

Minutes of the Swaffham Prior Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 9th January 2020 at 730pm in Swaffham Prior Village Hall.

Present:

Mr John Covill (JC) (Chair), Mr Andrew Camps (AC), Mr Alan Durrant (AD), Mrs Sandra Gynn (SG), Mr Peter Hart (PH), Mr Steve Kent-Phillips (SKP).

In attendance:

Mrs Jude Griffiths – Clerk

Mrs Charlotte Cane – East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC).

There were 2 members of the public in attendance.

2396. Apologies:

DG – away

PL – family commitments

2397. Members' declaration of interest for items on the agenda and requests for dispensation:

None

2398. Public participation for items on the agenda:

Michael Limb pointed out that it was DG who asked about rubbish bag delivery and Michael Limb and Alastair Everitt who asked about the bin collection calendar.

Min ref 2388 Michael Limb asked for clarification of where the wilding area is as Cage Hill is partially in the conservation area and one of the proposed rewilding sites is on Cage Hill. SKP explained that the area proposed was the bank in Cage Hill that is already left.

Michael Limb proposed that the footpath from Pulpit Corner to Devil's Dyke would benefit from a marker on the Dyke to provide a point of reference for walkers when the field through which the path passes has been cultivated and that this could be considered as a Special Project (Agenda Item 13). SKP explained that a bid would need to be constructed and passed to the clerk, but that the proximity to a scheduled monument will raise questions.

2399. Approve and sign the minutes of Parish Council meeting 12th December 2019:

SG noted that *min. ref.2380* had missed out that SG had congratulated the school on their success. Minutes to be corrected, approved and signed at the next meeting.

2400. Reports:

Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) – no report received.

ECDC – Cllr Charlotte Cane reported.

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting. CC stated that ECDC had concerns over the accounts for East Cambs Street Scene Ltd (a subsidiary of the District Council) which had been signed off by the directors despite containing apparent errors. The Committee voted against a motion to bring the accounts back to committee with a relevant director; instead the accounts were noted. CC raised this with the Council's auditor, who had not been informed of the situation. Revised accounts had not been provided to date.

The ECDC accounts have not been audited yet but changes have been noted to the published accounts. Whilst some were easily explained, the Committee asked for a full explanation of how errors could arise to be provided at the next meeting.

At the Finance and Assets Committee review of the East Cambs Trading Company (ECTC), CC questioned whether a Director was in a defined benefit pension scheme (which could have high costs for the ECTC) and was told it was probably a mistake – on pointing out that it was a mistake of 2 years' standing CC asked for clarification. CC also questioned how the Directors had satisfied themselves that estimate in accounts signed off by them in July were still reasonable when signed by the auditors in September.

CC noted that meetings of the Operational Committee at the end of January and the Finance and Assets Committee at the beginning of February should result in the resolution of the accounting issues raised.

The bus services review working party has met twice and will shortly be issuing a consultation questionnaire for residents regarding bus, cycling and walking routes.

The Chair invited questions.

PH asked what kind of errors were in the accounts. CC gave examples of profit and loss accounts not balancing and some figures varying from page to page when they should remain the same. CC said that she doesn't think the majority are major financial worries but it is worrying that the system allows these errors to occur uncorrected.

SG thanked CC for spotting the problems.

JC mentioned that the road surfaces on the fen roads are degrading – a delivery service had refused to use the fen roads unless customers paid extra to cover potential vehicle damage.

CC urged reporting of pot holes on the relevant system but JC said that the holes were not yet officially big enough to qualify as potholes.

JC also noted that fly tipping had occurred in the Fen – tyres and black bags at the end of Black Drove and what looked like a bathroom refit in the passing place on Headlake Drove.

CC to raise them as a quick response could lead to the recovery of evidence of the fly-tippers identities.

1957 CC left the meeting.

2401. Matters arising from the previous minutes:

Min. ref. 2389 Steve Kent-Phillips stated that the advertisement for applications had gone into the Crier and would be going on the website and the noticeboard shortly.

Min. ref. 2394 Steve Kent-Phillips noted that Martin Mead had patched the driveway as requested.

