

Swaffham Prior Annual Village Assembly – minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 24th November 2020 at 730pm via Zoom

Present: Parish Councillors: John Covill (Chair), Alan Durrant, David Greenfield, Sandra Gynn, Peter Hart, Steve Kent-Phillips and plus eleven members of the public.

Apologies: none received.

In attendance: Jude Griffiths (Clerk)

Jonathan Cook – A to B1102

Mike Barker – Village Gardeners rewilding project

Janet Hall and Sheryl French – Swaffham Prior Heating Scheme

Emma Fletcher – Community Land Trust and Swaffham Prior Heating Scheme

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of minutes of meeting dated 14th May 2019: The minutes were agreed by all as a correct record.

Reports:

Cambridge County Council.

A report had been produced for circulation before the meeting. No representative attended.

East Cambridgeshire District Council.

A report had been produced for circulation before the meeting. No representative attended.

Swaffham Prior Parish Council – John Covill reported.

Covering the period of May 2019 to April 2020. Mr Covill thanked the Parish Councillors for their work, particularly David Greenfield for work on contracts and Zoom meetings, Alan Durrant for his work tidying the cemetery, Steve Kent-Phillips for the accounts and the Clerk for being available. The change of ECDC councillors to Charlotte Cane and John Trapp was noted, both of whom had been good at attending meetings and Charlotte Cane was particularly praised for monitoring of ECDC accounts,

The playground had been opened as much as possible through the COVID pandemic and maintained throughout.

Much work had been undertaken with the cemetery records to ensure that they are up to date and the cemetery had been physically maintained through the attentions of Alan Durrant and Sandra Gynn.

The Village Hall had undergone much work – the Parish Council had paid for the tarmacking of the driveway and the levelling of the carpark.

The PC had entered the 21st century by moving to internet banking!

The street lighting contract had been agreed with a new company and now covers the correct number of lights only.

Reports regarding the village rewilding scheme and the heating scheme had been received regularly via David Greenfield.

The annual problems of overgrown vegetation had occurred; Station Road footpath has been partially cleared and the PC are chasing Anglia Water to try to finish the job.

The PC have been monitoring the potential estate that could be built on ground near the cemetery and have expressed concerns regarding it.

Financial support has been provided to the refurbishment of the Scout Hut.

A posy had been laid at the rededication of the World War I memorial windows to commemorate the men and horses lost.

Finally, the sad death of Sir Michael Marshall was noted.

Swaffham Prior Primary School

A report had been provided for circulation before the meeting. No representative attended.

Swaffham Prior Volunteer Group

A report had been provided for circulation before the meeting. No representative attended.

A to B1102 – Jonathan Cook reported.

A report had been provided for circulation before the meeting.

Mr Cook outlined the aims and aspirations of the group. They have been engaging in consultations e.g. regarding the development of Newmarket Road, where Mr Cook stated the aims of the Greater Cambridge Partnership was to greatly reduce the numbers of people driving into Cambridge, but that East Cambs was not represented in the discussions. The group are also working with Parish Councils along the B1102 to ensure that people are kept informed. It was noted that only 18 people from our region had responded to a summer consultation document.

Mr Covill noted the Swaffham Prior support for the group and that the need for it was emphasised by the business of the B1102 of late.

Village Gardeners rewilding group – Mike Barker reported.

A report had been provided for circulation before the meeting.

Mr Barker explained that the Village Gardeners volunteers had been looking at the verges and changes to the mowing regime this growing season. The bypass had looked good, but Betty's bank (Greenhead Road) had looked untidy and in need of further work, whilst the Cage Hill bank had been very dry and so was also in need of further work. The volunteers had undertaken an autumn tidy and planted seeds and plugs paid for by the PC, which should result in improvements next year. The group had also been in contact with CCC with an aim to develop the Rogers Road verges.

Mr Covill asked if the challenging weather had had an effect? Mr Barker thought it may have been a help, particularly on the bypass where the hot weather kept the grass low. Mr Covill thanked the group for their work.

Swaffham Prior Community Land Trust – Emma Fletcher reporting.

A report had been provided for circulation before the meeting.

There are 8 homes on Rogers Road owned by the CLT; all the tenancies were up for their 5 year renewal in March 2021, had been reviewed and had been offered to the current tenants for a further 5 years, although one property may possibly be available again soon.

Mr Covill noted that the tenants he had spoken to always seemed content and that the scheme was a credit to the village.

Swaffham Prior Heating Scheme – Emma Fletcher, Sheryl French and Janet Hall reporting.

A report had been provided for circulation before the meeting.

There had been much activity with the Heating Scheme. The design was confirmed to be net0 carbon to run, using 135 closed loop bore holes, air source heat pumps and solar panels.

Air quality monitoring had been taking place around the village.

The heating system is designed to run at 72°C which is ground-breaking within the UK and opens the scheme to houses of all ages. Listed properties would not need to apply for individual permission to instal the system and English Heritage are showing interest in the scheme's application to older houses; the scheme is also being watched by central government and the system is being studied by the University of Cambridge Engineering Department.

Sanctuary Housing, which owns 43 properties in the village, are undertaking upgrades to their housing heat retention with the help of CCC.

A heat interface unit has toured the village.

