

SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 16th OCTOBER 2023 AT 7.30PM IN SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE HALL

Councillors Present

Steve Gandy (SG) - Chairman
Nicola Borkmann (NB)
Martin Collett (MC)
Ken Hodkinson (KH)
Stephen Warrington (SW)
Victoria Taylor (VT)

Christine Coles - Parish Clerk

23/85. Apologies

Cllr Ryan Smith (personal)

23/86. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

23/87a. To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 4th September 2023

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed.

23/87b. To note any matters arising from the minutes not included on this agenda

Overgrown vegetation on the Main Road – The main problem is the BT box which blocks the line of sight. There is overhanging vegetation up the hill. Cllr Borkmann to send a photo to the Clerk.

Dead cherry tree outside play area – This was reported on Fix My Street. OCC's Tree Service have undertaken a tree survey and will have the work completed by the end of the financial year.

Bottom VAS at Tadmarton end – It does not work. The Parish Clerk to email Frazer for an update.

ICO – The Parish Clerk has registered with the ICO as a village email is being used to distribute information.

23/88. Public Participation Session

There were no members of the public present.

23/89. To agree and sign the amendment to the Section 101 Grass cutting agreement between OCC and SPC

An amendment to Schedule 1 has been received. In February 2023 OCC adopted a Highway Verge and Vegetation maintenance policy. As a result, Schedule 1 was reviewed and amended in line with that policy. It was agreed to accept the amendment as it enhances biodiversity and undertakes a nature led and risk based approach to verge maintenance.

Action: The Parish Clerk to sign the amended document.

23/90. To receive an update on the Governance project

Councillor's Gandy, Collett and Borkmann have met. They have spoken and met a specialist lawyer to secure advice on the feasibility, approach and type of charity structure that may be best suited. The lawyer has offered to assist with providing further details on the process, format of articles and objects, as well as supply any necessary resolutions that would need to be agreed in the correct form. This has not cost anything so far. Softer conversations with village groups have taken place and there is general support for the principle. More work is needed.

Action: The Parish Clerk to ask the Village Halls Advisor if any halls are a CIO? Future spend will need to be considered to be included when the budget is set in the New Year.

23/91. To receive an update on the Environmental Plan

Cllr Borkmann has met Andrew Bathe, the grass contractor to discuss new areas for wildflowers. The herbs and daffodil bulbs have been planted in the churchyard by the front wall. The strimming of Park Lane was discussed as the PC arranged the strimming and the school strimmed straight after.

Action: The Parish Clerk to ask Cllr Smith to liaise with the school.

23/92. To receive an update on the Development Plan Survey

The survey was launched two weeks ago and 50 responses have been received. Another reminder will be sent out for replies to be received before the end of October. Cllr Warrington will prepare a report on the findings. Then a consultation will follow to share a plan. More detail will be shared at the Annual Parish Meeting next April.

23/93. To note the closing date for 20mph applications

The deadline for applications is 28th October 2023. From the survey results received back, villagers are most dissatisfied with the actual material speed. 49% are dissatisfied with the current speed. Few commented on changing to 20mph. It is a big issue but there is no overwhelming evidence to lower the speed limit. There is a good relationship with the police and Speedwatch should be continued. The deadline was noted but there is insufficient data to support the initiative. The majority of Councillors were not in favour of the change. Both Cllr Smith and Cllr Hodgkinson supported the 20mph application.

23/94. To discuss the Cherwell Local Plan Consultation

The consultation started on 22nd September and will finish on 3rd November. Cllr Warrington will attend the CDC workshop on Thursday 19th October. Cherwell is the fastest growing area with a population of 160,000. 500 houses are proposed for rural areas. The level of protection has changed. Swalcliffe was a Category C village with no allocated development although infill development and exceptions development is permitted subject to planning policy. The housing was directed more to larger villages but this was felt unfair. In the village survey, villagers have said they like the village the way it is and one respondent felt that building social housing to help people stay in their own community was an option.

Action: Cllr Warrington to attend the Local Plan Consultation meeting and if opportunity arises express the view that any homes to be provided in smaller villages should be limited to infill if absolutely necessary and be affordable to local incomes.

23/95. To discuss arrangements for Christmas

The village hall has been booked for a party. £500.00 has been set aside. A tree will cost £100.00.

Action: Cllr Taylor to order the tree.

23/96. Financial Report

The following payments were approved under statutory powers:

- £378.00 to Moore (external audit)
- £151.20 to Community Heartbeat (Annual support cost)

- £267.70 to CDC (dog bin emptying)
- £700.00 to Andrew Bathe (grass cutting)
- £40.00 to Parish Clerk (ICO registration)

To discuss the External Audit report and agree the closure of the audit

The external audit is now closed. No matters came to their attention that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met. Other matters included additional variance information which needed to be provided. Sections 1 and 2 should be approved individually in a specified order. The Parish Council accepted the closure of the audit.

Action: The Parish Clerk to publish the report on the notice-board.

23/97. To receive an update on planning

- 23/01524/Q56, Change of use and associated building operations to convert existing agricultural building to single dwelling house at Hill Farm, Bakers Lane. Refused by CDC.

23/98. To receive Councillors Reports

Cllr Hodkinson noted that Speedwatch would take place again soon.

The yew tree hedge in front of Jesters on the Main Road is overgrown.

Action: The Parish Clerk to write to the owners.

Cllr Gandy noted that a capital grant application for village hall work is being submitted. It will have to be match funded.

Litter picks were discussed. The parish normally carry one out annually in the Spring before the vegetation starts growing. It was poorly attended last year.

23/99. To note next meeting date and time

Monday 27th November 2023 at 7.30pm (Apologies were received from Cllr Collett and Cllr Hodkinson)

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.15pm.