

**Minutes of the Swaffham Prior Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2020 at 730pm via Zoom.**

Present: Mr John Covill (Chair) (JC), Mr Andrew Camps (AC), Mr Alan Durrant (AD), Mr David Greenfield (DG), Mrs Sandra Gynn (SG), Mr Peter Hart (PH), Mr Paul Latchford (PL) and Mr Steve Kent-Phillips (SKP).

In attendance:

Mrs Jude Griffiths (Clerk)

Cllr Charlotte Cane (ECDC) (CC)

There were 3 members of the public in attendance.

**55/20-21 Apologies for absence**

None

**56/20-21 Members declaration of interest for items on the agenda and requests for dispensations**

SG declared a pecuniary interest in item 66/20-21.

**57/20-21 Public participation for items on the agenda**

Agenda Item 62/20-21 Michael Limb noted that the planning application for consideration was for Goodwin Farm, not Liberty Barns.

Agenda Item 70/20-21 Michael Hargreaves asked for the playground to be reopened, stating that there was a balance between caution and getting back to normality and that the risks outside and to children were minimal.

Min. ref. 50/20-21 David Isted asked if all owners of grave plots had been contacted with the results of the test. The Clerk explained they had not as the validity of the test was being questioned. Mr Isted asked if any other plots in the name of Frost had had problems – the Clerk to check and reply. Mr Isted recommended use of an independent memorial inspection firm and that he judged knowledge of how gravestones are constructed to be necessary in an inspector. Mr Isted wanted a standardized inspection form used, to record much information under different headings. Mr Isted stated that in conversation with an employee of ICCM, he had been told that the Memorial Management course was necessary for a valid inspection to take place and as this hadn't been undertaken by the Clerk, the safety inspection should be discounted.

Agenda Item 66/20-21 Mr Isted was upset that the Clerk had contacted the owner of a Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial directly; the Clerk had explained this was necessary to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Agenda Item 66/20-21 Mr Gynn outlined the repairs undertaken and asked why the PC's insurance company had been in touch by email regarding his complaint. The Clerk explained that the complaint had been passed to the PC's insurers. Mr Gynn asked why the second family on the letter of complaint had not been contacted by the insurers. The Clerk had no knowledge of why this would be – all relevant documents had been forwarded.

**58/20-21 Approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

*SKP proposed that the minutes were a true representative of the meeting; seconded PH, passed unanimously.*

**59/20-21 Reports**

a) CCC representative

None received.

b) ECDC representative Cllr Charlotte Cane (CC) reporting. A report was circulated prior to the meeting.

CC reported that East Cambs Trading Company are expected not to pay back the £1million loan from ECDC and instead have asked for a £4.9 million loan to be paid back in July 2023. There is a proposal to change Mepal Outdoor Centre from an outdoor adventure centre into a crematorium.

The ECDC have deferred the annual governance statement; CC said this was due to errors, omissions and question over whether procedure had been followed.

CC clarified that the ECDC reception was now open only by appointment.

The Chair invited questions.

PL asked if any alternative provision for outdoor adventure was being planned if the Mepal Centre was to change use – he expressed disappointment at the news of its demise, as did SG. CC said nothing had been announced. PL note that many people had learnt to sail at Mepal and then had in turn taught others, so the loss of the centre would have a much wider community impact. CC suggested writing to Cllr Anna Bailey, leader of the ECDC, with these views and noted a link to a petition to save the centre had been sent to the Swaffham Crier.

**60/20-21 Matters arising from previous minutes (for information only)**

None

**61/20-21 Correspondence for consideration/circulation:**

- a) Emails from M Hargreaves and T Lambert regarding the reopening of the playground – noted.
- b) Email from S Whiteside regarding overgrown cycle paths and poor visibility from the cycle path where the slip road meets the main road – noted.
- c) Email from C Matheson regarding right of way.

