

SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF 12TH MARCH 2018 AT 7.30PM IN SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE HALL

Councillors Present

Neil Urquhart (NU), Chairman
Ryan Smith (RS)
Victoria Taylor (VT)

Christine Coles - Parish Clerk and seven villagers

18/16. Apologies

Cllr Benson

18/17. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

18/18. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2018

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

18/19. Public participation session

There were no matters to discuss.

18/20. To note any matters arising from the minutes not included on this agenda for report only

Defibrillator - The training session was held on 20th February in the village hall and attended by 11 people.

18/21. To receive an update on the Swalcliffe Woodland Community Play Area project

Mr Foley gave an update on the play area project.

The Management Committee has had a number of meetings. It has been advised that the application for grant funding from the Oxfordshire Community Foundation failed. They were invited to reapply in the future when the appropriate funding theme is announced. The Management Committee made the decision to postpone the start of work at the woodland site on two counts: (a) full bridge funding of the project was not confirmed at the start of March and (b) the nesting season started on the 1st March which would make it illegal to start clearance of possible nesting areas within the site. The grant application to TOE2 for between £5,000 or £10,000 will be decided upon at their Council meeting on 21st March. If the TOE application is unsuccessful, the Committee will look at the whole viability of the project. The Management Committee has identified other possible funding sources and is pursuing these. An application for funding has been presented via the Parish Council to Cllr George Reynolds. The bridge funding stands at about £8,000 for a proposed budget of £36,000. The plan is to have the funding in place by early July so that the Management Committee is in a position to commission the contractors to commence work at the site during the first week in August when the nesting season finishes.

The new lease for the land will soon be signed by the Swalcliffe Park School Trustees. The Management Committee has completed a Health and Safety policy which has been submitted to TOE2 as requested. The Management Committee has obtained two estimates on behalf of the Parish Council for public footpaths to run in front of the dry stone wall in front of Swalcliffe Park School. A third quote is still required.

The Management Committee is hoping the project will be up and running by the end of September, subject to funding.

The Chair thanked the Committee again for their work. He reconfirmed that the Parish Council have agreed to underwrite a reasonable shortfall so the project can be completed. It will bring great benefit to the village. He noted that a condition of the planning application was the creation of a path along the wall and this would be included in the costings.

18/22. To receive an update on the garage lease

The lease was prepared and sent to Brethertons Solicitors before Christmas. The chair has been taking further advice from Brethertons to clarify the nature of the ownership and relationship between the two parties. The final version was sent to the garage owners on 21st February.

From the floor, Mr Hill noted that the lease has had history but considerable progress has been made. He acknowledged the good work of the Chairman. There were changes in the latest revision of the lease, some pleasing and others not so pleasing. Two points require further clarification. The first is the reference to the word 'property' which refers to all the land including the garage area, the village hall and parking area. The Chair agreed to look at how to define the area so that garage owners are only liable for maintenance of the area around and in front of the garages. The second point is the action on termination of the lease. The Chair will look at this clause. Another point to consider is including in the lease that there can only be one lease per household.

The Chair confirmed the garage owners have few rights of ownership and this new lease will give reassurance and more long term security. The Parish Council will be fair in what they do and give reasonable timescales. Mr Hill replied that the current lease is capable of interpretation and rights of ownership are not a problem. Once these points have been clarified the lease will be ready to sign.

A short discussion took place about the area in front of the garages which has eroded. Mr Foley felt that if garage owners are responsible for upkeep of the area then a percentage of use must be taken into account. The Chair did seek legal advice and it was recommended not to include proportions in the lease. It is hoped the matter will be dealt with fairly between the Parish Council, garage owners and other users when the matter arises. In the past gravel has been put on the area which has been a short term fix. Mrs Brookes asked if the garage rent should be put towards maintenance? This currently falls under the income of the Parish Council. It was acknowledged the land between the garages is higher and there are drainage issues. Sensible maintenance will have to be done.

Action: The Chair to clarify the two outstanding points and to get advice on the inclusion of the phrase 'Only one lease per household' within the lease.

18/23. To receive an update on the General Data Protection Regulations

Guidance had been received from OALC. The policy notice and privacy notice would be put on the website.

Action: The Chair to forward to the Parish Clerk.

18/24. To discuss the proposal to purchase the freehold land in the garage area

Mr Stanton has offered to purchase the land adjacent to his property that his two single garages sitting on it. The Parish Council have considered this request in great detail and looked at the benefits. It would not be in the best interest to sell a parish asset such as land unless the money could be invested in a specific project or retained for future investment. There is one project in progress at the moment and this is support for the play area. If the land is sold Mr Stanton would hand back the double garage to the Parish Council which it could rent out. Annual rental income could be about £1,300. This money would be useful as public funds are reducing.

