

Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting of Swaffham Prior, which took place on 29th May 2024, starting at 7.30pm at the Swaffham Prior Village Hall.

Attendance – 24 parishioners.

1. Welcome by the Chair.

John Covill chaired the meeting and welcomed all attending.

2. Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 31st May 2023.

These were approved by general consensus.

3. To hear from representatives of the following groups:

a. The Swaffham Prior Scouts, Beavers and Cubs. Steve White (Scouts) and Molly Richards (Beavers and Cubs).

Swaffham Prior Scouts has had a board of trustees since February 2024 in line with national changes in the Scout organisation.

The Scout Hut has been patched, painted, is now water/weather proof and has been boarded inside. It has heating, electricity and the water and drains have been connected.

At present, Swaffham Prior has 15 cubs, 15 beavers, 10 scouts, 5 young leaders and 5 section leaders/volunteers. There is a national shortage of section leaders so please spread the word if anyone is interested.

The Isleham Scout group folded and gifted all their camping gear to Swaffham Prior, replacing that which was stolen.

Grant applications have been complicated because the Scouts don't own the hut, but have received £1000.00 grant from Reach Solar Farm.

The Scouts have undertaken many group events e.g. BioBlitz, Halloween, Remembrance Parade, Christmas party, St George's Day, Reach Fiar and the Village Feast, Derbyshire and Easter camps, hiking. Looking into a possible beach camp this summer.

2027 will be the next World Scout Jamboree, taking place in Gdansk, Poland. Aim to send representatives.

Beavers and Cubs have also undertaken many activities with the help and support of a parent rota and a volunteer – hikes, parades, Clip n Climb, pancake evening, pizza evening, Christmas crafts etc plus undertaking many badges. The younger groups are thriving but need more adult leaders.

Molly Richards noted her intent to start a Forest School locally and asked that people please share this.

b. Proud of Prior litter-picking group Janet Wilmott – organiser.

The litter picks have not been regular in recent years. The day of the picks have moved to a Friday which has proved popular. The Scouts have joined a few picks.

Janet is aiming for the picks to be a monthly event from now on; the dates and times will be announced in the Crier and on the village Facebook page. There may be a twice-yearly working party organised to concentrate on specific areas of the village.

New equipment will be needed soon – which hopefully the PC will assist with.

c. Swaffham Prior Car Share Scheme Janet Wilmott – organiser.

The Scheme provides lifts to and from medical appointments. There are only a handful of volunteer drivers, so if anyone is interested in volunteering, please get in touch as the Scheme cannot expand beyond lifts to medical appointments without more drivers. It

has been found that for most car insurers, all that is required is to let them know that the driver is taking part – there are no extra insurance costs involved.

d. Saffham Prior Women's Institute. Janet Wilmott.

Meets every second Monday at the village hall at 7.30pm. A thriving joint WI with Saffham Bulbeck. Guest speaker at every meeting covering diverse subjects, cake and coffee/tea included!

Annual summer garden party and annual visit to local place of interest. Proactive fundraisers at village events.

New members and visitors warmly welcome and information regarding each month's meeting can be found in the Crier.

e. A-B1102 Group. Jon Cook – chair.

Much has happened in the last 12 months. Fordham, The Wilbrahams and 6 Mile Bottom PCs have joined the group. The development of bus routes has continued. A travel survey undertaken had nearly 900 respondents, giving information on travel patterns for the whole age range. A-B1102 have met with the Mayor, the Combined Authorities and been asked to contribute to discussions with the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership. The Group have explored concepts of active travel integrated with interchanges.

70 proposals for bus routes have been produced from the consultations – either new or improved routes. Saffham Prior is likely to benefit significantly from an improved no.11 route and a new route. A-B1102 were able to highlight and provide evidence for the need for both a fast, direct route into Cambridge and for access to the south of Cambridge, the sixth form colleges and the hospital.

Tender documents are prepared for 2 routes:

- 1) Soham - Fordham – Burwell – Saffham Prior – Saffham Bulbeck – Lode – Quy – Cambridge.
- 2) Newmarket – Exning – Burwell – reach – Saffham Prior – Saffham Bulbeck – Lode – Bottisham – The Wilbrahams – Fulbourn – Queen Edith's Way – Addenbrookes – Hills Road – Cherry Hinton – Fulbourn and back out again.

The key is the interchanges at Saffham Prior, Lode etc so that passengers can change quickly from one route to another.

Saffham Prior bus shelters will need improvement – lighting, seating, cover from the elements, real time passenger information. The PC will need to look into the funding available.