JC noted that having spoken the previous owner, the public road stopped at the front gate of the property in question and the public right of way ran along the top of the bank but there was no right of way connecting the two. The previous owner had allowed free access between the two, but the present owner did not. JC also noted that from previous experience, very good evidence of 30 years use was needed to establish a public right of way. CC was invited to comment and stated that the County Council keep s details of rights of way and would know the procedure to challenge one.

*DG proposed that the Clerk write to the County Council asking for support in establishing where the right of way is and whether one could be recognized to link the top of the bank to the road; seconded PL, passed unanimously.*

- d) Community gritting scheme email – Clerk to add link to Facebook and forward to the Crier.

**62/20-21 Consideration of planning applications received:**

**1) CCC/20/054/FUL Liberty Barns , Heath Road, Swaffham Prior, CB25 0LA.**

Creation of an Energy Centre to serve the village of Swaffham Prior via a heat supply network. Centre will include a small visitors, education and exhibition space within an existing agricultural building. Erection of solar photovoltaic PV Panels, a borehole ground source heat collector with associated pumps and machinery, landscaping and associated works.

SKP noted that the online planning application address was Goodwin Farm, not Liberty Barns.

SKP noted a concern regarding noise pollution from pile drivers during the building of the solar array, citing disturbance through the night to people in Reach when a solar farm was built there. SKP also suggested that Cambridge County Council was applying for permission from itself. PL noted concerns about the effect of building in proximity to a site of archaeological interest (Devil's Dyke). A 10 point suggested response created by DG was rejected as councillors could not agree on several points. PL suggested that insufficient information had been provided throughout the process of developing the Heating scheme. DG disagreed, noting meetings and reports given to the village and the PC, leaflets provided to the village and information shared through the Crier.

It was agreed unanimously that the issues of concerns regarding noise pollution and the proximity of the site to Devil's Dyke by passed back to the Planning Officer by the Clerk.

Action: Clerk to respond to the planning consultation on behalf of the PC as agreed above.

**63/20-21 Accounts for payment including:**

a) Clerk's salary and taxes	£510.00
b) CAPALC – DPO scheme	£50.00
c) Mr K Sumner – fence panel replacement	£105.00
d) Repairs to Speed Indicator Device	£90.00
e) Clerk's expenses - stamps	£18.24
Total	£773.24

Receipts: Cambridge County Council - for grass cutting £504.36

SKP noted that two bills recording direct debits made to Wave for water bills had been received and that the address they are sent to needed to be updated.

Action: the Clerk to update the PC address with Wave.

*SKP proposed that the accounts be agreed and paid; seconded PH, passed unanimously.*

**64/20-21 To review and update the cemetery regulations**

The PC decided that revised cemetery regulations should be produced and considered by the PC for adoption.

*SKP proposed that the Clerk and SKP make changes to the cemetery regulations regarding publicization of the need for safety tests and circulate these documents for consideration to the next meeting; seconded AD, passed unanimously.*

**65/20-21 To resolve that, pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press leave the meeting during the consideration of Agenda Item 66/20-21 because of the confidential and sensitive nature of the information to be considered.**

It was explained that this had been suggested as an appropriate action by CAPALC prior to the discussion of item 66/20-21.

*PL proposed that the resolution be rejected; seconded DG, passed - 4 votes for, 1 against, 3 abstentions.*

**66/20-21 To resolve the Parish Council's response to complaints regarding gravestones.**

DG suggested that the test of 18<sup>th</sup> June be scrapped and when the next take place, a visual inspection only be carried out and any concerns then passed to a professional; DG suggested modifications to the cemetery regulation to take into account greater sensitivity be discussed and agreed at the next meeting. SKP suggested that regarding the complaints, the PC should apologise for the upset caused and pay for repairs for the two complainants only, without accepting responsibility for any damage, as it was not possible to prove when any damage took place.

