

**Minutes of the Swaffham Prior Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 12th October 2023
at 7.30pm in Swaffham Prior Village Hall.**

Present: Cllr Alan Durrant (AD), Cllr David Greenfield (DG) (Chair), Cllr Sandra Gynn (SG), Cllr Peter Hart (PH), Cllr Kent-Phillips (SKP), Cllr Ruth Lambert (RL), Cllr Paul Latchford (PL) and Cllr Kate Muscroft (KM).

In attendance: Jude Griffiths (Clerk)

There were 3 members of the public in attendance.

110/23-24 To receive apologies for absence and to approve reasons for absence where appropriate.

Cllr John Covill sent his apologies.

111/23-24 Members' declaration of interest for items on the agenda and requests for dispensations

None.

112/23-24 Public participation for items on the agenda

None.

113/23-24 Reports

- a) Cambridgeshire County Council – report circulated by email, no representative attended.
- b) East Cambridgeshire District Council – report circulated by email, Cllr Charlotte Cane (CC) attended.

CC noted that the Growth and Infrastructure Fund was now open and that black refuse sacks should be provided to everyone by 31st October 2023. No further questions were forthcoming.

114/23-24 Approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 14th September 2023.

DG proposed that under min. ref. 109/23-24, “Phase 1 is due to end at the end of September 2023, when 100 65 external connections will be complete; full connection for these will be completed by the end of November 2023” was inaccurate and be replaced with “Phase 1 of the external connections is due to end at the end of September 2023, when 100 will be complete. By the end of November 2023 there will be 65 with full connection to the system”.

SKP proposed that with this alteration, the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting; seconded PL, passed with 1 abstention.

115/23-24 Matters arising from previous minutes (for information only)

111/23-24 PH noted that the ‘tripwire’ was still in place – RL to check and report to Highways.

108/23-24 SKP reported that Meads had cleared the new allotment plots well and that SKP and PL had marked them out.

107/23-24 AD obtained a quote for steel path edges for the cemetery – to be discussed at the November meeting.

91/23-24 DG noted that revised plans for the proposed greenway had not been forthcoming yet.

114/23-24 DG noted that a recent ‘Notes from the PC meeting’ in the Crier contained a factual error, expressed unhappiness with the notes being written by the Clerk from unapproved minutes and the PC agreed.

Action: Clerk not to produce the ‘Notes’ for the Crier this month. To be discussed at the November meeting.

116/23-24 Correspondence for consideration/circulation.

- a) Email from Stuart Bateman offering a Q&A session about the Red Lion. Noted.
- b) Email from Adrian Stokes regarding Polling District review. Noted.
- c) Email from the Heating Scheme inviting the PC to their open evening on 18th October. Noted.

- d) Email from GCP regarding the Making Connections consultation. Noted.
- e) Email from Pamela Hawkins with details of online meeting regarding Lode Greenway proposals on 19th October. Noted.

117/23-24 Consideration of planning applications received:

- a) 23/00942/FUL Amended Two levels of raised decking to the rear – retrospective. 10 Green Head Road, Swaffham Prior, Cambridge, CB25 0JT
DG proposed the PC respond with “if the amendment was made after discussions between the Planning Department, the applicant and the neighbours and meet Planning controls, the PC has no further comment”, seconded AD, passed unanimously.

Approved:

- b) 23/00967/TRE T1 Horse Chestnut at end of driveway - Crown lift above driveway to 5-6m from ground level T2 Sycamore - Cut back to clear adjacent building by approximately 2m T3 Horse Chestnut - Cut back to clear adjacent building by approximately 2m T4 Row of 4 Horse Chestnut Pollards - Shorten over-extended branch close togates to re-shape into remainder of canopy. The Old Vicarage 72 High Street Swaffham Prior Cambridge CB25 0LD. Noted.
- c) 23/00759/FUL and 23/00760/LBC Contamination remedial works. 17 - 19 High Street Swaffham Prior Cambridge CB25 0LD. Noted.

118/23-24 Accounts for payment including:

a) Clerk’s salary and taxes	£480.00
b) Meads – for the creation of 3 new allotment plots	£1152.00
c) Swaffham Prior Parochial Charities – Town Close rent	£30.00
d) CGM grass-cutting etc for September	£397.44
e) The community heartbeat trust – defibrillator pads	£77.40
f) Clear Insurance Management - insurance	£527.49
g) CAPALC – playground inspection course	£20.00
Total	£2684.33

Wave water bill (DD) £62.86

Postage (cash card) £1.15

nPower (DD) £213.75

Income:

Precept 2nd payment £7250.00

Grave maintenance grant £25.00

The Clerk noted the completion of the new play equipment in the playground and so the additional bill of £18,146.28 to Wicksteed Leisure Ltd was to pay, as agreed under min. ref.54/22-23.

SKP proposed that £20,000.00 be transferred from the savings to the current account; seconded AD, passed.

SKP proposed that the accounts be settled in full; seconded AD, passed.

119/23-24 To review and adopt Employment Policies.

