

Swanbourne Parish Assembly

4 May 2016

NOTES

1. Welcome and introduction by the Chairman

The Chairman welcomed all present. The Assembly was always well attended and he was pleased to see so many at the meeting this year. He welcomed Janet Blake, our County and District Councillor, thanking her for her help throughout the year. He introduced himself and the other Parish Councillors, outlining their roles as follows:

Tom Finchett	- Chairman
Clive Rodgers	- Vice-Chairman plus planning matters and liaison with village organisations
David Blunt	- Highways (liaison with BCC) and verges
Helen Cleaveley	- Speedwatch and MVAS
Simon Hitchings	- Local Area Forum representative (funding and grants)
Linda Sirett	- Devolved Services
Jean Tuer	- Village Hall liaison

The Chairman welcomed the new Clerk, Linda Knights and formally thanked the outgoing Clerk, Clare Barker, for all the work she had done for the Parish Council.

The 24 other attendees were asked to introduce themselves— see attached list.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman declared his interest with regard to Estate matters.
Simon Hitchings declared his interest as Headmaster of Swanbourne House School.
Adrian Hoy declared his interest as planning agent/architect regarding proposed developments at Deverells and Narton End Farm

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman thanked the thorough, intelligent and hard -working Parish Councillors for giving up their time to serve the community. He also thanked the members of the public for coming and for being engaged with the community. Swanbourne is a sought after place to live, not just because of the unspoilt nature of the village but because of the community within it and it is important to keep driving this forward and enjoying being part of it.

The Parish Council had met four times in the year plus the Annual General Meeting and this Parish Assembly. All were well attended and whenever possible they had been supported by our County and District Councillor, Janet Blake. Local Area Forum meetings were attended in Winslow by Simon Hitchings.

Devolved Services - Swanbourne was greatly affected by cost constraints, particularly those imposed on Bucks County Council, although the Devolved Service arrangement set up through Stewkley Enterprise Agency was now working very well, overseen by

Linda Sirett and employing Josh Sirett, Tom Sherwood and Eleanor Sherwood. Also, Sylvia Dalton was carrying out 'Sidesman' duties to the footways and verges.

Transparency - The Chairman thanked the Vice Chairman, Clive Rodgers and his wife Linda, who with hard work and enthusiasm had ensured that Swanbourne Parish Council was now fully meeting its obligations in terms of transparency and publication of data, minutes, finance and accounts.

War Memorial - During the year, the War Memorial had been listed as a structure of historic interest and was now protected accordingly. The Chairman thanked Roger and Ann Parker and the Swanbourne Community Association for all the work they had done to improve and tidy the area around the Memorial. There were plans to erect a commemorative plaque at the site, providing the names and more details of those who fell during World War 1 and the History Group were kindly undertaking this project.

Broadband - Ultrafast broadband would probably be laid to Swanbourne this year, which was expected to be of great advantage to everyone in the village. (See item 11.f)

4. Financial Report

The Vice-Chairman explained that, during the transition between Parish Clerks, he had taken the opportunity to update the accounting system to meet the standards required by the Auditors for the Annual Return and by the Transparency Code. He then presented the accounting statement for the year 2015/16 and explained any variances greater than 15%. The newly compiled Asset Register prompted two queries:

- i *Should the value attributed to each asset be the insurance replacement value or the original cost value. If the latter, how could you value something like the War Memorial?*

Guidance from the Auditor (Mazars) for this year's Annual Return states: "Fixed assets should be valued at purchase cost and not revalued or depreciated. If the asset was not purchased it should be valued at £1. If there are no records of the purchase, insurance cost may be used as a proxy." Therefore all values shown were purchase cost, except the War Memorial, which was the insurance value.

- ii *Why were dog waste bins so expensive?*
They have more technical lids than ordinary waste bins.

5. Report by Bucks County and Aylesbury Vale District Councillor

Bucks County Council

BCC had a shortfall of £53m over the next four years. The recent Government settlement had been worse than anticipated, although around an additional £9m of transitional funding had now been secured.

There had been some progress in improving Children's Services but it could take a further eighteen months or so to get where they should be.

Road maintenance: The Local Area Technicians were undergoing a review and village walk-arounds had been suspended until mid-summer. Additionally, changes were being made to the crews for the Vale area. There would no longer be an Area Maintenance Gang and only a Minor Works Crew would carry out both streams of work.

Additionally, they would no longer be spending two weeks in each LAT area, as work would be programmed on a priority basis. Residents were encouraged to report defects to Transport for Bucks, either online or via their contact number 0845 230 2882. All reported potholes would be inspected and assessed but regrettably, due to a reduction in budget, only category 1 potholes (make safe, 2-hour response) and category 2 (next working day) would be repaired this year.

