

Swanbourne Parish Council

Meeting held 15th April 2015

Minutes of the Swanbourne Parish Council meeting held in Swanbourne Village Hall on Wednesday 15th April 2015 at 8pm.

Present:

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

Apologies were received from Caroline Baldwin (CB)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

TF declared a business and financial interest on behalf of the Swanbourne Estate, in any matters where the Estate had a direct involvement. TF expressed his intention to present a full Chairman's Report at the Parish Assembly, rather than at this meeting.

ACTION: TF to prepare the full Chairman's Report ready to present to the Parish Assembly on 20th May, 2015.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14th JANUARY 2015

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 3rd SEPTEMBER

2.1.1 (2.1.1)* Dragons Teeth and Gates

Cemetery Hill Gate has now been repaired, but there are two gates that remain broken on the entrance to the village and the Dragons Teeth have not been painted. AVDC will be resurfacing the road through Swanbourne and to Mursley and have confirmed their intention to paint the Dragons Teeth at the same time.

ACTION: TF & DB will be meeting the Local Area Technician, Matt Whincup of Bucks County Council in May.

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. The work is planned but with no date currently scheduled by BCC.

2.1.3 (2.1.4)* Access to a defibrillator

JT said there was no problem with the defibrillator being outside the Village School. Liz Mcleish (6 Smithfield End) has been appointed as First Responder, (the £1,500 cost may hopefully be funded through LAF) for the cost of training and the equipment. **Post meeting note** - JT has informed the PC that as we now have a first responder in the village, this removes the need to have a static unit sited in Swanbourne after all.

ACTION: JT will clarify the situation and briefly discuss (including possible funding contribution) at the next meeting.

2.1.5 (2.2.2)* Parked cars outside the Pre-prep and along the Winslow Road

During the Easter holidays parking has not been a problem outside the Pre-Prep, but this will continue to be monitored. DB reported that the growth in after school clubs at Swanbourne C of E School has spread the parental pick up times more widely, helping to reduce traffic congestion along the Winslow Road.

ACTION: *Members agreed to continue to help monitor parking issues, and it is hoped that there will be closer collaboration with the Pre-Prep in future. The PC will discuss with Simon Hitchins (who has just been elected to the PC) at the next meeting.*

2.1.7 (4.1)* Dodley Hill Farm

The public footpath minor route amendments close to Dodley Hill Farm (previously approved) are intended to be implemented within the next few weeks.

ACTION: *TF to oversee the implementation process.*

2.1.9 (7.1)* Maintenance

The drains at the bottom of Cemetery Hill have been cleared. The camber at the bottom of Nearton End needs altering to change the flow of water to stop it flowing out onto the bottom of Cemetery Hill.

ACTION: *The Local Area Technician, Matt Whincup at Bucks County Council is aware of this, but will be reminded by TF at their next meeting.*

2.1.10 (7.2) * Village Hall

JT confirmed that Mark Oldfield is organising a race night to raise funds but Mark continued to maintain a low profile in the day to day running of the Hall. The servicing of the heating, fire extinguishers, paying bills, insurance, PRS and liaising with Simone and Trudy over hall hire and cleaning has largely fallen to David Tuer by default. However, David is Treasurer and he is intending to completely step down in the near future. Mark's name is on the licence, so any problems are his responsibility. It was noted that Mark Robinson might be interested, and he could be encouraged to take on the role of Chairman if MO agreed to stand down.

ACTION: *TF to ask MO if he wishes to continue in this role and to help raise his awareness of the duties and responsibilities of the Licence holder.*

2.1.11 Maintenance

- a. Footpaths - TT said tree in wood behind The Betsey Wynne has now been clearer but some of the gateways are still muddy and would benefit from some road planings.
- b. Pot holes - Nearton End pot holes need filling.
- c. (i) Verges at Nearton/Tattems - These verges are in a very poor condition, particularly outside Eleanor Sherwood's house (25 Nearton End). At the Council bungalows in Tattams Lane, 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.

ACTION: *PC to consider the merits of writing to BCC in support for the provision of additional parking. The PC will discuss again at the next meeting.*

(ii) Verges at Smithfield/Duck End – TF confirmed the plan of putting rocks and top soil on the Duck End corner verge (to build it up) will be auctioned shortly. CR noted that a car had been left on jacks on the verge outside No. 4 Smithfield End for several months. Other PC members thought this to be linked to Faisal Aziz's claim against the Council to pay for damage to the car when it hit a pothole. Some PC members expressed concerns over safety issues when cars are left on verges supported by jacks for long periods (e.g. danger to small children).

