

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

1. Highways minor improvements

Comments:

- Road marking in tricky spots to keep traffic on the right side of the road.
- Edges of road from Stockbridge to Horsebridge are a disgrace – mainly due to heavy traffic.
- We need more measures to deal with road flooding but that's probably down to the County Council.
- Potholes.
- Please do something about potholes in the road!
- Potholes and centre lines re-done.
- Improvements required. Paths and kerbs are often scruffy and dirty.
- Potholes and road edges.
- Road flooding/drainage by allotments & potholes!
- Weeds. Verges. Drains.
- Upkeep of drainage channels to reduce flooding.
- Potholes getting worse and worse and not properly fixed, so come back.
- Traffic increased +++ in village. Drainage. Holes. Edges of roads poor in many places.
- Potholes and road edges in very poor state.
- Road gutters are damaged and weeds and grass growing.
- Potholes and floods after heavy rain.
- Tidy the layby at Sheep Bridge – decent gravel surface and kerbed/retained at head and roadside.

=2. Provision of wild spaces

Comments:

- Nature does very well without us, but without nature we cannot exist.
- To expand on the idea of a meadow on allotment site.
- Accessible by villagers to improve habitats. Provide benches – improve well-being to sit and enjoy these spaces. Benefit climate control – SOLAR PANELS to Village Hall, plant more trees, etc.
- Such as? Is this within your control/power?
- Wildlife will need more support due to the stresses of climate change.
- Essential to encourage bird and insect life.
- More green spaces needed, and trees planted.
- Re-wild the verges. Flowers and trees.
- Continuation of the allotments.
- Wildflower areas are a good idea.

=2. War Memorial

Comments:

- We need to be proud of the Memorial.
- We have to rely on volunteers to tidy War Memorial for Remembrance.
- More regular cleaning and upkeep needed.
- Monthly maintenance to appear well looked after at all times.
- Important village memorial. Needs regular cleaning.

- This stone since being cleaned does not seem to have weathered well, so it really needs annual cleaning.
- Lest we forget.
- Seems well maintained already.

=3. Improvement and maintenance of current play area

Comments:

- Opportunity for adult “sport” socialisation such as boules, outdoor table tennis.
- The current recreation ground filed is not maintained and is virtually unusable. The kids love to play football but the grass is always too long. If it were mowed and treated regularly it would be money well spent.
- Largely maintenance – the park is relatively small and space is needed for football and ball-throwing for dogs
- There do seem to be more children using the area as we have an influx living in the village, plus grandchildren visiting.
- Children have fewer and fewer places to run and play.
- Area is dull and outdated with nothing to prevent dogs from fouling the area. We have stopped using – preferring to take our grandchildren to King’s Somborne.

=3. Provision of dog waste bins

Comment:

- Self-explanatory.
- To improve dog mess clearanace & compliance.
- Where? And is this a matter for you or a higher council?
- More needed – Perhaps at the entrance to Sheep Bridge.
- To encourage better dog waste management.
- Particularly along Monarch’s Way or Sheep Bridge. Have actually witnessed fouling with no pick-up.
- Many dog owners use our village to walk dogs; there need to be dog bins along some of the public footpaths.
- Sadly, people rarely clear up after their dogs.
- Might encourage dog owners to put bags in bins instead of hanging them on hedges!

What do you love/enjoy most about living in Houghton?

- Friendly villagers, beautiful natural environment, bird song, dark skies, timelessness, tranquility.
- Village community, quiet.
- Friendly welcoming village.
- The community and the people.
- Attractive village in beautiful countryside with the River Test flowing through.
- The great community spirit and the fact that it is still (despite too much building/development lately) a rural village. I value the views of the countryside, our trees, hedges and open green spaces.
- The beautiful vistas and landscape (which we need to protect!). The River Test. The fantastic community. The Boot. The walks.
- Tranquility. Access to the countryside. Community spirit. Friendly residents. Non-urban environment (low noise, low light pollution). Wildlife. Safety. Architecture.

- The village atmosphere.
- The friendliness and sense of community.
- Close proximity to River Test and beautiful countryside.
- The small/friendly community. Open spaces and wildlife.
- Dark skies. Local walks. Quiet neighbourhood.
- The River Test, countryside, community spirit, the pub and Houghton Lodge.
- Being in the countryside not surrounded by housing estates.
- There is a good community spirit in the village. It is nice to see coffee mornings thriving and they are able to help some charities raise some extra cash.
- The friendly nature of the villagers; the events that they run; the privilege of living in the beautiful Test Valley.
- To be surrounded by nature. The friendliness of the village.
- The surrounding countryside. The river. Good access to go places when necessary. Close to shops in Stockbridge.
- Rural setting and community.
- Access to unspoilt countryside and a network of footpaths and open spaces to appreciate it. Levels of street lighting that help preserve the rural character of the village. The close-knit community in which most people are known to each other. Peace and quiet!
- Community spirit.
- Friendly locals; quiet natural location.
- The pub! Access to country walks. The allotments.
- The peace and quiet despite the village being a building site in recent years. The Boot is the hub – should be the Village Hall (but it is no longer fit for purpose).
- Its rural identity. The pub. The church. When is the Village Hall even going to be finished?
- The wildlife. Peaceful surroundings. The River Test. The Boot Inn.

What are your aspirations for the future of Houghton?

