

Minutes of the meeting of the Swaffham Prior Parish Council held on Thursday 14th August 2025 at 7.30pm in Swaffham Prior Village Hall.

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

In attendance: Jude Griffiths (Clerk).

There were 3 members of the public in attendance.

73/25-26 To receive apologies for absence and to approve reasons for absence where appropriate.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Peter Hart and Ruth Lambert.

74/25-26 Members' declaration of interest for items on the agenda and requests for dispensations

None.

75/25-26 Public participation for items on the agenda

None.

76/25-26 Reports

- a) Cambridgeshire County Council. No report received, Cllr Malinowski sent her apologies.
- b) East Cambs District Council. No report received. Cllrs Cane and Trapp sent their apologies.

77/24-25 Approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 10th July 2025
SKP proposed that the minutes be accepted as the true and accurate record of the meeting; seconded SG, passed unanimously.

78/25-26 Matters arising from previous minutes (for information only)
DG 57/25/26 Still no date for a meeting with the ECDC head of planning.

79/25-26 Correspondence for consideration/circulation.

- a) Email from Mike Barker regarding possible ecological effects of Long Barrow Solar Farm. Noted.

Action: Clerk to forward details to John Chalmers for the Crier.

- b) Email from Low Carbon regarding the Long Barrow Solar Farm proposal. Noted.

80/25-26 Consideration of planning applications received.

- a) 25/00770/ESF The construction, operation and decommissioning of a ground-mounted solar farm and associated infrastructure, including inverters, customer switchgears, substation compound, security cameras, fencing, access tracks and access, as well as landscape and ecological improvements. Land south of Partridge Hall Farm, Heath Road, Swaffham Bulbeck, Cambridgeshire.

DG proposed that the PC respond with the following concerns:

1. *The proposed site is on top of a scheduled ancient monument and an unscheduled bronze age circular ditch. This would require extensive archaeological investigation of both the monuments and the area they are set in.*

2. *The proposed site is under the flight path to Newmarket racecourse and there is concern that light reflected from the solar panels could dazzle pilots overhead.*
3. *The application does not show the line of connection between the Burwell substation and the proposed solar farm, or whether the connections would be underground or overhead - these are important considerations and are missing from the application.*
4. *The condition of Heath Road – which is already in need of substantial repair and is not fit for use by the necessary additional heavy construction vehicles that would need access. Are the developers proposing to contribute by funding necessary road repairs and improvements?*
5. *Provision at the junction of Heath Road and the B1102 for increased traffic – at present the PC's Speed Indicator Device has recorded 1000 cars per hour in each direction between 8-10am and 4-6pm. This is not easily combined with heavy vehicles leaving and rejoining the B1102. The PC have noticed that a traffic survey has been undertaken (although it is unknown who carried it out or for what reasons); however it was during the summer holidays when schools are out and people are away - to compile an accurate view of the levels of traffic, there would need to be a number of surveys at different times of the year.*
6. *The potential for noise pollution for residents from increased traffic noise, potentially outside of normal hours.*
7. *Access to the site for fire engines – as noted Heath Road is already in poor condition. Also, the robustness of risk assessments for fire at a solar farm, particularly in reference to the battery storage.*
8. *The PC refute the description of Heath Road as particularly quiet. There are currently 4 agricultural contractors based along that roadway in addition to a sizable construction company with a fleet of lorries. This has already increased the volume of heavy machinery using the road at all hours.*
9. *Parishioners have raised concerns about a devaluing of house prices overlooking the proposed farm.*
10. *Concern has been raised around 'scope creep'; that the solar farm, once agreed, could expand considerably in size, as observed at West Wrattling, another site in the area.*
Seconded SKP, passed unanimously.
 Action: Clerk to query the address of 'Swaffham Bulbeck' on the planning application.

b) -

Approved:

- c) 25/00696/TRE T1 Lime tree - Re-pollard back to previous points as part of a good management regime. T2 Lime tree - Re-pollard back to previous points as part of a good management regime. T3 Lime tree- Re-pollard back to previous points as part of a good management regime. T4 Horse Chestnut- Colonisation by bleeding canker evident, no significant decay noted, some deadwood in crown. Re-pollard back to previous points. T5 Wild Cherry- Prune crown to provided clearance from ground level of 2.5m point, and that an aerial inspection is undertaken at the same time due to the location of the target. T6 Cherry- Young self-set tree under canopy of T5, tight to fence, remove as a poor specimen with limited growth potential, is likely to damage fencing. Playground, High Street, Swaffham Prior.

Noted

- d) 25/00671/TRE T1 Sycamore adjacent to house - Reduce height by 5m, reduce spread on all sides by 2.5m and shape round. T2 Cypress adjacent to house - Reduce height by 4-5m down to ridge of roof trim back on garden side by 1.5m. T3 Yew - Trim to clear phone lines by 1-1.5m, remove dead branches in inner canopy.
Stocks Farm House, 1 Lower End, Swaffham Prior, Cambridgeshire, CB25 0HT.
Noted.