A Transport of the Future survey was being conducted online covering home-to-school transport, services for adult social care, concessionary fares and non-commercial bus services.

The retiring Chief Executive of BCC had raised the question of a unitary authority for Buckinghamshire. AVDC's preference was for two unitary authorities, one north, one south. Consensus would be required from all the local authorities in Bucks on a final decision.

Aylesbury Vale District Council

AVDC had made £14m savings over the past six years, by reducing costs through increased efficiency plus creating additional income from commercial activities and asset rental. A further £6m would be needed over the next three years when the government grant would disappear altogether.

A new organisational structure was being created with just two main departments – Community Fulfilment and Customer Fulfilment – providing the same services plus additional ones determined by customers. This ground-breaking commercial/entrepreneurial approach was essential for survival. Ten other authorities were interested in this approach, so AVDC would help them implement some of the ideas on a consultancy basis.

AVDC were the first local authority in the country to move completely to the 'Cloud', using Amazon Cloud Services to store data; no more PCs on desks and no servers in the offices, thus reducing maintenance costs.

'My Account' had been introduced to enable customers to interrogate AVDC systems whenever they wanted and had over 16,000 users so far. They could set up direct debits to pay for services, claim discounts on council tax, apply for licences and benefits, report any problems with waste collection – and the list would grow.

Vale Lottery had been set up to help raise funds for community groups and was raising £60,000 a year for good causes across the Vale. 114 groups had signed up to date and players could choose which cause they'd like to support. 58p from every £1 ticket was going to good causes.

Investment in commercial property was continuing and £100m had been spent in improving Aylesbury town centre, making Aylesbury a better place to visit, improving the local economy and generating rental income for AVDC. The next phase would be to build four new restaurants with residential units above.

Aylesbury Vale Broadband had been set up last year to provide superfast broadband in rural parts of the Vale. After a successful pilot in North Marston, Granborough and Swanbourne were now being serviced. They could now offer fibre (direct to the home) ultrafast broadband.

Two companies, Limecart and Incgen, had been formed to further AVDC's commercial activities. Limecart would seek to provide additional home/garden services and products to residents and Incgen would help businesses with support facilities. The response so far had been very encouraging.

AVDC had increased its share of Council Tax this year by 1.99%. £2.70 per week, based on an average band D property, constituted its share of the tax, the rest going to the County Council, Fire and Police Authorities and Parish Councils.

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan was being prepared to determine the location of housing, economic growth and associated infrastructure for the next 20 years. At present it was looking to accommodate around 31,000 new homes, 21,000 for the Vale's own growth requirements and 10,000 for the unmet needs of other authorities, who would be asked to carry out greenbelt and brownfield site reviews to ensure AVDC was not taking on housing that could be provided locally.

A village resident proposed a vote of thanks for JB saying she worked endlessly to improve the planning system.

6. Planning and Housing

The Vice-Chairman described three proposed schemes currently going through the system, showing a map of their locations - Site A: Nearton End Farm, Site B: Deverells Farm and Site C: East of the Betsey Wynne public house.

One of the planning agents acting for the vendor at Site A complained about the Parish Council not originally supporting this development while being more enthusiastic about the possible development next to the pub, and suggested duplicity. The Vice-Chairman refuted this and explained that the Council preferred the more obvious infill nature of the site at the Betsey (Site C) which would include provision for more affordable small houses and flats to buy as well as to rent whereas the plans at Nearton End were for four executive houses and unlikely to benefit local people. Furthermore, Site A was next to the Conservation Area and a similar proposal had been refused some years ago when the Inspector at the time did not regard it as an infill site, but an extension into the open countryside. The vendor's agent further suggested that the Nearton End site should have been favoured because it was brownfield, but the Chairman disagreed, as only one of the buildings had been used as a workshop, and the others were barns. The Chairman said the PC had requested more detailed plans from the original submission, which had not been forthcoming. However, he stressed that the Council accepted that some planning frameworks have recently changed, as the proposal had now been approved by an Inspector on appeal and the site was currently for sale. The PC expressed the desire to talk constructively with the future owners concerning the detailed nature of the development.

The PC regarded the proposed site at Deverells (B) as acceptable, though there were still some concerns over the parking arrangements.

7. Transparency Code

The Vice-Chairman explained the need to adhere to the Code and what was involved. The Parish Council was now publishing all relevant information on the Swanbourne Community Association website. It would be in place by the end of June and the hard copy accounts would be available for one month.