Next stage – going to operators for bids.

A £1 fare for under 25s will be introduced.

Opportunities:

– possible building of travel hubs, providing parking, safe places to leave bikes etc.

Potential locations are being discussed, for example Fordham could have the equivalent of a small P&R, reducing the numbers of cars on the B1102.

- Maybe a satellite P&R on this side of the A14 to counterbalance the move of the Newmarket Road P&R onto Airport Way to reduce the congestion along the B1102 into Cambridge.

The Chair thanked the group for all their work.

f. Saffham Prior Primary School. Report submitted by Helen Bartley, headteacher.

School Capacity - 109 children on roll. This year there is full capacity in Hedgehogs and 7 Hoglets but only half the spaces filled for next year. Concerns as this is a national theme and will affect funding and therefore the classes

One teacher returned from maternity leave and there is a new teacher in Y3/4

2 teachers are Local Leaders in Maths Education for the Cambridge Maths Hub
Ruth Dalton, TA retired after 38 years. She would be sorely missed but luckily is still coming in to school and volunteering regularly.

We have lots of wonderful volunteers who help with listening to children read etc. We couldn't do without their support.

Academic:

We were in the top 200 schools for Multiplication Tables Check out of over 20,000 primary schools nationally and received a letter of congratulations from the Minister for Schools.

SATs results last year, we had only 8 children who all achieved their very best and we were very proud of them.

We had a successful Science Week in October on the theme of Sustainability.

Last week was Health & Fitness Week which included a range of workshops such as Bounce, Olympic Dance which children wouldn't usually experience.

This year we have participated in a lot more tournaments including a Swimming Gala, Football, Cross-Country, Multi-skills, Hockey. We won the Fair Play Shield at the football tournament and were 2nd place in a dance competition,

Enrichment:

The Y5 & 6 class had a visit from Lucy Frazer MP. They asked some very challenging questions and not all were impressed by the answers but it is great to engage our young people in issues at this age.

The school has a well-established relationship with Queen's Court which is ongoing. Some children even joined the resident for Pudding Club!

Trips and visits include Kettles Yard, West Stow, Y5/6 going to Normandy, Denny Abbey, Botanic Gardens, local area – the windmill, Waterstones, village walks to develop map reading skills, Ely Museum, visited local gardens, Anglesey Abbey

As always the Maypole at Reach Fair and Swaffham Prior Fair was a great hit. Our children take lots of pride in being involved in these events.

Fundraising:

We have a very strong community of volunteers who ensure the pool keeps running, support in the classes and on the governing body and as FOSPs.

Last year, FOSPs and our community raised enough money for us to be able to buy 17 new chrome books. These are a real asset to the school.

Last Friday we had a Sponsored walk which raised over £1000

We have also participated in Comic Relief, Children in Need, and donated Christmas Boxes for Operation Child

As always, the school welcomes visitors and working with our local community so please do get in touch if there are any projects that we could get involved with or any further questions.

g. East Cambs District Council. Charlotte Cane – councillor.

The use of funding by the Mayor's precept for the new bus routes gives confidence that the bus route changes will happen and that if the new routes are well-used, the funding will continue. At present routes are decided by private companies but the Combined Authorities are looking at reorganising this so that they chose the bus routes, pay operators to run them but keep the income. This will enable less profitable routes to be subsidised by more profitable ones. This change involves a lot of work but it is actively being investigated.

Complaints about bin collection are down but about street sweeping are up. It is intended that the times of sweepings and the routes taken will be published in advance so that people can move parked cars in preparation. It was also suggested that PCs could be responsible for reporting if the job had been completed satisfactorily. ECSS have overspent this year and asked the ECDC for more money. There are many plans to improve bin collection (e.g. replacement of black bin bags with black wheelie bins) but these will not take place before 2025.

The Local Plan has been updated and is there now valid again. Consultation is taking place about the protection of hedgehogs – chosen by popular demand. A new Local Plan has been started but is now on hold while a judicial review takes place to see if a Local Plan is allowed to include Green standards higher than those demanded by government. Complaints of dangerous/illegal parking – ECDC does not do civil parking enforcement (one of the few councils that don't) and therefore this has to be tackled by the police.

h. Swaffham Prior Parish Council. John Covill – Chair.

The PC has installed new play equipment in the playground and has been ensuring all the policies etc are up-to-date and undertaking general maintenance around the village. The Precept has risen for the first time in 10 years.

i. Swaffham Prior Parochial Charities. John Covill – trustee.

