

Parish priority statement Houghton v4 October 2023

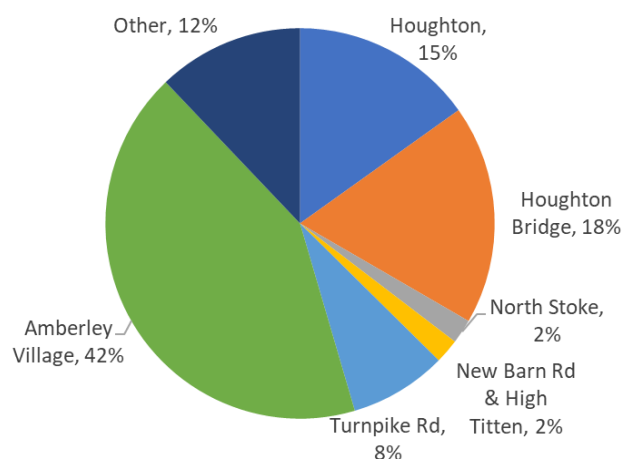
Parish Details

Information Required	Response
Contact name	██████████
Town or Parish Council	Houghton Parish Meeting
Main contact address	██████████ ██████████ ██████████ ██████████
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Details of public consultation and engagement used in the preparation of the PPS

- Concerns about the safety of pedestrians and community and the inadequacy of the B2139 to handle increasing traffic through the village prompted the restoration of regular parish meetings in March 2020.
- The Meeting agreed the priority for action on pedestrian and traffic management, debated specific solutions and supported an application, together with Amberley Parish Council, to WSCC to explore options for a footpath between the Monarch’s Way at the George & Dragon and Amberley station (a community highways scheme).
- Amberley Parish Council and Houghton Meeting held a series of Community Drop-In Sessions about the B2139 in September 2022. Some 40 individuals attended, and half completed a survey which was later extended to all local residents, resulting in a total of eighty-five responses. These confirmed strong local support for action to increase pedestrian safety and reduce the speed of traffic.

Figure 1 Responses to survey on B2139



- In October 2022, 35 of 36 residents at the Houghton meeting voted to support an application for the development of Houghton Farm specifically to include the provision of a safe off-road footway between Houghton Lane and St Nicholas for access towards Houghton Bridge

- In June 2023 Houghton residents were sent a first draft PPS and invited to contribute by email – with little response. An expanded v3 was circulated in September as a draft final document.

Introduction to Houghton PPS

I Overview

Houghton is a village of 90 people living in fifty homes. The community is effectively split by fast, heavy traffic on the B2139 which has become a prime east-west route through the national park, second only to the A27. There is no pavement to join the Monarch's Way from the George and Dragon to South Lane and St Nicholas Church. There is no footpath from the village to the South Downs Way or to Amberley station. Lack of pedestrian access and footpath signage is an overriding safety concern for residents and visitors.

The lack of safe footways effectively divides the village into ten residential “cells” in which neighbours are accessible on foot. The largest cell, South Lane and the Cart Shed, includes twenty-two homes. Without crossing or walking along the main road, the pub is accessible from four homes and St Nicholas Church from (a different) four homes.

Figure 2 Houghton homes accessible on foot



A joint application between Houghton parish meeting and Amberley Parish Council for a footpath from the George and Dragon to Amberley station was accepted by West Sussex County Council as a community highways scheme in 2022. The report of a feasibility study by consultant engineers is due for public consultation in September 2023. Some simpler solutions, such as creating a path from the George and Dragon to Houghton Lane and improving footpath signage could then be implemented within the existing CHS funding within the fiscal year 2024/25.

2 The vision for the future...

Houghton supports the duty of the South Downs National Park to foster the social and economic well-being of the local communities within the Park¹ and, specifically, to address local needs for access to essential services and facilities. *Development should not be discouraged provided it enhances rather than exploits the character of the village.* Local development and provision of working from home facilities or shared office spaces combined with better pedestrian access between the village and the station will also help the National Park meet its aspirations to reduce carbon emissions overall.

Summarised as priorities for change over the next fifteen years, Houghton would propose:

- improved pedestrian safety for residents and visitors within the village
- improved road safety for residents and visitors within the village
- improved connectivity of footpaths and public rights-of-way between Houghton and neighbouring communities
- Suitable family housing to help support the excellent local schools.
- Provision of shared office space to enable more remote working.