8. Village Maintenance

The Chairman reported that:

- The dragon's teeth on Mursley Road had still not been repainted – he had spoken to Matthew Whincup at BCC, who said the job was on their list to do
- MW had also said they would deal with the problem of water running down Station Road. Both jobs would be sorted by the end of the year
- The gate at Cemetery Hill was down but would be replaced. The new plastic ones looked smart and were easier to keep clean
- The dog waste situation at Smithfield End was better now that the new bin had been installed. Another bin would be ordered and sited at the exit from Millennium Wood opposite Nearton End Farm and an ordinary waste bin would be put at the junction of Smithfield End and Winslow Road
- A new noticeboard had been put up
- The bench by the Winslow Road junction near the church had been repaired.
- BCC had assessed the damaged pavement outside the Village Hall and reported that it was not bad enough to qualify for repair.

Other comments were:

- The potholes down the middle of Winslow Road were getting worse. JB said everyone should report their concerns. The more reports received, the more work got done.
- The Station Road verges and quite a few others were being eroded. It was also pointed out that the big stones placed on the verge on one side of Smithfield End had moved the parking problem to the other side of the road. The Chairman said the long-term solution for the verges was granite sets and it was planned to ask the LAF for funding towards this.
- Avey Lane was getting very muddy due to large vehicles churning it up. This should improve after the Estate harvest was completed.

9. MVAS and Speed Watch

Helen Cleaveley said most villages were concerned about traffic volume and traffic speed, which were two separate things. Whilst we could monitor traffic volume there was little we could do about it at village level, whereas we could try to have some control over traffic speed. She listed all the current initiatives and gave a more detailed update on two, as follows:

Speed Watch

HC formally thanked the five current volunteers for their help: Ken Harris, Anne Hampton, Anne Parker, Trudy Timms and Linda Sirett. They operated all year, using a device which required manual recording of speeds. The aim was for three volunteers per fortnightly session across four official sites but currently they could only work in pairs, so more volunteers would be very welcome. In 2015 they carried out 12 Speed Watches between March and December and reported 198 speeders to the Police. This was below the stated aim but weather was a factor and more volunteers would reduce the impact of work commitments and illness. The busiest sites in terms of speed were still the two on Mursley Road. The top recorded speed so far this year was 65mph (and that driver was aware of their presence!)

MVAS (Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign)

This device could be positioned in four different places around the village and had been in operation since August 2015, being moved every three weeks. It flashed and acted as a deterrent as well as recording volume and speed of traffic. Problems with the clock had meant that some of last autumn's data was unreliable, the memory filled up more quickly than expected and there was an issue with the firmware but these issues now appeared to have been resolved. The top speed recorded was 70mph. Traffic was focussed around morning and evening peaks when speeds were generally reasonable. Higher speeds occurred off peak, with the highest of all occurring rarely but mostly in the early hours.

HC had requested an officer with a speed gun and we were also on a list for a device called Sentinel (which would make a video recording of speed offences, including the vehicle licence plates) but no date had been given yet.

HC asked if people would be happy to buy and display 30mph stickers on their wheelie bins at a bulk-buy cost of 12 for £16. Several people volunteered to do this.

Questions/Comments:

- *Could the speed limits be reduced further out, eg by the nursery?*
At the last review we had wanted all three changed but only got one.
- *Could we have 20mph signs?*
There was a funding issue and the Police have said they couldn't enforce them so they would need to be self-enforcing.
- *People were parking too close to the T-junction on Winslow Road, blocking the view of oncoming traffic?.*
The school would try to control the parking. The parents had a minibus for lift-sharing
- *The Headmaster was requested to ask the parents not to be so rude!*

10. Poor's Land Report

Ken Harris was now Chairman of this charity's trustees, the other trustees being Jane Smith, Diane Edmondson and Trudy Timms, with Simon Faulks as vicar, *ex officio*. KH reported that annual income from renting the land was now £400 and in 2015 £390 was distributed amongst 13 households before Christmas (£30 each). There was currently £15 in the charity account.

As chairman, KH hoped to increase the charity's income, perhaps looking into raising the rate of rent on the land and/or increasing voluntary donations. Secondly he would look into the focus of the grants, possibly changing to fewer, larger grants in response to specific needs. Our Councillor suggested applying to receive from the Vale Lottery.

11. Other Village Matters

a. Village Hall Report

Mark Oldfield said the accounts were being prepared for the following week, the opening balance being £1720.97 and closing £374.78. There had been an increase in usage, with several regular users. Hand dryers had been installed and the lights had been repaired.

He formally thanked David and Jean Tuer, who had worked tirelessly to keep the hall going and had now retired. JT was very pleased to have done it and was proud of the results of their labours. The new committee members were Mark Oldfield (Chairman), Leanne Gibb (Vice Chairman), Emma Saddington (Treasurer), Simone Millard and Trudy Timms.

b. Playing Field

David Thrower had sent his apologies, so the Chairman reported that the new committee was working well, financed mainly by the Parish Council for maintenance of the grounds. A contractor was doing the mowing and new fences had been put up, so the school was able to use the field now that dogs were kept out. There would be a meeting on 14 June to progress matters. A new dog waste bin was needed – the existing one wasn't being emptied and wasn't an official bin.

