

Minutes of the meeting of the Swaffham Prior Parish Council held on Thursday 13th March 2025 at 7.30pm in Swaffham Prior Village Hall.

Present: Cllr John Covill (JC), Cllr Peter Hart (PH), Cllr Sandra Gynn (SG), Cllr Steve 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.

193/24-25 To receive apologies for absence and to approve reasons for absence where appropriate.

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

194/24-25 Members' declaration of interest for items on the agenda and requests for dispensations

None.

195/24-25 Public participation for items on the agenda

None.

196/24-25 Reports

- a) Cambridgeshire County Council. No report received; no representative attended.
- b) East Cambridgeshire District Council. Report circulated by email; Cllr John Trapp attended. Cllr Trapp noted:

- that the council tax remained frozen, although there were rises in other departments
- the Local Plan was no longer being revised, due to changes in government
- objections to the Mepal crematorium plans had not passed.

The Chair invited questions.

SKP asked which other councils East Cambs is likely to merge with to form a unitary authority.

Cllr Trapp thought it most likely with South Cambs and Cambridge City.

SKP asked if the Combined Authorities will continue? Cllr Trapp said yes.

SKP asked if a new Local Plan will cover the unitary authority area? Cllr Trapp said yes.

JC asked if neighbourhood plans would be taken into account in Planning plans? Cllr Trapp said they should be.

SKP/PL asked if the new unitary authority would have a different political makeup? Cllr Trapp said it should be tripartite, no overall control.

SKP asked if there was a degree of choice as to which councils will form unitary authorities? Cllr Trapp said that it will be a joint decision between the 6 councils involved.

PL asked if council tax would rise under the new unitary authority? Cllr Trapp said it may.

PH asked what was happening regarding unoccupied Sanctuary houses in Swaffham Prior. Cllr Trapp will look into it.

197/24-25 Approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 13th February 2025

SKP proposed that the minutes of the meeting be accepted as a true and accurate record; seconded SG, passed unanimously.

198/24-25 Matters arising from previous minutes (for information only)

Min. ref. 188/24-25 DG via email. 1m of the missing double yellow lines are the responsibility of the Heating Scheme and will be replaced. The rest is the responsibility of the Water Authority.

Min. ref. 188/24-25 DG via email. Road surface degradation – the sub-contractor for the Heating Scheme to inspect and provide a report including remedial actions.

Min. ref. 188/24-25 PL to contact the Water Authority following receipt of the above information.

Min. ref. 182.24-25 PL to order ground cover tomorrow.

199/24-25 Correspondence for consideration/circulation.

- a) Emails from a parishioner regarding the poor state of the fen roads. Noted.

200/24-25 Consideration of planning applications received.

Approved:

- a) 24/01287/FUL and 24/01288/LBC Addition of 3No. Conservation style roof windows to the rear including internal changes and the retrospective erection of a chimney. The Smock Tower Mill, Mill Hill, Swaffham Prior, Cambridge. CB25 0JZ. Noted.
- b) 24/01337/FUL Construction of koi/eco pond in residential garden. The Smock Tower Mill, Mill Hill, Swaffham Prior, Cambridge, CB25 0JZ. Noted.
- c) 24/01158/FUL Change of use from an annexe to holiday let accommodation. The Smock Tower Mill, Mill Hill, Swaffham Prior, CB25 0JZ. Noted.

201/24-25 Accounts for payment including:

a) Clerk's salary and taxes	£561.20
b) Village Hall rent – January and February 2025	£40.00
	<u>£601.20</u>

Direct debits:

Vodafone	£36.86
ICO registration	£47.00

Income:

Ivett and Reed – cremation plaque	£ 50.00
Swaffham Prior Parochial Charities – grass cutting	£216.00

Further outgoings of £439.21 for CAPALC/NALC annual membership renewal and £79.99 for Microsoft annual renewal were noted.

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

SKP proposed a transfer of £1000.00 from the Business to the Community accounts; seconded SG, passed unanimously.

202/24-25 To consider the council's response to issues regarding poorly maintained local roads.

SKP had spoken to a Highways representative. There are 15,000 major potholes on A and B roads in Cambridgeshire. The criteria by which road repairs are prioritised for fixing are:

1. A roads, then B, then C, then unlisted roads.
2. The numbers of vehicles using (the higher the numbers, the higher up the repair list)
3. The number of claims for damage to vehicles associated with it.

Some extra funding for repairs to fen roads has come through. A trial of techniques to fix potholes long term is taking place but will not conclude for 3 years. Although the PC may be able to pay for repairs to potholes, the PC would then become legally responsible for that repair.

The PC concluded that all that can be done is to keep reporting potholes until they are fixed.

203/24-25 To decide actions regarding 2 cemetery benches in need of repairs.

Viv Elston had inspected the benches and reported that it would be more cost efficient to replace them rather than repair them.

Action: Clerk to investigate the cost of 2 hardwood replacement benches – to be discussed in April.

Action: Clerk to attempt to contact the Reeve family, to make aware that their memorial bench is potentially to be replaced.

204/24-25 To adopt a revised publication scheme

SKP proposed that the revised publication scheme be adopted: seconded SG, passed unanimously.

205/24-25 To consider the council's response to a Housing Survey sent to all households regarding potential building on Dencora Field.

SKP proposed that the Clerk write in response to the housing survey pointing out that:

- the village is aware of its housing needs
- there is already a Community Land Trust in the village, providing 10 affordable houses, meeting most of the village's needs
- their proposed site (SWP1 in the Local Plan) has already been developed for social/affordable housing, so the land is not available – they have been misinformed
- the survey refers to the SWP1 site only, therefore is invalid (as the site is already in use) and cannot be used to support other projects in the village.

Seconded SG, passed unanimously.

Action: Clerk to write as above.

206/24-25 To discuss the proposal that the footpath on Station Road by the school is fully tarmacked and the grass verge removed.

After discussion, it was concluded that no proposal could be brought forward until ownership of the verge in question was established.

207/24-25 Report on Heating Scheme

DG – nothing to report.

208/24-25 Clerk's Report

The Clerk had forgotten to check the cemetery tap for leaks – to do tomorrow and fix if necessary.

209/24-25 Parish Councillors' Reports

PH reported that the footpath outside 28/30 Lower End was becoming overgrown.

Action: Clerk to write to request the overhanging vegetation is cut back.

The meeting ended at 8.25pm

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