

**SWAFFHAM PRIOR ANNUAL VILLAGE ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 24th MAY 2011**

Present: Mr Andrew Camps in the Chair with 5 Parish Councillors and 20 members of the Public attending.

Apologies: Parish Councillor Peter Hart
Parish Council Chairman – John Covill
CCC – Cllr David Brown
ECDC – Cllr Allen Alderson

In Attendance: Karen King (Clerk).

Andrew Camps as Vice-Chairman took the meeting in the absence of John Covill. Andrew welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Next item moved up agenda.

Scouts & Cub Groups - Presentation by Tim Doe and Steve White:

Tim and Steve presented a slideshow of some of the Cubs and Scouts' events and activities over the past year. This included an update on the Scout field where the shelter was now complete and others items such as toilets and tree planting were planned.

In addition to the slideshow Tim told the meeting that they were now working with a Beavers' Group that started in September 2010 and this was going well but as with all the groups, extra volunteers are always needed.

"Recognising Swaffham Prior's needs – the Core Strategy". Presentation by Katie Child, Forward Planning Officer for ECDC.

Katie Child talked about the production of a 'Vision' for Swaffham Prior confirming that the District Council wanted to work with the Parish Council and local community over the next year to identify how Swaffham Prior should improve/change in the future – and to produce a Village Vision document which will guide future development and decisions on planning applications. The Vision would cover matters such as housing growth, employment development, key development sites (if relevant) and the protection/improvement of key infrastructure and services. The Vision would be included in the District Council's statutory development plan, known as the 'Core Strategy'.

The District Council hoped to be able to publish a short questionnaire in June/July, which would seek the views of local residents. A draft version of the questionnaire was tabled at the Parish Council meeting on 12th May. A number of comments and suggestions were made, and therefore some significant revisions would need to be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting in June. Unfortunately this meant, as the content and timing of the consultation have yet to be finalised there would be little to discuss at the Annual Village Assembly. Katie said that the Forward Planned Team hoped that as many local residents as possible would get involved in the consultation process, and let them have their views on the future of Swaffham Prior. Residents' view would help to develop a draft Vision for Swaffham Prior. It was hope that the consultation would take place in late June/early July. There would be a further opportunity to make comments early next year, when the Forward Planning Team hoped to be able to publish the draft Vision for consultation.

Katie invited questions from the public.

- Would the housing survey carried out by Cambridgeshire ACRE go towards the 'Village Vision'? *Katie replied that this survey would play a very important part.*
- Would the results of the 'Village Vision' questionnaire to be published prior to the final draft? *Katie replied that there would be a second stage consultation early next year.*
- Looking 20 years ahead would there be the opportunity to revise the 'Village Vision'? *Katie replied yes, but it was difficult to say when and how as this would partly be due to Government changes.*

Katie Child explained that the current Core Strategy document was under review.

There followed discussion on the Cambridgeshire ACRE survey and the proposed changes to the Government planning laws – *Katie explained that these proposed changes were out for consultation.*

There was further discussion about how the questionnaire would be circulated and Katie confirmed that ECDC did not have the resources to circulate and this would be the responsibility of the Parish.

Andrew Camps thanked Katie Child for her presentation. Katie then left the meeting.

Approval of Minutes from Meeting – 25th May 2010: These were approved as a correct record. *Proposed: Geoffrey Woollard. Seconded: David Greenfield.*

Parish Council Report: *(Andrew Camps read out a written report from Chairman John Covill) – summary:*

A number of these issues took a considerable time to resolve due to what we felt was unnecessary attempts at avoiding responsibility by various officials.

