

SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF 6TH DECEMBER 2016 AT 7.00PM IN SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE HALL

Councillors Present

Jenny Bell (JB), Chairperson

Lizzie Melvin (LM)

Ryan Smith (RS)

Mike Stanley (MS)

Victoria Taylor (VT), Christine Coles - Parish Clerk, Mark Williams of Swalcliffe Park School, Linda Gregson (Governor of Swalcliffe Park School), Gay Harris of the Parochial Church Council and seven villagers

1. Apologies

Cllr Benson

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Melvin declared an interest in the payment to Gerry Melvin.

3. To receive an update from Swalcliffe Park School on matters of interest

Mark Williams attended the meeting. He had circulated an update via email beforehand.

A tree survey around the site has been conducted. There have been flooding problems which the school are managing internally. The school are trying to keep the leaves cleared. The school are talking to OCC about the sluice problems and have cut channels to add to the soakaways. There has been flooding in Park Lane. Although this is not under the school's remit, they have been keeping the gulleys clear. Complaints have been received about ivy clearance and this is in hand.

CDC have given authority for the external lighting scheme to proceed. Work should start on 9th January or before if manpower is available. The neighbours' boundaries will be a priority. The old lights will come down once the new ones have been commissioned.

Mr. Carter spoke about the windows and doors on the George wing. He mentioned that the boys were leaving the lights on all night. Mr. Carter asked if the window and door at the bottom could be covered up, but it is a fire escape and has to be lit up all night. Mark Williams agreed to check this. Mark Williams then left the room.

Linda Gregson, a Governor at Swalcliffe Park School spoke about several matters. She has been a Governor for three years and lives locally. Planning issues have caused concern within the village. The Governors check that the school funds are spent wisely. It is felt that money should be spent on caring for the children and their educational needs. Mrs. Gregson hopes that the school can work with the village. She expressed concern that the perception of the school was wrong and out of date.

There has been a new Head and Senior Management team for six years and the school has changed. The school is a children's home for autistic children. The last Ofsted inspection was outstanding. The boys are very bright but lack social and interaction skills. There has been a recent innovation and young enterprise scheme. The boys were awarded a loan by Peter Jones from 'Dragons Den'. The school are very happy to help the village and recently donated a piece of land for the Woodland Play Area. The school can always be approached. There are more events taking place and these will be put into the Link. It was suggested they are sent to the village website and put on the Facebook page.

The Chair said that the school had not always been responsive about tree and maintenance issues in the past. She declared an interest as she lives in Park Lane.

One Cllr said the school should be recognised for the work they have done in the neighbourhood.

4. **To approve the minutes of the meeting of 1st November 2016**

The minutes could not be signed off. To be carried over to the next meeting.

5. **Open Forum**

Mrs Harris from the Parochial Church Council gave an update. The church is being made available and accessible for outside people to rent. The PCC have put an alarm on the church roof on the recommendation of the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust, because there have been many thefts of lead from church roofs. The roof alarm cost between £4 and £5K and the PCC are hoping to get a grant for half of the work. The alarm will not be set off by animals or birds. Five people have volunteered to be key holders and have been supplied with torches.

6. **Matters Arising**

Councillor Vacancy - There is still a vacancy.

Broadband update - The Digital connectivity Group consists of David McLindon, Colin Hill and Peter Beddowes. The group have been able to determine that Virgin Media will not be considering connecting the village up to high speed internet. However, the group is in discussion with Sugarnet who are a local provider of high speed broadband using micro-wave technology. There is a possibility that they will be able to connect the village to their local network - which could potentially be a solution for some residents. They have a small but growing network in South Warwickshire villages and are keen to extend their North Oxfordshire coverage. Their plan would be to install an unobtrusive relay panel on the Church Tower which will give 'line of sight' coverage to a lot of the village and beyond. The Church PCC have agreed to support this in principle and Sugarnet expect to submit a proposal to the decision makers in the Diocese. The group proposes to circulate information around the village about Sugarnet and their service; which they understand to be very good and will deliver excellent Broadband and reliability at reasonable prices. For Sugarnet to invest in the equipment on the tower they will need to have expressions of interest from a number of villagers. As part of their contribution to the community they would probably donate something of practical value to the village. The group will put out publicity in the New Year.

