

# Swanbourne Parish Council

## Meeting held 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015

Minutes of the Swanbourne Parish Council meeting held in Swanbourne Village Hall on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at 6pm.

### **Present:**

Tom Finchett (Chairman)	TF	Clare Barker (Clerk)	CLB
Phil Timmins (Vice Chairman)	PT	Clive Rodgers	CR
Jean Tuer	JT	Trudy Timms	TT

### **In attendance:**

Nick Odell            NO            (for the Playing Fields Committee)  
Faisal Aziz

Apologies were received from Caroline Baldwin (CB)

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

TF declared a business and financial interest on behalf of the Estate. TF welcomed Nick Odell to the meeting as Chairman of the Playing Fields Committee.

### **1. THE PLAYING FIELD & SURROUNDS**

Proposals from the Playing Field Committee were presented first, including a budget of proposed expenditure for the year.

- a) **Grass cutting** - Roy Sherwood has agreed to cut the grass 15 times a year and charge only £300/year. It was noted that this was a very low cost and NO was asked to revert to Roy Sherwood to clarify this, in view of the fact that VAT would also be chargeable. For the purposes of calculating a budget for Playing Field expenditure £500 plus VAT was allocated.
- b) **Park Benches** - NO proposed the supply of solid wood benches at £500 x 2 plus £30/each to fix to the ground – One of the benches would be situated at the top of the tennis courts and one by the swings. DB suggested that a simple bench design with no back would be cheaper and more than adequate and would mean that four may be purchased. Nick to investigate further.
- c) **The mound** – TT strims the mound and surrounding areas – budget £300.
- d) **Hedges** - The Estate will trim hedges and cut back around the entrance – no charge. Estate will top the outlying areas when it dries up – estimate £100.
- e) **Fencing** - Chris May has quoted to secure the whole playing field so dogs can't get in, thereby preventing fouling, and signs to be put on the playing field access gates saying "NO DOGS".
- f) **Children's play area** - The slide needs attention as it contains a puddle at the bottom.
- g) **Tennis courts** - minor repairs are needed to the tennis court netting.
- h) **Millennium Wood** – It was suggested that bark chippings should be put down on paths which are very muddy and the shrubs need cutting back. This could be done over a number of years, with a budget of £200/year. DB tops the area with his tractor and TT maintains the footpath.
- i) **Bins** – the bins for dog waste are collected and TT empties the rubbish bins. NO will telephone BCC to see if we can get a wheeled brown bin for garden waste materials.

Total budget allocated for Playing Field is £3500 which will cover (a) to (i) above.

**ACTIONS** – NO to action points indicated above with the Playing Field Committee. TF to ask David Thrower, Mark Robinson and David Thrower if they would be prepared to join the Playing Fields Committee. The Committee will discuss upgrading equipment and various grants available.

## **2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 3<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014**

The minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting, having been circulated and read, were approved and signed by TF.

### **2.1 B/F MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING OF 3<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER**

#### **2.1.1 (2.1.1)\* Dragons Teeth and Gates**

Three gates are broken on the entrance to the village and the Dragons Teeth have not been painted.

**ACTION:** TF to inform the Local Area Technician, Matt Whincup at Bucks County Council.

#### **2.1.2 (2.1.2)\* Water running down Station Road**

This work has been completed but there is still water running at the top outside Charlton Hill Farmhouse, arising from a spring. BCC have programmed for the installation of a 'French drain' to solve the issue.

**ACTION:** TF to remind the Local Area Technician, Matt Whincup at Bucks County Council.

#### **2.1.3 (2.1.3)\* Cemetery Hill Footpath**

Work now fully completed; item closed.

#### **2.1.4 (2.1.4)\* Access to a defibrillator**

Alex Richards has a defibrillator in his car. It was agreed that JT would see if there was funding for a joint purchase between the village school and the village and the defibrillator might be placed on the front wall of the school for easy access.

**ACTION:** TF will forward email regarding AVDC funding to JF, AR and DB.

#### **2.1.5 (2.2.2)\* Parked cars outside the Pre-prep**

This is still an issue.

**ACTION:** TF to speak to Simon Hitchings at the Pre Prep regarding parking on the road opposite the Church once term starts. DB to convey our concerns to the Village School.

#### **2.1.6 (2.2.3)\* Deverells Farm development**

TF explained that the plans for the proposed housing development at the disused farmyard of Deverell's Farm will soon be submitted for planning approval. Following public consultation at the Parish Assembly in 2014, a number of design changes were made by Adrian Hoy who will be acting as agent for the Swanbourne Estate.