3 Development and management of land

Some increase in housing provision to maintain the local population but also the provision of more accommodation for visitors to the National Park.

There are at least two brown field sites in the village that are currently occupied by redundant and unsightly agricultural buildings.

Pavements, footpaths, and footways

1. Path 2932-1: the boardwalk on riverside path 2932-1 is incomplete and increasingly inadequate, making it virtually unusable with increasing frequency. We would like to see the boardwalk extended or relocated to connect to the foot of South Lane and upstream to reach higher ground.
2. Monarch's Way path 2275: the great storm of October 1987 uprooted several mature trees, blocking 400 m of the footpath in the sunken lane which was once the London Road. Since then, walkers have used up to 2 m of the edge of the adjacent field, effectively taking 600 m² of arable land. We would like to see the historic route restored and the arable land protected.
3. Old goat path 2276: this footpath from the old quarry leads walkers into the main road where there is no safe point to cross and no corresponding footpath on the other side of the road. We would like a safe pedestrian route to keep walkers off arable land and provide continuity to join the Monarch's Way without hindering road access from Open Country.²
4. The Street, Houghton: with agreement of the Angmering Park Estate, a 2 m strip would allow a 40m footpath from the G&D inside the wooden fencing to join the existing, widened verge to Houghton Lane. We hope this will be approved, funded and implemented under the community highways scheme starting in 2024.
5. The Street and Blacksmith's Hill: the substandard width of the carriageway, the width of the public highway, the proximity of private property and listed buildings and steep roadside

¹ <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/about/purposes-duty/>

² WSCC Proposed Creation of Permissive Footpath from Footpath 2276 to Bridleway 2275 at Houghton Hill January 2019 Location Plan 01746, Site Plan 01747

embankments give little opportunity to create a standard 1.2 m footpath along the main road. The owners of Houghton Farm are willing to include a permissive footpath through the farm buildings as part of the overall development of the disused farm. This would allow walkers to cross the road safely from Houghton Lane and to bypass Blacksmiths Hill via the track beside St Nicholas Church. Unless a structural solution can be found on the north side of the road, the only practical route would be through the farm. This solution is entirely dependent on planning approval from SDNPA for development of Houghton Farm.

4 Homes

4.1 Available sites

Greenfield sites are limited to the residual properties owned by the Angmering Park Estate. Opportunities for development would be constrained primarily by physical access to pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Please note that on the attached plan, Angmering Park no longer own the site next to Little Wyndham.

Figure 3 Residual properties of the Angmering Park estate in Houghton village



Redundant agricultural buildings offer a greater opportunity for new housing, especially on the site of Houghton farmyard and also Old Farm. Redevelopment of the site would not only allow for new build homes, and some business space, but also contribute to the integrity of the village by allowing an off-road footpath to the church for the benefit of residents and visitors.

4.2 Preferred character of new homes

New 2,3 or 4 bedroom homes should benefit the accessibility and cohesion of the village. Ideally, they should be for people and families with local connections and jobs.

Since the pandemic, more people are choosing to spend a significant part of their week working from home. The pressure to adjust existing homes to accommodate this ought to be recognised and welcomed.

4.3 Sustainable energy

The installation of air or ground source heat pumps, double glazing and solar roof tiles should be encouraged to support renewable energy development without detracting from the character and appearance of the area, including listed buildings³.

5 The natural environment

Viable agriculture

Proposals for greening and rewilding should support traditional landscapes and the capacity of economically viable agriculture to maintain them. Agriculture is very much a part of the landscape of the National Park; indeed, it has shaped it over many generations. To remain viable modern agriculture relies on more and more amalgamation of farms and rationalisation of farm businesses. The location of many farm steads is no longer practical, and these areas need to be considered for other mixed uses to provide employment to help arrest the long-term deterioration of the village community.

6 Public spaces

The village currently only has two church yards that can be considered public open space. There is a possibility of providing more if it is linked with an overall vision for the village to include development and better connectivity.

7 Infrastructure

Currently the B2139 precludes any chance of improving connectivity for visitors and villagers on foot. The provision of safe pedestrian access through the village would be a key priority.

Mobile phone reception

Mobile phone networks should be required to share resources in order to increase coverage within the Downs. This would provide better broadband backup for residents and more reliable navigation for tourists and visitors.

³ South Downs National Park Authority Small Scale Renewable Energy Technical Advice Note. South Downs local plan April 2022 <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Small-Scale-Renewable-Energy-TAN.pdf>