

# SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF 24TH FEBRUARY 2015 AT 7.00PM IN SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE HALL

### Councillors Present

Jane Morgan (JM), Chairperson

Jenny Bell (JB)

Ben Benson (BB)

Mick Foley (MF), Vice Chairman

Victoria Taylor (VT)

Christine Coles, Parish Clerk (CC), Gay Harris of Swalcliffe PCC, Peter Beddowes and David McLindon

### 1. Apologies

Cllr Melvin

### 2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Foley declared an interest as he rents a garage from the Parish Council.

Cllr Taylor declared an interest in the planning application at SPE.

### 3. Minutes of last Parish Council meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015

An amendment to page 3, matters arising, Proposed Toddler Playground, 19th May changed to read 19th January. The minutes were then approved and signed.

### 4. To receive a presentation of the Working Party re The Adventure Playground at Swalcliffe Park School

Mr Beddowes thanked the Parish Council for the opportunity to speak. A site visit took place in January with Nicole O'Donnell of Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association and some members of the working party. Details from the site visit have been prepared and circulated to councillors. Mr Beddowes is asking for the support of the Parish Council to take this project to the next stage. Further investigations will have to be made and a small commitment made to pay for the CDC planning application and legal work.

Mr Beddowes then raised four important points:-

1. The village fund and working party think this is an excellent opportunity to add another social amenity to the village. It could be a place for people to have picnics and walk through the woods. This is top of the agenda for the village fund. It will be an additional amenity and make the village more attractive for families.
2. The village can afford it if the willpower is there. If the project is expensive there will be a rethink. The village fund can raise between £5-8K over the next year. There are other funds to get money and the Parish Council has money. It is hoped that between £20-30K can be raised over a year. The main cost will be preparation to the site which will not be cheap.
3. The working party acknowledge concerns that people have. The site is close to the road but the safety risk will be mitigated by having a gate to the area. Another concern is the area being in the school grounds. The school have a safeguarding policy and children would not be unaccompanied. It is not ideal but workable.
4. It is important to think of the children for the future. It will be an amenity for them and future generations.

Cllr Benson asked if they had a rough idea of costs? Rough costs are £20-25K approx but there will be a better idea at the next stage when more detail is known. The main cost will be preparation of the site and ground works.

Cllr Foley added that this site meets with the approval of Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association. Adjoining villages such as Hook Norton, Epwell and Sibford are prepared to help with fund raising. The site will be a natural woodland with woodchip paths. The wall was of concern but it might not be a concern now.

Cllr Benson asked about drainage. There is a natural slope in the area which would take away the water. It is not known what wildlife is in the area but this could be incorporated. The larger trees will be retained and the others thinned out. There may be benches of dedication placed in the area.

The next stage is to get pre-planning advice from CDC which will cost £90.00. Then two to three contractors can be approached to get initial estimates. The working party will canvas more people and come back to the Parish Council with detailed proposals.

A discussion took place about the initial survey. There were nine positive responses and one negative. The negative response had concerns about the closeness to the road, the site being under the trees and near to the school. The site is not ideal but the only one available at present.

Cllr Foley added that there may be finance available from Play England and the National Lottery. The expenditure may be covered by grants. These bodies cannot be approached until planning approval is given.

The Chair suggested that a note is sent to the village asking for comments as there will be ongoing costs to consider. This will be done after the next stage. Cllr Benson mentioned the Facebook page which has 95 followers. Some of the detail can be posted on this page.

It was agreed by a majority vote that the working party can take this project to the next stage.

5. **To receive an update from Swalcliffe Park School**

To carry forward to the next meeting.

6. **Open Forum**

Mrs Harris of the PCC advised she has received one quote for the repair work to the church wall of £8K. There is no access to get equipment in. Mrs Harris will get two more quotes and this will be discussed at the March meeting. Cllr Benson suggested that she contact local building colleges to help with the work. The Parish Clerk to forward contact details for the Oxford Conservation Volunteers.

Cllr Foley asked about work to the toilets and kitchen in the church. The cost is about £39K and the PCC are applying for grants. There was a delay with the faculty and the PCC are waiting for the church to sign off the permission.

