

SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 5th DECEMBER 2022 AT 7.30PM IN SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE HALL

Councillors Present

Martin Collett (MC)
Steve Gandy (SG)
Ken Hodkinson (KH)
Karen Riordan (KR)
Victoria Taylor (VT)
Christine Coles - Parish Clerk and four members of the public

22/75. Election of Chairperson

It was proposed by Cllr Collett and seconded by Cllr Hodkinson that Cllr Gandy be Chairperson.

Signing of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Gandy signed the Acceptance of Office form. The Parish Clerk to keep on file.

Election of Vice-Chairperson

It was proposed by Cllr Gandy and seconded by Cllr Riordan that Cllr Collett be Vice-Chairperson.

The Chair began by thanking Neil Urquhart who had been Chairman for five years. He had overseen some difficult issues such as the garages and village hall during his time as Chair. He was not passive and his efforts were applauded. The Parish Council wished Neil best wishes in his new role and future. The Chair thanked Cllr Taylor for being Vice-Chair and her service. He was pleased she was staying on the Parish Council and supporting them. He welcomed Cllr Collett as Vice-Chair. Cllr Gandy will be away for some of the year and supported by Cllr Collett.

22/76. Apologies

Cllr Smith (work commitment)

22/77. Declarations of Interest

The Chair declared a personal interest in item 22/84, the tree application at Church House, Main Road.

22/78. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 31st October 2022

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed.

22/79. Public Participation Session

One villager spoke about the local charity which would help those in need. Its confidential and requests can be made to help with high energy and food costs. The fund might have closed but the Parish Clerk will find out. The John Loggins Charity was also mentioned by Mr Hill, which was established in the past to help contribute funds to deserving causes in several villages, including Swalcliffe.

Action: The Parish Clerk to establish if the local charity was still active.

Another villager has missed several meetings but congratulated those who worked hard to make the Platinum Jubilee event happen.

Mr Foley gave an update on the Community Woodland Play area. A committee meeting took place on Tuesday 29th November 2022 and was chaired by Peter Beddowes. They welcomed Cllr Steve Gandy.

They expressed their thanks and appreciation to Neil Urquhart for his continued support of the project and for his time, help and assistance in making the play area such a great success. The meeting discussed adding a road sign on the Main Road. Good reports have been received on the usage of the play area. The committee agreed to open a separate bank account with online facilities.

Cllr Gandy agreed to transfer the balance amount from the Parish Council into a new Woodlands account. The proposal of a climbing frame was discussed. It was agreed to reduce the size and related costs. Swalcliffe Park School are to be invited to be involved in an activity at the woodland. A fund raising committee has been formed to raise external funds for new equipment. Virginia Beddowes noted she would be resigning. A secretary would be appointed on a month by month agreement.

The acoustics for the village hall were discussed. A suggestion was made for villagers to make them which would be a cheaper option. The matter is in hand. A sound evaluation should be carried out first. It is hoped the sound acoustics can have a dual use.

22/80. To note any matters arising from the minutes not included on this agenda

Speedwatch – There is a new contact at Hornton and a meeting is being arranged. A battery is being purchased for the bottom speed sign. Mr Hill offered to help with the purchase as he has been involved before.

Action: Cllr Taylor to progress replacement battery.

Plaque from broken bench on the Green – This will be passed to Colin Hill for the village archive.

Action: Mr Hill to be given plaque for storage in village archive.

Village Hall - Discussions are ongoing with the Charity Commission re the recommended approach and way forward. There is a benefit to being a registered charity and the ability to get grants. This will be a future agenda item.

Action: Cllr Collett to investigate further options for village hall.

Fund raising ideas for the hall – To take forward to the New Year.

Action: Parish Clerk to add village hall fundraising to January meeting agenda.

22/81. To receive an update on the placement of the Jubilee Bench

Cllr Riordan has emailed OCC for an update and it is progressing slowly. Early discussions were verbal and staff have left OCC. OCC lease the site from OBT and English Heritage are involved. Mr Hill asked to be kept involved as he has dealt with Property services for over 30 years.

Action: The Parish Clerk to ask Cllr George Reynolds if he can help.

Earlier in the year Mr Hill had raised issues with the Parish Council concerning the planting of the Platinum Jubilee tree outside Tithe Barn without the correct permissions. The Chair gave reassurance that in the future, the correct permissions will be obtained before commencing any work on a village project. In particulate the Tithe Barn and its grounds and consulting with the Swalcliffe Society through its Secretary. The Parish Council were trying to meet expectations of the village and apologised for the mistake made.

22/82. Garage Rent 2023

The previous Chairman, Neil Urquhart had written to garage owners re the next annual review. He noted the CPIH index which is published by ONS as 13.2%. This was an error which has been recognized. The rate is 8.8%. The garage owners would prefer a smaller increase. They have regularly had to deal with high rent increases over the years.

Councillors felt there is an agreed mechanism in place and it is not advisable to deviate from that. The Parish Council have a duty to think about their assets and the benefit to the whole community.

They take the point raised by the owners and this can be considered when the lease is up for renewal in 2025.

Mr Foley spoke about value for money and asked what value the garage owner gets? It was felt by the Parish Council that garages are leased on reasonable commercial terms and there is a high demand for them. The Chair summarised that representations have been well made and the money will go back into the community. The agreed current formula is fair and increases will be applied on this basis.

On behalf of the garage owners, Mr Hill thanked the Parish Council for considering the issues raised.
Action: Cllr Gandy to write to garage leaseholders to confirm 8.8% increase agreed on.

22/83. Financial Report

The following payments were approved under statutory powers:

£300.00 to Andrew Bathe (grass cutting)

£118.39 to Lights4fun (Christmas lights)

£74.02 to J Nicholls Ltd (building materials for village hall)

£93.60 to A Darby Electrical (repair of defibrillator)

£38.99 to ABC Advertising Ltd (annual website back up plan)

£70.00 to Taylors & Son (Christmas tree)

22/84. To receive an update on planning

The following applications had been received since the last meeting:

22/03077/TCA, T2 Norway Spruce, fell to ground level at Forge House, 5 Old Forge Yard. No comment by PC.

22/03071/TCA, Tree work at Swalcliffe Park School. No comment by PC.

22/03411/TCA, T1 x Ash, remove and T2 x Horse Chestnut no 2, remove at Church House, Main Road. No comment by PC.

22/85. To receive Councillors Reports

A new play sign for the Woodland Play Area will be discussed in January. A quote was obtained from Highways a few years ago.

Action: The Parish Clerk to circulate.

There is a village nativity and carol concert on 22nd December.

Speeding was discussed. There are very few options without street lighting. The new chicane on the Milton Road has a solar light close by, but a similar set-up for Swalcliffe was unlikely to be feasible.

The Coronation of King Charles in May 2023 was briefly discussed. It will be a more low-key event than the 2022 Platinum Jubilee.

Action: Cllr Riordan to think of ways to celebrate this event.

22/86. To note meeting dates for 2023

9th January, 20th February, 17th April (Annual Parish Meeting), 15th May (Annual Parish Council meeting), 26th June, 4th September, 16th October and 27th November.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.05pm.