81/25-26 Accounts for payment including:

a) Clerk's salary and taxes	£560.00
b) Village Hall rent (July)	£20.00
c) Meads Construction (Scout Hut)	£1860.00
d) Nurture Landscapes Ltd (March grass cuts)	£766.04
e) Nurture Landscapes Ltd (April grass cuts)	£366.37
f) Nurture Landscapes Ltd (May grass cuts)	£1032.50
g) Nurture Landscapes Ltd (June grass cuts)	£865.97
Total	<u>£5470.88</u>

Direct debit:

Vodafone (PC mobile) £39.22

HyperJar Card

Community Heartbeat (Defib battery) £270.00

Transfer from current account to HyperJar card £200.00 (18/7)
£100.00 (21/7)

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

SKP proposed a transfer of £5500.00 from the business to the current account: seconded SG, passed unanimously.

SKP proposed that the PC retrospectively approve the transfer of £100 and £200 to the HyperJar card account for the payment for a defibrillator battery; seconded SG, passed unanimously.

Action: Clerk to update Financial Regulations to increase the amount of emergency spending allowable – for the September meeting.

82/25-26 To hear a progress report on the Village Photo Album and approve payment of an invoice

Celia Tyler reported the progress made on the project to the meeting. So far the project is under budget and should be completed by the end of the year, producing 5 copies of the book.

SKP proposed that the PC pay the invoice for scanning images; seconded DG, passed unanimously.

SKP noted that £750.00 had been ringfenced for the project in 2020, of which £322.50 has been spent so far.

83/25-26 To agree to pay for a councillor to attend an online course on the new Planning Framework.

SKP proposed that the PC pay for DG to attend the online Planning course; seconded SG, passed unanimously.

84/25-26 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 85/25- 26

PL proposed that the above proposal be passed; seconded DG, passed unanimously.

85/25-26 To discuss and respond to PREAPP/00086/25

DG outlined the details of the proposal for discussion.

DG proposed that the PC support the pre application; seconded KM, passed unanimously.

86/25-26 To decide whether to repair, replace or remove the broken cemetery bench with cast iron ends.

The bench is to be dismantled and the cast iron pieces stored in the Keep.

87/25-26 To accept a memorial application

SKP proposed that the memorial application be accepted; seconded SG, passed unanimously.

88/25-26 To allow the renting of 2 allotment plots by a resident of Burwell

SKP proposed that the Burwell resident be allowed to rent the 2 plots; seconded KM, passed 2 for, 1 against, 4 abstentions.

89/25-26 To agree a quote from ETS for the cutting back of the Village Hall drive trees

SKP proposed that the PC accept the ETS quote; seconded DG, passed unanimously.

90/25-26 To agree a grant application from A-B1102

SKP proposed that the PC award a grant of £200.00 to the A-B1102 group; seconded KM, passed unanimously.

91/25-26 To discuss the employment of a contractor for twice yearly clearance of vegetation from footpaths

DG reported that Nurture Landscaping had been impeded from cutting the grass by overgrown vegetation on and some footpaths. It was suggested that the PC investigate paying for twice-yearly cutting back of the footpaths. An alternative suggestion was a regular schedule of reminders to householders bordering footpaths/rights of way.

Action: Clerk to gather quotes for both a one off cut back and for regular pruning.

92/25-26 Report on Heating Scheme and the proposal to remove this item from future agenda and cover it under ‘Parish Councillors’ reports’ instead.

DG reported.

- 23rd July a (false) alarm for an ammonia leak went off at the Heating Centre – very loud and disturbing. The placing of the alarm is being considered, dependant on whether it is aimed at alerting workers on site or residents nearby.
- The yellow lines were reported as completed. On inspection they are only partly completed. DG to follow up.
- The school is not taking up the scheme; DG to raise if the Village Hall can be connected in, bypassing the school.
- In light of the plentiful information available through the Crier, *DG proposed that the Report on Heating Scheme be removed from the agenda and any information be covered in the Parish Councillors reports; seconded PL, passed unanimously.*

93/25-26 Clerk’s Report

- a) Wrote to four agricultural firms regarding driving carefully through the village
- b) Wrote to property in the village regarding the overhanging hedge –A phone call was received in response – the owner does not seem amenable to making pavement fully accessible. Consultation with ECDC noted that ECDC unlikely to get involved with anything less than total removal, lifting of branches may or may not cause die back, there are potential solutions which may or may not work, Highways have power to clear path and potentially charge owner.
Action: Clerk to reply to issues raised.
- c) Bus stop. Consultation with ECDC Planning department indicated that if the PC submit a proposal, the Planning Department will see if it would be allowed.

94/25-26 Parish Councillors’ Reports

- a) SG noted that a bus stopping at 7.30am had caused an obstruction of the road due to parking congestion. DG had raised this at the last meeting of the A-B1102 Group. It was noted that the buses have to be at set nodes at set times, one of which is Swaffham Prior and that the bus companies are working to get things right.
- b) DG asked that the Clerk find out who had undertaken the traffic census on Heath Road.
Action: Clerk to ask Highways.
DG also asked that another parish councillor attend the next Kingsway briefing of 19th August at 6pm online, in case he is prevented by internet issues.

Business concluded and the meeting closed at 9.08pm

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