7. **Matters Arising**

*Swalcliffe Park School* - Mark Williams updated the council on the lighting problem via email a couple of weeks ago. There will be an open day at the school on Friday 27th March. In notes circulated by Cllr Foley from the North Oxon Group meeting there is a mention of an application by the school for 'Childrens Home Status'. The recent clearance of the ivy has highlighted how overgrown the area is. The Parish Council will ask what their maintenance plan is and get a timescale for the clearance of ivy and tree work at the next meeting.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to invite the school to the next meeting and ask for an update on the application to 'Childrens Home Status'.*

*Defibrillator* - The Village Hall Committee support the idea in principle of placing the defibrillator on the village hall wall. Councillors discussed whether the best place for it is here or in the centre of the village.

Cllr Benson agreed to be part of a working party to look at the siting options. It was agreed that the existing telephone box might be the best place for it but is ugly. The previous Parish Council gave Mrs Carter permission to ask BT to remove the box. Mrs Carter did authorise BT to remove the box although it is still in place. However there are quite a few people who would like the current phone box to stay. The cost to purchase an alternative red telephone box is £2.5K. The best purchase price for the defibrillator is from South Central Ambulance Service. Once a position has been agreed the defibrillator can be purchased.

*Action: Cllr Benson to look at siting options and ask opinions from other villagers.*

*Bus Shelter* - Cllr Taylor has had a site meeting with OCC. There is still the question if the bus stop is in the right place. A list of bus users was passed to Cllr Taylor. If the stop is re-sited too far away the police will have to be consulted. The cost of a new bus shelter is approximately £3600-£4580. Cllr Taylor is getting a quote for a hand made shelter which may be cheaper and not need glass.

*Action: Cllr Taylor to talk to the users of the bus to ask if the current sign is in the right place.*

*Trough in Park Lane* - Cllr Foley to speak to Duncan Jack.

*Litter Pick* - The Parish Clerk has received the letter from CDC but their suggested dates are to hold a litter pick in April. Carol Moir has agreed to organise the event.

*Welcome to Swalcliffe Leaflet* - This has been mentioned in the Parish Plan. A map of walks could be added later on. Sibford have agreed to help.

*Parking outside 1 and 2 Madmarston View* - The Parish Clerk advised that Sanctuary Homes do own these properties.

*Action: Cllr Benson to pass a contact at Sanctuary Homes to the Parish Clerk.*

*Park Lane road sign* - This has been removed.

*New Swalcliffe Barn sign* - The amended sign was circulated to councillors.

#### **8. To discuss garage rental and access payments due for 2015**

It was agreed to increase the rental of a single garage from £140.00 to £150.00 and a double garage from £200.00 to £210.00.

Cllr Melvin has suggested that the current lease needs amending.

*Action: The Chair to ask Cllr Melvin what the changes are before letters are sent out.*

It was agreed to keep the access charge for Maurice Cooling at £60.00 and £50.00 for Mrs Bowen.

#### **9. To agree Standing Orders (circulated prior to meeting)**

The Standing Orders had been circulated before the meeting. An amendment to page 3, financial regulations points 1 and 2, £300.00 was increased to read £500.00.

The standing orders were then agreed and accepted by the council.

#### **10. To agree the purchase and siting of dog bins**

The preferred dog bin is the green Retriever 35 at an approximate cost of £175.00 plus VAT. It was agreed to purchase four dog bins, two for Green Lane at the top and bottom, one for Park Lane near to the wood and one for the parking area near the pub.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to order the bins. Cllr Benson to get an installation cost for the next meeting.*

**11. To discuss and agree if the Parish Council should contribute/pay for the church clock service and repair of pulley**

The PCC had asked the Parish Council if they would consider making a contribution towards the upkeep of the church clock service and paying a one off cost for the repair of the pulley.

The servicing is part of a five year contract totalling £872.00 and is due to run until 2017. The repair cost of the pulley is £594.00. The invoice has already been paid by the PCC.

It was agreed to pay for the repair of the pulley but postpone contributing towards the church clock service at present as there may be other expenditure to consider during the year.