ACTION: *TF to discuss the car left outside 4 Smithfield End with Mr Faisal Aziz.*

2.1.12 Traffic Calming – Mobile MVAS

MVAS equipment has now all arrived and just needs to be set up and used. The post is kept in a barn at Home Farm. Helen Cleaveley (who has just been elected to the PC) has already expressed an interest, and as she has been involved in the Speedwatch programme (together with Ken Harris), a discussion with Helen at the next meeting seemed most appropriate.

ACTION: *PC members to discuss the use of MVAS with Helen at the next Parish Council Meeting.*

2.1.13 Fibre Optic Broadband for Swanbourne – the way forward

TF and CR have emailed the various contacts but no reply as yet, and have tried to obtain more information about the costs of the Parish paying for the installation of broadband it was agreed that we should wait until the next round of AVDC funding for the roll out of rural broadband is announced in June. Hoggston Village network broadband is faster than the current broadband in Swanbourne and maybe worth investigating.

ACTION: *CR to monitor AVDC funding announcements and will follow up unanswered emails with telephone calls.*

2.1.14 Devolved Services

PT said that the youth contractors using the mowers need anti vibration gloves as they are using the mowers for longer than Health and Safety allows. This is particularly an issue for those using strimmers.

ACTION: *PT/TF to obtain prices for the appropriate equipment.*

2.1.15 Playing Field

Grass has now been cut by Roy Sherwood, but was fairly late with lots of grass laying. TT is still strimming the edges and playing area. Brian Knaves, David Thrower and Mark Day, Deputy Head of Swanbourne C of E School have agreed to go on the Playing Fields Committee. DB and TF have spoken to the Deputy Head of the C of E School who is keen for the school to make more use of the field and will contribute to the maintenance costs, and there may also be grants available through the school. NO has now received a new cheque book.

ACTION: *TF to email Nick Odell the schools contact details and the last playing field meeting notes so that the improvement and management of the Playing Field can be progressed and the amount of grants and contribution can be agreed.*

5. FINANCE

CLB went through the financial situation at 15th January 2015 and this together with cheques issued were approved and signed by TF.

Devolved Services – the youth contractors' mowing invoice Stewkley Enterprise Agency (SEA) who then pay them and charges to Swanbourne PC. The SEA will also monitor their work and arrange insurances etc. Stewart Baldwin is our Village Co-ordinator.

The budget for the devolved services for 2015 is summarised as follows:

Set up costs (mowers, strimmers PPE etc)	£2,308.92	COST
Pump prime funding for the above	£1,192.05	INCOME
Annual mowing and strimming costs incl. insurance	£2,968.00	COST
Grant from BCC	£508.19	INCOME

Any shortfall will be met out of PC funds derived from the Precept.

It was noted that the verges already looked far better than in previous years, and that the boys should be commended for that.

CR thought the lack of flowers and flowering shrubs made the village look less welcoming compared with neighbouring villages (e.g. Mursley). Some PC members thought that any addition of flowering plants

needed to be in keeping with the rural character rather than of the 'suburban' type. It was felt that once the village gates are repaired and kept clean, this should help.

ACTION: TF to establish who is responsible for the cleaning of the gates.

CLB presented the budget to the PC although this included some unconfirmed amounts for possible capital expenditure. The draft budget has been reworked to take account of these possible costs, as detailed below. (New budget attached.)

Granite Sets Barrack Row & Nearton End – LAF funding	£4,200	INCOME & EXPENDITURE
Defibrillator – LAF funding	£1,500	INCOME & EXPENDITURE
PCC donation for cemetery mowing etc.	£800	EXPENDITURE
Grants / maintenance for the Village Hall if required.	£500	EXPENDITURE
Maintenance of the playing field	£1,000	EXPENDITURE
Improvements at the playing field :		
Fencing	£1,500	EXPENDITURE
Upgrading play area	£5,000	EXPENDITURE
New zip wire	£5,000	EXPENDITURE
Other improvements	£1,000	EXPENDITURE
Benches	£1,000	EXPENDITURE
War memorial Plaque	£780	EXPENDITURE

6. PLANNING

CR produced a list of recent planning applications and their current status – copy attached.

7. WAR MEMORIAL

Sheila Nuttall had previously researched a plaque to go on the War Memorial. CR now taken this over and has had quotes for a bronze plaque of £700 or a stainless steel plaque for £300. The names would be cast in zinc/bronze metal itself, but only etched with the stainless steel option. The PC thought the cast metal plaque would be more in keeping with the village. PT said this could be fixed onto the memorial with security screws. Further names could not be added to the plaque, but there would be space for additional plaques if required in the future. **Post meeting note:** The updated cost is now greater than that previously quoted at £780 + VAT + £25 postal carriage.

