

HOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Monday 4th September 2023 at 19.00
at Houghton Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors: A Young (Chairman), L Adams (Vice Chairman), L Middleton, P Chant, B Battey. Borough Cllr A Johnston, County Cllr D Drew.

Members of the Public: 11

Minutes: Mrs C L Cotterell (Parish Clerk)

The meeting started at 19.00

Item Minute

1. Chairman's Welcome and Public Participation

Cllr Young welcomed all to the meeting and stated if any members of the public wished to speak on any item then to raise their hand.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Dougall and Coombes.

3. Declarations of Interest

To declare an interest in any items of business on this agenda – **None**.

4. Borough and County Cllrs

To receive reports.

Cllr Johnston confirmed September's Mid Test Matters had been sent to the Clerk and reported:

- Cost of living grants are available – details on TVBC website.
- There is an update regarding nitrates in Mid Test Matters.

Details are available in the full report published on the Council website.

Cllr Drew confirmed the HCC September update had been sent to the Clerk and reported the following items:

- Schools and RAAC – unsafe concrete
- Generating green energy – solar together
- Childrens education – prioritising attendance
- Recycle vape batteries to avoid fire risk
- HCC launches consultation on future of care homes

Details are available in the full report published on the Council website.

Cllr Drew confirmed a resident's concerns re flooding in Houghton has been followed up with HCC.

Cllr Middleton raised overgrown road verges, Cllr Drew confirmed it has been raised with HCC.

5. Planning

i) Notification of Planning Committee 5th September 2023 - 22/00217/OUTS – RoDor Ltd, Stevens Drove, Houghton

To consider representations to the planning committee in relation to the application.

There was a brief discussion held around traffic issues in Stevens Drove.

A further response to object to the planning application was **resolved** and agreed to send a copy to all Planning Committee members. (See Appendix A) – Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Middleton. Cllr Young will attend the Committee meeting and speak on behalf of the Parish Council

ii) To propose a response to the following Planning Applications:

a) 23/01582 - Creation of new access and six parking bays, erection of fencing, re-location of oil tanks and garden sheds - 19-22 Houghton Corner, Horsebridge Road, Houghton – **Resolved to Support** – Proposed Cllr Middleton, seconded Cllr Adams.

b) 23/01881 - External alterations to ancillary building to include cladding and new windows and doors - Drayton Lodge, Houghton Road, North Houghton – **Resolved No Objection** – Proposed Cllr Chant, seconded Cllr Battey.

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- c) 23/01981 - Alterations to windows/doors on front and rear elevations - 16 Houghton – **Resolved No Objection** – Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Battey.
- d) 23/01987 - T1 - Ash Tree situated at Dianthus - Top crown reduction by 5m and outer crown reduction by 3.5m - Dianthus, Houghton – **Resolved No Objection** – Proposed Cllr Battey, seconded Cllr Adams.
- e) 23/01988 - T2 - Ash Tree situated at Hollobury House - Remove lower, over hanging branches, back to boundary fence - Hollobury House, Houghton – **Resolved No Objection** – Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Middleton.
- f) 23/02122 - T1 - Ash – Fell - Chalk House, Houghton – **Resolved No Objection** – Proposed Cllr Young, seconded Cllr Adams.

6. River Pollution Working Group

- a) To receive an update from the working group – Cllr Middleton provided an update from the working group – see Appendix B.
- b) To consider setting up a Pan Parish group.
It was resolved to allow the working group to set up a Pan Parish group with nearby parishes, conjunction with Borough Cllr Johnston – Proposed Cllr Middleton, seconded Cllr Young.

7. Minutes

To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on Tuesday 4th July 2023 – **Resolved** – Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Middleton.

8. Updates

To receive any updates.

Clerk updated:

- the redeclaration of compliance with the Pensions Regulator has been completed and submitted, acknowledgement has been received.
- the volunteer who agreed to carry out the regular cleaning of the play area equipment has confirmed it will be done free of charge.

9. Finances

- a) To propose acceptance of the financial statement for the period 1st July – 31st August 2023 – **Resolved** – Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Battey.
- b) To approve the following Schedule of Payments – **Resolved** – Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Middleton.

