

**Minutes of the Swaffham Prior Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 11th January 2024
at 7.30pm in Swaffham Prior Village Hall.**

Present: Cllr John Covill (JC) (Chair), Cllr Sandra Gynn (SG), Cllr Peter Hart (PH), Cllr Kent-Phillips (SKP), Cllr Ruth Lambert (RL) and Cllr Paul Latchford (PL).

In attendance: Jude Griffiths (Clerk)

There were 2 members of the public in attendance.

166/23-24 To receive apologies for absence and to approve reasons for absence where appropriate.

Apologies were received from Cllr Alan Durrant, Cllr David Greenfield and Cllr Kate Muscroft.

167/23-24 Members' declaration of interest for items on the agenda and requests for dispensations

None.

168/23-24 Public participation for items on the agenda

None.

169/23-24 Reports

- a) Cambridgeshire County Council – report from Cllr Lorna Dupre received, circulated by email and noted. No representative attended.
- b) East Cambridgeshire District Council – report circulated by email. Cllr Charlotte Cane (CC) attended. The planned meeting with Sanctuary housing had been postponed again. The Operational Services Committee meeting at the end of the month will discuss the grant to the Newmarket Citizens' Advice Bureau, which is of significance to the area. The Combined Authority is consulting on its budget, including looking at bus routes and fares; one proposal was a reduced bus fare for the under 25s.

The Chair invited questions.

JC asked if there was a cap for increases in the Majoral precept? CC said not that she was aware.

JC reported a less than helpful encounter with reception staff of ECDC for a parishioner – CC to report back.

170/23-24 Approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 14th December 2023.

SKP proposed that the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting; seconded PH, passed with 2 abstentions.

171/23-24 Matters arising from previous minutes (for information only)

158/23/24 Update from GCP after the PC response to their latest proposal for the Greenway – it would appear they are looking into the option of stopping the Greenway just short of the village. The PC must now wait for further proposals.

172/23-24 Correspondence for consideration/circulation.

- a) Emails updating regarding the road into Upware in need of repairs. Noted.
- b) Email regarding Sutton replacement Neighbourhood Plan. Noted.
- c) Email response from Jon Munslow regarding weed-killing policy of CCC. Noted.

173/23-24 Consideration of planning applications received:

Approved:

- a) 23/01281/TRE G1 3 x Limes - Re-pollard back to previous pollard points and remove basal growth. Towers & Hill Charitable Trust Village Hall, 36 High Street, Swaffham Prior. Noted.

174/23-24 Accounts for payment including:

a) Clerk's salary and taxes	£560.00
Total	£560.00
nPower – electricity bill (dd)	£354.44
Wave – water bill (dd)	£ 76.94

SKP proposed that the accounts be paid in full; seconded PH, passed unanimously.

SKP proposed a transfer of £500.00 from the savings to the current account; seconded PH, passed unanimously.

175/23-24 To agree the Parish Council budget and precept for 2024-25.

SKP presented the current figures and proposed 2024-25 budget. After discussion and agreement of the budget, *SKP proposed a precept to £17000.00 for 2024-5; seconded PH, passed unanimously.*

NB this amounts to an increase of £8 per household for the year, or 15p per week.

176/23-24 To discuss the proposed housing need survey by Cambridgeshire ACRE and decide if the PC should support it or not.

DG suggested the following 2 points (by email):

- 1) The site location has to remain confidential and can't be disclosed to the PC. The PC is aware of some extremely sensitive areas of the village that have recently been proposed for development. The PC must ensure that it has all the means available to attempt to have some control on behalf of the Parish, which is impossible while the site in question remains unknown.
- 2) The Second issue is the PCs ability to control any development within the Planning Framework. As confirmed by Cllr Cane (ECDC) at the December meeting (min ref 152/23-24) "that a need for affordable housing expressed in a survey would make it very difficult to object to planning applications for exception sites".

SKP suggested 2 further points:

- 3) Cllr Cane (ECDC) had made the PC aware of 212 empty houses in East Cambridgeshire belonging to Sanctuary Housing alone, several of which are in Swaffham Prior.
- 4) Swaffham Prior already have a Community Land Trust in the village. Cambridgeshire ACRE are proposing using a second separate CLT to build and run the affordable housing; one that is not involved or embedded in the village in the same way as the present CLT.

SKP proposed that the PC should not support Cambridgeshire ACRE in conducting a housing need survey for the reasons listed above; seconded PH, passed unanimously.

Action: Clerk to write informing Cambridgeshire ACRE of the PC's decision.

177/23-24 To close the Optimum Cashcard account.

SKP explained that the Optimum Cashcard was being discontinued from 1st February 2024 and a replacement would need to be found.

Action: JC to look into a PC Barclays credit card with a limit.

178/23-24 To discuss maintenance of Cooper's Green regarding leaf fall and encroaching vegetation over the hedge-side path.

Emails from a member of the public had been received pointing out that the footpath at the back of Cooper's Green was having to deviate around fallen branches and self-set vegetation and that the

mature deciduous trees leaf fall produced considerable coverage of the grass that was at present only removed by a volunteer.

Action: Clerk to request quote from ETS removing overgrowth back to the fenceline along the edge of the Green.

After discussion, the PC felt the leaf cover would be dealt with adequately by the first mowing of the spring.

179/23-24 Report on Heating Scheme.

The Clerk read out a report sent in by DG.

Currently 63 properties have heat on, 36 have connections from the road ready to complete in the spring. One property will be connected once internal works are complete. Design and legal works are ongoing for further connections to the network in the spring, together with a planned push for additional sign-ups.

There have been no reported issues so far this winter and a start has been made developing Heat Maps of the network for further analysis.

The investigations and rectifications of the sound issues experienced from the Energy Centre are ongoing with stakeholders being kept updated on proposed and completed works.

A temporary reinstatement of the verge close to the Energy Centre entrance has been carried out.

180/23-24 Clerk's Report

All covered under other agenda items.

181/23-24 Parish Councillors' Reports

SKP noted that repairs to the fence between the church and cemetery were still being pursued.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

Open Question Time.

A member of the public noted high levels of litter along Heath Road. SKP suggested the litter-picking group could consider targeting it.

Business concluded at 8.24pm.

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