Various activities were now taking place or being planned, eg Play Out Tuesday during the school holidays and the possible resurrection of Jubilee Sports Day, to encourage children and parents to congregate and use the facilities and to bring together children who attend different schools.

Frankie Fisher was commended for her work.

c. Swanbourne Community Association Report

In Frankie Fisher's absence, Ken Harris gave an overview of the various activities carried out or planned by the association, including:

- 2 quizzes, which raised £150
- Lottery restarted, with Roger Parker as promoter/organiser
- Bi-monthly Newsletter and updated welcome booklet funded by Parish Council - Thanks went to the joint editors Clive and Linda Rodgers
- Christmas carols on the tractor and trailer - £305 collected and donated to Canine Partners towards training an assistance dog
- Tea in the Afternoon run by Anne Parker and Frankie Fisher and funded by the SCA. Income in 2015 from voluntary contributions was £462, costs were £90. Thanks were extended to AP, FF and all food makers and helpers
- Christmas cards, calendars, placemats, coasters and jigsaws – income in 2015 was all profit due to costs being incurred in 2014. Thanks expressed to Roger Parker
- Swanbourne Memorial Garden regenerated and new bench installed and dedicated in a short ceremony in memory of Anne Fremantle, costs met by fundraising/SCA. Plans for new entrance and sign in 2016 plus a volunteer rota for maintenance and gardening
- Swanbourne Memorial Plaque to be commissioned and mounted on a lectern stand in the Memorial Garden – design agreed and cost of £950 to be met by Parish Council
- History Group - see item d. below
- Mums and Toddlers – trying to restart but there were not enough toddlers
- SCA website – see e. below
- Speed Watch – see 9. above.

Volunteers were needed to water plants.

The closing balance was £2428 and the Association was happy to help other schemes.

d. History Group

The Swanbourne History Website was still very successful, with emails from far and wide offering or seeking information. Three History Evenings had been enjoyed over the last year – the first, in Spring 2015, by Polly Cowell's nephew, Mr E. J. Hounslow, was the story of his grandfather (Bill Cowell of Dodley Hill Farm) and of the Royal Bucks Hussars. The second, in Autumn 2016, was a talk about Florence Fremantle and the famous World War 2 fighter pilot Anthony Bartley, who had lived in Swanbourne. The recent (April 2016) third evening was by Swanbourne resident and author Joel Greenberg about Bletchley Park, which was attended by about 30 people and was followed by a display of some enhanced old photographs of Swanbourne. Sadly, the Bletchley Park records had been so secret that nothing was known about any Swanbourne residents who might have worked there. There had also been a very popular and successful Reminiscence Afternoon in early 2016.

e. SCA Website

Roger Parker had set up the new website in November 2015 to replace the Swanbourne Village Website. It was operating well and held a lot of interesting and useful things including items for sale, the lottery, local events, photos, details of local organisations/charities and there was a page devoted to Parish Council information. Advertising space was now available to generate income. There was no capacity left for new pages but existing pages had space free.

f. Broadband Update

The Chairman encouraged everyone interested in receiving the ultrafast fibre broadband to get their names down on-line and pay the £20 deposit, which was refundable if broadband wasn't put in. Once the list contained 40% of Swanbourne households, the process of laying the fibre optic could begin. The level was currently at 20%. *[Post meeting note: the required 40% was passed, so work could begin.]*

The route and process of laying the fibre optic to all interested households was explained in detail on a projected map. As much as possible would be carried out on Estate land and consent would be sought where private land was involved. Some stretches may have to go via the roads. Hotspots would be put in at the Betsey Wynne and Village Hall. Detailed routes would be discussed with individuals where needed.

Stuart Greenwood was the Broadband 'tsar'.

Janet Blake was thanked for her support and enthusiasm in getting this going.

12. Any Other Business

Janet Blake said the Community Chest Grant system was in its last year so if anyone wanted to request a grant (maximum £25k), they should apply within the year. AVDC Officers had delegated authority to agree grants up to £1k, the rest being decided by the committee, which JB was chairing in its last year.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.05pm.

SWANBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 4 May 2016

LIST OF NON-COUNCILLOR ATTENDEES

Clive Adams	Victoria Hoy
Faizal Aziz	Adrian Hoy
Janet Blake	Janet King
Dee Blunt	Mike King
Philip Dalton	Sheila Nuttal
Wilma Gilbert	Mark Oldfield
Hugo Gilbert	Alex Richards
Maivin Gray	Liz Richards
Anne Hampton	Linda Rodgers
Ken Harris	Emma Saddington
Gavin Hill	Nicholas Sirett
Doody Hough	Penny Tuck