CR also made a case for the whole area being tidied up with the trees and hedge behind the memorial being cut back and a wooden bench being sited there and possibly a bark path. DB worried that cutting the trees back might result in cars speeding up around the corner as their view would be better. CR commented that the intention would be to plant flowering shrubs to provide the atmosphere of a proper memorial garden rather than being open. TT was happy to help improve the War Memorial gardens, and requesting that a rose bush planted there by her father be retained. JT doubted how much it would be used, but it was agreed that the area needed to be tidied up and then see if there was call for a bench later.

ACTION: CR to mention to the SCA and the Parish Assembly.

8. VILLAGE MATTERS

- a. Maintenance – DB & TF are meeting the Local Area Technician in May to 'walk about' and discuss various highways issues.

Verges and granite sets – an estimate of circa £60 per metre had been obtained. The particularly bad sections of verges in the village are outside Barrack Row, the corner between 2 and 4 Smithfield End, opposite Brises Farm, west of 29 Nearton End, outside 10 and 12 Nearton End, in the vicinity of 23 and 25 Nearton End and outside Chapel House. It was deemed appropriate to tackle the worst sections in Smithfield End and Nearton End and £3,500 would be included in the budget. **Post meeting note:** £3,500 + VAT = £4,200 which could be funded by a LAF grant.

TF explained that under the Devolved Services Agreement, the PC was now responsible for weed control, verge mowing, minor hedge maintenance and serving hedge notices on landowners, fly poster removal, drain clearing, sign cleaning, footpath trimming and a number of other maintenance items previously the responsibility of BCC. The SEA (Stewkley Enterprise Agency) through the youth contractors will be responsible for verge mowing and sign cleaning, with the remaining items falling to them or another contractor within the village, such as TT. It was felt appropriate that any contractual agreement with TT should be formalised to outline exactly what works would be contracted.

ACTION: *TF and CLB to prepare an agreement.*

There is much litter in the village at the moment, DB suggested organising a litter pick after the Parish Assembly before the hedges grow up.

ACTION: *PC to discuss at next meeting (a week before the Parish Assembly).*

Parking Nearton End – too often cars can't get through. JT suggested that the verge outside her house could be cut back to allow some parking there. Parking at the bottom of Tattams Lane is terrible, BCC need to resolve this issue.

ACTION: *TF and BD to discuss with the Local Area technician when they meet up.*

- b. Affordable Housing – TF announced that he was reluctant to pursue the issue of Affordable Housing, because too many false promises and hopes had prevailed over recent years with no progress. As Estate Manager for the Swanbourne Estate, he felt that it was inappropriate for him to make the land available for Affordable Housing, on behalf of the Estate, and then to oversee the implementation. If the proposed scheme were to be carried out in house by the PC, this would be a major project for which TF simply did not have sufficient time to implement and manage. The scheme came with inherent risks uncertainties and an impossible workload for the PC. To proceed further would incur significant consultancy costs for the PC, with no guarantee that the scheme would progress, and with no certainty that the PC could retain control. Reverting to the proposal that an existing Housing Association (for example, Hastoe) develop the site was still a possibility, but there remains concerns over Swanbourne's lack of control over nomination rights, so there would be no protection of ensuring a local connection for occupants. In summary, there are two options – either revert to the involvement of an established Housing Association, or completely 'shelve' the scheme. The PC would benefit from discussions with Mursley Parish Council to see how the Parish has benefitted from the affordable housing and the extent of their involvement in the nomination of occupiers.

CR reminded TF of the demand for new privately owned smaller houses for sale (as raised by members of the public at the Parish Assembly last year), and asked if the Swanbourne Estate might consider a mixed development next to the pub to include a range of properties for sale and rent, some of which could be 50% shared ownership, so more affordable nature and preference could be given to people with a local connection. Such a scheme could be managed by the Swanbourne Estate (as they would have retained a 50% interest). TF noted that this was a prime building site within the village, but agreed that there would be more flexibility in the use of this site compared with the exception site at the edge of the village (opposite the playing field).

ACTION: *TF agreed to discuss with the Estate Trustees and it was thought that the matter could be discussed at the Parish Assembly in order to measure the level of interest.*

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The new Parish Councillors will be contacted to say they have been elected from 7th May. The list of new councillors is appended to the minutes and the note will be placed on the Parish notice board.

ACTION: *CLB*

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

PC Meeting to be held at 6pm in Swanbourne Village Hall on 13th May 2015.

Parish Assembly to be held at 7 for 7.30pm in Swanbourne Village Hall on 20th May 2015.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting which closed at 10pm.