

SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON 11th APRIL 2017 AT 8PM
IN SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE HALL

Present

Cllr L Melvin (Chairperson), Cllr B Benson, Cllr R Smith, Cllr M Stanley, Cllr V Taylor, Christine Coles - Parish Clerk, Cllr George Reynolds and sixteen parishioners.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Kiran Hingorani, Head of Swalcliffe Park School.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

2. Update from Parish Council

The Chair first gave thanks to Mrs Jenny Bell for her work as a Councillor and Chair of the Parish Council. There has been an increased number of visitors to the Facebook page and increased positive responses to the work of the Council. Progress has been made on the 20 is Plenty signs. A request has been received to move one and it seems that other villages are noticing them. The Swalcliffe Woodland Community Play Area is progressing and the lease has now been signed by the Parish Council. The dog bins seem to be working well. There are currently two vacancies on the council. It is hoped that a longer lease for the garages can be sorted out soon. The placing of the defibrillator is to be decided at the next meeting.

3. Update on Woodland Adventure Area (Mr M Foley)

The project new title is: The Swalcliffe Woodland Community Play area. During this year the village has formed a Working Management Committee which is answerable to both the Swalcliffe Parish Council and Swalcliffe Park School Management. The principal purposes of the Management Group are to prepare the project for presentation for Planning, obtain funding, supervise the construction of the play area and administer the project on a monthly basis post opening. The Management Committee comprises of: Peter Beddows, David McLindon, Mick Foley, Virginia Beddows, Anna McLindon, Christine Coles and Lizzie Melvin who has been appointed as the Management member on behalf of Swalcliffe Parish Council. On behalf of the Management Committee Mr Foley expressed thanks and appreciation to both Swalcliffe Parish Council and Swalcliffe Park School for their help and support for the project. The Lease Agreement for twenty five years duration has been approved and formally signed by both Swalcliffe Park School and Swalcliffe Parish Council. On 12th April Acerman's will be removing part of an infected tree that's on the edge of the project area. The Bio-Diversity Consultant will be attendance. The next meeting of the Management Committee is on Wednesday 19th April at 7 pm at Sparrow Hall. Once the work has been completed the committee hope to have the full report from the Bio-Consultant by 24th April. The Management Committee with Christine Coles assistance hopes to be in a position to present to Swalcliffe Parish Council the completed Planning application for Council approval by w/c 15th May. It is hoped that the planning application could then be presented to Cherwell District Council by early June. No work can commence before approval of the project has been given by Cherwell District Council. This could take up to six weeks. Equally no Fund raising can take place until Cherwell District Council have given their approval. On a positive note the Management Committee have raised through Village Funds the sum of over £6000.00 while the Swalcliffe Parish Council have allocated £6000.00 to be made available subject to conditions on the use of Public funds. The committee have been given a surety that through Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association they can apply for Local Funds up to £7000.00. The Management Committee estimate that the total estimated cost of the project will be around £28,000. A rough time line would be that work could start early September with an opening during October/November.

4. Update from Swalcliffe Park School

The school broke up on Friday 7th April with their Open Day. Thanks was given to anyone who attended from the village and the school hope they enjoyed the day. During the holiday some tarmac is being laid in the car parking areas to create additional parking. The outside lighting project is well underway and those people who border the school can already see the difference. The school will be submitting a planning application for a barrier half way down the drive which will be hardly visible from the road and have no impact on traffic flow in and out of the school. In the summer the school roof will be repaired. In the meantime the school continues to support the Swalcliffe Woodland Community Play Area Committee and hope that progress continues to be made.

