

**SWAFFHAM PRIOR ANNUAL VILLAGE ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 16th May 2018 at 7.40PM**

Present: Parish Councillors: John Covill (Chairman), Steve Kent-Phillips, David Greenfield, Mark Lewinski, Paul Latchford plus 27 members of the public.

Apologies: Sandra Gynn, Peter Hart, Andrew Camps, Michael Malster, Cllr Joshua Schumann, Pam Waters, Jack Smith, Steve White.

In Attendance: Paul Catling (Clerk), Cllr Allen Alderson

Chairman John Covill welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of Minutes from Meeting – 17th May 2017: The minutes were agreed by all as a correct record.

County Councillor's Annual Report: *(Cllr Allen Alderson read Joshua Schumann's printed report to the meeting)*

"

Ely Southern Bypass

The works have passed several major milestones.

Ely Southern Bypass will provide a huge boost for the area and will ease congestion in and around Ely by providing a new link between Stuntney Causeway and Angel Drove, reducing journey times by 56%.

The new route will remove the need for heavy goods vehicles to use the railway level crossing – currently closed for 35 mins in every hour, a time set to increase as more trains use the line to a possible 50 mins by 2020 - and reduce collisions at the low railway bridge.

Construction is progressing well, with the eastern, central and western embankments built. The abutments, which is where the bridge starts and ends, and the central pier over the railway are also, complete. We expect the project to be completed in October.

Appreciating how important the scheme is to alleviate the misery felt by many residents in the area, working with partners the County Council found the initial funding to develop the much needed scheme as early as possible to get the work underway. The Council had feared if we hadn't committed to deliver the project when we did, the funding could have been lost and at best, the bypass would have been delayed a further 12-18 months.

The new bypass is being built across a flood plain and the poor Fenland soil has resulted in large amounts of additional work and material being needed as the ground conditions have been even worse and more unpredictable than expected.

Working under these tricky conditions and near a national heritage site has meant costs have increased by £13 million to an estimated £49 million, which we're working with our contractor Volker Fitzpatrick to minimise.

This project has been funded by Cambridgeshire County Council, East Cambs. District Council, Network Rail and the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership grant - £22m Growth Deal including £16m from Department for Transport (DfT).

Connecting Cambridgeshire

Connecting Cambridgeshire, led by Cambridgeshire County Council, has been awarded additional funding to ensure the county has 'outstanding digital connectivity'.

The successful programme is developing ambitious plans for improving mobile, broadband and public Wi-Fi coverage for everyone – whether at home or work, on the move, in market towns or rural villages.

The plans will be supported by a £5.6 million investment recently agreed by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board, as part of a shared vision for fixed and mobile connectivity to underpin the region's growth and prosperity.

The programme has also recently been allocated £4 million additional Government Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) funding, which includes increasing the availability of full fibre networks along a 'digital innovation corridor' from St Ives to Linton, providing fibre upgrades to 31 public buildings in rural areas and supporting businesses to access fibre networks.

With the additional funding the programme will be extended to target improvements in mobile (2G & 4G), extend full fibre networks, trial 5G (next generation mobile) and increase public access Wi-Fi coverage over the next four years.

Libraries

The council is looking to increase the offer that our community libraries make and further explore how we can ensure our libraries serve as a community hub's for the area. You can find out what is going on in your local library at the web link below.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-&-culture/libraries/library-news/monthly-library-newsletter/>

Council Tax

At the February meeting of the county council the members decided to approve a council tax rise of 2.99% and a 2% rise in Adult Social Care (ASC) precept. The administration has made huge savings and generated incomes to support the services that are delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) but with an increasing demand and reduction in funding it became obvious that, in order to ensure that we are financially prudent, we must make small increases. The demand in our services that support our most vulnerable residents has increased sharply and to a much greater extent to that which we have raised the council tax by but with new innovative ways of working we have managed to reduce this impact. We will continue to fight for fairer government funding. If we were to receive the same as an average London Borough Council in funding this would result in us receiving an extra £75m per year or if we were to receive even the same as an average county council, we would be £13.7m better off.

