

Houghton CCTV System

Annual Report Houghton Annual Parish Assembly 2026

History of The Houghton CCTV System

The genesis of the system came during the Covid-19 lockdown when the Houghton Support Group discussed the idea. Dennis Stephens led the project, and cameras were installed at the three entry points of the village in 2023. The funding for the consultant costs and equipment came from the Houghton Community Benefit Fund and the annual maintenance costs met by Houghton Fishing Club. Other costs are funded by Houghton Parish Council who are the custodians of the system. Absolute Security (AS) installed the system and provide troubleshooting and annual maintenance support.

Operational Overview

The system is overseen by Cllr. Peter Chant with Cllr. John Broomfield and Terry Heffernan as the two co-ordinators. These three are the only people (apart from AS) that have access to the camera footage. Cameras can only be accessed for three reasons:

- To respond to incidents, but only when a Crime Number has been issued by Hampshire Constabulary
- Upon requests from Hampshire Constabulary (in which case there will also be a Crime Number)
- Monthly checks by the team to ensure that all cameras are operational

The cameras are not monitored 24x7!

2025/6 Highlights

Thankfully, we live in a low crime area and the system seems to have been called upon less in the past 12 months compared to the previous 12 months. It is difficult to measure the reasons for the fall, but we hope that the existence of the cameras has had some positive impact locally.

In December, concerns were raised with AS regarding the reliability of cameras, and after a meeting with them, remote access by AS is now possible when the system fails. Additionally, AS has introduced an email alert system, to inform us when they know of an outage.

The Parish Council has asked AS for quotes to upgrade the system (if funding allows) and this is currently under consideration.

Police Liaison

One of the biggest frustrations is the lack of Police feedback when footage has been supplied to them. We understand the confidentiality of investigations, but it would be prudent for us to at least know what the footage has allowed the Police to achieve, e.g. interviews have taken place, or arrests made. Most requests come from the Neighbourhood Policing Team based in Lyndhurst. We have requested a meeting with them to discuss how best to improve the communication flow and await a response to that effect.

We previously had a working relationship with the Police Sargeant at Stockbridge, but personnel in this post seems to frequently change and we are currently seeking to understand the current manpower there to liaise.

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WhatsApp Groups

Under Dennis Stephens' leadership, two WhatsApp Groups were established:

- Fishy – a group made up of river keepers, The Boot Inn and other local business and the Fishing Club, to communicate suspicious activity or crime within the Parish
- Operation Test Valley (OpTV) – a group made up of Parish Councillors and Neighbourhood Watch teams in villages local to Houghton, with the object of communicating suspicious activity or crime

For the Houghton CCTV System, there are a further 2 WhatsApp groups, one for comms between the system management, the other with the three households that house the cameras

Acknowledgements, Without Whom...

- Houghton Parish Council
- Houghton Fishing Club
- The three households that house the cameras

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