

SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING **OF 31ST MARCH 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

Lizzie Melvin (LM)

Victoria Taylor (VT)

Christine Coles, Parish Clerk (CC), Gay Harris of Swalcliffe PCC and nine villagers (Mr and Mrs Irons, Mrs Brookes, Mr Stanton, Mr M Cooling, Mrs Salter, Mrs Stoertz, Mrs Boycott and Mrs B Taylor)

1. Apologies

None

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.

Cllr Bell declared an interest in the discussion on overgrown vegetation in Park Lane.

3. Minutes of last Parish Council meeting held on 24th February 2015

The minutes were approved and signed.

4. Co-option of new councillor

Mr M Stanley has expressed an interest in becoming a councillor. He was not able to attend this meeting so this item will be carried over to the next meeting.

5. Open Forum

Mrs Salter thanked the Parish Clerk for her involvement in the new sign at Swalcliffe Barn which is now in place.

Mrs Boycott spoke about the excessive noise levels from an event held at Swalcliffe Park Equestrian recently. She has made her own representations to CDC. A list of future event dates have been sent to the Chair which will be circulated and made public. The noise levels to be discussed at a later meeting after more events have been held.

6. Matters Arising

Swalcliffe Park School - A lighting consultant was engaged and he is working on a solution. He has spoken with neighbours and will provide samples of possible fixtures. There will be a compromise and the main objective is for something to be in place by the Autumn time. The school has also registered as a 'Childrens Home'. This will enable the school to offer a greater variety of placements. The places are only offered to pupils at school and this applies to four pupils. Residential provision is inspected twice a year.

Defibrillator - Cllr Benson has asked a few people about the best place for it and central seems to be best. This could include the pub, bus shelter, phone box or pub sign. One person has expressed a desire for the phone box to be removed but it has been used five times in the last eight months. The phone box is ugly. It could be painted and adopted for £1 from BT. More opinions are to be sought and the subject is to be raised at the Annual Parish meeting. From the floor, Mr Stanton offered to be involved in the training.

Dog bins - It was agreed that the question about where they are to be sited is raised at the Annual Parish Meeting. Dog mess has been found in the church graveyard but CDC may not collect from there.

The Parish Clerk to organise an A1 laminated village map for use at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Trough in Park Lane - To carry forward to the next meeting.

Litter Pick – The litter pick took place on Saturday 21st March. 11 people helped and they cleared 11 bags of rubbish. A thank you letter to be sent to Carole Moir for organising the event. The Parish Clerk to ask Carole who took part.

Welcome to Swalcliffe Leaflet - Cllr Foley and Carole Moir have spoken about the leaflet.

Parking outside 1 and 2 Madmarston View – The Parish Clerk to contact Sanctuary Homes.

Review of Conservation Area - The Parish Clerk has written a letter to Dr Rose Todd, Senior Conservation Officer at Cherwell District Council and is awaiting a response.

PCC meeting - This was attended by Cllr Foley. He asked Gay Harris if she could send the minutes to the Parish Clerk for circulation. The PCC to also let the Parish Council know of future meeting dates.

Speedsigns/Speedwatch - Mr Parish now has both sets of batteries and has agreed to change both ends until another person comes forward to take over the opposite end. The Parish Clerk has ordered two new batteries from the supplier at a cost of £80 each. There are big trees down the Banbury end of the village which may be affecting the reliability of the speed sign and need pruning. Cllr Benson to speak to Adrian about the trees. Cllr Taylor has met the new PCSO, Louise Beaumont and they will try and get Speedwatch up and running again.

Woodland Playground - Cllr Foley advised that they are not allowed to call the area an adventure playground so it is to be called a 'Woodland Playground'. The working party met on 30th March and they are now talking to Cherwell District Council. The working party will complete a pre-application planning form. The cost to submit the documents is £96.00. Peter Beddowes has agreed to check the deeds of the school regarding the land in front of the school. There will be grants available from Play England, DHL (through Dan Parish) and Jewson. Grants are based on submission and the school have agreed to proceed until the planning stage. There will be no costs incurred. The school are going to help with the legal costs. The eco side is going to be explored via Charlotte Watkins with bat and bird boxes and there will be a greater use of the area.

Mrs Harris asked what equipment there would be for young children to use? Cllr Foley replied there will be logs to play on and hills to run up and down but no actual play equipment. The area will be an educational facility and a place for youngsters to appreciate a structured woodland area.

There will be a stall at the egg rolling celebrations on Easter Monday. The children can get involved in a painting competition to show what they want to see in the area and there will be prizes.

Mrs Taylor spoke about the wood in Park Lane which is owned by Woodland Trust. Children from Hook Norton Primary School regularly visit the wood. She said Woodland Trust may be able to help.

