

**Minutes of Swaffham Prior Parish Council meeting held on Thursday, 11th April 2019 at 7.30pm, Village Hall.**

Present:

Mr John Covill, Mr David Greenfield, Mrs Sandra Gynn, Mr Steve Kent-Phillips, Mr Paul Latchford, Mr Andrew Camps, Mr Peter Hart, Mr Michael Malster, Mr Alan Durrant.

There were 5 members of the public in attendance.

2542. In attendance:

Cllr Allen Alderson, Cllr Joshua Schumann, Paul Catling (Parish Clerk), Jude Griffiths (Trainee Parish Clerk).

2543. Apologies for absence:

None

2544. Members' declaration of interest for items on the agenda and requests for dispensation:

None

2545. Public participation for items on the agenda:

It was pointed out that Mrs Sandra Gynn has been recorded as 'Mr Sandra Gynn' in the previous minutes. In addition, it was asked if there would be answers to questions in the minutes – Steve Kent-Phillips responded that these will be dealt with under 'Matters arising'.

2546. Approve and sign the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Michael Malster noted that item 2531 of the previous minutes was not passed unanimously, as he had abstained.

Paul Latchford requested that details of the question he'd asked in 2532 (regarding the design of buildings to a standard to suit later life) be included.

The minutes were approved with these alterations – *proposed Steve Kent-Phillips; seconded Sandra Gynn. David Greenfield abstained.*

2547. Reports:

CCC.

Cllr Joshua Schumann asked that the report he'd provided today be circulated by the Clerk. He stated that the CCC budget had been set two months previously and had risen by 2.99%, mainly due to a substantial increase in the demand for both adult and child social services. This increase would equate to an average of an extra 79p per week on band B and D houses. £28.7 million had been spent on highway improvement; not 'patching' the roads but wholesale improvement, with the idea that greater investment in road repairs would decrease the need for patching in the future.

The CCC was focussing on income generation e.g. they have already invested in student accommodation to provide income for the CCC. They have a further £70 million of investments to come.

90 percent of all children have been offered their first choice of school place for the next academic year.

CCC will be moving out of Castle Hill by December 2020 and relocating mainly to the Alconbury hub, but also to other County Council offices so as to maintain a presence throughout the county. Castle Hill is a costly site and no longer fit for purpose so the move will result in savings for the CCC. Additionally the CCC is looking to lease the Shire Hall site (which consists of 6 acres of grounds and multiple buildings to be developed and let), providing further revenue for the CCC in order to keep council tax levels down. The castle mound itself will remain protected and accessible. The services presently at the Castel Hill site (e.g. the registry office) will be moved elsewhere before the Shire Hall is left, so that services will continue without disruption.

Paul Latchford enquired into the level of risk in such investments in the Castle Hill site.

Joshua Schumann responded that the risks were as low as possible – Shire Hall is a highly desirable asset and there is no reason to think it won't make a profitable hotel.

John Covill asked whether the social services budget would overrun this year? Joshua Schumann responded that the adult overspend will be £700,000, which is not bad when compared to the children's services overspend of £3 million. He attributed the huge rise in children's services spending to unexpected causes, such as complicated cases and the arrival of unaccompanied minors as refugees. He stated that good services attract people to the area.

ECDC. Cllr Allen Alderson noted that this would be his last meeting as councillor as he is stepping down. He also pointed out a few mistakes in the report he had sent in; for example, he had seen 'foals' not 'fowls' on a recent visit to the National Stud.

Paul Latchford expressed sorrow at Allen Alderson's leaving, noting his regular presence at meetings and diligence in answering questions. John Covill thanked Cllr Alderson for his work in sorting out issues raised. Steve Kent-Phillips proposed a formal vote of thanks to Cllr Alderson for his support to the Parish Council over the previous 15 years and wished him well for the future, extending an invitation to join the audience at future meetings.

2548. Matters arising form previous minutes (for information only)

Steve Kent-Phillips raised the question posed in *min. ref. 2532* regarding loss of planning approval if sites were not built on. Cllr Joshua Schumann responded; the current Local Plan is unacceptable with regards to constraints on development. The CC is doing all it can to help builders as encouragement or 'carrot'; the 'stick' is to be a reduction in the time to start building once planning permission has been granted – from three down to two years. There has been little response from the Housing Minister in getting builders to build; as long as permission for housing is being granted it is viewed as adding to the housing stock, regardless of whether it is inside or outside of the housing envelope. Cllr Schumann stated that the area will continue to be vulnerable to inappropriate building until 2020, when East Cambs will no longer be counted as having a building deficit.