- NT lifted their new bridge over Reach Lode into place and it was subsequently opened. The PC were not represented at the opening as we felt it inappropriate having objected to the building of the bridge in the first place.
- The Village Hall car park had its surface smoothed and two disabled bays have been provided, although it has been noticed that one of these is always used by a non-disabled driver on Thursday evenings!
- The drive to the village hall car park causes continual problems because of the surface becoming pot holed. There is no easy cure for this because tarmacing would prove very expensive and would be likely to fail in a relatively short time because of the tree roots which extend under the drive. We will therefore probably continue with the present surface and try to keep it filled as regularly as possible.
- Extra dog bins have been provided and fixed in appropriate positions. Karen has a supply of bags freely available for those who wish to use them. An extra salt / grit bin has been provided for Fairview Grove.
- BT has decommissioned the phone box but has assured us that they will keep it in repair and is to remain in place being listed.
- The Pound wall has eventually been repaired and is a considerable improvement. This is another one of those jobs which took a considerable time to implement because of a chance of stance on grants from ECDC and the fact that we were working with a listed building which requires you to jump through several hoops to get approval for the works.
- The old style road sign at the Lower End was completed again after various alterations to get the correct height of the sign. Thanks go to Jonathan Cook and Martin Mead for progressing this forward.
- Some of you may have noticed that our friends at ECDC proposed a travellers site on Heath Road! As you will also know by now after a vigorous campaign of opposition this has been withdrawn and Swaffham Prior has been firmly crossed off the list of possible sites. We would like to thank our County and District Councillors for their assistance in this matter. However, the main work was undertaken by David Greenfield who not only arranged a very effective campaign but also arranged the financing of this. We would therefore feel that not only the Parish Council but the whole village would wish to thank him for his considerable efforts.
- There has been a health and a nuisance issue with chemical smells coming from the drains in Greenhead Road. Whilst this matter has not yet been completely resolved, it is now in the hands of the HSE and other agencies who will ensure the safety of future operations.
- Yet another protracted session of letter writing has had to be endured by our long suffering clerk Karen. This has been to get anyone to take responsibility for the sloping path at the Beeches where one of the residents had a fall. Eventually it was agreed to fit a handrail to make this safer. Thanks to Karen for wearing them down to agree to this.
- Another job which has been 4 years in resolving is the fitting of kissing gates between Pulpit Corner and the Devil's Dyke. This will make access easier for the less agile being easier to negotiate than the existing styles.
- We would also like to thank Steve Kent-Phillips for completing the Accounts to his usual high standard. Copies of the Accounts are available for inspection.
- The owners of the 'Dencora' field now referred to as 'land off Rogers Road' have suggested that it may be suitable for a minor development of affordable houses together with some commercial housing. They only wish to go ahead with the support of the majority of the village. To this end various negotiations have been going on with ECDC regarding Affordable Housing. You have probably already had a questionnaire regarding this through the post from Cambridge Acre.
- It was gratifying to see the marvellous attendance at the Street Party for the Royal Wedding see photos on display. A big thank you to Emma Fletcher for all her work in organizing this in such an efficient manner. It was a credit to the village and we even got television coverage.

Questions asked following the above report:

- Alastair Everitt asked if the additional dog bins had helped. *The Clerk replied that fewer incidents of dog fouling had been reported.*
- Mike Phillips asked if there would be a further consultation with regard to the affordable housing survey by Cambridgeshire ACRE and whether there was the option not to have affordable housing. Mike considered the Cambridgeshire ACRE questionnaire to be deficient and said there was a need to look at the demographics of the village. He further asked how many affordable homes were occupied by "outsiders". *Geoffrey Woollard referred to the housing waiting list with Hereward Housing and noted that 9 people from the village had applied but felt that the scope for young people from the Parish to stay in the Parish was limited.*

There followed some discussion about both the Cambridgeshire ACRE survey and the ECDC 'Village Vision' questionnaire.

Parish Council – Financial Report:

Copies of the Parish Council's unaudited accounts were available for information. *There were no questions.*

County Councillor's Annual Report: (*Clerk read out Cllr Brown's report – copies were available.*)