**12. To discuss if the Parish Council should ask CDC for a review of the Conservation Area**

The Conservation Area was last reviewed by CDC in 1988 and it was felt a new review is now very overdue.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to write to Rose Todd, Conservation Officer at CDC and ask about the process.*

**13. To discuss the co-option of a new councillor**

The Parish Clerk to contact Mike Stanley of Bakers Lane who has expressed an interest in joining the Parish Council again.

**14. Finance Report**

Bank balances are as follows:

Current account £8,676.00

Deposit account £16,794.00

Betty Panks Account £4,665.00

The following payments were approved:-

- £15.50 to Cllr Foley (refreshments at Adventure Playground working party meeting)
- £148.20 to Parish Clerk (mileage to meetings for 2013 and 2014)
- £415.72 to Parish Clerk (hours)

*To agree the Parish Council Insurance renewal of £853.20*

It was agreed by all to accept this new quotation. The Parish Clerk to raise a cheque.

**15. Planning**

A new application was received after the agenda had been issued.

*15/00165/F, Erection of stone stable with garden machinery store - Resubmission of 14/01241/F at The Old Barn, Swalcliffe. Currently under consideration by councillors.*

**16. Correspondence**

The following correspondence had been received:

- Age UK, Invitation to Community Information Network Partnership Meetings
- CDC, Spring Clean 2015
- OCC, LTP4 Consultation
- CDC, North West Bicester Draft Supplementary Planning Document
- OCC, Discussions on savings made by unitary government in Oxfordshire

**17. Councillors Reports**

*Parish Pit land - Councillors were asked to respond to Cllr Melvin as to whether the Parish Council should keep the land or let it go. The councillors discussed trying to keep the area as a green space with different lease conditions as the current offered lease is too onerous.*

*Action: The Chair to email Cllr Melvin.*

*Community Plan* - Cllr Bell advised that approval has been given for the Community Plan flyers. This will be followed by a questionnaire in March. A village meeting will be held late Summer/early Autumn to look at the responses.

*Speedwatch* - Cllr Taylor spoke about Speedwatch and has not been able to make contact with PCSO Alford. She will try to contact Sergeant Fishwick. Councillors discussed the bottom speed sign being unreliable. A new battery would cost £80 and the shelf life of a battery is only one year.

*Action:* The Parish Clerk to ask the supplier how much they would charge to service the signs. Cllr's Taylor and Benson to get together and look at the signs.

*Village Hall* - Cllr Taylor attended a village hall meeting. The quiz night was cancelled as two teams dropped out. The next event is on 13th March for St Patricks Day.

*SPE* - Cllr Benson attended the planning committee meeting held at CDC on Thursday 19th February to show support for the SPE application. He was appalled at the way it was handled. The case has been deferred again. He felt the process was most unprofessional and he was frustrated at the lack of decision making. He asked if the Parish Council could write a letter of complaint to CDC. The Chair and Cllr Foley felt this was not the right time to write a letter. Cllr's Benson and Bell voted to write a letter. Cllr Taylor was unable to vote. As the vote was tied the Chair had a casting vote and she voted that the letter is not sent. Cllr Benson could still write his own personal letter if he wished to.

*Coping of wall* - Cllr Foley reported the coping of the wall near the Green which is broken away.

*Action:* The Parish Clerk to contact Mr McNally.

*North Oxon Group* - Cllr Foley has circulated notes from this meeting. He has received the documents from Julie Carpenter about registering the pub as a heritage asset. The paperwork was passed to the Clerk.

*Land in front of school* - Cllr Foley spoke about the area in front of the school. The land which is 1 metre from the road belongs to OCC. The rest is unidentifiable ownership. The Parish Council previously tried to register the land but were asked to produce testimonials. The area is mowed by Gerry Melvin and OCC.

*Action:* Cllr Foley will speak to the working party.

*Corroded post* - Cllr Taylor reported the corroded post for the village sign at the end of Park Lane.

*Action:* The Parish Clerk to report to OCC.

*Footpaths* - Charlotte Watkins has agreed to carry on looking after footpaths.

*Removal of garage in Madmarston View* - A garage has been removed.

*Action:* Cllr Foley to check with the resident that permission was not required.

Next meeting date 31st March at 7pm. Agenda items to be forwarded to the Clerk by 23rd March.

Meeting Closed 9.45pm