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Payee</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Payroll/HMRC	£1170.00	Clerks/office expenses	£51.84
TVBC dog bin	£472.16	Sutcliffe Play (replacement handle)	£61.20

Bank balance as at 31st August 2023 - £63,849.08

- c) To consider HugoFox website fees – HugoFox host the Council’s website and have done for no cost for several years – they are now introducing monthly charges, three levels available – Bronze £9.99 + VAT, Silver £19.99 + VAT, Gold £29.99 + VAT – **Resolved** to take the Bronze level and agreed to set up direct debit payment – Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Battey.

10. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

- a) To accept the external auditor’s report and certificate for the year ending 31 March 2023.
- b) To approve payment of the external audit invoice.
- c) To agree the cost for providing requested hard copies of the return.

This item **deferred** as the external auditor’s report has not been received yet.

11. Speed Indicator Device/Village Gates

- a) To consider purchasing a further speed indicator device – It was agreed to obtain quotations for a solar powered device, and additional poles if needed.

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- b) To consider gates at village entrances – Cllr Chant to put information in parish magazine to consult village on the idea - HCC will advise on locations.

12. Play Area

To receive an update – Item **deferred**.

13. Commemorative Trees

To discuss

Family of Dr Bennett have asked to plant 2 commemorative trees in the parish. It was confirmed that permission has been granted by the Fishing Club for 2 small trees by Sheepbridge. Cllr Young to contact family with suggestions for native species.

Cllr Middleton spoke about the Hampshire Forest Partnership scheme regarding tree planting – Cllr Middleton will forward details to the environment group and parish magazine.

A representative of the Environment group has confirmed a grant has been received from HCC to provide an energy report for the village hall refurbishment and a conversation has been held with the Estate Manager for Bossington about possible creation of a copse.

14. Churchyard Burial Spaces

To discuss – Item **deferred** – Cllr Young to contact the Church Warden.

15. Next Meeting

Extraordinary meeting for AGAR – TBC

Full Council Meeting – Tuesday 7th November 2023 at 19.00

Meeting closed at 20.31

These minutes were approved and signed at the meeting held on Tuesday 7th November 2023

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Appendix A

Further Response of Houghton Parish Council to Planning Application 22/00217/OUTS Stevens Drove, Houghton.

Summary

1.The Parish Council is extremely disappointed that the officer recommendation is for permission for a scheme which is clearly contrary to the Houghton Neighbourhood Plan. To approve the application which is contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan without clear and convincing justification will undermine the community's confidence in the planning system, the neighbourhood plan process and its involvement in it.

2.The Parish Council respectfully asks the Committee to refuse the application.

Reasons

Neighbourhood Plan Policy HTN3 Type of new housing

New housing development should provide dwellings of a type and size that meets the latest assessment of local needs. This includes providing dwellings with 2- and 3- bedrooms to meet the need for smaller properties. Larger dwellings will only be supported where there is up-to-date evidence of a local need for such homes. As part of providing a range of housing types, self and custom built dwellings will be supported subject to other Development Plan policies.

3.The original proposal was for one 3-bed and five 4-bed houses but was subsequently amended to one 2-bed and five 3-bed houses. The revised layouts are clearly an attempt to overcome Policy HTN3 of the made Neighbourhood Plan.ie the renaming of a bedroom in each house to a study. This is a contrived approach to conform with the Policy.

4.The Neighbourhood Plan has identified a local need for smaller dwellings ref policy HTN3.Where larger dwellings are proposed evidence of a local need for such homes should be provided. None has been provided by the applicant and therefore there is no justification for an exception to the Policy.

5.The officer report advises that a condition, no 21, restricting the use of the study rooms would be the mechanism by which the proposed houses would comply with the Policy. However, the Parish Council, has little confidence as to the effectiveness of such an approach. It would require regular monitoring by the Borough Council and if a breach did occur it is unlikely that any proposed enforcement action would pass the test of expediency. The proposed parking provision appears to be that required for the larger houses and there would be no material change to their appearance.

6.The condition would not provide a workable remedy for the conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan Policy HTN4 Village Design

Development proposals should protect and enhance the key characteristics of Houghton village as set out in Table 2 and have regard to the National Model Design Code and Guidance. In particular, proposals should:

- **maintain the overall dispersed and linear form of the village through the siting and orientation of development; and**
- **be in keeping with the character of properties in the locality, including as to scale, height, materials and detailing; and**

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- **make provision for off-road vehicle parking and cycle parking/storage in accordance with Local Plan policy T2; and**
- **provide boundary treatments using traditional local styles and materials suitable to the rural context. Existing boundary hedgerows should be maintained and strengthened, and new hedgerows of native deciduous species provided wherever possible; and**
- **retain existing roadside grass verges, with provision of new verges encouraged; and**
- **use native deciduous species for new tree planting; and**
- **avoid undue adverse impacts on amenity, wildlife and dark skies from external lighting and signage.**