#### **2.1.7 (4.1)\* Dodley Hill Farm**

The footpath diversion has been agreed by Bucks County Council, and an order will be made once the new footpath is in place in the spring.

#### **2.1.8 (6)\* Changes to Local Bus Route**

Ken Harris had reported back to TF that the village had not lost any bus services as a result of recent changes to local bus routes, but was still trying to get a bus stop on the A413, within walking distance of

Swanbourne. It was very unlikely that he would be successful. At the LAF meeting PT reported that discussions had taken place to see if the bus times in Swanbourne could be changed as residents couldn't get to the doctors surgery in the morning in time for their blood tests, and this was being investigated.

#### 2.1.9 (7.1)\* Maintenance

The drains at the junction of Nearnton End and Cemetery Hill are still blocked.

**ACTION:** TF to inform the Local Area Technician, Matt Whincup at Bucks County Council.

#### 2.1.10 (7.2) \* Village Hall

JT (as Village Hall Vice-Chairman) reported that the Village Hall is now being used all day Tuesdays for yoga classes. Generally it is much busier than it used to be. Mark Oldfield is Chairman, though working full time, he maintains a low profile. Redecoration was now complete, and JT referred to the need to re-hang the pictures. After some discussion it was proposed that by PT that boarding be affixed to the wall behind the pictures to allow these to be fixed without damaging the damp proof membrane.

**ACTION:** JT to liaise with PT.

### 3 FINANCE

CLB went through the financial situation at 8<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and this together with cheques issued were approved and signed by TF. The budget was discussed and agreed. LAF funding - PT reported that the Parish Council are too late for further funding this year but it was felt appropriate that the Playing Field Committee may apply for funding for new equipment during the course of the year. A further grant application may be appropriate for the cost of granite kerbing (J&S Contractors to quote). It was decided to increase the precept by 10% this year to £10,000.

**ACTION:** CLB to send off Precept application by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January. CLB also to request details of the grant for £512. TF to contact J & S Contractors to obtain quotes for various kerbing and highway projects.

### 4 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

CR reported to the PC on the current applications:

- a) **New house at 18 Smithfield End** (14/03307/APP) – The discrepancies in the property dimensions have now been clarified, so providing it is acceptable to the Historic Buildings Officer as fitting in sufficiently with the street scene, the PC do not oppose the application because the roof line will be 2 metres lower than that previously approved, hence the skyline impact of the property would be reduced. However, the new plans move the house closer to 6 Station Road, and the Historic Building Officer has now expressed a slight preference for the previous design as more in keeping with the street setting. The application is in the process of determination by AVDC now.
- b) **Old Vicarage, felling of hornbeam tree** (14/03775/ATC) – Target determination date is 4<sup>th</sup> February 2015. A healthy tree, but situated at the entrance to the house and also the roots undermine neighbouring wall and farm buildings which are part of Church Farm. The PC thought it was a shame to fell a healthy tree but understood the reasons and would not object.
- c) **Village C of E School, new classroom** (14/03380/APP) – AVDC has extended the consultation process into January. CR had previously been circulated copies of the plans by email, and had requested and received comments back to him by email on two separate occasions; the first on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014, attaching building and site plans. DB (Vice Chairman of the Governors of Swanbourne C.E. School) had confirmed that the plans were to provide a single new classroom and two smaller storage rooms which would help improve the facilities and improve the working environment of the school e.g. a proper

library rather than having books stacked in the corridor of the main building. CR reported that the PC members expressed full support for the plans in reply to his first email. Some members referred to the school coming perilously close to closure on two or three occasions over the past 30 years and it was considered important to support the village school. A list of objections has been lodged to AVDC by the immediate neighbour to the school, Mr Peter Bird, who lives at 'Gable End', and his concerns had been summarised in the second email sent from CR to all PC members immediately after talking to him on the evening of 17<sup>th</sup> December.

