

“HOUSE-KEEPING ISSUES”

(Matters requiring ongoing, background activity rather than major new initiatives)

OVERVIEW

Transport – traffic, buses & parking <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traffic speeds• A Haughton by-pass?• Bus services• Bus shelters• Traffic flow at shops• Parking• Weight Restriction	Keeping Haughton tidy and well-maintained <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Village centre shops• Infrastructure – pavements, roads & drains• Other house-keeping tasks Security – police and rowdiness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Police presence and summoning help• Monitoring rowdy or suspicious behaviour
---	---

INTRODUCTION

Consultations already carried out with the Parish have raised a variety of concerns many of which require some kind of ongoing, background activity rather than the more major new initiatives proposed elsewhere in this exhibition. Such activity is undertaken by local authorities, the police or local organisations like Neighbourhood Watch, Speed Watch and Best Kept Village committee. The steering group aspires to use links with these bodies to pursue, on an ongoing and open-ended basis these admittedly subsidiary aims also viewed as important by the Parish.

TRANSPORT

Traffic speeds

It is felt that the Vehicle Actuated Signs (VASs) and the pelican crossing have encouraged drivers to slow down. Unfortunately VASs do break down and the wait for a repair can be lengthy. Speed cameras would be good but the trend seems to be against them. The local Speed Watch campaign has done an excellent job and is expected to continue to monitor developments.



A Houghton by-pass?

A past proposed by-pass hugging the southern village boundary is unlikely to happen and the County Council abandoned safeguarding the route in 2002; the possibility of a by-pass is now effectively discounted. Also villagers raised concerns that the provision of a by-pass would “kill the village” and this is more relevant now that the local village shop has expanded and the bus service has improved.



There is however concern about the threat of increased heavy traffic through Houghton arising from a new rail terminal at Donnington, Telford. This seems unlikely to prompt the County Council to revive plans for a by-pass. However a weight restriction could be requested for the A518 and it is increasingly important

to monitor developments and protect the relative peace and safety we now enjoy.

Bus services

Houghton now enjoys a main road service (route 481) much better than its use by local people might lead one to expect, including a Sunday service which had not existed for decades. Roadside information has improved dramatically and the more limited links to outlying areas provided by route 482 are also appreciated.

Bus shelters

Until recently there was only the one shelter near the corner of Ash Drive where the main need was perceived to be. This shelter is in need of urgent replacement.



A second shelter has now been installed opposite the end of Prince Avenue to help those travelling to Gnosall or beyond.



However, there have been calls for more bus shelters. Funding apart, space for a shelter is not always easy to find without blocking a pavement or visibility.

Traffic flow at shops

When the crossing was sited on the Gnosall side of the shops the County Council judged this made it dangerous for traffic leaving the shops to turn left onto the main road close to the crossing. This led to the direction of flow being changed and no entry signs created. An informal two-way flow now operates with only a small minority exiting towards Gnosall.



This needs to be resolved between the County Council/Parish Council and the land owner, as an accident caused by someone exiting at the Gnosall end could have a legal implication for the landowner.

Parking

Concerns have been expressed about dangerous on-street parking, especially on pavements. Parking on pavements is technically illegal. Vehicles are sometimes also parked on a bend, creating a hazard.

This seems to be an area where reliance must be placed primarily on the sense of responsibility of residents and it is judged that few of us would welcome the appearance of more yellow lines and traffic wardens further eroding the village atmosphere.

KEEPING HAUGHTON TIDY AND WELL-MAINTAINED

Village centre shops

The shopping area is now operating normally following the opening of our new and extended grocery store and Post Office. Any litter at the shops and other areas can hopefully be contained. The local shops seem to be well-supported and continuation of this support, both for the shops and other local businesses, is vital for their future, based on the often-quoted comment “*Use them or lose them!*”.

Appearance of the village



The village appearance is enhanced by the planting of flowers. Thanks must be given to the residents who regularly plant and maintain these areas. Maybe this could be extended to other areas by other residents or groups.

Infrastructure – pavements, roads and drains

Generally the pavements and the roads within the Parish are in good order and compare favourably with elsewhere locally but there are some problem areas.

Also, in some areas of the village there are no footpaths i.e. on the main road opposite The Bell Inn, at two areas near the Shropshire Inn and in Station Road.



The County Council (as Highway Authority) is responsible for maintenance and will respond to reports of hazards, damage or vandalism on a time scale appropriate to the severity of the problem.

Unadopted pavements and roads are the responsibility of the developer or private owner, albeit the County Council may intervene to make safe.

Drains (and water supply) are the responsibility of Severn Trent. Flooding is a rare problem within the Parish, apart from Brazenhill Lane, which floods from the playing field down to past Mayo Farm. This occurs due to the brook near the playing field overflowing during heavy rain possibly because the culvert is blocked or damaged. The main road opposite Prince Avenue also floods following heavy rain. These needs investigation.

Other Housekeeping Issues

Past consultations with the Parish have raised a number of concerns.

The solutions to these problems must stem from

- a mixture of individual actions,
- more organised steps by local voluntary organisations
- regular maintenance activities of various official authorities.

The summary table below shows the bodies believed to be involved in each area.

task/problem	Possible bodies involved
Removal of autumn leaves on footpaths and gutters causing a hazard	BC
Weed local pavements and roads	BC PC
Remove grass cuttings after mowing green areas and verges	BC PC
Keeping litter down	PC BKV
Keep dog fouling down	PC BKV
Provide more seating and lighting in communal areas	see comments in Security section
Paint local pillar boxes	Royal Mail PC BKV
Clean and paint phone box	British Telecom PC BKV

Key:

PC - Parish Council;
BC - Borough Council;
CC - County Council;
BKV - Best Kept Village

SECURITY – POLICE AND ROWDINESS

Police presence and summoning help

Concerns have been expressed about the lack of police patrols and the difficulty in summoning help when problems arise. Experience obviously varies as in a recent incident police attended within ten minutes of being called by a parish councillor. However, others residents have found that a call to the police contact number (not 999) remains unanswered.

Police do not respond to an ongoing invitation to attend Parish Council meetings saying there is “nothing to report”. This precludes any opportunity for the Parish Council to liaise with the police!

It seems that Haughton is viewed as a low priority area by the police. To the extent that this is a reflection of the relatively rare incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour here, we can take some comfort from this.

The police now have a new non-urgent number which is:

0300 123 4455

Monitoring (and discouraging) rowdy or suspicious behaviour

Comments were made in the last Parish Appraisal about youths congregating at the junction of Rectory and Brazenhill Lane and people behaving suspiciously and hanging around in cars on the playing field car park. This partly reflects the well-understood problem that the playing field is isolated from the village down a dark, ill-lit lane with no footpath.

Proposals set out elsewhere in this exhibition for the linked development of housing, youth and community facilities aspire to address these problems over both shorter and longer time-scales.

Proposals to increase the number of seats within the village for the use of the young and elderly members of the community have been suggested.