7.The proposed layout in the Parish Council's view does not satisfy criteria 1 and 3 of the Policy. The Borough Council's landscape officer expressed concerns that 'The proposed dwellings appear suburban in nature, they do not appear characteristic of an edge of a rural village development. Whilst there is no objection to the size or scale of the properties from a landscape perspective, their formal appearance and layout is not fitting with the local landscape' The officer also noted that there was limited scope to introduce soft landscaping in the front of the properties. ref criteria 1. The over-provision of parking limits the scope for landscaping.

8.The proposed layout is also contrary to Policy E1 High Quality Development in the Borough, of the Borough Local Plan.

9.In respect of criteria 3 the proposed parking appears to be in excess of that required for the proposed dwellings. Policy T1 Parking Standards, of the Local Plan requires justification for variations to the standards set out. None has been submitted.

Neighbourhood Plan Policy HTN1 Sustainable development

Development proposals which contribute to the sustainable development of the Houghton Neighbourhood Area will be supported. In assessing the sustainability credentials of a development proposal, the achievement of the following objectives will be sought and balanced against each other, as relevant to the proposal:

- **meeting the needs of the community for housing, services and facilities;**
- **supporting small business uses and the re-use of existing buildings for commercial purposes, where these are in accordance with Local Plan policy and compatible with the rural character of their surroundings; and**
- **taking all opportunities to conserve and wherever possible enhance the built, historic and natural environments.**

10.The application by proposing, what the Parish Council considers to be, houses which are not two and three-bed dwellings, is not meeting the housing needs of the community and is not enhancing the built environment. Therefore, it is contrary to the Policy.

Conclusion

11.The application is contrary to Policies HTN1, HTN3 and HTN3 of the Houghton Neighbourhood Plan and Policies E1 and T2 of the Borough Local Plan. It should be refused for those reasons.

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Appendix B

River Pollution Working Party Report 29/08/23

Members: Lynda Middleton (Chair), Alistair Dougall, James Coombes

Aim: To investigate if the Parish Council 'would consider buying a water quality monitoring station (WQMS) so the community can be aware of the threat to the River Test'. (Proposed by Seth Crosswaite)

We have met on 3 occasions and liaised with:

- Seth Crosswaite: From a single quote, cost of equipment, training and installation £8,826.91 and annual maintenance costs £3,658.00 tbc This would provide 'realtime' updates on any pollutants in the river.
- Houghton Environment and Climate Change Group. Richard Knox-Johnston is keen to develop 'citizen scientists' in the parish. This could be for 'spot' water samples to be taken along the river. Sampling kits cost approximately £250
- Janet Wright (secretary to Pan Parish Forum, Ampport parishes) : Set up to deal with flooding that caused local sewage issues. Contacts provided for Southern Water, who helped to overcome their issues through a Southern Water Pathfinder group.
- Environment Agency, Solent and South Downs Team. Advised that Fullerton's monitoring station is not to be permanent. However, DEFRA plans for all Water Companies to 'start continuous remote monitoring of rivers for the impacts of final effluent and storm discharges from 2025' Also to publish data within one hour of an incident.
- TVBC, Alison Johnston (Borough Councillor); Sean Feist (Scientific Officer, Housing and Environmental Health Service) Ongoing guidance. Sean Feist has confirmed that the Environment Agency does not provide routine updates re water monitoring.
- Jem Dunn, Executive Director Test & Itchen Association: involved with the Watercress & Winterbournes Landscape Partnership Scheme (winterbournes@hiwwt.org.uk) which monitors the upper Test and other North Hampshire chalk streams to address pollution, flooding and protect habitats. Also provided contacts with the Angling Trust who have a Water Quality Monitoring Network, whose focus is the impact of pollution on fish populations.

Recommendations

1. To determine
 - a) The direct benefit to the community
 - b) What do we do with the WQMS results
 - c) Comparative costs for buying/renting a WQMS
 - d) Funding resources eg Community Benefit Fund, Houghton Fishing Club
2. To set up a Pan Parish Group to study the effects of river pollution on the community, pool ideas/resources and raise our credibility.
3. To develop constructive links with Southern Water and other agencies to help overcome pollution of the River Test and ensure its restoration.