

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

Present: Parish Councillors: L Adams (Vice Chairman), J Coombes, A Dougall,
L Middleton, P Chant, B Battey.
Borough Cllr A Johnston

Members of the Public: 5

Minutes: Mrs C L Cotterell (Parish Clerk)

The meeting started at 19.00

Item Minute

1. Chairman's Welcome and Public Participation

Cllr Adams welcomed all to the meeting and asked if any members of the public wished to speak on any items. 2 members of the public indicated they would like to speak.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Young. County Cllr Drew advised he would arrive later.

3. Declarations of Interest

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

4. Minutes

To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on:

- a) 16th May 2023 – Annual Council Meeting – Resolved – Proposed Cllr Dougall, seconded Cllr Chant.
- b) 6th June 2023 – Extraordinary Meeting – Resolved – Proposed Cllr Middleton, seconded Cllr Coombes.

5. Planning – To propose a response to the following Planning Applications:

- a) 23/01139/FULLS – Erect pergola – 13 Stevens Drive, Houghton – **Resolved No Objection** – Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Dougall.
- b) 23/01270/FULLS – Construction of a detached double garage – Houghton Farm, Houghton – **Resolved No Objection** – Proposed Cllr Chant, seconded Cllr Middleton.

6. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

To confirm any conflict of interest with BDO LLP (external auditors) – All Cllrs present confirmed they had no conflict of interest with BDO LLP – **Resolved** – Proposed Cllr Dougall, seconded Cllr Coombes.

7. Finances

- a) To propose acceptance of the financial statement for the period 1st May – 30th June 2023 – **Resolved** – Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Battey.
- b) To approve the following Schedule of Payments – **Resolved** – Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Dougall.

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Payee</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Payroll/HMRC	£1170.00	Clerks/office expenses	£98.55

Bank balance as at 30th June 2023 - £65,119.52

8. Play Area

- a) To receive an update on repairs to equipment following the inspection report – Clerk reported that there had been a slight delay but the replacement handle for the rocker chair is on order.
- b) To consider paying an honorarium for weekly cleaning of the play equipment – It was **resolved** to pay an annual honorarium of £260.00 (paid quarterly) for the weekly cleaning of

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the play equipment. It was noted that there was a small amount due for the cleaning already undertaken in June – Proposed Cllr Dougall, seconded Cllr Adams.

- c) To receive an update on the play area refurbishment project – Cllr Coombes gave a brief update advising that the project is progressing, some designs and costings have been received and will be reviewed by Cllrs. It was noted that, because of the likely cost, the project will have to go through a proper tender process and follow correct legislation including Public Contracts Regulations.
Residents were asked to forward any queries or ideas directly to Cllr Coombes.

9. **River Pollution Working Group**

- a) To approve draft Terms of Reference for the working group – It was **resolved** to approve the Terms of Reference for the River Pollution working group – Proposed Cllr Dougall, seconded Cllr Adams.
b) To receive an update from the working group – An update was received from the working group (see Appendix A).

Borough Cllr Johnston reported:

- There is a government initiative to improve water quality. Costs may be passed on to consumers by water companies.
- There is a Pan Parish group consisting of some parishes west of Andover looking into pollution.
- Cllr Johnston advised she may be able to provide some funding

Cllr Johnston was asked to provide a contact at TVBC for the working group or residents. Cllr Middleton will contact the Environment Agency to confirm if any of the monitoring stations are likely to be removed.

Cllr Johnston also reported:

- TVBC are continuing to fight flytipping.
- Over Wallop NDP is out for consultation
- TVBC Corporate plan is out.
- Bury Hill Meadows, a green space, has been opened.
- SSEN community resilience fund is available with a deadline of 31st July.

10. **CCTV Update**

To receive an update from the working group for the CCTV system – An update was received – (see Appendix B).

It was noted that a hedge near one of the cameras needs trimming – Cllr Chant to confirm with Cllr Young whether the Lengthsman can do this.

11. **Waste Bins**

To consider purchase of additional waste bins, including purchase and servicing costs, locations and landowner permissions. Clerk confirmed that one dog bin has been ordered but has not received an update, Clerk to chase.

Cllrs agreed to apply the stickers to each existing green waste bin, which informs users that dog waste as well as general litter can be deposited in the bins, and not to purchase further waste bins at this time.

12. **Next Meeting**

Full Council Meeting – Tuesday 5th September 2023 at 19.00

Items for the next agenda

Churchyard grave space.

Speed indicator devices/gated entrances to the village.

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Meeting closed at 19.50

Appendix A – River Pollution Working Group Update:

The River Pollution working party consists of Lynda Middleton (chair), Alistair Dougal and James Coombes. We have met once, 29 June, and as we are not experts in this field, set out to gather information on river pollution locally.

We have learnt of the Environment Agency's river monitoring at <https://environment.data.gov.uk>. This details that there are 8 sampling stations between the source of the River Test and Kimbridge (including on feeder rivers). Of note Fullerton has a permanent sampling station at the moment due to recent sewage discharges. This is monitored by the environment agency and TVBC (Alison Johnston to confirm the latter). We are keen to establish if there is a chain of communication which enables our parish council/residents to be aware of pollution. Also to ensure that this sampling station remains permanent.

Alison Johnston has informed our group of a 'pan-parish' group looking into river pollution. Contact details to be forwarded so we can liaise.

We would also like to liaise with representatives from other groups such as Houghton Environment and Climate change Group (HECCG) and Houghton Fishing club.

We are grateful to those who have already raised the issue of river pollution with our local MP, Caroline Nokes. We are committed to gathering as much information as possible so that an informed decision can be made (by the Parish Council), on the best course of action to help address river pollution in Houghton. The group will meet again on 20 July.

Appendix B – CCTV Update:

The 3 cameras continue to provide good images with occasional problems which are quickly rectified by the installation company.

Times and dates are checked regularly for accuracy, these checks are recorded and logged for reference.

With what appears to be a drop in reported crime in the village there have been very few occasions requiring the examination of footage. We have though seen an increase in the reporting of suspicious vehicles and persons not only with the village but beyond across Test Valley. This is largely due to the setting up of two WhatsApp groups - one for the village and one for adjoining areas in a project named 'Operation Tango Victor'.

This is a Houghton initiative which enables those on the group to share information and reports instantly, the group meet every few months to share ideas and specific crime problems - there has been 3 three such meetings so far. We are also liaising and working closely with the Policing Rural Section of Test Valley. There is a major shift in Policing and strategy which can only be good for the future with a strong emphasis on crime generally and how they are investigated.

These minutes were approved and signed at the meeting held on Monday 4th September 2023