Paul Latchford asked if the area of light industry on Heath Road still had that status. Steve Kent-Phillips and David Greenfield both responded, saying that it was counted as such in the 2015 plan, which also included reference to 'lifetime' homes.

David Greenfield noted a letter sent in 2018 to Lucy Frazer MP (not copied to Cllr Joshua Schumann). In her response, Lucy Frazer used supportive language but directed the PC towards Oliver Letwin's review, which resulted in an accelerated planning Green Paper, potentially shortening planning permission to last for less than two years.

John Covill asked if there had been a response from the Planning Inspector as to why they threw out the policies they did. Joshua Schumann said the Planning Inspector had done nothing legally wrong so the results could not be challenged through a legal route, but that the

CCC were withholding payment due to the Inspectorate on the grounds that they had not behaved in a way that would be expected. The Letwin report had denied that land-banking occurred.

*Min. ref. 2537* Steve Kent-Phillips stated that no-one else had applied for an allotment.

*Min. ref. 2541* Steve Kent-Phillips noted that the parked lorry has now gone.

*Min. ref. 2542* Steve Kent-Phillips noted that the unapproved minutes on the website are now all up to date. The old website has been taken down and the new website is published in the Crier.

2549. Correspondence for consideration/circulation:

Steve Kent-Phillips said that a local group campaigning against a possible incinerator at Milton had been in contact to request the dates of PC meetings – these had been given. Two letters from charities had been received; one from the East Anglia's Children's Hospices containing information about the work they do and the second from Seafarers UK asking for help raising awareness of their cause.

2550. Consideration of planning applications received:

19/00444/FUL – the July Racecourse, Newmarket – single storey side extension to maintenance building. No objections. *Steve Kent-Phillips proposed, Michael Malster seconded. Unanimously agreed.*

2551. Grant of exclusive rights of burial (3 plots):

*Proposed Steve Kent-Phillips, seconded Alan Durrant. Unanimously agreed.*

2552. Village Hall:

a) Steve Kent-Phillips had investigated mesh and its costs (£20,000 for the mesh, £1250 for a membrane that goes underneath the mesh, then additional cost for work required – skim the top off, roll it and lay gravel). He had also talked to Martin Mead, who advised that mesh expands and contracts with heat, causing lumps and bumps and that to lay it properly is labour-intensive and therefore expensive, therefore continuing to patch the drive and carpark makes financial sense. Paul Latchford noted that regular maintenance would be a sensible way forward, with regular discussion of the state of the drive and carpark in order to keep an eye on it.

Regarding gravelling of the carpark, Martin Mead suggested tarmacking the car park with a thin layer of porous tarmac to prevent the problems of runoff. While section 106 money could be used to fund this, it was agreed that this option will be discussed later when the car park is in need of work, with the Village Hall keeping an eye on its situation.

b) Alan Durrant explained that last year the Village Hall had asked the Council about building an extension to the Village Hall for storage. The Council had agreed in principle but the project was currently on hold due to the cost of £61,000. The Parish Council needed to endorse the extension in order for the Village Hall to apply for a grant from section 106. Steve Kent-Phillips proposed a formally minuted vote of support. *Proposed Steve Kent-Phillips, seconded Paul Latchford. Unanimously agreed.*

In addition - the strip of grass beside driveway needs regular cutting.

- The disabled sticker needs replacing in the car bay – Steve Kent-Phillips to sort.
- The repairs to the noticeboard damaged by the high winds came to £180.

2553. Allotments:

Michael Malster said there was nothing to report; the vacant plot was still vacant and had been advertised on the website and in the Crier.

2554. Appointment of the new Clerk and signing of contract:

Jude Griffiths was proposed as the new Parish Clerk. *Proposed Steve Kent-Phillips, seconded Sandra Gynn. Unanimously agreed.*

Steve Kent-Phillips proposed a vote of thanks to Paul Catling for 4 years effort. *Proposed Steve Kent-Phillips, seconded David Greenfield.*

Steve Kent-Phillips stated that the Parish Council needed to rejoin CAPALC in order to get training and support for the new Clerk. *Proposed Sandra Gynn, seconded Steve Kent-Phillips; passed unanimously but Steve Kent-Phillips to confirm the cost.*

Steve Kent-Phillips proposed to send the new Clerk on a new clerk training course run by CAPALC, at a much reduced rate for members. *Proposed Steve Kent-Phillips, seconded Sandra Gynn. Passed unanimously.*

There will be further training courses in the future.