5. Update from Parochial Church Council (Gay Harris)

There has been a recent meeting with Sugarnet and the Diocese have given permission for the church tower to be used. Work will start on 24th April and a week later for properties. The Church and Village Hall will receive free wi-fi. The PCC are reinstating the Betty Panks Garden. The wall has collapsed. Plans are being drawn up for the planting and a memorial bench has been bought. The PCC are able to rent out the Church now and Colin Hill is running some concerts. The first couple of dates are 1st June and 21st October. Details are on the village website and will go in the Link. It costs £13K to run the church so fundraising is important. There will be an Alfresco event this year kindly organised by Mr and Mrs Taylor and an organ recital. Thanks was given to everyone for their support and the fundraising.

From the floor Mr Colin advised that a number of villagers will have the Sugarnet service straight away as they are acting as the guinea pigs. The local company offer a number of speeds and there is a guaranteed speed and upload.

6. Update from Village Hall Committee (Kate Foley)

The village hall costs a lot to run but continues to sustain itself through rental and fund raising. A full set of accounts has been produced and thanks was given to Mrs B Taylor. Main revenue is from hiring of the hall. There were two large donations from the Burns Night (£543.00) and the Christmas Market (£670.00).

The main outgoings are electricity, water, film license, cleaning and the upkeep of the fire extinguishers. The VHC believe that the Parish Council should pay the utility bills as the owner of the hall.

Improvements in 2016 were the purchase of new crockery and cutlery, a projector, DVD Blu Ray player and new chairs. Objectives for 2017 are to upgrade the kitchen, repaint the interior and the committee believe there is free paint available and to replace the curtains with pull down blinds. The committee are delighted that wi-fi will be put in the hall. This will mean that the hall can be pushed as a venue for companies to hire for meetings and catering can be offered. The committee welcome any ideas for fundraising and any offers of help.

7. Open Forum

Mrs Harris read out a proposal for the defibrillator from Nick and June Carter who were unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments. Four years ago with the approval of the Parish Council, Mr and Mrs Carter approached BT to remove the pay phone as no-one was using it. The box was put on a removal list by BT. A subsequent Parish Council decided to retain the box, potentially for housing the defibrillator. The reasoning behind removing the redundant phone box was that it was an unwanted eyesore in the lovely village. The defibrillator and cabinet have been acquired now from Community Heartbeat Trust with a grant from SSE. CHT have confirmed the cabinet requires no weather protection and just needs to be secured to a wall. The Parish Clerk has tested the emergency phone supplied by CHT and it did connect to 999. If there is a signal, CHT have said that a phone is not a required addition because 999 would be activated at the place where the person had the attack. So all that is required is a wall for mounting and an electric supply. Mr and Mrs Carter have offered to have the defibrillator mounted on their new wall.

A covenant may have to be drawn up to maintain the power supply from their house in the event of death or moving house. If this course of action is decided upon, they will arrange for the redundant phone box to be removed. From the floor Mr Hill noted that if a phone is supplied by Sugarnet it will require a weatherproof cabinet. The Parish Council will make a final decision at the next meeting in May.

A representative from Blenheim Farm spoke about the recent planning application made by the Harlequin Group to place a phone mast in Shutford. The application was refused by a CDC Case Officer as the mast will be seen from a public footpath. The Harlequin Group will appeal in the next month or so. The applicant is hoping that the village and Parish Council will support the application.

Mr Foley spoke about the Park Lane river. OCC Highways are currently sorting out the blocked culvert in Brick Row and have said the two incidents are not connected. Mr Hill advised that ground water does change over time and he has seen evidence of this in his own garden recently. Cllr George Reynolds confirmed that gulleys, which were previously soakaways, are not looked at now. He advised the Parish Council to keep complaining and use 'Fix My Street' to report problems. The Parish Clerk to try and organise a meeting with the drainage engineer.

Cllr Reynolds advised that CDC are ticking over. The Unitary argument goes on and should be resolved by the Winter. Despite being a County Councillor he is not in favour of a Unitary Authority. He believes in Local Government. If the Unitary Authority goes ahead there will be one council based in Oxford and sub committees dealing with local issues. There will be no District Council.

Finally the Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Meeting closed 8.55pm.