

Minutes of the meeting of the Swaffham Prior Parish Council held on Thursday 10th April 2025 at 7.30pm in Swaffham Prior Village Hall.

Present: Cllr John Covill (JC), Cllr David Greenfield (DG), Cllr Peter Hart (PH), Cllr Sandra Gynn (SG), Cllr Steve Kent-Phillips (SKP), Cllr Alan Durrant (AD) and Cllr Kate Muscroft (KM).

In attendance: Jude Griffiths (Clerk)

There were 3 members of the public in attendance.

210/24-25 To receive apologies for absence and to approve reasons for absence where appropriate.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Ruth Lambert and Paul Latchford

211/24-25 Members' declaration of interest for items on the agenda and requests for dispensations

None.

212/24-25 Public participation for items on the agenda

A member of the public spoke on the subject of planning applications and complications encountered in the process.

A second member of the public asked if the cemetery benches could be repaired more cheaply than replaced.

213/24-25 Reports

a) CCC – no report received, no representative attended.

b) ECDC – report circulated by email prior to the meeting; Cllr John Trapp attended.

Cllr Trapp explained that the choice of which councils formed a unitary authority was decided by locality and numbers. A joint proposal of the councils would be made by November 2025, a decision made in January 2026 and the change implemented in 2028. The Combined Authorities will still exist, with the Mayor overlooking 2 unitary authorities.

Cllr Trapp also noted that the Sanctuary Housing counter at the Grange had been removed and that he intended to get information on the number of empty Sanctuary houses in Swaffham Prior at a meeting on Monday.

214/24-25 Approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 13th March 2025.

The word 'tax' was added to min. ref. 196/24-25 a)

The word 'potentially' was added to min. ref. 203/24-25

SKP proposed that with these two changes, the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting; seconded SG, passed with two abstentions.

215/24-25 Matters arising from previous minutes (for information only)

None.

216/24-25 Correspondence for consideration/circulation.

a) Email response from Midlands Rural Housing to the PCs email regarding the housing survey. A meeting is to be arranged between DG, Cllr John Trapp and the ECDC Planning Department manager in order for the PC to understand fully where it stands in relation to this proposal.

SKP noted the survey would be invalid due to 1) the reference to the wrong site affected the results obtained, as was made clear by postings on the village Facebook page stating that a different response would have been submitted if the correct site had been identified and 2) the survey did not give an option of 'no housing wanted'.

Action: DG to arrange such a meeting and report back to the next PC meeting.

217/24-25 Consideration of planning applications received.

Approved:

- a) 25/00234/TRE T1 Cypress – fell to near ground level and grind stump. 7 High Street, Swaffham Prior, Cambridge CB25 0LD. Noted.

218/24-25 Accounts for payment including:

a) Clerk's salary and taxes	£392.00
b) Village Hall rent – March 2025	£20.00
c) Nurture Landscaping – grass cutting Village Hall March	£71.28
d) Nurture Landscaping – grass cutting Cooper's Green March	£71.28
e) Nurture Landscaping – grass cutting Village Sign March	£26.14
f) Nurture Landscaping – grass cutting Footpaths March	£47.52
g) Nurture Landscaping – grass cutting Playground March	£57.02
h) Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management renewal	£105.00
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	£790.24

Direct debits:

Vodafone £36.86

Water bill £77.11

DG noted that the Nurture Landscaping invoices were all incorrect and that new, correct invoices should be on the way.

The Clerk noted that the Microsoft 365 subscription renewal had been £104.99, not £79.99 and had been paid for by the clerk personally.

SKP proposed that the PC settle the accounts for a) b) and h) only: seconded DG, passed unanimously.

SKP proposed that the PC refund the Clerk for the Microsoft 365 subscription; seconded DG, passed unanimously.

SKP proposed a transfer of £1000.00 from the business to the current account; seconded PH, passed unanimously.

219/24-25 To consider an application for a grant by a) Ely Food Bank and b) The Scouts

SKP proposed that the application for the grant by Ely Food Bank be refused as the food bank did not cover Swaffham Prior; seconded DG, passed unanimously.

SKP explained that the Scouts were looking for funding for repairs to a French drain at the Scout Hut – to be discussed at the May meeting once further information has been received.

Action: Clerk to check the power to spend for this grant.

220/24-25 To consider the cost of purchasing 2 cemetery benches

SKP proposed that the Clerk order a replacement bench from Scotsdales at a cost of £299.99, and obtain quotes for the repair of the bench with cast iron ends; seconded AD, passed unanimously.

The Clerk noted that according to information received from a parishioner, there are no descendants of the Reeves to contact regarding their bench.

Action: the Clerk to seek quotes and to post on the Village Facebook page to see if anyone would be interested in repairing a bench.

- 221/24-25** Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (2) to resolve that members of the public and press be requested to leave the meeting by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted under agenda item 222/24-25.

SKP proposed that the PC resolve as described above; seconded KM, passed unanimously.

- 222/24-25** To discuss responses to 2 planning pre applications

SKP proposed that the PC had no objections to the first pre-application; seconded SG, passed unanimously.

DG proposed that the PC request the Planning department ensure that the appearance is sympathetic to the surrounding for the second pre-application; seconded SKP, passed unanimously.

Action: the Clerk to pass the PC responses back to the Planning Department

- 223/24-25** To move to a gov.uk domain for the website and emails

SKP noted that the current PC website hosting agreement expires in June and that in order to pass the audit in 2026-7, the PC website and clerk email must be either 'gov.uk' or 'org.uk'. SKP had found a local firm, Mythic Beasts, willing to provide the necessary at a much lower price than when the matter was previously discussed (September and October 2024).

SKP proposed that the PC accept a quote from Mythic Beasts for a website, domain name (swaffhamprior-pc.gov.uk), 5 emails and cloud storage for 10 years of £442.00 plus VAT; seconded SG, passed unanimously.

- 224/24-25** To consider allowing the renting of two allotment plots by one applicant

SG proposed that the applicant be allowed to rent two plots for the 2025-26 year; seconded SKP, passed unanimously.

Action: the Clerk to revise the allotment tenancy agreement for 2026-27.

- 225/24-25** Report on Heating Scheme

Report provided by DG.

The ongoing noise issues are being addressed. Much mitigation work is being undertaken.

DG is awaiting feedback on landscaping as planting is due now.

- 226/24-25** Clerk's Report

- a) The tap in the cemetery has been fixed at no cost.
- b) The date of the Annual Village meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 28th May
- c) A report has been received of children climbing on the bus stop roof and over onto the private property behind.
Action: Clerk to produce a sign warning of the dangers for the bus stop.
- d) The Clerk requested a replacement laptop as the current one is struggling with the amount of photographs needing storing and cannot be updated to Windows 11.
Action: Clerk to obtain quote from World of Computers for a replacement laptop and transfer of all data – to be discussed at the May meeting.
- e) The Clerk reported finishing and passing the CiLCA qualification; the PC offered congratulations.

227/24-25 Parish Councillors' Reports

- a) SKP noted that the year end is to be completed in time for the May meeting agenda.
- b) DG reported having attended a meeting regarding the Kingsway proposal, along with representatives of all affected PCs. DG is not confident that the outcome of the consultation can be influenced by the PCs, but that it is very early in the process. SKP noted that English Heritage had refused permission for pylons passing over Devil's Dyke but that they could be overruled by the Secretary of State.
- c) JC noted that two major potholes on the fen roads had been repaired and that a resident had been given a timetable of works for the fen roads and driveways, which if isn't completed in the next 12 months, could result in the Highways Agency being taken to the Magistrates Courts.

The meeting closed at 8.58pm