The PC then discussed of some main issues which had been raised:-

- (i) That parent car traffic would increase because there might be a school plan to expand further. PC members recognised the issue of congestion around the school at pick up and drop off times. However, pupil numbers are planned to remain the same, so the traffic issues should not worsen.
- (ii) That the local bat population would be endangered. However, the County Biodiversity Officer does not concur with this view.
- (iii) There was a boundary dispute. However, this appears to have been due to a poorly drawn map, and would seem to be in the process of being resolved. TF confirmed that none of the proposals related to land other than that within the school premises or owned by the Swanbourne Estate.
- (iv) That the public footpath would need to be slightly diverted, and the Ramblers Association objected. This is not the case. What was presumed to be the footpath cutting through the proposed site, was in an informal route used by walkers. The Public footpath, as shown on the Definitive Map will not be affected by the development proposals, rendering the objection invalid.

NOTE: School Governors Chairman (Canon John Saunders) is unavailable since the sudden death of his wife last month. David Blunt is consequently Acting Chairman and dealing with the issue for the school.

**ACTION:** - *The discussion led to a request by CR to take the village school planning application to a vote. In a show of hands, the PC unanimously voted to continue to support the application, and there were no abstentions.*

CR concluded by reminding PC members of the importance of prompt replies to plans circulated by email now that AVDC had ceased issuing paper copies of Planning Application plans and maps to PC's last summer.

## **5 VILLAGE MATTERS**

### **5.1 Maintenance**

- a. **Footpaths** - TT said there were three footpath entrances which were very muddy – Nearton End, Footpath by Tony Hilton's house, entrance to the wood behind the pub. Also in the wood there is a pine tree blown down.
- b. **Pot holes** - at junction Tattams End and Nearton End pot holes need filling and the road needs sweeping to remove the gravel build up and leaves etc. If gravel sets are used this should help the problem.
- c. **Branches** - TT has cut back the overhanging branches outside The Cottage.
- d. **Verges** - The verges are in a terrible state particularly outside Eleanor Sherwood's. At the Council bungalows down Tattams End, the residents are parking on the grass verges as there are too many cars for hard standing parking. The situation to be observed and monitored, and taken up again at the next meeting.

Verge parking Duck End, Smithfield End – an anonymous complaint has been made about the parking on the verges, leading to verge erosion. Following discussion, it was decided to instigate a protective plan of action to put some large rocks on the verge/road side and TF would arrange to fill in with topsoil and re-seed. Granite sets are need by JT's and also Barrack Row. Intention to tackle a small area each year as they are expensive.

**ACTION:-***TF to ask Vale Housing if they would consider putting in some further parking areas.*

**ACTION:** - *TF will speak to residents requesting restraint from parking on the grass, and to instigate the protective plan of action. TF will also contact J&S Contractors to obtain a price for the granite sets.*

Top of the New Walk, people are parking and turning on the grass, and this is getting rutted and cut up.

**ACTION:-***TF to speak to Paul Campbell.*

## **5.2 Affordable Housing**

TF reminded the Parish Council that there seemed sufficient interest for a mixed affordable Housing Scheme in Swanbourne. The Parish Council agreed that they were still wished to oversee a development themselves, within a Swanbourne Housing Trust, if the scheme were to be viable. Ark Housing would be able to advise on this. However, DB expressed great concern that with AVDC insisting they retain nomination rights, the future availability of the homes for local Swanbourne residents, may not be secure. The inability and unwillingness of AVDC to help local residents obtain a home in the village's existing stock of social housing has highlighted this.

**ACTION:** - *TF has already sent a strong letter to AVDC regarding Malcolm and Sheila Ash being overlooked for the latest bungalow.*

The grant of a long leasehold of the land by the Swanbourne estate, or the use of restrictive covenants within a sale, may reduce the availability of lenders or be ineffective. TF said that with the discussions on affordable housing how dragging on over a number of years, a decision should be made as to whether to pursue this either through an existing housing association, through a new village trust, or not at all. The Parish Councillors should consider what is in the best interest for the village and its residents. TF had already discussed securing nomination rights with Ark Housing who thought it unlikely that AVDC could be left out. The only way that this may be possible would be should a scheme be developed not as an 'Exception Site.'

CR pointed out that the availability of an affordable housing scheme did not, in itself solve the problem highlighted in the discussions at the Parish Assembly –the lack of availability of small open market homes to buy within the village. TF stated that to achieve development not restricted by a S.106 agreement, this would need to be carried out on land not being an exception site. CR reminded the PC that the shortage of houses to buy in Swanbourne was a major concern for the residents (mentioned at last year's Parish Assembly) and it was agreed that this alternative option could include some flats for elderly residents. TF removed himself from the 'Chair' and explained that the 'Estate' could investigate a development on the site adjacent to the pub. If AVDC did not consider this to be an exception site, but within the village boundary, it may be possible to achieve both objectives – that is: a scheme of small houses for sale on the open market as well as retaining some properties with a view to designing and making these available to local residents (and particularly the elderly.) TF pointed out that this would be an open market scheme for the benefit of the Estate, but that it could include a social housing element.

