

SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF 16TH JULY 2018 AT 7.30PM IN SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE HALL

Councillors Present

Neil Urquhart (NU), Chairperson
Ben Benson (BB)
Ken Hodkinson (KH)
Ryan Smith (RS)

Christine Coles - Parish Clerk

18/71. Co-option of New Councillor

Mr Tom Woolston was co-opted onto the Parish Council. He signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

18/72. To receive apologies for absence

Cllr McCallum and Cllr Taylor

18/73. To receive Declarations of Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct relating to business on the agenda

No interests were declared.

18/74. Financial Report

The following payments were approved under statutory powers:

£39.00 to CDC (uncontested election costs)

£60.00 to Graphics Direct (covering of phone kiosk)

£120.00 to A Bathe (planting in Betty Panks Garden)

£1080.00 to Sheldon Bosley Knight Ltd (land valuation behind village hall)

£315.39 to V Merritt (plants for Betty Panks Garden)

18/75. To approve the following resolution:-

"That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw from the meeting at this point". This resolution was passed.

18/76. To discuss the sale of parish land behind the garage area

The Chair had circulated a discussion sheet, which covered the issue, the background, factors and parish views. The issue is to consider the offer from Mr and Mrs Stanton of Jesters to purchase the freehold land at Swalcliffe Parish Pit for the sum of £7500.00 and give to the Parish Council their double garage for the PC to take ownership or sell.

The decision to be made is to either negotiate the sale of the freehold land or do not sell the land and retain the current leasehold relationship. The decision has to be based on the requirement to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the parish.

This has been rumbling on for some time. Mr Stanton of Jesters first asked three years ago and the land has been leased to Jesters for a long time. Mr Stanton bought a parcel of land adjoining Jesters in 2007. There is detail in the TP1 Transfer of Title document giving right of access and maintaining the roadway. The proposal is to sell the two single garages at the end of the block and the land in front. Mr Stanton would like to knock the garages down and build a garage/workshop/playroom. The notice advising of the sale was placed in the July Link and comments (both positive and negative) have been received from villagers.

Cllr Hodkinson noted that if the land is sold, the Parish Council must be clear what the money will be used for. He felt that if one is sold, this may start other villagers selling pieces of land. The Chair replied that it made sense to sell land to an adjoining property and other requests would be decided on a case by case basis. Cllr Hodkinson felt it would be difficult to say no to a villager once one plot had been sold.

It was noted that the land can only be sold once. One benefit would be getting the double garage back into PC ownership. However, the double garage may fall into disrepair over time and then the PC would be responsible as the landlord. This could incur significant maintenance costs.

Mr Stanton has made an offer of £7500.00 to purchase the land, two garages and hand back the double garage. The land valuation prepared by Sheldon, Bosley, Knight in June 2018 is greater than this. The Parish Council are unclear about the future use of the area at this time.

The Councillors then voted and it was unanimous not to sell the garages or land.

The two main reasons are:

Parish land should not be sold unless there is a strong reason to do so. The Parish Council are unclear about how the Parish pit may be used in the future and there is not a particular project that needs a lot of cash. The Parish Council still has significant cash reserves. The Parish Council took opinion from the community. Although there were comments in favour of selling the land (or not) at the right price, the majority of comments were against this. Principally the view is that the Parish Council should not be selling an asset without a good reason.

Action: The Chair to email Cllr Taylor and Cllr McCallum who could not attend the meeting. The Chair to reply to Mr Stanton and inform him of the decision made by the Parish Council.

18/77. Date and time of next meeting

Monday 23rd July 2018 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 8.55pm.