

### **8. PLANNING MATTERS**

#### **8.1. T1 Ash - reduce one over-extended lateral over entrance drive by 4m** The Elms Thicket Road Houghton Ref. No: 24/00891/TREE

**RESOLVED:** Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend this application is APPROVED as the work is necessary and will not cause any problems.

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

#### **8.2. Proposed replacement roof covering in natural slate** Monument House Thicket Road Houghton Huntingdon PE28 2BQ Ref. No: 24/00858/HHFUL

Cllr Baxendale declared a personal and financial interest in this application as he owns the property, and remained in the room but took no part in the discussion or decision making.

**RESOLVED:** Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend this application is APPROVED as the work is necessary for safety reasons. The surrounding buildings have various types of roofing. The Parish Council would like to see solar panels included.

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

#### **8.3. Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of proposed two storey side extension.** 6 Hill Estate Houghton Huntingdon PE28 2BX Ref. No: 24/00811/HHFUL

**RESOLVED:** Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend this application is APPROVED. The extension is not visible from the road. The Parish Council would like to see solar panels included in the final development.

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

#### **8.4. Erection of timber fence to define the rear curtilage** Fernleigh Huntingdon Road Wyton Huntingdon PE28 2AU Ref. No: 24/00808/LBC

**RESOLVED:** Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend this application is APPROVED. The fencing will be similar to that on other boundaries although it will be higher than the approved wall. However, whilst recommending approval of the application the parish council did note that this was a departure from the conditions set in the original application dated July 2022 which went as far as to stipulate 'for the avoidance of doubt work will be carried out in accordance with approved plans.' Those plans specified a wooden fence sitting on low level wall made up of mixed Cambridgeshire brick.

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

#### **8.5. Removal of existing UVPC conservatory and replacement with energy efficient conservatory including sedum green roof system** The Croft Thicket Road Houghton Huntingdon PE28 2BQ Ref. No: 24/00459/HHFUL

**RESOLVED:** Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend this application is REFUSED. on the following planning grounds:

- Local Plan LP 11 Design Context
- LP 12 Design Implementation
- LP 14 Amenity
- HWNP 17 Design and New Development
- Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017)

The Croft sits within the Conservation Area of Houghton and Wyton and is unusual by

being built sideways-on to the road, directly facing no.5 Elm Cottage to the east. This means windows look directly on to no.5 from the main house and the existing conservatory.

Adding a larger room to the existing building would improve the living space. There would also be energy efficiency improvements with a more substantial and well insulated room. We welcome the incorporation of a sedum/green roof within the proposal which fits with the environmental policy of the Parish Council.

However, the size of the replacement building is substantially larger than the existing conservatory. The roof design being high, deep sided, and flat roof design, dominates the space, as well as increasing the sense of massing to the main house and proximity to no.5 next door. The extension would also be visible from the street and more imposing on the street scene.

The design of the roof with its circa 700 mm overhang on each side is such a major part of the building that in planning terms, we feel the total area it occupies should be taken as the new footprint of the building when comparing it to the existing conservatory.

The plans do not readily allow the reader to take measurements for easy comparison, but it appears that the footprint area (including the roof area) is increasing from circa 10 sq m to circa 33 sq m. Importantly, it is projecting approximately 1.3m further south and 2.6m further east towards the neighbouring property.

This is important given the point about the unusual side on position of the property in relation to its immediate neighbour. Projecting eastward by 2.6m brings windows and therefore views much closer to the neighbours, bearing in mind that these are not side windows as per a conventional layout, but rather the principle viewing orientation as per the rest of the house. This we feel would add to the subsequent loss of privacy. The design of the flat roof overhang at 2.7m high throughout, also means that unlike the sloping roof of the existing conservatory, it has the effect of creating a more prominent visual incursion.

By looking at HDC's Design Guide (2017) Extensions – amenity, which helps assess the impact of extensions and what may be considered acceptable, we can see that without vegetation or screening, the proposed building projection falls foul of the 45-degree test when looking south from the mid-point of the kitchen window of no.5. Overall, we feel that whilst the proposal has positives, without amendments it fails to satisfy sufficiently the requirements of the policies listed above and therefore we recommend refusal.

We also note the neighbour's comments.

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

#### **8.6. Lawful Development Certificate (Existing) for construction of an agricultural building.** Land Adjacent Shortacre Banks End Wyton Ref. No: 24/00906/CLED

**RESOLVED:** Houghton & Wyton Parish Council cannot form a response to this application as it is substantially incomplete and therefore we request that the applicant be asked to resubmit for the following reasons:

The covering letter from Bidwells states that the application 'contains evidence of the agricultural use of this building and associated curtilage at the Land at Wyton continually for a period in excess of 10 years'.