Since September 166 households have expressed interest in the scheme. Planning application was submitted in July 2020 and a result is expected by 30th November 2020. During July and August 2020 funding for the network was confirmed and consultation regarding the contract took place, the results of which are available on the website. At present, design surveys are taking place.

Sheryl French noted that the UK is hosting a Climate Change conference in January 2021 and that meetings have been held between CCC and a government minister wanting more rural projects to take communities off gas and oil.

The scheme is submitting a grant application with Sanctuary Housing that would target household with an income of under £30,000 and a E F or G energy efficiency rating, allowing access to grants of 50% of the cost of upgrades to heating efficiencies. There are also ongoing discussions on using the trenches dug to bring fibre optics to the village.

Mr Kent-Phillips asked what was happening with the idea of selling Carbon Credits to fund the scheme? Ms French replied that acceptable prices were being researched before this was agreed by CCC.

Mr Covill asked if any help would be available for properties unable to join the heating scheme due to being too far out of the village? Ms French noted the government aim of removing all homes from oil and gas heating by 2050, but currently working only with community schemes. She noted a range of options available for households individually, and that Burwell were currently looking into introducing a mixture of 20% hydrogen in to present gas supplies and whether such hydrogen would be obtainable from 'clean' sources. Mrs Fletcher noted that after Christmas, the government was due to consult on the changing of properties from gas and oil heating to other sources.

Village Hall Committee – Alan Durrant reporting.

A report had been provided for circulation before the meeting.

The Village Hall has been closed since the first lockdown for COVID and all bookings have been cancelled.

CCC have provided a grant covering 6 sevenths of the cost of the extension – the rest has been paid by the Village Hall and the work should hopefully be finished in December 2020.

Steve Kent-Phillips enquired when the bill for new chairs would need paying – when the chairs arrived or before? Mr Durrant to find out.

Swaffham Prior Parochial Church Charity – John Covill reporting

A report had been provided for circulation before the meeting.

End of year audited accounts for 2019:

Income £15,536.09

Expenditure £5,692.96

Carried forward £9,843.13

The SPPCC added a reminder that the Christmas Grant is now open for applications, as well as funding available for study materials for students and would like to emphasise that all applications would be treated confidentially.

Car Share Scheme and Proud of Prior.

Reports had been provided for circulation before the meeting. No representative attended.

The Car Share Scheme has been suspended for the duration of the COVID crisis; hopefully it will restart as driver volunteers become available again and requests come in.

The litter picks of Proud of Prior have also been suspended but hope to restart in the New Year and will be advertised in the Crier. Mr Kent-Phillips noted that PoP were asking for more litter pickers and hi-vis vests from the PC. Mr Covill expressed appreciation for the work done by PoP although it is a shame that it is necessary.

Sports and Social Committee

A report had been provided for circulation before the meeting.

The SPS&SC did not meet in the year as there was no activity. The finances are unchanged, but private. The Committee is still in existence and intends to continue. The SPS&SC can be contacted via Ted Hurst or John Berry.

No questions were asked.

Scouts

A report had been provided for circulation before the meeting. No representative attended.

The Scouts in Swaffham Prior have continued to go from strength to strength despite the difficulties of this last year, holding several meetings in the new Scout Hut in February and continuing work to update the hut with community support. After the loss of much of our camping equipment due to a break in, a fund raising event was generously hosted by the Red Lion. Lockdown has posed problems, however, we have been able to continue to meet via zoom and regular session continued throughout the summer term, including a virtual camp weekend. Beavers even managed a face to face end of term, 'bring but do not share' picnic. Cubs and Beavers managed half a term of meetings before October half term and have once again continued via zoom.

The hut is cleared, boarded, with newly fitted toilets, cloakroom entrance area and storage. We are eager to get on with the painting and fitting of the kitchen as soon as we are able to meet again. Over the last year we have gained new leaders - three are 'home grown' Swaffham Prior Cubs, who having graduated from Cubs to Scouts and then Explorers/Young Leaders and have now become Leaders themselves. This is wonderful to see, clearly we are doing something right!

Open Question Time

Farfield/Snakehall Farm Woods – Peter and Lisa Fretwell reporting.

Dr Fretwell said that he and Mike Barker had taken part in a meeting with CCC, who are interested in the biodiversity credits the proposed woods and ponds would provide and so very keen that it would go ahead. Dr and Mrs Fretwell are currently producing written and drawn plans to be sent to CCC and have undertaken a survey of the site. Hopefully the change in land use will go through in the Spring of 2021 so that groundworks would be undertaken in late spring/early summer 2021 and tree planting commence in autumn 2021.

Mr Kent-Phillips asked if the need for carparking had been addressed. Dr Fretwell said that in discussions with CCC it was thought that space for 2 cars could be made on the verge and there was also the option of parking at Snakehall Farm itself. This would be comparable with parking available for both Priory Wood and the Swamp in Burwell. Wheelchair parking and access would be through Snakehall Farm. The need for further parking would have to be assessed as necessary.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2nd-5th June 2022 – Emma Fletcher. Mrs Fletcher asked if there would be enthusiasm for a village celebration. Mr Kent-Phillips suggested a street party and Mrs Fletcher suggested this take place on the Sunday as there would be less traffic to divert. Village interest in getting involved to be gauged.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.