Houghton CCTV Scheme

Annual Report Houghton Annual Parish Assembly 2025

Background

The Houghton CCTV Scheme was the brainchild of Dennis Stephens, who recently stepped down from coordination due to him moving from the village. After a rigorous approval process and system registration with the Information Commissioner's Office, the systems went live in 2022, with three cameras to monitor traffic and pedestrians entering and leaving the village, placed at the three entry roads (from Broughton, Horsebridge and Stockbridge). These require a power supply and connection to a broadband service to work, and controllers can view still and video images from each camera via their PC or mobile device. Images are stored for 31 days, after which they are wiped. However, these can be downloaded for transmission to members of Hampshire Constabulary.

Owners of the three properties where the cameras are housed receive an honorarium to cover the costs of power and wi-fi.

Sharing Intelligence

In 2023, the system was augmented by two WhatsApp groups, with the aim of speedy communications and intelligence sharing in the event of criminal activity. These are:

- 'Fishy' – for Houghton & Bossington businesses and estates. Members include the Boot Inn, estate workers, Houghton Lodge, Houghton Fishing Club etc. It is designed for those 'out and about' to report suspicious activity
- Operation Test Valley (OpTV) is for Houghton and the surrounding villages to share intelligence and criminal activity, for example Mottisfont, King's Somborne, Lockerley, Crawley, Ashley etc.

Police Liaison

This is largely provided through Sara Walker and Houghton Neighbourhood Watch. Sara is able to enter footage and images onto a police database, once a crime is reported and a crime number obtained.

On occasions, we are contacted by officers from Hampshire Constabulary, asking us to examine footage for certain vehicles that have been identified as undertaking criminal activities locally. We have provided results to them on a couple of occasions this year.

Supporting Local Crime/ Camera Access

Crime in the village tends to come in waves, nothing for weeks and then two or three incidents together. In the past 12 months, the number of times that we have accessed cameras (outside of regular checks for system robustness) has decreased. Whilst the reason is unknown, it is hoped that the cameras for some deterrent to criminals plying their trade in the parish.

To access the cameras, for data protection reasons, we must have a crime number. This means if a criminal act goes unreported, we cannot look at the footage. For this reason, we urge all parishioners to report any form of criminal activity, no matter how small, as this also helps us to build intelligence around criminals and their vehicles.

System Administration

- Sponsor – Houghton Parish Council
- Data Controller – Cllr Peter Chant
- Data Processors – Terry Heffernan & Cllr John Broomfield
- Maintenance – Absolute Security Ltd.

Houghton CCTV Scheme

Acknowledgements, Without Who…

- Houghton Fishing Club, who pay for annual maintenance
- Houghton Parish Council, who sponsor the scheme
- Absolute Security, which maintains the hardware
- The three householders who kindly house the cameras at their properties

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