

SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING **OF 20th MAY 2019 AT 7.30PM** **IN SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE HALL**

Councillors Present

Neil Urquhart (NU), Chairperson
Ben Benson (BB)
Ken Hodkinson (KH)
Victoria Taylor (VT)
Christine Coles - Parish Clerk and three villagers

19/36. Elections

Election of Chairperson and Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office form

Cllr Urquhart was elected to be Chairman. He signed the Acceptance of Office form.

Election of Vice-Chairperson

Cllr Taylor was elected to be Vice-Chairperson.

19/37. Apologies

Cllr McCallum (work), Cllr Smith (work) and Cllr Woolston (work)

19/38. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Benson declared an interest in the planning application as a neighbour of Church House, Main Road.

19/39. To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 8th April 2019

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

19/40. Public Participation Session

There was nothing to discuss.

19/41. To note any matters arising from the minutes not included on this agenda for report only

Swalcliffe Park School – Concerns were raised at the last meeting about speeding up the driveway. The barrier is now in operation and Give Way line markings have been painted at the exit.

Planter on triangular area –The area is being damaged by larger vehicles using it as a turning circle. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the state of this area.

Culvert in Brick Row – There is no further news.

Play Park Lease – This was discussed at the earlier meeting. The Parish Council are still waiting to see the original lease with the Chair's signature on. The Parish Council agreed to accept its contents.

19/42. To receive a report from SWCPA Meeting (6.30pm on 20 May)

Mr Foley gave the following update.

At an earlier meeting the following officers were elected:

Chairman - Mick Foley, Vice-Chair – Peter Beddowes, Secretary – Virginia Merritt, Treasurer – Christine Coles, Director – David McLindon. The committee will formally meet in December and May of each year. Informal meetings will be held in between. The Terms of Reference have been agreed and signed by Mr Foley and the Chair of the Parish Council, Cllr Urquhart. The Parish Clerk has a copy for the file.

80-90 children were at the opening event with parents and grandparents. The committee will contact local schools and hope the park is visited as part of their curriculum. The committee will proceed with the purchase of turfing, bench plaques, a rustic house, bat boxes and bird boxes. Volunteers are to look after the upkeep of the site.

Finance – The Parish Council made a donation of £6K to the play area fund which was a commitment made by two previous Chair people. The Chair and Clerk agreed there is no need to open a new bank account. There will be a restricted line within the parish budget and future maintenance costs taken from it but it is expected that the SWCPA Committee will continue to raise funds (a target of £500 a year) towards its upkeep.

Pathway – The grass is starting to come through.

The Chair of the Parish Council gave a vote of thanks to the Management Committee for continuing to take responsibility for the maintenance and checks of the site.

19/43. To decide how to proceed with the Village Map

The Councillors previously agreed to support this idea and, following a suggestion at the Annual Parish Meeting, to include the Conservation Area boundary on the map. It was agreed there would be little benefit in naming sponsors on the map so this idea will not be taken forward.

Action: The Chair to liaise with the Mapping Officer at CDC and bring this to the next meeting.

19/44. To receive a report from the Digital Connectivity Group

Cllr Woolston had sent a brief report. The group have agreed to make contact with Voneus to ask them to come in and discuss their service to the village, respond to constructive feedback and talk about their plans for the future. The group think that contracts may expire at the end of June 2019 so the timing is good. There is a new cabinet in the village which brings FTTC (Fibre to the cabinet) connectivity which presumably brings with it more options of better service.

Action: Cllr Woolston to liaise with Gay Harris of the PCC re the contract with the Church/Tower. Cllr Woolston to draft a simple tips article to serve as a practical aid for those suffering low speeds. This will go in the Link and on the website after the group have met with Voneus.

19/45. To receive an update on Park Wood

The Chair reported on recent communications with the owners of Park Wood, Countryside Learning, a charity which manages woods for educational purposes. He had met with a forestry consultant for an inspection of the wood. As a result at-risk trees close to the paths were marked for felling and an area was designated for thinning ready for re-planting. He had expressed his disappointment to the charity that the trees had been felled while the bluebells were still in flower, with further damage caused by the machinery. He would continue to liaise with the charity.