Potholes

We have had an unprecedentedly bad winter for our roads and as a result repairing potholes has proven very difficult. Please continue to report any potholes through the councils reporting web page as this is the best way for the council to keep a record of works required. The council has committed more finances to tackling potholes and invested in new machinery (dragonpatcher) to make the work on repairs quicker and better quality.

”

It was noted that council tax rise would be 2.99% plus further 2% retained for adult social care. Allen Alderson was asked when CCC will move to Alconbury. He stated that there was a decision at the last meeting, the previous Tuesday but it will be possible to sell Shire Hall. Shire Hall was no longer fit for purpose for the CC. Also, the rail crossing will remain as one lane under the bridge with traffic control.

District Councillor's Annual Report: *(Cllr Allen Alderson reported to the meeting; he had also provided a printed report.)*

”

Council Tax

Our fifth year of zero percent Council Tax rise with the same pledge for a sixth year in 2019/20 makes us different – all the other District Councils in Cambridgeshire are again raising Council Tax this year, and all have Council Tax rises built in to their MTFs which ours does not.

Waste services

Waste and recycling services were brought in house with the councils new trading arm East-Cambs Street Scene Ltd in April 2018. Any profits made will now go to our District Council rather than Veolia. The cost to the council will be just £1 per week per house for waste collection.

Housing

We need to press ahead with housing and CLTs in the district to meet current demand. The last financial year has seen

- The first CLT homes occupied in Stretham, where the CLT owns 23 homes, for ever for local people to live in their own community, at genuinely affordable rents.

- Building is well underway at Soham CLT, Haddenham has been granted permission for 54 homes, 19 of which will belong to the CLT. Kennett will have 500 homes, 150 of which will be owned by the CLT

Homelessness

We have had the opening of the Ely Community Hub – a safe place for people to get advice and support on a whole range of issues. It is an integral part of the unique way that our housing team prevents homelessness. 1st March saw the opening of the second community hub in Littleport.

Planning

Without the Local Plan in place 2018 was a very busy year for planners and us councillors. We had to deal with a large number of planning applications, many of which were inappropriate.

Commuter Car Parks

We have seen the delivery of two commuter car parks at Littleport and Ely railway stations, which helps to cut down on street parking

New Cinema and Leisure Centre

The new 6 screen cinema opened in Ely in 2018. On 11th May the new Leisure Centre will have its official opening. It will have a 25m 6 lane swimming pool, an outdoor all-weather sports pitch, a fitness suite and badminton, volleyball pitch. It will be a truly great Leisure Hub catering for a variety of peoples' leisure preferences.

Ely Southern By-Pass

The by-pass should be open by October. The crossing gates will then be shut but the underpass will remain open-operated by traffic lights.

Business Visits

During the last year, together with other counsellors, I attended the following local businesses.

Hadrian Stud, CD Foods, Turner Transport, Gs Salads, Ely Enterprise Zone.

As a business-friendly council, we need to encourage more businesses to the district, thereby creating more local employment and less need for commuting to Cambridge and London – which should mean less cars on our main roads.

The Last Year

I have been a member of the Community Services Committee – I have also attended various planning committee's full councils, and council seminars.

He mentioned the saving on homelessness, now there were zero costs for B&B, a saving of £800K. IT was asked why the underpass was now one-way with traffic lights. It is apparently one-way with a dedicated cycleway. It was asked why, as it seems the in-house waste management could be saving £240K / year, it had not been taken in-house before. Allen Alderson did not know. There were a number of questions and discussion about The Paradise Centre, Steve Kent-Phillips pointed out it did not have a cricket pitch. It was noted that it did have a covenant on it. This led to a discussion about improvements, or lack of, in the Swaffham Prior and areas south of Ely. It was suggested the substantial savings would provide funds to spend in the south. The current and future traffic problems were discussed. Allen Alderson stated that money will be put into A11 improvements, Bulbeck, Heat Road junction, A10 (under combined authority) and ideas to improve train services by adding parking at Dullingham and Soham. Traffic surveys were also discussed, including Quy's efforts taking out traffic calming and adding a staggered junction on the A14 roundabout. There was further discussion regarding public transport – busses and trains. Dullingham, Cambridge North, Soham and Addenbrooke's all mentioned but not all were convinced they would provide improvements.