From the floor Mr Cooling noted that this land area behind the garages would be halved if the plot was sold and asked how this would be used? The Chair replied to say the village hall is of sufficient size to meet its needs. The selling of an asset could be turned into regular income to fund a new village asset. Miss Stoertz spoke about engagement with the village about the selling of village land. It was confirmed this is not the first time the matter has been discussed. Various concerns and questions were raised over the rental value, whether the garage could be rented out, what condition would be placed on Mr Stanton as the buyer.

The Chair noted that any planning permission would have to go through CDC and there is a process to follow. Covenants on the land were discussed and the point was made that land value could change if land use is not specified when sold.

18/25. To discuss the grass cutting tenders

The Parish Clerk had prepared the tender and sent it to three people. Two quotes were received. It was agreed to proceed with Andrew Jon Bathe for three years.

Action: *The Parish Clerk to make contact with Mr Bathe.*

18/26. To discuss the Parish Report for the Annual Parish Meeting

The Chairman has drafted a written report of the Parish Council work and agreed to circulate it.

18/27. To discuss the idea of a Stairclimber by the PCC to enable wheelchair access to the church

The Parochial Church Council are in the process of having demonstrations of various types of stairclimbers to enable disabled access into the church. The cost is approximately £7K and people in the village have already agreed to give donations. It was agreed to give a donation of £1K.

Action: *The Parish Clerk to raise a cheque.*

18/28. To discuss maintenance issues in the village hall

There are various maintenance issues in the village hall which have now come to light after the recent bad weather. The Parish Council own the hall and the last time a lot of money was spent was in 2008 (£15K). The hall has been very cold this winter which has caused the damp issues to get worse. The new projector had to be replaced. The roof has come adrift in a few places which has allowed the snow to blow underneath and melt into the hall. There is dampness in the toilet area. It was agreed that these two areas are a priority and fall under routine maintenance which the Parish Council should pay for. Other improvements such as the kitchen refurbishment and redecoration of all areas could come out of village hall funds. A short discussion took place about the viability of the current village hall and replacing it with a new build. There are a number of current problems such as condensation and repairs which are a drain on current resources. Swalcliffe Park School recently put in a new modular building which cost £200K. A new build could take years to fund and, whilst it can be looked into, it was agreed the current maintenance issues need to be dealt with soon. Solar panels were briefly discussed but not thought to be suitable for this building.

Action: *Cllr Taylor to get three quotes for repair work to the roof and a new heating system. Cllr Foley to pass contact details of grant funders for a new build to Cllr Taylor.*

18/29. Financial Report

The following payments were approved:

£775.10 to Came & Company (general council insurance)

£249.00 to Brethertons Solicitors (legal fees for Woodland Play Area)

£600.00 to Brethertons Solicitors (legal fees for garage lease)

£135.06 to OALC (subscription)

£100.00 to Christopher Cooke Charities

£508.08 to Parish Clerk (hours)

£51.00 to HMRC

18/30. To receive an update on Planning

Two new applications had been received since the last meeting:

18/00283/F, Demolition of existing attached garage and carport and erection of two storey extension at Barn Court Cottage, 2 Park Lane. Under Consideration.

18/00083/TCA, Fell yew tree at Swalcliffe Park School. Under consideration.

An update was given on an older application:

18/00021/TCA, Tree work at St Peter and St Pauls Church. No further comments or objections.

18/31. To receive the following correspondence:

The following correspondence was received and circulated:

- HS2, Announcement of the First Round of Funding - HS2 Community & Environment Fund and Business & Local Economy Fund
- CDC, Spring Clean 2018
- CDC, Elections in May 2018
- CDC, Peer Challenge Review – Final Report
- CDC, Cherwell Parish Liaison Meeting Dates 2018
- Moore Stephens, Smaller Authorities Audit arrangements
- OALC, NALC GDPR Toolkit
- OCC, Road closure on Hook Norton Road 21 March to 23 April
- Thank you letter from The Link re the donation

18/32. Councillors' Reports

Cllr Taylor advised that Traffic Technology Ltd are giving a demonstration of speed equipment in Hornton on Tuesday 20th March. Hornton Parish Council are proposing to buy the equipment and insure it. The cost could be shared between five local parishes. More clarification is required from the police about what action can take place from the data received on speeding drivers.

Action: Cllr Taylor and the Parish Clerk to attend the demonstration. Cllr Taylor to circulate costs and look at the viability of the project.

The handover of the batteries for the bottom speed sign has not happened yet.

Action: Cllr Taylor to chase.

18/33. Date and time of next meeting

Monday 9th April, Parish Council Meeting at 7pm followed by Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 9.30pm.