**ACTION:** - *With his interest declared, TF to raise the issue of an alternative development site closer to the pub with the Estate Trustees as an option.*

**ACTION:** - *All Parish Councillors to consider whether, in any event, the Parish Council should pursue an affordable housing scheme east of 33 Mursley Road.*

## **6 Traffic Calming – Mobile MVAS**

MVAS has now all arrived and just needs to be set up and used. The post is in a barn at Home Farm. Helen Cleavley and Ken Harris will take this forward as part of the Speedwatch programme.

**ACTION:** *TF to contact Helen Cleavley.*

## **7 Fibre Optic Broadband for Swanbourne – the way forward**

CR handed out a summary for the members of the PC (attached) with details of bodies to lobby to ensure that Swanbourne is on the list of villages for the roll out of fibre optic broadband. SHS are independently funding their own broadband. Parishioners need to make contact to demand superfast connection. It was suggested that Marion Lowe might email this out to everyone. It is possible that Swanbourne will be considered following the next programme update in June. Failing this, it may be possible to consider a community funded option.

**ACTION:-** *CR will circulate a template to use. All PC to send individual letters to help lobby the issue.*

## 8 Parish Elections

PT and CB intend to step down at the election in May. Nominations for replacements from the village should be known by March. The issue will be discussed at the next meeting, closer to the election. The election costs would be £900.

## 9 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

AGM to be held at 6pm in Swanbourne Village Hall on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Parish Assembly to be held at 7 for 7.30pm in Swanbourne Village Hall on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015

PC Meeting to be held at 6pm in Swanbourne Village Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting which closed at 8.30pm.

### FIBRE OPTIC BROADBAND DISCUSSION PAPER

Swanbourne is not on the list for Fibre Optic Broadband installation, so we need to lobby as much as possible. Some suggested names to lobby to help obtain County support for Fibre Broadband for Swanbourne:-

Tracey Aldworth; email address is [taldworth@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:taldworth@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk)

Tracey is a Director on AVDC and has influence over the allocation of the £1.5 million support donated by Bucks County Council (which is being delegated to the Districts) towards the extension of Fibre Broadband in the County. Telephone number to Samuel Deer, Tracey's PA, is 01296-585932

Andrew Mills; email address is [amills@iconicthought.com](mailto:amills@iconicthought.com)

Andrew is an ICT Consultant who lives in North Marston. He has been in talks with AVDC concerning trialling Fibre connections using cables suspended on existing telegraph poles above the ground to North Marston and Granborough. The trial has now been accepted and AVDC will fund it.

Chris Rawson; email address is [chris@bbf.uk.com](mailto:chris@bbf.uk.com)

Chris is Broadband Manager for Buckinghamshire Business First. Tel: 01494 568942

Mob: 07825 060603. He deals with the co-ordination the Open Reach (BT) intallation programme of Fibre Optic Broadband for Bucks and Herts. Progress may be seen in map or table. Ref. to Website:-

[www.connectedcounties.org/news/2014/february/first-fibre-broadband-cabinet-upgrades](http://www.connectedcounties.org/news/2014/february/first-fibre-broadband-cabinet-upgrades)

*Outcome:- we are likely to know by the middle of the year if our lobbying for county/state aid has resulted in our eligibility.*

Possible alternative solutions:-

1. If unsuccessful, we could approach Swanbourne House School, as they are leasing a private cable which is likely to have been laid by this Autumn. According to Chris (above), however, this will be expensive for the school, probably about £2000-£3000 per month, and tailored towards the needs of a school. Essentially it would require a big favour from the school, with a subsidy to the rest of the village, which is why this type of arrangement is relatively rare.
2. Another possibility would be to Investigate the the prospect of a Community Funded cabinet. We would need to liase with Open Reach directly, specifically Annette Thorpe, email address:- [annette.thorpe@bt.com](mailto:annette.thorpe@bt.com) with fund raising and donations. Once the money is raised (could be c£10,000+ needed, but may be less if we could get a subsidy) then it may be c9 months to installation.

NOTES: Little Horwood is planned to go on Fibre Broadband in two months time. Mursley should go on Fibre Broadband in March 2016.