- Financial pressures and setting a balanced budget dominated time and work at Cambridgeshire County Council over the last year. Following the General Election we were faced with a financial settlement from the Coalition Government requiring savings of £160 million over 5 years. If that was not bad enough, the settlement meant that we had to find savings of £65 million in 2011/12, as well as significant in-year savings. Budget setting was a long process, culminating in bad-tempered 10 hour meeting of the County Council in February, which was interrupted on numerous occasions and saw the Police being called to remove demonstrators.
- At the local level considerable disquiet was caused when East Cambridgeshire District Council suggested County Council-owned land at Heath Road, Swaffham Prior as a suitable site for gypsies and travellers. Following a campaign led by local residents, East Cambs Strategic Development Committee ruled out the suggestion and also said that Swaffham Prior should no longer be considered as a suitable locality for a gypsy and traveller site.
- As well as attending meetings of the Full Council I took part in a number of other committees over the year including the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee and the Safer and Stronger Communities Committee. I sat on several home to school transport appeals and also the East Cambs South Neighbourhood Panel. The Neighbourhood Panel this year seemed to be dominated with problems associated with cars at Bottisham Village College as well as speeding cars across the patch.
- I also sat on a small group looking at highways policies in general. The final report of this group has now been published and it is hoped this will give much greater flexibility to allow, for example, parishes to change local speed limits.
- Numerous potholes in our local area were repaired following reports, although thankfully this winter did not go on as long as last year so there were fewer reports. I also supported Burwell residents in presenting a petition regarding dropped kerbs in the village to the County Council Cabinet. This has resulted in some improvements already.
- On the less formal side, the Cambridgeshire Schools Carol Service, held at King's College was a pleasure to attend, as was the official opening of the new bridge across Reach Lode.
- Finally, the year ended with the personal honour (and challenge) of being asked to join the new Cabinet as Lead Member for Children and Young People Services.

Alastair Everitt said Cllr Brown had not reported on the Recycling Centre and asked what the latest news was. *Andrew Camps replied that he thought discussions were continuing but Cllr Brown would be asked for an update.*

District Councillor's Annual Report: (*Andrew Camps read out Cllr Alderson's report – copies were available.*)

East Cambs Budget 2011/12: Once again we have to set a very tough budget with a cut in the Government Revenue Support Grant, plus a drop in income from business rates, etc., due to the recession. There has been no increase in Council Tax this year.

- *Black sack collections:* We have maintained the weekly black sack collections despite a call from Liberal councillors to change to fortnightly collections as a way of encouraging more recycling.
- *Leisure:* The Council now has planning permission for a new Leisure Centre on the Ely by-pass. This will incorporate a six land swimming pool, a sports hall and a fitness suite.
- *Tourism:* Ely's Tourist Information Centre has seen yet another successful year having once again scooped the accolade of Regional TIC of the Year. Its visitor numbers have increased by over 500. The tourist website (www.visitEly.org) attracted 100,000 visits last year, up from 60,000 the previous year. This year we have already had over 12,000 visits in April.
- *Housing (Affordable):* There are currently over 30 being built in Fordham and 5 four bedroom houses in Isleham. The Council has bids in for a total of 100 houses at Isleham, Bottisham and Haddenham.
- *Fly-tipping:* Fly-tipping has decreased this last year due in no small part to Mark Mahaffey, our Enforcement Officer who works closely with the local Police.
- *Travellers:* By working together with the local action committee representing local residents and also the Parish Councils, I was able to stop the proposal for an extended families travellers' site at Goodwin Farm, Swaffham Prior.
- *Newmarket Waste Recycling Centre:* The site is to remain open until July 31st to give time to explore alternative funding options for the site. At present the site costs £214,000 per year to run. The Newmarket site has approximately 50,000 visits per year. A customer survey gave 43% of respondents from Cambridgeshire.
- *Committees:* During the past year I have been a member of the Licensing and the Strategic Development committees. I was also a District Council panel member of the south area Neighbourhood Panel.

Mike Phillips asked if extra money was set aside for the extra fly-tipping that would result with the closure of Newmarket Recycling Centre?

Geoffrey Woollard said Cllr Allen Alderson was a good District Councillor and had represented the Parish very well at key meetings about the proposed traveller site on Heath Road and asked to record a vote of thanks to Cllr Alderson.

Royal Wedding Street Party – Display of Photo’s: *(Clerk read out report – copies were provided):*

Well what a party that was! People of Swaffham Prior showed true British spirit and flocked to the High Street on 29th April to celebrate. The weather started off a little chilly but soon warmed up.

It was estimated that over 500 people were in attendance for all or part of the afternoon. 73 tables were laid between Kent House and the Village Hall, 250m of bunting was strung up, 240 cream teas and nearly 200 pints of beer and cider was sold.

Everyone got into the spirit with uplifting music and ceilidh by ‘The Branston Hicks’. The Punch & Judy show entertained the children whilst the wedding photo competition raised a few chuckles and the Royal Wedding quiz caused a few scratched heads.

In the run up to the day, the Street Party preparations were covered by Look East, Anglia News and BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, who also broadcasted their Royal Wedding show live from the High Street. The occasion was also featured in the Newmarket Journal.