Min. ref.2388 The clerk read out notes from DG that the rewilding group had been informed of the PC decision to go ahead with three areas but not Coopers Green; they agreed with these decisions. Additionally DG had produced a village grass-cutting contract and sent it to CGM Group and R H Landscapes and Maintenance Services for quotations to be provided by the end of January, with DG reporting back to the PC at the February meeting. DG requested that if anyone had knowledge of a third suitable company, their details be forwarded to him.

Min. ref. 2395 DG also reported via email that the refuse sacks were distributed in August/September and would be again in the future.

2402. Correspondence for consideration/circulation:

None received.

2403. Consideration of planning applications received:

None received.

2404. Accounts for payment:

a) Clerks' salary and tax	£322.50
b) Chair's honorarium	£ 40.00
c) Clerk's out-of-pocket expenses	£100.00
Total	£462.50

It was noted that due to a typo, the Clerks' salary and taxes came to £332.50, not £322.50. An invoice for Eon Electricity for street lighting of £151.52 and an invoice from Meads for repairs to the Village Hall driveway (£96.00) were added in with the agreement of the Chair. Action: the Clerk to send details of these last to payments to JC to enable payment by BACs, as this now appears to be possible from the Barclays current account.

It was proposed that all these be paid *proposed SKP, seconded SG; passed.*

SKP proposed a transfer of £1000 to the Barclays current account – *proposed SKP, seconded SG; passed.*

SKP noted that a set of lines would be added to the accounts sheet for the Unity Trust Bank Account and also that he would be undertaking the quarterly year end accounts at the weekend.

2505. Village Hall driveway repairs:

SKP had discussed the need for repairs to the driveway with AD as Village Hall representative. Martin Mead has patched the potholes as agreed in the last PC meeting but more were appearing with the rain. A suggested solution by Martin Mead would be to replace the driveway surface with porous tarmac (and an underlay) that could cover the track and up to and including the disabled parking bay. This would be done after the Village Hall had undertaken repairs to the patio and ramp.

Action: to be discussed at the March PC meeting with quotes.

2506. Cleaning of the ditch between The Beeches and Lower End post box:

AC noted that the ditch between The Beeches and the Lower End post box is becoming clogged with leaves and undergrowth. SKP noted that the ECDC will remove the leaves and loose debris

Action: the clerk to write to the households adjacent to the ditch requesting that they clear it of plant growth.

Action: SKP to pass on the names and addresses involved to the clerk.

Action: SKP to report to Council as drainage job.

2507. Play area:

SKP had received an email from Fenland Leisure regarding the spring daisy. They are out of stock at present and are re-ordering. 2 quotes were received – one to install the equipment and one just to supply it. As it would cost £1800.00 to have it installed, the decision was made to go with just supplying of the equipment which will be stored until the spring.

2508. Special projects:

SKP reported that the letter regarding appeals for funding had gone to the Crier and is to go on the noticeboard and website. The end date of 12th February can be extended if requested, as PL has already by email. SKP has also passed the letter to likely groups directly.

Action: Clerk to add to February agenda.

2509. Clerk's report:

- The clerk reminded the PC that in order to pay by BACs through Unity Bank, two of the signatories have to log in and authorise the payments.
- The village hall has been provisionally booked for the Annual Village Assembly on 26th May 2020, 7-10pm.
Action: Clerk to amend so that only the main hall is booked.
- The requests for grave markers in the cemetery are continuing – currently the clerk is establishing the present owner/s of each plot.
Action: Clerk to update the cemetery costs sheet on the cemetery noticeboard.

2510. Parish Councillors' reports:

SG reported that the village is currently relatively free from uncollected dog faeces and that the bins at the cemetery are working well.

DG sent a report by email, read by the clerk. Heating Scheme – the funding was approved in late December, which is excellent news; however due to the Christmas and New Year break, the next stage of actions are just starting.

SKP will be posting off the Manchester building society book to claim the interest.

JC reported that at the football ground, a tree had blown over into the car park. JC also noted that the school rubbish is getting scattered in the road on the morning of collection, although it is cleaned up afterwards. SKP noted that this is down to the cleaners, not the school.

SG praised the service for the rededication of the church windows as moving and well done.

The meeting closed at 2032.

2511. Open question time:

Michael Limb described contacting Darren Hughes of the ECDC recycling department with questions about the recycling bin and said that Darren is happy to meet groups from the village to give information about ECDC recycling.

Action: Clerk to invite Darren Hughes to the Annual Village Assembly.

Business concluded at 2040.