

HAUGHTON PARISH**A DISTINCTIVE RURAL HAMLET***Initial representation to the Cheshire East Local Plan scoping consultation (1 September 2026 deadline)*

Haughton does not seek to be preserved in aspic. We recognise that communities evolve and that needs and services change over time. Our request is that Haughton is properly recognised and understood before decisions are made, so that any future change is within what the area can bear for its agricultural enterprises, limited services, limited infrastructure and sparse residences - sustainably, appropriate to the place, evidence-led and shaped through constructive engagement with the parish.

OUR THREE CORE CHARACTERISTICS**1 AGRICULTURE AND RURAL ECONOMY**

Haughton is an active agricultural community with a strong, successful centuries-old dairy-farming heritage. It is at the heart of one of the largest, most highly productive grass farmland areas for grazing and mowing (in one of the most intense 'milk fields' of Europe), together with food crop/animal feed production and arable mix, securing and sustaining significant rural employment. The practical needs of those working in agriculture on Haughton's widespread Prime Agricultural Land are fundamental to the Parish's identity, and its sustainable economic and social future. Accordingly, Haughton's evolution over time has consistently given strategic prioritisation to reserving Haughton's world-class productive Prime Agricultural Land for agricultural use to support the continuing important dairy and food production so vital to the U.K.'s National Interest in line with National Farming & Food Self-Sufficiency, Rural Economy, Environmental and Sustainability Strategies.

2 ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

Haughton, more accurately Haughton Moss, is environmentally a part of the special characteristics of South East Cheshire's 'Meres and Mosses' with exceptional local wildlife fauna and flora value, high and variable water-table conditions, where seasonal flooding and drainage challenges affecting all parts of the Haughton Parish are defining natural features and remain constants with very little mitigation possibilities, reflected in the siting, age and sparsity of the built environment within the Parish. The Local Wildlife Site, countryside, habitats and community assets should be recognised as essential parts of the area's distinctive environmental character.

3 A SPARSE, RURAL HAMLET

Haughton is a dispersed collection of farms and homes, not a continuous built-up settlement. It is not connected contiguously with any built-up areas or villages. The Parish has adapted over time to realign its accommodation to meet changing needs for people employed locally in agricultural and rural enterprises through conversions, extensions, changes of use, all within existing residential/farmyard curtilages, and not utilising any Prime Agricultural Land. Haughton's infrastructure is very limited: it is linked solely by narrow rough and broken country single-track lanes (with only one through-route narrow dual lane) carrying large and heavy agricultural traffic, with no mains sewerage and limited drainage, and very few local services (limited to water, electricity and digital/telecommunications); and requiring universal reliance on private transport for workers in and out of area, and for access to schools, health services, shops and leisure pursuits (not any one of which exist in the Haughton Parish area), materially impacting what the area can sustainably bear.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING CHESHIRE EAST TO DO

- Formally recognise Haughton, with an identified boundary, within the Local Plan process and establish a clear, evidence-based understanding of its character, needs, opportunities and constraints. Haughton has been omitted as an identified area in previous local plans despite being a recognised community and category for many years in the list of planning areas for the purposes of planning applications. For Haughton's future designation and planning profile to be established the boundary of Haughton needs to be defined and adopted.
- Engage directly with the Parish before determining Haughton's place in the settlement hierarchy or the appropriateness, type or scale of any future development.
- Give full and proper weight to agriculture, the rural economy and its reliance on the very high quality of its prime agricultural land enabling the highest quality and most productive milk production from world-class herds as the principal feature of the area, and environmental designations, the Meres and Mosses landscape, flood and drainage conditions, road capacity, mobility and the paucity of local services.
- Enable the Parish to contribute local evidence on housing and agricultural needs, community assets and future sustainability as the plan develops.

OUR APPROACH

A full cross-section of all people living and working in the Parish of Haughton/Haughton Moss are fully engaged and passionate about the active vibrancy and rural community mutual support within their sparsely populated, successful agricultural, primarily dairy, rural economy and geography. They care deeply about its essential character and assets, and that together they wish to ensure it is sustainable, appropriate, proportionate and responsible in how the area and community adapt and evolve over time.

We seek a constructive, active and trustful relationship with Cheshire East. At this early stage, the Parish is not seeking to predetermine whether Haughton should be treated as an infill settlement or to volunteer specific sites or levels of development. Those questions require evidence, wider community engagement and a proper assessment of local need, not least housing needs at all levels, and capacity. Haughton is ready to play its full part in that work in partnership with Cheshire East.