2555. Agree on SID rental

The changes required at the previous meeting have been made. John Covill suggested reference be made to the excess in the last paragraph to prevent confusion. Once this change has been made, Paul Latchford proposed to accept the agreement (*Paul Latchford proposed, seconded Michael Malster. Passed unanimously*). Paul Latchford to amend the agreement and then send it to Steve Kent-Phillips to send on to Reach.

2556. Accounts for payment:

a) Clerks' salaries	£375.00
b) Inland revenue – Clerks' tax	£ 75.00
c) Taw Carpentry and Joinery (VH noticeboard)	<u>£180.00</u>
Total	£630.00

Payment of the above invoices was agreed. *Proposed Steve Kent-Phillips, seconded David Greenfield. Agreed unanimously.*

No transfer was required.

2557. Clerk's report:

A resident of the village had been in touch to complain about the lack of a streetlight on Lower End, at the bottom of Cage Hill. Paul Latchford said that The Parish Council is responsible for 9 of the streetlights, the County Council for 15. Steve Kent-Phillips stated that the light in question was rationalised during a review of street-lighting and that the only thing to do was enquire of the County Council if it can be replaced; the Parish Council can only help if there is one already there, not working.

There had also been a complaint about the height of the slide in the playground after a child fell off. The sign stating that children must be supervised by adults and use the equipment at their own risk has been put up again – it had fallen into the grass – and the ROSPA check is due imminently.

Nicola Martin, a trustee of the Little Chapel in the Fen, had been in touch trying to trace the chapel's parish records. Steve Kent-Phillips directed her towards Geoffrey Woollard as her best source of information.

2558. Parish Councillors' reports:

Sandra Gynn thanked Steve Kent-Phillips for emptying the cemetery bins.

The table in the shelter at the playground is leaning over - Steve Kent-Phillips to check on it.

There has been some damage to the road sign on Cage Hill.

Helen Bartley is the new permanent Head of the primary school – it was suggested that she be invited to the Village Assembly.

The date of the Village Assembly has now been agreed as the 14<sup>th</sup> May – Clerk to email invitations.

David Greenfield has heard two complaints regarding a business sign put up on a fence at the top of Cage Hill. The causes of concern are that it is a) very big and b) likely to spawn copycats. David Greenfield is to research what is allowed in the way of signage on fences before the Parish Council proceed in any way.

David Greenfield has received notification that grass cutting has taken place on 7<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of March and 9<sup>th</sup> April. On the 9<sup>th</sup> April, the contractors wanted to know when to start cutting the areas of wild flowers; particularly those in the cemetery. Paul Latchford asked if the contract says that all the areas of grass must be cut each time, as there may have been 3 cuts but not areas have been cut. Peter Hart pointed out part of the back path had not been cut at all. David Greenfield confirmed that the contract did specify all areas, therefore partial cuts should not be happening. It was decided to wait to see what the invoice says. Steve Kent-Phillips suggested that the wild flower areas be cut from June onwards, unless the contractors are notified otherwise.

Steve Kent-Phillips stated that the financial year end 1<sup>st</sup> April. He has started on the year end accounts and has issued Rosie with her P45. He has also started the payroll year ends. Three audits are due before the 10<sup>th</sup> May so is taking the books to start tonight.

Paul Latchford enquired what had happened with the lorry parked at the end of the village.

Steve Kent-Phillips said a note was put on the windscreen and the owner moved it.

Steve Kent-Phillips noted that this will be Michael Malster's last Parish Council meeting as he is standing down and formally thanked him for his efforts over the past four years. This will leave a vacancy on the Parish Council next meeting.

The meeting closed at 2053.

2559. Open Question Time:

Alastair Everitt asked which areas of grass will not be mown due to the presence of wild flowers. Steve Kent-Phillips and David Greenfield listed Cage Hill bank, the entrance to Greenhead Road and the edge of the bypass.

Business finished at 2055.