- That we will continue to respect and care for the village, its natural beauty and history but show a willingness to future proof our infrastructure and amenities for the benefit of all – no barbed wire at the river!
- Less dependence on cars.
- More young people, greater use of communal facilities to foster sense of community.
- That it remains a beautiful country village and a small close-knit community. No more new big houses!
- That we protect a very beautiful and special Hampshire village.
- To remain a small, peaceful, friendly, rural village immersed in rural values and detached from the urban and sub-urban in terms of design and lifestyle.
- That Houghton can remain a village.
- Enhanced community spirit for people of all ages.
- Happy for it to grow a little – but we need the infrastructure of a village shop and bigger surgery, etc.
- More affordable housing. To not grow disproportionately – this is a small village whose infrastructure can't support more housing development – and to retain its unique identity.
- The Village Hall needs gutting and rebuilding. Otherwise, it is not fit for purpose or something to be used for future generations – it should not be kept for sentimental reasons. We need a building to be proud of.

- Better bus service = fewer cars, minimal growth. No more big houses.
- Maintain rural nature and green spaces. Take pride and protect village assets.
- If we have to have more housing it would be good to see small houses and starter homes for the young people who grew up here and cannot afford to stay.
- No more buildings! Plus no more large houses either. A new Village Hall perhaps? Or at least a new kitchen!
- That it doesn't increase much more in size and that further buildings are in keeping with the smaller ones in the village. Large houses seem to take so long to build that there is constant disruption with all the extra lorries, traffic, noise, etc.
- No more building and much less traffic. Protection of nature and not fighting against it. Supporting nature.
- It remains as tranquil as possible and resists the pressure from property developers to over develop.
- To be maintained as a small village and not overdeveloped.
- No more building – especially large houses.
- Maintain and enhance what we already enjoy, making sure we preserve rural character and avoid urbanisation. Ensure the village remains attractive and affordable to young people brought up in the village – this would mean a limit on the number of large detached houses being constructed and barriers to speculative development.
- To maintain quiet natural location.
- Further development only by quality and reputable builders. (Not XXXXXXXX or XXXXXXXX [names redacted]).
- Prevent overdevelopment by greedy landowners who do not put anything back into the community.
- Sometimes driving or walking through, we think frankly it looks a mess and would achieve last position of 'Village of the Year'. We can do much better.
- That it remains a village with a beating heart. A strong sense of community.

Other

- That the future proof plans for a full and comprehensive refurbishment of the Village Hall be realised in full for the benefit of all and in line with the specifications realised by our neighbouring Test Valley villages.
- Better facilities for bike riding. Ideally a bike path along road to Stockbridge.
- Need one more post box in centre of village – suggest bottom of Church Lane.
- Areas we would like to see improved/better funded:
 - Path to Eveley Farm fields can be almost impassable in winter due to mud and sometimes in spring/summer due to overhanging bushes. Better maintained path, please!
 - Investment in planning consultants to protect the village from further inappropriate development (there is an imbalance of sophisticated developers versus vulnerable homeowners currently.
 - Investment in security provision to protect villagers from the increasingly persistent and disturbing criminal activity in the village.
- Other preferences in this order (depending on what is within your powers):
 1. Litter collection in and around the village on a regular basis. It's a big and growing problem.
 2. A parish noticeboard by the Sheep Bridge path gate. It would be much more visible/seen than the existing ones.

3. Village Hall maintenance and improvement (why not in a box above?) obviously needed. Is it within your responsibility?
4. Ditch clearance (though that may be for another higher council?) e.g. outside Bossington Mill Cottage, which is badly overgrown now.
5. Fixing broken concrete drain covers e.g. outside Bossington Farm Offices and opposite Mill Bank (if within your powers).

There is a problem in answering this questionnaire without knowing precisely what powers and responsibilities the Parish Council has, and therefore what its powers extend to. This will be apparent from the answers given.

- The NDP indicates the village does not need more housing for the foreseeable future. We have an oversupply of large housing.
- Ditches: regular ditch and silt trap cleaning to prevent flooding in village and properties. Improve/increase number of ditches, especially with increase in number of houses.
- Other:
 - Safe footpath access to Houghton Lodge, circular footpath/bridleway to link Test Way around village
 - Improve/create car parking especially by Clarendon path and Village Hall/Stevens Drove
 - River Test: info board on river.
- Making the Village Hall more sustainable:
 - Double glazing
 - Solar panels
 - Maybe a heat pump.
- As Houghton has no mains gas or drainage lots of traffic to deliver oil/gas and take away waste. Ideally, a plan should exist to move to greener energy. Solar panels, more efficient electric heating.
- I live near Tiebridge Farm and local traffic and delivery vans are often travelling too fast – bikes, walkers and horses frequently on this stretch of the road. I am new to the village, so not sure of all the village amenities, etc. to add more comments.
- Improvements to Village Hall.
- Ditch maintenance between Testwood and Bossington Mill. Also between South View Cottages and Bossington Estate Offices.
- Please erect signs/obstacles to prevent field path being used as a cycle track – it is a footpath.
- Other:
 1. Slight improvements to the frequency of buses.
 2. Protection of agricultural land and ‘green belt’ around the village to ensure it does not become joined to other residential areas.
 3. Protection of wildlife habitats.
 4. Encouragement/stipulation that housing development should blend in with the rural character of the village:
 - buildings should not be obtrusive
 - dark skies should be preserved, wherever possible, by avoiding the installation of large skylights through which bright, harsh lighting shines.
- The Village Hall is no longer fit for purpose and sticking plaster will only delay the inevitable eventual demolition and rebuild. However, the longer that takes with rising costs, the less likely it is to happen.

- Let's spend some money on making the village look better. Virtual gates as with some villages which 'welcome' to the village – plant some flowers at these entry points.
- Too many cyclists – but not a problem that is going away. Sometimes the village appears 'scruffy' with dirty roads, paths and kerbsides. Large building developments need to 'give back'. Also, flooding in village after heavy rain. We need to rectify this problem as it is dangerous to vehicles and pedestrians.