19/46. To progress plans for the Village Hall

Kate Foley, Chair of the Village Hall Committee gave a report at the Annual Parish Meeting last month. The Chair gave a summary following the survey that was carried out. Discussions then took place as to whether the hall should be repaired or knocked down and rebuilt.

The Parish Clerk had found some history to the hall. The hall was built in 1925 on surplus parish land. It was owned by trustees with a management committee and ownership was transferred to the Parish Council in 1947. There are architects plans for the extension from 1992 and plans for the front of the hall which did not happen. The toilets were pre 1992.

A summary of the survey highlighted lack of maintenance but the hall was in good condition. The Chair went back to the surveyor to ask about knocking down the extension and his advice was there would be no point in knocking it down unless the whole building was to be replaced.

Mrs Foley referred to the lottery funding of £50K that was previously used to upgrade the hall. The hall now needs new investment to modernise and refurbish to a standard where it can be promoted. There is a mixture of views from the village hall committee. Swalcliffe Park School have put in a modular building which cost £200K and is smaller in size. To knock the village hall down and rebuild could cost at least £250K. Mr Foley noted that the cost should not put people off.

Various points were noted in the discussion:

- Is the building fit for purpose and worthy of any investment in 5-10 years time?
- The insulation could be upgraded.
- There is free space at the back which is not being used and the layout of the hall could be changed.
- The cost of demolishing the toilets would be expensive.
- The hall could be clad from the outside.
- Given the lack of a volunteer leader, a Project Manager could be engaged to look at the whole project. This cost could be included in any grant application.

It was agreed that there is no firm view at this stage of which route to take and it would be wrong to make a decision. The Chair agreed to write a specification to share with the VHC and Parish Council. The specification will be given to three local architects to get quotes to either rebuild or refurbish. The matter to be discussed further at the July meeting. More consultation is to be taken with the wider village.

The Chair briefly mentioned the role of the Village Hall Committee and Parish Council which is unclear. Mrs Foley noted she felt the role of the VHC should be promoting the use of the hall. It was agreed that Officers should be elected and clear responsibilities agreed with Terms of Reference similar to the Woodland Play Area.

Action: The Chair to write a specification and share with the VHC and Parish Council. This will be sent to three local architects. Mrs Foley to forward the VHC accounts to the Parish Clerk.

19/47. To consider the report of the CDC Parish Remuneration Panel

The CDC report is on the notice-board and was last discussed and reviewed in November 2018. It was agreed to pay Councillors for travel and subsistence when attending council meetings for the coming year.

19/48. Financial Report

The following payments were approved under statutory powers:

£9.00 to R Smith (copying of APM leaflet)

£175.00 to V Taylor (refreshments at APM)

£250.00 to R Fletcher (internal audit)

£18.50 to SLCC (Clerks membership)

£48.50 to CDC (retrospective planning for the footpath by woodland area)

£300.00 to A Bathe (grass cutting)

To approve a salary increase for the Parish Clerk in line with the NGC Salary Award

It was agreed to increase the salary of the Parish Clerk in line with the NGC Salary Award effective from 1st April 2019.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/19 Part 3

The internal audit has taken place. Copies of the following documents had been circulated by email.

Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement was approved and signed by the RFO and Chairman.

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2018/19 was approved and signed by the RFO and Chairman.

19/49. To receive an update on Planning

Two new applications had been received since the last meeting.

19/00130/TCA, Tree work at Swalcliffe Cottage, Main Road. No comments or observations.

19/00654/F, Variation of Condition 2 at Church House, Main Road. No objections.

19/50. The following correspondence was received and circulated:

CDC, Invitation to Cherwell Lottery Launch Event

CFO, Assets of Community Value. The Parish Clerk to get further information on what can be registered and the process involved.

19/51. Councillors' Reports

Cllr Benson reported that the dragon patcher has been used on Grange Lane.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.55pm.

DRAFT