

SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF 16TH OCTOBER 2012 AT 7.30PM IN SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE HALL

Councillors Present

Julie Carpenter (JC)

Jane Gallick (JG)

Mick Foley (MF)

Mike Taylor (MT)

Mike Stanley (MS)

Christine Coles, Parish Clerk (CC)

1. Apologies

Cllr Bradshaw

2. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes of last meetings held on 4th September 2012

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

4. Matters Arising from the previous meeting

Registration of Swalcliffe Common - Ongoing.

White gates to mark entrances to the village - Peter Egawhary of OCC Highways has confirmed the order is still in place.

Undergrowth in churchyard - Gerry has done a lot of extra unpaid work in the churchyard and the area looks very nice. The front part has been strimmed too. It was agreed that members of the council should all take a look at his efforts.

Plant for wellhead - MS to ask Jeff Demmar for advice on which plant to put in.

Parish Pit - There is no further news on this. The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council are covered by their public liability cover of £10M. Gerry has strimmed this area and the area behind the village hall.

Land behind Jesters - The Chair had found paperwork relating to the sale of land. A letter has been sent to the owners of Jesters to advise that in accordance with the sale, the Parish Council will be asking for a fair contribution towards the work that needs to be done in improving the garage area. The Parish Council will be getting quotes. There seems to be a drainage problem associated with the impacted ground which requires attention.

Action: MT to have a look and provide a quote and Nigel Matthews to quote too.

Parking at the Barn - The Chair replied to Doug Seymour via email.

Speed signs - The Parish Council to wait and see if any more VAS figures are sent through.

Mirror on highway - The Clerk sought advice from OCC Highways and they no longer provide mirrors to be placed on the public highway. The mirror would have to be placed on private land and purchased by the Parish Council. The mirror would then become the responsibility of the Parish Council. The cost could be between £500-1000. It was agreed to leave this.

Free bag of salt - The Clerk completed the order form and returned to OCC Highways.

Pothole at bottom of Green Lane - This has been filled in.

Green fence around Swalcliffe Park School - The Chair to speak to Cathy Stoertz.

Missing 'Park Lane' sign - The Clerk to order a sign via Cherwell District Council. The Chair to forward a location plan to the Clerk.

5. To discuss extending the village hall car park

An email was received from Doug Seymour to note that the handrail for the disabled access ramp has been reversed into on frequent occasions. He suggested that if the car park was extended along its length into the bank, there would be more room for cars to reverse and allow some double parking when an event in the hall is on.

The councillors agreed this was a good idea and the flat land could be cleared, perhaps 4-5 feet off each side and perhaps a metre to the rear depending upon costs. A letter to be put on each vehicle that parks outside the village hall to remind them that they can park there but not to damage any roadside furniture.

Action: The Parish Clerk to email the letterhead to MS.

6. Planning applications

No applications had been received since the last meeting.

7. Financial Report

The following payments were approved at the meeting:

- £195.00 to Gerry Melvin (grass cutting)
- £162.00 to BDO LLP (external audit)

To approve and accept the Annual Return 2011/12

The Annual Return has been signed off by the external auditor . There is one issue arising. The level of reserves held by the council appear high. This has been raised because the council has no power to hold excessive reserves unless they are saving for something in particular. The recommendation is for the council to reduce their level of reserves to a more appropriate level. This was noted by the council. Several ideas were discussed about using the reserves and the village have been asked for suggestions although none were forthcoming. There is no land for a play area.

Another idea is a footpath from the Forge to Park Lane, perhaps a stone path with kerbstones although this could be expensive to implement.

The Annual Return was then accepted and approved by the council. The appropriate notice would be placed on the notice-board for fourteen days.

8. Correspondence

- CDC, Invitation to Countryside Forum on 17th October
- CDC, Consultation on Housing Allocation Scheme
- Audit Commission, Appointment of external auditor for five years from 2012/13
- Sacha Barnes Ltd, How safe are your trees?
- ORCC, Details of Neighbourhood Planning Support Services
- Sue Ryder local hospice, donation request

The Clerk highlighted several items of correspondence:

- Appointment of External auditor. BDO LLP have been appointed as the external auditor for the next five years.
- How Safe are your trees? The Clerk had recently attended an insurance training course and she was advised that trees which the Parish Council own and could be at risk, should be surveyed on a regular basis.
Action: The Chair to write a piece for The Link reminding parishioners that they are responsible for trees that are on their own land especially those by public highways and byeways.
- Sue Ryder Local Hospice, donation request. It was agreed not to support this request as the hospice is in Henley and there are other charities closer to home to support. The Clerk to respond.

9. Councillors Reports

Another pothole in the middle of Green Lane was reported.

Action: Clerk to report to OCC Highways.

A discussion took place about the money that is being raised by the Church for village projects. They are looking to put a kitchen area and toilets into the Church. A bus shelter was also talked about but this would be the responsibility of the Parish Council.

Action: The Chair to ask CDC if one would be allowed outside the church which is a grade 1 listed building and in the conservation area.

The Christmas arrangements were discussed. MT to purchase a Christmas tree. Councillors to put the tree up during weekend of 15th/16th December. The trees on the Green will need trimming first.

Action: MT to pass contact details of a tree surgeon to JC.

MF to speak to Mark and Vanessa about removal of the bench which is to be treated before the winter sets in.

10. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 27th November, Parish Council meeting at 7.30pm. Meeting Closed 8.40pm