The Ely buy-pass over-spend was mentioned and it was asked how the planners did not know about the soft ground noted as one of the causes of extra costs. Allen Alderson suggested that it may not have even started if the real cost was known up front and also confirmed that the construction was lower than normal to save the views of the cathedral.

Parish Council Report: *(John Covill reported to the meeting)*

John had managed to keep his report short last year despite the long list of projects with CIL and Open Space money and this year, with less major works there were mostly tidying up jobs to report.

"We sailed through the annual audit thanks to Steve's faultless bookkeeping. The Village hall has had a fair bit of further attention including replacing various windows, doors and agreement to replace the lighting / electrics. We are also having to correct the leasing agreement trustees and valuation to bring these up to date. We have replaced and had filled a damaged grit bin. We have provided snowdrops which have been kindly planted by volunteers. The speed indicating device (SID) is hopefully going back into action as soon as confirmation of insurance is received, it may also be hired out to other villages once an agreement has been drawn up. I believe that the cemetery notice board needs replacement/repair.

The threat of a generator station in the edge of Burwell has receded to be replaced by a battery storage station which will be quieter and further off.

The plans for 10 bungalows opposite Fairview Grove which had caused concern as they would have threatened the viability of the windmill have been withdrawn.

There have been some concerns about the camping at the church (champing) as it is not always well organised as there is no contact available when needed and some of the Champers make an inconsiderate amount of noise for the neighbours late at night.

Last year I reported on the excellent new cemetery plans, only to be tripped up this year by an overzealous undertaker and an unfortunate lack of the right people to ask so that a grave was dug in the wrong place it has not yet been properly made good by the undertaker concerned. We have now put in a more robust procedure for marking plots and I would like to again apologise to the people who were affected.

To show that we were only human in the middle of Paul Latchford and Mike Malster setting out an inspection of the allotments, their rules and agreements a decision was made that due to a misunderstanding was effectively not correct. We have since rescinded this decision and apologised in person and by letter to those affected. Again, the new rules should avoid such problems. Due to these problems we are conducting a review of all our procedures to make sure that they are fit for purpose.

The Youth Club hut

The youth Club has now handed the hut back to the Parochial Charities who are putting various surveys in place to determine the viability of the hut for future use. It is hoped to make it or at least part of it available to the Scouts. The Parish Council has kindly offered to use any money left over the CIL projects to help towards the cost of these surveys.

Other Projects

We have been able to donate some money to help a child with learning difficulties have one to one help in Reach.

Gay Bulleid Award

This year it is awarded to two deserving people who run the scout group (they will have to fight over who has it for the first six months). They are Tim Doe and Steve White. I am sure we would all like to thank them for the sterling job that they have done over the years to promote and run this very successful group. Having such a group is a great asset to the village, giving as it does a sense of purpose and responsible behaviour to a large number of local children.

Well done both of you and keep up the good work!"

Steve Kent-Phillips presented a report on the PC's accounts. The general state is that the year was around £4300 under budget / surplus, with £29K reserves and therefore no need for the precept to go up.

Additional Village Reports including:**Report for School:** *(Chris Goodfellow, Chair of Governors, reported to the meeting)*

Chris Goodfellow, Chair of Governors, reported that it had been a challenging year and that following the recent Ofsted report 'requires significant improvement', Swaffham Prior School is will change to Academy status, and will become part of the Ely Diocesan Trust. The headteacher, who has been on sick leave for a significant period, has resigned, and Mr Mercer has stepped up to take over for the remainder of the academic year. Other help will be available for the summer and a new head will be appointed soon. The pupils will be involved in the maypole dancing.

It was asked and confirmed that as an academy, the school will remain Church of England.

Scout, Cubs & Beavers Group: *(Tim Doe, reported to the meeting)*

Tim reported on the 1st Swaffham Prior Scout Group – since 2001. Problems of recruiting did mean that they only had 2 leaders per section rather than three. They were having more success keeping the older Scouts or "graduate" Explorers on as leaders. Although they could still do with more leaders and would welcome anyone interested. One of them, now a leader but as part of explorers, Harry Oliver-Towers, presented a report about the World Scout Jamboree next summer in West Virginia. Oliver and two others from the troop have been chosen to attend. This is quite a feat for a small village troupe. They need to raise around £3,800 between them to cover the cost, apparently more than lesser GDP countries have to pay. It was asked how they could be helped – Tim said you can contact him and details will be in The Crier. It was noted that 45 were going from Cambridge and 45K or more in total. Harry was congratulated on his achievements.