Christmas tree - This has been put up. Thanks was given to Cllr Taylor and everyone involved.

Update on Bus Service - Tadmarton are looking into purchase a community bus if there is enough interest.

7. **To discuss the Childrens Christmas party and agree a contribution**

The meeting was attended by Sophie Thompson and Helen Argyros-Farrell who have taken over the organising of the children's Christmas party. It will take place on 17th December from 3-5.30pm in the village hall. 27 children have been invited. A full proposal, list of invitees and a budget sheet have been prepared. It was agreed to give a contribution of £175.00. Receipts will be provided. Thanks were given to them for organising the event. *Action: The Parish Clerk to forward a cheque payment of £175.00 to Sophie Thompson. Sophie Thompson to forward receipts when she has them.*

8. **To review and discuss the garage lease**

It was agreed that the rental figures in the minutes of the meeting of 1st November were incorrect. The correct rental figures are £260 per year for a single garage and £460 per year for a double garage. These figures are for ground rent only. The rent is increasing because it has not been assessed for many years and it has previously been a nominal amount. This rent is fixed for three years as opposed to the previous arrangement when a small rise in rent occurred annually. This new lease has better terms for all parties. There is added value to have a longer term lease and with better terms.

Mr Hill had circulated examples of commercial property rentals in Banbury area to other garage owners. It was agreed that these rates could not be compared with the garage area.

The draft lease was based on points raised by Mr Foley (another garage owner not present tonight). It was agreed that the garage owners will create a 'garage owners' forum' or 'user group' to discuss and agree all the comments on the draft lease.

A maintenance fee had been previously suggested as complaints had been made about the surface of the area. Garage owners at the meeting tonight (Gillian Brookes, Matt Stanton, Colin Hill and Cathy Stoertz) agreed they would prefer not to pay a weekly maintenance charge but look at what work needs doing, get quotes and then the cost to be divided between themselves.

Ideally, the Parish Council would own both the land and garage. In the past garages have been sold to the highest bidder and the village has not been able to use the asset effectively.

Mr Stanton advised that he purchased his house with a double garage. He currently rents a double and two single garages. He would ideally like to look at a proposal to purchase the plot near to his house and he will gift the double garage back to the Parish Council.

Action: The Parish Clerk to forward the draft lease to all garage owners. The garage owners to reply with comments by Friday 13th January 2017. The lease will be sent to the solicitor for checking after the next meeting. Cllr Melvin to start discussions with Mr Stanton about purchasing the plot nearest to his house.

9. To receive an update on the defibrillator

The defibrillator and cabinet have been delivered to the Parish Clerk. She will arrange installation as soon as possible.

Action: The Parish Clerk to contact Community Heartbeat Trust to book a training session.

10. To receive an update on the Conservation Area Appraisal

The mapping is complete. The appraisal is to be approved by the Lead Member at CDC who took office in May and has to be talked through the system. It is hoped there will be an answer from CDC before Christmas or in the New Year.

11. To receive an update on the Woodland Play Area

Since the Parish Council's last meeting the group have made more progress - over three Sunday mornings in November a small group of volunteers did some pre-clearance work. They have started work on the planning application

The lease has not yet been signed- but it is hoped this can be done very soon.

The Parish Clerk is communicating with Oxfordshire Highways about ownership of the wide grass verge. The group think they will need to try and determine if anyone has any ownership claim over this piece of land - before they can put in a planning application for the proposed footpath along the stone wall. No one has been able to determine ownership of the land to date.