*SKP proposed that the Clerk write to the two families involved, apologising on behalf of the PC for any upset and stress caused, proposing to pay any cost of repairs to the two stones identified and completely reviewing the cemetery regulations, which will then be published on the PC website. Seconded AD, passed unanimously.*

Action: Clerk to write to the complainants as described above.

**67/20-21 To discuss the maintenance and marking of infant and other graves in the cemetery**

AD reported that he had cleared several grave markers that had become overgrown by ivy and brambles. The Clerk reported that infant graves along the right side of the cemetery were covered by an overgrown hedge, and that a relative had complained.

*SKP proposed that the hedge be cut back around the complainant's grave only ; seconded PH, passed unanimously.*

SG and JC suggested that areas around graves be maintained but not the graves themselves – this was up to individual owners of the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial. AD indicated that he would be happy to carry this out.

The Clerk noted that a grave marker for one individual had been placed on the wrong grave – it had been hidden by undergrowth and appeared to have been there for some time. SKP suggested the owner of the marker be asked to move it. PL suggested that to avoid upset, no action should be taken – as the occupants of the grave in question had been in place for a long time, it seemed unlikely that their relatives were concerned. The PC agreed with PL.

**68/20-21 To discuss the application for the Red Lion to continue to be an Asset of Community Value and review other assets.**

*SKP proposed that the PC reapply for Asset of Community Value (ACV) status for the Red Lion Public House; seconded PH, passed unanimously.*

It was noted that a previous application for the Little Chapel in The Fen to become an ACV had been rejected as the chapel was not in frequent enough use.

Action: Clerk to reapply for ACV status for the Red Lion Public House.

**69/20-21 To consider a request for an additional inscription on a gravestone.**

The proposed inscription had been circulated to the PC prior to the meeting. *SKP proposed that the PC accept the inscription be added; seconded PL, passed unanimously.*

**70/20-21 To resolve whether to reopen the playground in the light of COVID 19 guidance.**

The PC discussed the balance of safety with the need for the playground to be used; also whether responsibility for avoiding COVID 19 transmission fell with the PC or the users of the playground. Suggestions for notices to be put up around the playground had been circulated prior to the meeting – these were agreed.

*DG proposed that the PC pay for a professional, deep-clean of the playground, prepare and put up the agreed signs and then reopen as soon as possible; seconded SG, passed unanimously.*

Action: DG to approach suitable cleaning companies and commission cleaning of the playground up to the value of £200.00.

Action: the Clerk to put an announcement regarding the reopening of the playground on Facebook and prepare signage.

**71/20-21 To consider maintenance required to Village Hall windows**

AD reported that the Village Hall windows were in need of repainting and possibly replacing.

Action: The Village Hall committee to obtain quotes for the work and approach the PC with a proposal.

**72/20-21 To discuss a complaint that the playing field is not being maintained and that trees bordering it are overhanging the road.**

JC outlined how the field had become overgrown, as were surrounding trees, whilst the field was not in use by the Burwell Tigers due to COVID 19 restrictions. The PC discussed whether maintenance of the field and trees were the responsibility of the field's owners (Hurrell Estates), Anglia Water and/or the Highways Agency.

Action: the Clerk to write to Hurrell Estates, politely requesting that the field and trees be maintained.

**73/20-21 To discuss the PC's response to unauthorised grave markers in the cemetery**

SKP proposed that retrospective permission be granted for two wooden grave markers added to graves in the cemetery; *seconded PL, passed unanimously.*

**74/20-21 To resolve a PC response to the annual problem of overgrown footpaths**

No overall policy was suggested, but it was confirmed that a letter had been written to the Crier requesting people trim back their plants where they are impeding paths. It was agreed that the Clerk should write a polite note to the properties backing on to School Lane to ask them to trim back their overgrown hedges.

Action: Clerk to write to property owners as outlined above.

**75/20-21 To agree repairs undertaken to the Speed Indicator Device (SID)**

SKP reported back that the SID had needed recalibrating to take account of scratches to the lens, but no further work had been required. It was decided not to put the SID up at present.