However, this evidence is missing from the application and it contains no statutory declarations, no aerial imagery or evidence contained in the application as claimed. The meeting heard from 5 members of the public who stated they had knowledge of the land and building in question and contested the claim that this building and land had been in agricultural use throughout the period in question.

Without being able to see the evidence claimed in the application, we could not make any recommendation and it was disappointing to see an incomplete application.

Concerns were raised again about the number of applications being made for buildings of various kinds outside the built-up area of the village on farmland north of the A1123, east and west of Splash Lane, and the use of certificates of lawful development and general permitted development orders. The concern stems from the previously stated aim of landowners wishing to create a new 'Wyton Garden Village' in the area around and near to Splash Lane and the number of dwellings now resulting. The Parish Council believe that the **character of the neighbourhood is being changed** and that planning policies which exist to control and guide development in a co-ordinated and appropriate fashion are being undermined. We believe that the situation therefore requires appropriate action to ensure unintended, non-sustainable development is checked.

The Parish Council requests that permitted development rights are restricted under an Article 4 direction, covering a small area of land shown on the map below for the period of time up to the adoption of the revised Local Plan.

The Parish Council believes it is both a sensible and practical solution which still allows plans to be put forward for the area but ensures that they are made as full planning applications and therefore requiring to be determined using all of the policies covering the area in question. The Parish Council are happy to work with the District Council to put the Article 4 direction in place.

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

#### **8.7. Houghton Grange update and S106 agreements**

There is still no contact from Homes England or HDC.

### **9. REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **9.1. Sports Clubs**

Three clubs have met with the mediator and discussed new proposed payment terms. A report on the responses is awaited.

#### **9.2. Meeting with Houghton School Head and governor**

A productive meeting was held with several issues of mutual benefit being discussed. An application has been submitted to register the school playing field as an Asset of Community Value. Efforts will be made to encourage junior football teams within the village to use this field. **Clerk**

A link will be made with the National Trust to discuss their parking needs.

The Parish Council will ask Highways if there are ways that cars accessing the school can be prevented from driving to the end of Green Lane creating a hazard to pedestrians. **Clerk**

### **10. PROJECTS**

#### **10.1. Clock Tower phase 2**

A Highways survey is being commissioned based on potential designs for The Green before a final design and planning application can be developed. The survey will allow for adjustments to ensure that sufficient parking is available and other users can access the area safely.

#### **10.2. Village Defibrillators**

The defibrillator at the Pavilion is now sited on the external wall in a locked cabinet. This can be accessed with a code when an ambulance is called. The unit will be added to the Play Area checklist.

#### **10.3. Play Area repairs**

Two new swing sets have been installed.

The gate from Laughtons Lane has been removed as it was falling apart. This will be replaced in the coming week.

More quotes are awaited for interim inspections of the Play Area.

**RESOLVED:** £1,500 be allocated to replace a small climbing net and carry out repairs to woodwork on the Tree House.

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

More play bark will be bought to fill in areas that are sinking due to use. Grants will be sought to install rubber surfacing in areas of high wear. **CA**

**10.4.** Migrate emails and website to gov.uk domain

The grant available to cover some costs has been applied for. There are still some issues with migrating the current website to this domain. **CA**

**10.5.** Playing Field

**10.5.1.** Playing field Lease

A 125-year lease on the eastern half of the Playing Field has been agreed, signed and fully engrossed. The payment for this has been made to the landowners. The solicitors have been asked to write to HDC to confirm the lease agreement in order to release S106 funding for securing the Playing Field.

**RESOLVED:** Cheques for the previous lease payment for the first five months of 2024 will be issued to the landowners. **Clerk**

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

The Assistant Clerk will be asked to produce a 'plain English' precis of the lease for general use. **CA**

**11. CORRESPONDENCE**

A letter and paperwork were received from Fenstanton Parish Council asking for their support in asking the Environment Agency to carry out essential maintenance work on sluices on the river. The Parish Council agreed to support this initiative.

The Clerk will attend an Ouse Valley Management Group meeting on 22 Oct 2024.

Arrangements will be made to cut back vegetation blocking the view from benches near Houghton Lock. **PB**

The Flood Group asked for funding for E.coli testing kits. They were asked to purchase from their budget and request further funding if needed. **DK**

An ex-resident has nominated the Old Rectory in Wyton for a blue plaque in honour of Isabella Bird. The Parish Council will consider applying for a grant from HDC to install a history board at Loxley Green to commemorate the history of the village including notable residents. **RS**

**12. ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AT FUTURE MEETINGS**

- Introduction of a Biodiversity Policy
- Nominations for Vice-Chair
- Increase to charges for use of the Pavilion and Playing Field
- Recycling facilities for the Pavilion and Playing Field.

**13. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

The next Parish Council meeting will be **Wednesday 3 July 2024 at 7pm.**

Signature ..... Date.....