It is proposed that the PC places a public notice in the Banbury Guardian early in the New Year to see if anyone comes forward with a verifiable claim. If nothing arises from this they can then proceed to preparing the planning application. From the floor Mr Hill spoke about registering a caution on the land as a possible way forward.

12. To receive an update on the culvert in Brick Row

The Parish Clerk has tried repeatedly to contact the drainage engineer at OCC for an update. He was on holiday for three weeks in October. The Chair has also tried to make contact. The Parish Clerk will continue to follow up.

13. To receive an update on speeding

Thanks was given to Cllr Taylor for her work. The new '20 is Plenty' signs are ready to be installed. It was agreed to place two in Park Lane, two in Green Lane and Bakers Lane. The speed signs are not working.

Cllr Taylor met the company who provide the speed equipment. The equipment is easy to work and collects data. The company have agreed to loan out the equipment for a week in the New Year. They are hoping to extend the system to include people using the phone whilst driving and not wearing a seatbelt.

From the floor, Mrs Harris asked for clarification on whether traffic cones can be placed on the road on the corner for weddings and funerals. She was told they could not be. The Parish Clerk to ask the local PCSO.

Speeding continues to be a problem and in particular down Park Lane. Cllr Stanley will deal with this matter. Trade vehicles have been parking on pavements which causes problems if the pavements are narrow. It was agreed that as the next Link is not due out until February, villagers should approach tradesmen and ask them to move.

14. Planning

A new tree application had been received since the last application:

16/00320/TCA, Pollard Horse chestnut up to 8.0M and maintain as habitat pollard at Swalcliffe Park School. No objections raised.

A new tree application was received after the agenda had been issued:

16/00344/TCA, Fell 4 Hawthorn and replant with 2 deciduous trees at The Cottage, Park Lane. Under consideration.

15. Finance Report

The following payments were approved:

£193.00 to Gerry Melvin (grass cutting)

£399.00 to Graphics Direct (purchase of 6 x '20 is Plenty' Signs)

£175.00 to Sophie Thompson (for the Childrens Christmas party)

£170.00 to Bodicote Flyover Farm Shop (purchase of Christmas tree)

To agree to transfer £1300.00 from the Betty Panks Bank Account to the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

A report had been compiled by Gay Harris of the PCC and circulated. The plan for disabled access through the Betty Panks garden was turned down by the Diocesan Advisory Council because it could not be built to Building Regulations. The PCC would like to ask for the release of some money to create a garden. The proposal is to rebuild part of the wall with steps to provide a safe access with a handrail. They are proposing to put in a wooden memorial bench, mounted and fixed to a concrete base, black plastic membrane topped with wood chippings and planted with shrubs. A breakdown of costs has been provided. It was agreed to transfer £1300.00 from the Betty Panks Account to the PCC's bank account.

Action: The Parish Clerk to arrange the transfer of money between the two accounts.

16. Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received:

- OALC, October and November Update
- OALC Training Programme for 2017
- CDC, Follow up from Cherwell Parish Liaison Meeting held on 9th November
- OALC, Powers in relation to bus service
- OCC, County Council update
- CDC, Notification of Planning Policy Consultations, Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan (Part 1):Options Consultation – Oxford's Unmet Housing Needs, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule, Draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). A poster has been put on the notice-board and website. This is to do with accommodating housing which Oxford City itself cannot accommodate. CDC has agreed to take 4,400 (up from an initial 3,500) new houses on top of the c. 23,000 to meet Cherwell's own needs. The quantum of new housing is not up for discussion although the siting of them is.
- Sugarnet, Superfast Broadband
- BT, Completion Notice of ownership. Notice to be placed in the phone box.

17. Councillors' Reports

Cllr Stanley reported that he has been looking into whether the village hall has charity status. The hall is owned by the Parish Council. The Parish Clerk to get advice about how the village hall can purchase items and claim back VAT.

18. Date, time and place of next meeting

Tuesday 17th January, 2017 at 7pm in the village hall

Meeting closed at 10.05pm