A big thank you to all the High Street residents and everyone who helped set up, clear up and financially cover the cost of closing the road.

Whilst it was not the intention to make any money from the day, there was a little in reserve from the sale of mugs, etc., which might be put to perhaps a Jubilee event next year.

Ruth Scovill proposed a vote of thanks to Emma Fletcher for organising a very successful celebration. This was unanimously agreed.

Report for School: *(Roz Chalmers reported as Chair of the School Governors)*

There was on display a collage of some of the work by the pupils.

- Year 6 girls work hard to create a collage of activities that they have enjoyed at School in the last year.
- Pictures on display are mainly from our big starts to the topic we are studying:
 - The big start for the Vile Victorian topic was a visit to the Cambridge Folk Museum.
 - The big start for the Ancient Egyptians topic was building our own mini-pyramid then joining them together to make a bigger one.
 - The big start for save the rainforest was having some animals that live in the rainforest to come in so we got to hold and feel the animals – pythons, lizards, snakes and spiders.
- Also on the collage are key events during the year. The choir sang at a West Road concert, the grand opening of our outdoor classroom and activities during Red Nose Day.
- £19,000 had been raised in under 6 months to repair the school swimming pool.
- FoSPS raised a further £8,000 for the outside classroom.
- The School was again dropped from the Building Project Scheme due to budget cuts. The School has been on this list for over 20 years.
- The Head Teacher had left the School but a new Head Teacher had been appointed. This was a compliment to the School as there was never a problem in recruiting teachers.
- Thank you to all the community for their support – it is very important.

Geoffrey Woollard asked what proportion of children was coming from Burwell. *Roz Chalmers said she was unsure but that there were great pressures on pupil places overall so must be pretty close to limit now.*

Swaffham Prior Youth Club: *(The Clerk read out a brief report from Alan Badcock, Youth Club Leader)*

The numbers of young people using the Club is very poor both senior and junior. The building needs a lot of work carried out on it. The outlook is bleak but we will continue to do our best.

Burwell Tigers Football Club: *(The Clerk read out a brief report).*

- It's been another busy year for Burwell Tigers FC.
- We have had u7's and four Mini League Teams playing at Margaret Field Burwell, five Colts league teams playing at Swaffham Prior, Colts league team playing at Swaffham Bulbeck and four girls teams playing at the Recreation Ground in Burwell.
- The fencing at SP is working well, keeping the pitches rabbit and badger free throughout the season. The whole field will now be sprayed for weeds and seeded where required. Considering how many teams have been playing here this season the pitches have coped very well.
- A portakabin has been purchased this year which will need some attention over the closed season and then used as changing rooms from September. Fundraising is ongoing and we are still hoping to upgrade the car park in the future.

Village Hall Management Committee: *(Andrew Camps read out written report)*

- The Village Hall made a modest profit over the last year despite spending considerably more on repairs and refurbishment than in the previous year – *copies of the accounts were available for information.*
- The Management Committee also decided to change the cleaning contractor and to increase the amount of cleaning (which is now twice weekly), in response to comments by users. This has obviously had an impact on costs.

- We were also able, at least for the time-being, to absorb the large increase in the cost of oil. Charges for hiring the Hall have been greatly simplified, although this has had little effect on the amount that our regular hirers have paid and bookings have remained at the same level as last year. The Committee had felt that it was important to support hirers who provide a service for the village.
- A website at: <https://sites.google.com/site/swaffhampriorvh/> has been set up and it is hoped that this will be used by potential users to get detailed information about the Hall, as well as to check availability, prices and to submit booking requests.

Comments:

- David Jackson suggested that the cleaning of the Village Hall was not very good.
- Michael Phillips asked that the chair seats be cleaned.
- Frances Reeks referred to the balance of the current account and the total payments asking why some of the funds could not be transferred to the deposit account rather than all being in the current account. *The Clerk was to ask Mike Carrington (Treasurer) to reply.*

Parochial Charities Accounts: *(Andrew Camps read out detail of the accounts - Copies were available for information.)*

Alastair Everitt asked what the Charities insure as the figure listed was high (£450.56). *The Clerk was to ask Pam Waters, Secretary to the Parochial Charities.*

Open Question Time:

Alastair Everitt thanked Andrew Camps for taking the meeting.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm