

SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON 21ST APRIL 2015 AT 7.30PM
IN SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE HALL

Present

Cllr J Morgan (Chairperson), Cllr M Foley (Vice Chairman), Cllr J Bell, Cllr B Benson, Cllr L Melvin, Cllr V Taylor, Christine Coles - Parish Clerk, Cllr George Reynolds and twenty two parishioners.

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and to those who had attended Parish Council meetings throughout the year. She thanked the new councillors and advised that they would all be giving an update on their work except Cllr Melvin. The Chair thanked Carole Moir for organising the litter pick. Cllr Taylor has produced a leaflet on work that the Parish Council is doing and would like to hear villagers views. A new Christmas tree and Christmas lights were bought. A lot of work has been done at the church and the Tithe Barn has a new sign. The next meeting date for the Parish Council is 12th May 2015.

2. Update from Parish Council

Cllr Taylor thanked Cassie Kinnaird and Dan Parish for changing the speed sign batteries every two weeks. New batteries have been purchased for one of the signs. A volunteer is still needed to look after the bottom sign. Cllr Taylor has met a representative of Oxfordshire County Council to look at the location of the bus stop. It could be moved further down towards the village hall or up by Tithe Barn. If it is moved too far there will have to be a consultation with the police and the local bus company. Residents can send their comments direct to Cllr Taylor.

Speedwatch was discussed and a meeting that Cllr Taylor had arranged was cancelled. There are currently two volunteers but more are needed. Speedwatch has not been done in the village since Doug Seymour left. She said it would be great to get it restarted. Cllr Taylor is waiting to hear from the police.

Cllr Foley referred to the Parish Council meetings that he attends and some villages are applying for a 20mph speed limit. Shennington have applied for consideration on the Main Road. Cllr George Reynolds replied that Oxfordshire County Council will look at reducing speed limits to 20mph in villages but they will not pay for the work. The parish would have to pay. There is currently one village called Shiplake in the south of the county going through the process and Mollington have also applied.

Cllr Benson suggested that a yellow reflecting birdbox is built and put near the Main Road to look like a speed camera. There is a similar one in Heyford which is effective.

Cllr Benson spoke about highway problems. The drains do not work properly in Park Lane as the cambers are incorrect. Both Park Lane and Grange Lane should have been resurfaced but OCC keep putting plasters on them. 36 potholes were reported. Anyone can report a highway problem to 'Fix My Street' website and OCC have to deal with the matter within 28 days as they are liable.

Cllr Benson spoke about the defibrillator as a lot of villages are getting them. Some people are already trained and more have come forward. The location is key and the unit requires a locked cabinet and power supply. It is felt the Main Road is the best option for siting. The three main places are the village hall, next to the pub sign and next to the phone box. The village hall is not central. The pub is central but there is an issue using the sign as the electrics are not fit for purpose. The church wall is listed and has no power. The phone box is ugly and could be adopted from BT for £1. He asked those present to place a sticker on the map as to where they think the defibrillator should be placed.

The Parish Council have agreed to purchase some dog bins but are still deciding on the best location for them. The cost per bin with installation is approximately £220.00. CDC will empty and charge a small fee per week. Some suggested locations have been at top and bottom of Green Lane, around the village green, the churchyard, at The Tithings, outside the front of Swalcliffe Park School and Park Lane. He asked villagers present to put a sticker on the map as to where they think they should go.

3. Update on Community Plan (Cllr Bell/Peter Beddowes)

Cllr Bell reported that a meeting was held in November to launch the idea of a Community Plan. Thanks was given to those who attended this meeting and put forward their ideas. A Steering Group was formed and a few meetings have been held since then. A questionnaire has been produced and residents will be asked to complete as best they can.

Mr Beddowes advised that a timetable has been established. The Steering Group are hoping to finish the plan by April 2016. The role of the Steering Group is to manage the process and engage the village and to agree the main areas to explore. An open meeting will be held in June to see the results of the questionnaire and in the Autumn time the group will focus on the key points and shape of the plan. The aim of the plan is to see how the village will look in 5-10 years time. There will be a longer term vision and shorter term points that can be actioned. The questionnaire is going to be printed soon and will be sent out by the beginning of May. There will be two weeks to complete the survey and the person who delivers the survey will collect it at a later time. There are four sections to the questionnaire. 1. Graphics 2. Life today in the village 3. The Vision for the Future 4. Household Information. The questionnaire will be anonymous and there will be one copy delivered per household to save money. Each individual can sign the survey and children over the age of 12 years are encouraged to fill it in. It will take 20 minutes to complete.

4. Update on Woodland Adventure Area (Cllr Foley/David McLindon)

Cllr Foley reported that for the last few years discussions have been held about areas to have a playground and sites have been looked at and rejected. Four to five months ago, the Board of Trustees and Governors of Swalcliffe Park School offered an area of the school near to the entrance. It is hoped the area will be turned into a Woodland Adventure Area for young children. The area will be fenced off to keep the school separate. There will be seats with plaques and one offer of a seat has been made already. It will be an area not just for village but to be enjoyed by all. The group have tried to apply for one grant through Jewson but Jewson are looking at main sites and city centre projects.

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council were consulted in January and a site visit was held. The project was then presented to the Parish Council who have given approval to proceed. A pre planning application will be submitted to Cherwell District Council soon. Once a response has been received from CDC, the group will go back to the Parish Council. There may be funding opportunities from Sport England and two or three other sponsors, one of whom is a company that a villager works for.

Mrs Moir asked why the group decided not to put in swings and a slide as there is play equipment made of wood. Mr McLindon replied that it is a woodland area. It will be for anyone to use and not just the village. Nursery children could be encouraged to use for educational purposes. A bio diversity tag will get more funding.

Some villagers felt that this information might influence people answering the questionnaire as they did not know about the area being woodland. Cllr Foley advised that they were going to get the opinion of Cherwell District Council (CDC) first and then approval from the Parish Council. They are going to look at the project in a balanced way. The area will need clearing and some tree work doing. A survey was handed out at the Childrens Christmas party in December plus at the Easter Egg rolling and 25 positive responses were received and two negative responses. There is a question about the Woodland Adventure Area within the Community Plan questionnaire which everyone will have a chance to answer. The results of the survey will be used as a mandate to go ahead.

Cllr Foley agreed that the pre planning application will be submitted to CDC and the points raised tonight will be taken on board. A response from CDC should be received within 20 days after receipt of the application. He also acknowledged the contribution from Rob Piner of Swalcliffe Park School. Cllr Benson thanked David McLindon who was the hub of the egg rolling competition which raised £320.00 and will be put in the village fund.

5. Update from Swalcliffe Park School (Robert Piner)

Mr Piner attended the APM last year. Swalcliffe Park School is a residential childrens home for boys with autism. It has day, weekly and termly boarders. The school is currently undergoing a refurbishment programme. Villagers have been invited to open days. The school is the biggest employer with 100 staff. A recent Care Ofsted inspection was outstanding and the school are due an educational inspection soon. The villagers who are governors and trustees give lots of their time to help the school. The school realise they are very lucky in their location.

Cllr Benson thanked Mark Williams, Site Manager who has recently helped with the issue of clearing overgrown ivy in Park Lane. He hoped that the Parish Council could engage with the school in an effort to clear the whole wall down the lane. There is ivy growing through the wall and there would be a huge cost if the wall had to be replaced. Cllr Benson suggested that a working party is created to help do the work and reduce the costs.

Cllr Melvin asked for an update on the lighting problem. Mrs C Stoertz advised that the school have engaged a lighting designer. The matter is in hand and site visits have been held. The designer is working with the school to draw up a scheme.

The scheme will meet the schools requirements and alleviate the problems with the neighbours. The designer will be sending a sample of a light fitting for the school to look at. It will not be a quick fix but objective. It is hoped that a better solution will be found by the Autumn time. Mr Piner advised that the school have invested £3500.00 on a lighting designer and there might be planning implications. If villagers have any queries or worries they should contact the school. Cllr Foley thanked the school for allowing the charity football match on Boxing Day which raised £300-400.

6. **Update from Parochial Church Council (Gay Harris)**

Mrs Harris advised that two years ago the Fund Raising Committee felt that a toilet in the church was a priority. It has taken a huge amount of time as the PCC had to apply to the Church Administrator. They have agreed the work can go ahead. Quotes for a new kitchen and toilet have varied between £39K and £54K. The PCC have applied to various places for grants and engaged a local builder to quote. Thanks was given to the volunteers such as Peter Donovan. The PCC are looking at volunteer organisations to help rebuild the wall. The conifers in the Betty Panks Garden have been cleared. It is hoped the rest can be cleared and replanted with nicer shrubs. There is a possibility that disabled access will be taken through this part of the churchyard. It is hoped to make the church more attractive and used more by the village. Improvements will be made to the heating, lighting and disabled access. Stuart Ralph is the Project Manager and co-ordinating this work. The PCC are asking for volunteers and it is hoped it will take one year to complete the work.

Thanks was given to everyone including the Parish Council for supporting the mowing and church clock repair.

7. **Update from Village Hall Committee (Kate Foley)**

Mrs Foley advised that the village hall was built in 1924. It is a village resource and currently under utilised. A new committee was formed in July 2014. The Parish Council own the building and the Village Hall Committee are looking to make improvements. Looking further forward the kitchen requires updating as the units are old. It would be nice to encourage bigger events and recreate an extra door into the kitchen. The committee will try and promote the hall and encourage local businesses to use the hall with facilities for a lunch. The opportunities are endless. For 2013 income was approximately £1400 and expenditure £1200. The new committee are looking at fund raising opportunities. The last event in March raised £825. The village is small but the village hall is a big space to use. It is hoped the hall can be advertised through networks. The hire rate is cheap at £5 per hour and the committee welcome ideas from anyone.

8. **Update from Cllr George Reynolds**

Cllr Reynolds spoke about the broadband situation which is very frustrating. Cherwell District Council agreed to contribute some money and the programme keeps getting put back. The Local Plan should be approved soon.

9. **Open Forum**

There were no other matters to discuss.

Meeting closed 9.30pm.