Parish Pit - Cllr Melvin noted that this has been left open because she was not sure how much the Parish Council might be liable for. A memorandum of agreement was signed by the previous council but not the final lease document. The current lease is not of interest and it would cost a lot of money to turn into a memorial garden. The current lease is onerous and if the peppercorn rent is missed, the lease becomes invalid. Cllr Foley added that the previous council tried hard to prove ownership of the land.

Action: Cllr Melvin to contact the solicitors again.

Village hall - The issue with the postcode for the village hall has been resolved now and the village hall is being advertised on the ORCC website. Cllr Taylor spoke about the disabled toilets and disabled access but there is no disabled parking bay outside of the hall. She asked if the hall can be advertised in this way? Cllr Benson spoke about his work in getting quotes for a kerb to be put along the edge of the parking bay outside the hall.

The stone at the top is compacted in but the gravel further down moves. OCC would not have given

permission for gravel to be put down without a proper kerb being in place. To put a disabled bay in would cost extra. The work would mean that the car park would be shut for four days.

Action: Cllr Benson to get three quotes for the kerbing and disabled bay.

Removal of garage in Madmarston View - A new base has been put in. Cllr Foley to make some enquiries.

7. To receive an update on the Community Plan and to discuss the funding contribution from the Parish Council for the Community Plan Grant application

A draft questionnaire (version 7) has been circulated to councillors for comment. It is hoped the questionnaire can be handed out in April but this may be delayed as it is more important to get the questions right on the form. They will be handed out by the Steering Group and collected back by them.

The Chair spoke about the housing topic in the questionnaire as the Steering Group have asked four questions about it. She asked councillors if the questions should be raised as housing is a low priority of a community plan and this could highlight the village as an opportunity for building. Cllr Foley agreed and spoke about the main seven areas of housing development with Cherwell which is now being increased to fourteen areas. CDC look at this when considering planning applications. A community plan and neighbourhood plan are two different documents.

Councillors felt that the countryside is changing and they would not object to someone building a house if it helped to represent local people. Infill is different and this could be reflected in the questions. It would also bring new people in and secure the pub. The main consensus was that there should be fewer questions and they should be worded differently. Another thought was for the Steering Group to look at the questions for families who have more than two children.

Action: Councillors to email comments and thoughts about the questionnaire to Cllr Bell/Parish Clerk.

Cllr Bell spoke about the costs. The total cost to produce the plan is £1500.00. The Parish Council are going to apply for a grant of £750.00 from ORCC. All councillors agreed for the Parish Council to contribute the additional amount of £750.00.

Action: The Parish Clerk to submit the application form to ORCC.

8. To discuss the listed sale of two garages with a house in Swalcliffe

Cllr Melvin advised that there is a house for sale in the village with a double garage. The ground is owned by the Parish Council and a ground rent is charged on an annual basis. Point 2 of the lease states "The Lessee shall own or rent a domestic dwelling in the parish of Swalcliffe, and the Lease shall cease if the Lessee ceases to own or rent a dwelling in the parish, and is non transferable without the agreement of the Council" and Point 3.5 states "To leave the property clear and vacant by removing the garage structure when the lease ends and leave the property clean and level unless a new lease is agreed between the parties". The Parish Council have never asked for a garage to be removed before. The garages were originally built to get cars off the streets but now each house has a least two to three cars. A waiting list was started some time ago and the garage should be offered to the next person on the list but that has not happened.

Mrs Irons advised that she bought her house with a single garage. She sold her single garage about seven years ago. At the time she advised the whole village of the sale and asked for sealed bids. The single garage was sold to Mr Stanton. Mrs Irons also purchased a double garage some time ago from someone who was not living in the village at the time which was very controversial. This is the garage that she is now selling with her house. She agreed to follow the same procedure this time and put a notice in the Link asking for sealed bids.

Mr Stanton asked if the garage and whole area have been discussed recently? Cllr Benson replied there are a number of issues such as maintenance, potholes and access. A detailed quote to sort out the drainage problems was for £7-9K. How much should be spent on the area and is this a best use of income for an area that benefits five people? When councillors looked at the area there was building rubble, weeds and the area was unkept. The leases are confusing and people do not know what their rights are.

Mr Stanton owns a double and single garage and has already written to the Parish Council to look at purchasing the freehold property. This could put money in the pot to be used for other projects. He bought the single garage from Mrs Irons but knew the risks at the time although he has a right of way too. He has three children and finds the garage space useful. He would like to put a permanent garage in place. Mrs Brookes has a single garage and hers was the last garage to be built. She was approached to get one by the Parish Council. She put the base in and someone built the garage for her.

The area does seem to be used by people using the village hall. Recently Maurice Cooling, who lives in Rock Cottage and whose drive is adjacent to the garage entrance area, has had a gatepost knocked over. There was a childrens party in the hall but there is no proof of who did the damage. It was agreed that a 'No Parking' Sign should be put up and hirers told about the area being a private area.

Action: Cllr Taylor to take this to the next Village Hall meeting.

Cllr Foley observed that the garages are in a Conservation Area. Cllr Melvin replied that some garages and their conditions are breaking a few rules already.

Cllr Benson asked what does the Parish Council actually own? Cllr Melvin replied that the Parish Council own the physical ground. The bases and structures are the ownership of the person.

Cllr Foley asked if the lease can be signed without prejudice? Cllr Melvin replied no.

Cllr Foley asked if the land had been valued? Ground rent for annual lease is about £250-£300. A longer term lease would allow longer rights, be a stronger tenure and the rents become more valuable. Cllr Foley also asked if the garages would have a rateable value. Cllr Melvin felt they should be and this would be based on rental value and be more than ground rent. The owners of the garage would receive the bills direct.

Councillors agreed that the Parish Clerk should re-issue the existing lease. Owners can then email their thoughts to Cllr Melvin for her to look at all the responses. The Parish Council must do the best for the village. Leases can be made longer but they must be fair and for the good of the village.

Action: The Parish Clerk to re-issue the lease. Cllr Melvin to co-ordinate the replies. The Parish Clerk to contact the villagers on the waiting list to ask if they still want to be on it.

9. To discuss the overgrown vegetation in Park Lane

A patch of overgrown ivy in Park Lane has been cleared already by Swalcliffe Park School but this shows how overgrown the whole area is. The wall was expensive to build and may come down in time if the vegetation is not cleared. At a meeting in September the school agreed to cut the trees but this has not been done yet. Park Lane is damp and dark and this impedes on drivers. It was agreed that the school should be invited to the next meeting.

Action: The Parish Clerk to ask for a timetable from the school for them to clear both sides of the wall and to cut the trees back in Park Lane.

10. To receive an update on the bus shelter

Cllr Taylor has received a third quote to purchase a bus shelter for £6K plus VAT. A decision needs to be reached on where to site it and there are different opinions about how it will be positioned. The question has been raised in the Parish Plan questionnaire.

11. To discuss the Annual Parish Meeting and refreshments

Invitations have been sent out to Swalcliffe Park School, the PCC, Cllr George Reynolds and the police. The police are not attending. Cllr Taylor to provide the refreshments and Cllr Foley to organise the drinks. The Chair to put the large posters out just beforehand. A flyer produced by the Chair is to be put on the website, on Facebook. Councillors to meet at 6.30pm on the night to prepare the hall, followed by a short PC meeting at 7pm.

12. Finance Report

Bank balances are as follows:

Current account £6,483.66

Deposit account £16,794.00

Betty Panks Account £4,315.39

The following payments were approved:-

- £197.90 to V Taylor (refreshments for Parish plan evening meeting)
- £120.00 to O Brunsden (maintenance work)
- £64.80 to ABC Advertising (printing of village plan leaflet)
- £133.07 to OALC (subscription)

To consider the report of the Cherwell District Council Parish Remuneration Panel

The report was considered and it was agreed that travel and subsistence allowances would be paid to councillors attending meetings.

Cllr Foley spoke about the expenditure for the coming year. He suggested that a list of projects is drawn up and councillors to consider which are worthwhile. The Parish Clerk and Chair have produced a draft budget sheet for the new financial year which will be circulated.

Action: The Parish Clerk to get further advice about what the sale of land money can be spent on. The Parish Clerk to circulate the draft budget sheet for 2015/16. To be put on the May agenda.

15. **Planning**

The following applications had been received by the council

- 14/01762/F, Use of land at Grange Farm for mixed use comprising part agricultural, part equestrian training and competitions (Use Class D2): retention of 1 no access and relocation of 1 no access on to the road leading from the B4035 to Sibford Ferris: extension to existing parking area and retention of equestrian jumps and obstacles: as detailed in agent's letter dated 22nd December 2014 at Swalcliffe Park Equestrian (amended plans). This was considered by the Planning Committee on 19th March. The Parish Council are awaiting a formal decision notice.
- 15/00058/TCA, Tree work at Sparrow Hall, The Square. No objections raised . Approved by CDC.

16. **Correspondence**

The following correspondence had been received:

- Castle Preschool
- OPFA, Jewson Building Communities Fund
- OCC, Corroding signpost in Park Lane
- CDC, Cherwell Update including invitation to Parish Liaison meeting on 10th June
- Swalcliffe PCC, Thank you letter

One item of correspondence was highlighted:

- The corroding signpost in Park Lane was reported to OCC. The new posts will be ordered once the maintenance budget has been received for the next financial year 2015/16.

17. **Councillors Reports**

Cllr Taylor has produced a leaflet detailing all the work that councillors are working on at the moment. Once the master has been agreed, the Parish Clerk to get copies for distribution around the village.

Next meeting date - Annual Parish meeting on 21st April 2015 at 7.30pm.

Meeting Closed 10.00pm