After discussion and some small changes, *SKP proposed that the Employment Policies be adopted by the PC; seconded DG, passed.*

120/23-24 To examine and adopt Mike Barker’s draft Parish Nature Recovery Plan.

Mike Barker was invited to speak to the PC. The proposed plan is to apply for a ‘Pride of Place’ grant from ECDC to fund:

- A Spring planting spree in early 2024 in Swaffham Prior's green spaces to enhance them for pollinators
- Plug planting of native wildflowers on banks and bases of hedges/walls
- A planting project in the cemetery in the area containing graves but very few grave markers.

The planting would be carried out by a team from Prospect's Trust, the application would be made by Mike and administrated through the CLT. The areas to be planted would be identified in a survey by Mike, a member of the Prospect's Trust and a member of the PC, then confirmed in advance by the PC in early 2024. Surplus bulbs and plants will be given away to parishioners.

SKP proposed that the PC approve the principle of making the grant and undertaking the planting; seconded AD, passed unanimously.

Action: Clerk to write a letter of support as required.

121/23-24 To review and accept additional Standing Orders.

Action: Clerk to move 2 of the proposed additions to the Financial Risk Assessment; gratuity to the Clerk to be dropped as duplication. FRA to be approved at the November meeting.

122/23-24 To discuss and respond to emails regarding CCC's changes to their weed-spraying policy and a petition opposing them.

Cambridgeshire County Council have stopped spraying weedkiller to reduce environmental and financial impacts. DG explained that this had been done without consultation, leaving the onus on individuals to report hazardous vegetation.

SKP noted that it was not made clear if ditches would still be cleared and that weed removal by strimming would avoid the use of chemical herbicides.

PL stated that lack of weed removal would lead to long-term maintenance problems, e.g. drainage disruption.

DG proposed that he write a letter on behalf of the PC, outlining the opposition to the policy change and potential problem, to be circulated to the PC for suggestions and agreement before being sent; seconded PH, passed unanimously.

123/23-24 To agree joint action with Wicken PC regarding the road out of Wicken towards Swaffham Prior.

The Chair invited Cllr Charlotte Cane to speak. CC explained that a consortium were seeking central government funding for repairs to the fen roads as the works will be hugely expensive.

DG proposed that Swaffham Prior PC support Wicken PC regarding the need for repairs to the Swaffham Prior road; seconded SKP, passed unanimously.

124/23-24 Report on Heating Scheme

DG reported.

Regarding the issues raised last month by members of the public:

- a) Lighting issues – these had been viewed and a contractor had ordered downlights and daylight sensors to be installed as soon as possible.
- b) An expert has been commissioned to identify problem noises, where they are coming from and what needs to be done. DG to update the PC once the work is done.
- c) Generator – this will be removed as soon as practicable.

- d) Soft landscaping – this was in the planning application so will take place. There have been difficulties where equipment has been moved on site which delayed permanent planting in some places. Interim steps are being considered, where sections with no impediment are planted.
- e) Turning circle – this will be reinstated as soon as possible.

PH asked if the road closure on the Burwell Road was connected with the cable being run from the solar farm to the Heating scheme? DG confirmed this.

125/23-24 Clerk's Report.

- a) Allotments – one person is viewing the new allotments on Saturday 14th, one person on the waiting list has asked to be removed and the other will not be ready to take on an allotment for another 12 months. The PC confirmed that the rent for the new plots will be £25 a year. PL had suggested that agricultural ground cover be used on the new plots to suppress weed growth.
Action: PL to ask John Covill about ground cover.
Action Clerk to advertise the available allotment plots in the Crier and on the website.
- b) Playground – the new equipment was installed on 27th-29th September and is being well used. The Clerk had attended Playground Inspection training in order to be able to carry out routine checks efficiently and as a result is now classed as a competent person to do so. The course highlighted the need for an annual check and three-times-a-year operational inspections.
Action: Clerk to get quotes for operational inspections.
- c) Internal Audit – Clerk asked for confirmation that the current Internal Auditor evaluated the effectiveness of the PC's risk management, control and governance processes considering the internal auditing guidance for smaller authorities, as laid out in the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance's Practitioners Guide to Smaller Councils. SKP confirmed that he did.
- d) Cemetery – one of the laid down grave markers is due to be reinstated after ownership of the appropriate grants had been claimed by a living descendant.

126/23-24 Parish Councillors' Reports

- a) SKP reported that the Burwell Cricket Club Bonfire night would be taking place on Saturday 4th November, with a half hour firework display starting at 7.15pm – for information.
Action: Clerk to send details to the Crier.
- b) AD reported that the trees on the Village Hall driveway need pollarding.
Action: Clerk to get quote from Eastern Tree Surgery.
- c) DG reported that County Fibre had enough interest/commitment to install fibre in the village (including along Heath Road and into the Fen), although they don't currently have any fibre networks nearby. Gigaclear have fibre networks in Swaffham Bulbeck already and are looking to move into Swaffham Prior in January/February 2024.
Some ducting is known to be blocked and will need replacing before being used, otherwise the plan is to use current infrastructure, with some overhead wiring where necessary.

The meeting closed and business concluded at 8.50pm