They were also involved in the normal parades including the Remembrance Day in Swaffham Prior, Christmas Panto, carol singing and field events.

Burwell Tigers Football Club: *(The report was read by the Clerk).*

The Tigers have grown, they now have over 250 boys, girls and men playing football every weekend. The Tigers ground in Swaffham Prior has been used by U6s, U7s, U8s, U14s and U15s. Without this ground the club would not have grown as it has. The fencing around the field was recently stolen. This will be difficult to replace.

CIL Monies: *(Steve Kent-Phillips reported to the meeting)*

Steve presented the spend to date and project status of projects allocated CIL money. What is left of the remaining £3.5K will be allocated for the Youth Club Hut structural survey. The survey would be of the structure, foundations and known presence of asbestos. The state of the hut was discussed. The new table tennis table location was also discussed. IF the hut did get used the table tennis would also be used. It was suggested that it could be moved into the school. It was confirmed that the property is owned by Swaffham Prior Parochial Charities. Steve Kent-Phillips confirmed that all the CIL and Open Spaces reports are on the PC Web site.

John Covill thanked Steve Kent-Phillips for his work.

Community Land Trust: *(Emma Fletcher reported to the meeting)*

Emma Fletcher reported on the Community Land Trust (Rogers Road development). The development has been a success with 8 homes. They may have improved the project by having smaller units. All tenants are on 5-year leases. Two of the tenants have swapped, one downsizing one upsizing due to family situations.

Emma also reported on the ongoing investigation into the possibility of a village wide community heating system. The Community Heating Scheme has managed to get grant funding for the next survey. Villages without gas grid connection are on the target list and results will be shared with other villages. The feasibility study should help develop a cost model and "how it works" explanation for potential consumers. The main driver is the increases in oil prices and lack of alternative to oil, which may become increasingly less viable. It was pointed out that local money was not at risk or part of the funding. There was a discussion regarding the need for backup power or heat, if the ground

sources were not sufficient for demand. Mike Barker noted that the engineers being consulted, would, if the project proceeded, design, build and operate the entire system.

There was further discussion of the CLT housing and what the process is applied to new applicants when existing tenants move on. Emma Fletcher explained that the criteria remain the same. The application form will be made easier to complete.

Village Hall Management Committee: *(Alan Durrant reported to the meeting)*

The hall bookings are good and usage is good. Policies and procedures have been reviewed and many renovation projects are in progress or completed. Scotsdales had provided financial help with garden improvements. The PC helped with the replacement doors and lighting. Further projects will require funding, such as the roof tiles. The major project is the extension to the hall, proposed to make the smaller part of the hall more available independent of the main hall and provide some more storage.

Parochial Charities Accounts: *(The Clerk presented the written accounts)*

Swaffham Prior Community Car Scheme: *(Janet Willmott reported to the meeting)*

Janet reported that they managed to respond to all requests. They have not had any new volunteers but had lost two as they have moved away. All current drivers are from the village. Any new drivers are welcome! The low current use of the scheme is good news as this means that family and friends are providing required transport. Janet reminded the meeting that the contact details are inside the front cover of The Crier.

Proud of Prior (PoP): *(Janet Willmott reported to the meeting)*

Janet also reported on the 4th year of PoP, cleaning up the village. They were also involved in the snow drop planting this year, along with the top road & slip, more areas were added this year. Janet thanked ECDC for collecting the waste. She also suggested that some "Take Litter Home" signs may help keep the village clean.

Janet also mentioned the pop-up tea shops that were now in their 5th year. St Cyriacs, St Mary's this year and at the Village Hall too.

Business was completed at 21:39

Open Question Time:

Steve closed the meeting with a request that it be held in June next year, because it is a busy time for the PC. The AGM, the May meeting and the year end accounts and audit. Emma Fletcher suggested not clashing with half term. The 3rd Wednesday in June was suggested. (The change would be an item on the PC agenda.)

Meeting closed at 21:41.