The SPPC have been registering its land with the land registry – difficult without deeds! They have 3 new trustees and 2 new tenants.

j. The Village Hall. Philip Blackburn – chair of the Village Hall committee.

A relatively new committee has been feeling its way for the last few years but is now settled and very supportive of each other, to keep the Hall in good repair and well used. The Village Feast was restarted in May 2023 raising funds for the Village Hall and other charities; the Autumn show and Christmas Carol evening also took place, the latter being popular and very enjoyable. Philip thanked Jenny Brand for all her efforts in organising the 2024 Feast.

There has been an increase in the Hall's use for weddings and in regular use by groups. A new booking system was introduced in April 2024 and although there were teething problems, it will prove an asset.

The hall was redecorated last August and has had new blinds fitted recently. There are some issues with the fabric of the building and the committee are looking for a volunteer who would be interested in general maintenance of the building and grounds.

Kate Muscroft is joining committee meetings as a liaison between them and the PC.

k. The Community Land Trust. Emma Fletcher – board member.

The CLT was established in December 2013. The homes are owned by the CLT and managed day to day by Hundred Houses Housing Association. 8 homes (6 houses and 2 bungalows) were built and first occupied by residents in 2016 on five-year tenancies.

The majority of the tenants remained in the homes and renewed for a further five years.

There has been one home swap between tenants due to changes in family circumstances, one tenant has moved and one tenant sadly passed away last year.

An empty property was advertised last autumn and 8 applications were received and it has been re-let. The other seven homes are due to finish their current five year term in 2026 and will be readvertised next summer. Applications are regularly received but unless there is a home available, applications can only be considered every five years.

l. The Heating Scheme. Emma Fletcher.

64 properties are now connected to the heating scheme. Further connections were put on hold due to electrical grid constraints at the energy centre which is awaiting the new

power connection direct to the solar farm at Burwell. The new wire has now crossed B1102. There is an action on the team to ensure that the footpath is kept clear for cyclists and pedestrians. There is further work being undertaken at the energy centre regarding noise mitigation. There has also been a request for a customer user group which will be set up soon.

50 housing association properties now have external pipe connections, of which 4 are connected and the remaining 46 will be connected once the new power supply is in place. 15 private homes are fully surveyed awaiting connection with 5 more recent enquiries. The connection fee has been waived due to the delays with the power so anyone interested in being included in this wave of work is asked to make contact with the project team as soon as possible heatingswaffhamprior@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

m. The Bell Ringers. Gareth Davies – tower captain.

5 new ringers had joined this past year. The bells of Swaffham Prior are rung twice a month for church services and also for weddings, royal events and would like to ring for civic events (e.g. the Swaffham Prior Feast) if more people joined.

Gareth is happy to give tower tours (phone number to be added to the Crier).

The bells were restored in 1991 but will need further restoration at some point which will cost in the tens of thousands of pounds – the framework holding the bells is secure but difficult to work with.

A parishioner noted that their small daughter had loved the bell ringing event that took place last autumn and still talked about it.

Q. Would the Conservation Trust remove the bells if repair was too expensive?

Unlikely – the Trust was very positive about bells but lack funds

n. The Swaffham Crier. Caroline Matheson – editor.

The Crier is now nearly 50 years old and the current editors have been in place for 25 years. It has a circulation of 394, 8 staff (including a new treasurer and advertising manager) 4 crossword setters and 16 distributors (all volunteers). The front cover shows an original artwork by a local artist each month.

Finances – there are some new advertisers replacing those lost during Covid.

Looking to the future, the Crier needs back-up editors to take over if an issue arises, possibly with an eye to taking over completely in the future. There is also a need for contributors and if anyone were willing, a reporter for the PC meetings. Finally Caroline emphasised that the opinions in the Crier were not necessarily those of the editors.

The Chair thanked all involved for their work.

4. Open debate/questions.

- The Gay Bulleid Award for being a good neighbour was awarded to Martin Mead, for the many village projects he has helped on and much behind-the-scenes support given.
- The question of how wheelchair accessible the village is was raised, as there are problems with narrow and/or overgrown footpaths and accessibility to some locations. Cllr Charlotte Cane offered to walk the village with the parishioner in question to see where the problems were; ECDC would be involved in any necessary lowering of pavements and the PC will remind parishioners to cut back vegetation over paths bordering their properties.
- A vote of thanks was given to the new pub landlords, who have made it a great place to go through much hard work.

Business concluded and the meeting closed at 8.55pm.