**76/20-21 To hear a report from Cllr Greenfield on issues that have arisen regarding grass-cutting.**

For information. DG had met with Mr Turner regarding the alleged damage to an electricity box and it had been agreed that there was no proof as to the cause of the damage. DG had provided a replacement box and Mr Turner had fitted it and the matter was now regarded as closed by both sides. The PC thanked DG for his work on the matter.

DG also reported that due to a mistake, the PC had been invoiced for the grass-cutting at Town Close instead of the Parochial Charities. It had been agreed that the PC invoice the Parochial Charities for the grass-cutting carried out.

Action: the Clerk to invoice the Parochial Charities twice – once as soon as possible and for the remaining sum at the end of the cutting season.

Finally DG reported that, prior to the review of the rewilding of the verges scheduled for next month's PC meeting, the village rewilding group were happy with the rewilding carried out so far and Cambridge County Council had expressed an interest in wilding taking place in the parish.

**77/20-21 Clerk's Report**

- a) For information. The Clerk noted that minutes of the PC meetings "are intended to be a formal record of the acts and decisions of the council. They are not intended to be a record of the speeches of councillors. Accordingly minutes should not normally include details of the reasons for the decisions nor of the discussions which precede the making of the decisions unless a decision cannot be expressed in any other way" e.g. if a decision was postponed or not reached ('Local Council Clerk's Guide', 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, Paul Clayden, 2010, p21).  
PL noted that he preferred fuller minutes so that the views and votes of individual councillors were recorded for information prior to re-election.
- b) The Clerk requested permission to pre-order the latest edition of 'Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration' at a cost of £149.99, which was agreed.
- c) The Clerk had identified the owner of the two cremation plaques damaged during the tree removal from the cemetery and asked how the PC wished to proceed. It was decided to ask the owner to get in touch with the Clerk so that the event could be fully explained.  
Action: the Clerk to write to the owner asking them to make contact.
- d) The Clerk reported that Mr Wilmott had given up Garden Allotment Plot 5 and that it had been offered to the next person on the waiting list; also that two more people had applied for GAPs when they become available. PL enquired if there was a map of the Heath Road allotment plots – AC thought that he may have one.  
Action: AC to provide PL with the map of the Heath Road allotment plots if available.

**78/20-21 Parish Councillors' Reports**

- a) PH noted that the hedge by the driveway to the Smock Mill was still untrimmed – the Clerk had been unable to find contact details for the owner. SG and DG said they may be able to locate the owner’s contact details and would pass them on to the Clerk.  
Action: SG and DG to try and find the owner’s contact details.
- b) DG – for information. Anglia Water intend to move the water treatment works at Milton and a police hub is planned next to the Milton Park and Ride – a map showing possible locations was provided.
- c) PL requested that the councillors put on record if they were taking part in the Heating Scheme. PL, SKP and AD are not, PH and SG are undecided, JC is outside the area covered so cannot, DG would but doesn’t need it due to having an air-source heat pump already and AC is taking part. The Crier had requested a joint PC response to the Heating Scheme proposals, but it was agreed that one would not be possible with the diversity of individual councillor’s views.
- d) AC noted that the Heating Scheme survey of the streets had taken place.
- e) AD noted that the Village Hall had received a grant to pay for its extension and that work should start in the next 3-4 weeks.
- f) SKP noted recommendations that PC meetings do not last more than 2 hours and that if necessary, extra meetings be scheduled. SKP stated that it was up to the Chair and Clerk to make sure that meetings did not run on as long as the meeting taking place, regardless of circumstances.

The meeting ended at 10.38pm

#### **79/20-21      Open Question Time**

Charlotte Cane commented that as a director Reach Community Solar Farm, she knew that it was not true that work on the solar farm had led to complaints of disturbed nights in Reach – she believed that this was true of work in Burwell.

Business concluded at 10.40pm