**Swerford Parish Council**

**Parish Council Committee Meeting**

**Thursday 30 July 2020 at 19:30 hrs**

**Virtual Meeting using ZOOM**

**Present:** Mr J Chaplin, (Chairman), Mrs J Abbott (Councillor and Deputy Chair), Mr J Drinkwater (Councillor), Mr W Haddon (Parish Clerk), Mr G Strachan (Councillor and RFO). Mr L Tustian (Councillor). (JC, JA, JD, Clerk, GS, LS respectively hereafter.)

**Residents:** Mr C Campion, Mr N Davies, Mr C Dixon, Mr K Gardner, Mr M Osborne, Mr N Wellard, Dr M Welstead,. (CC, ND, CD, KG, MO, NW, MW respectively.)

**Draft Minutes**

1. **Declarations of Interest.** None noted.
2. **Apologies for absence.** None received.
3. **Code of Conduct.** Noted.
4. **Approval of minutes** of meeting of 14th May 2020. Approval proposed by J.A, seconded by J.D. Approved.
5. **Matters arising.**
   1. The renewal of Council insurance through Ecclesiastical to 31MAY21, together with a new policy on the Ride-On Mower (Amlin Countrywise) was noted. GS had an enquiry related to values which had been increased for insurance purposes. Assets had been taken from the Register of Assets and replacement values updated for insurance purposes - book values remain unchanged. A copy of the Register has since been forwarded to GS for the sake of good order.
6. **Financial Governance**:
   1. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Part 2) (AGAR) requirements were addressed:

- The Certificate of Exemption, to be signed by RFO and Chairman and despatched to the external auditor by 31JUL20, was approved (Proposed: JA. Seconded: J.D.)

- The Annual Governance Statement, confirmed/signed by Chairman, was approved. (Proposed: L.T. Seconded: J.D.)

- Accounting Statements, noting any significant variances as required, were approved. Proposed: J.C. Seconded: L.T.

These are to be published on the Village Website for a period of at least 14 days commencing no later than 31AUG20.

* GS will set the dates applicable to the Notice of Public Rights of as soon as possible: to commence on or before 1SEP20 for a period of 30 consecutive working days.
* The Internal Audit Report process was outlined by GS: it was agreed that the target date for completion be 1SEP20. (Notice of Conclusion of the Annual Audit by 30NOV20).
  1. An up-to-date statement of Receipts and Payments together with Summary of Balances held was noted (having previously been circulated). No Loans or Investments exist. (Individual item greater than £100 to be listed noting: date, purpose, amount, VAT that cannot be recovered).
  2. Approval of the 2019-2020 Financial Accounts was formalised.

1. **Planning Applications** received since last meeting:
   1. The Cold Harbour Farm Application (20/01248/FUL) was discussed in depth. The deadline for Council comment is 13AUG20.
      1. JC gave the outline for a proposed response by the Council. This was followed by general discussion with particular input from village members MO, KG, ND and CC.
      2. It is clear that considerable opposition exists for a number of very fundamental reasons. These include issues to do with: the environment; safety (particularly related to the A 361 and even more general access); noise; an absence of any obviously sustainable commercial projections; hidden follow-ons necessary to make this sort of project work; possible incorrect process.
      3. There are groups in the community who have already been working on this with action planned to maximise opposition.

It was agreed that this is a complex situation and that the Council will object. To this end JC will liaise with MO, KG and CC to harbour thoughts. It will be important to target the best level of local government including the WODC Planning Committee, the Head of Oxfordshire County Council, Hilary Biles and District Councillors. And to advise villagers in a simple and straightforward way as to what is going on, and the Council’s response, with a view to galvanising participation.

Other consideration will be given to practical contact with Hook Norton and possible other local Parishes with a view to seeking their support.

It was not thought that a letter to our MP was a practical step at this stage.

* 1. ND very briefly outlined his intention to apply for planning permission to extend Lyndhurst.

1. **General Governance**:
   1. The general delays caused by the COVID situation were noted very briefly. Items listed will be taken forward in due course.
2. **Playground.**
   1. The paper previously circulated was referred to and a discussion occurred. Although regrettable, it was not possible to reach a majority in favour of opening the playground. It was agreed that this be kept under informal review.
3. **Village Hall** 
   1. £10,000 has been received by way of government grant to assist the Hall with a drop in revenues
   2. Insurance renewal due 13SEP20 will be taken forward by the Chairman/Clerk. Current cover will be renewed.
4. **Village Website**
   1. The website ‘swerford.org’ has been launched. Legal requirements for Council documents requiring publication remain under review. What is now needed is training for usage by individually appointed users.
5. **Footpath 375/5**

The position outlined in the Agenda was discussed and formally ratified / approved.

1. **Any Other Business**
   1. Mary Welstead gave a forceful argument as to the dangers relating to the corner next to the telephone box in East End, being most concerned that a serious accident might occur and that steps be taken to see that the risks are minimised.

This was discussed in some detail and it was decided that the matter is reverted to once the building work on Lansdowne Cottage is complete. Hopefully the excessive amount of space taken by this project bunging up the road, will alleviate the situation. It was noted that householders along the road have cars which may only be parked on the road, and that there are many dangerous corners into the village, particularly (for example) coming in from Hook Norton. Some thought will need to be given as to practical possibilities.

* 1. CC raised the issue of work at Lansdowne Cottage. Three key points were made: (a) that one of the buildings appears to have been built well in excess of the height approved (completion is imminent); (b) the lack of response by the Planning Authorities despite numerous emails, starting in June, advising them of this apparent breach; and (c) concerns as to health and safety contraventions which (again) whilst having been reported to the relevant authority (Environmental Health) have received no response. It is felt that the building team is unconcerned and have shown little respect to the neighbours.

The development of Lansdowne Cottage has been of considerable angst to neighbours and the Council who have opposed various proposals for development along the way. CC urged the Council to reiterate to WODC the importance of proper planning control and the need for urgent action when apparent breaches of Planning and Environmental Control are reported.

Furthermore, as originally objected to by the Council (and neighbours), the traffic concerns related to that part of the village are now a reality, being raised, separately, earlier in the meeting.

The following general matters will be taken forward at the first practical opportunity:

* 1. **Playing Fields:** a working party to clean the area (Jane Abbott and John Chaplin were liaising).
  2. **Swerford Charity** updates (when appropriate).
  3. **CPR training** targeted for JUL20.
  4. **Salt Refills**. OCC had delivered a new bag as requested but had yet to distribute to our bins as promised. The location of a new bin at Chapel End has yet to be decided. JC was considering further together with a new request for next year’s provisions.
  5. Location of a new **Chapel End tree.**
  6. How best to install and thereafter maintain ‘dog friendly’ access to all **stiles.** Progress on writing to all involved landowners was to be taken forward by the Clerk after meeting with Colin Ford to gather names and addresses. A letter would then be sent by the Chairman.
  7. The damaged **mile post** by the A361.
  8. **Bus Services**.
  9. Re-institution of a village **‘Welcome Pack’** - volunteers needed!
  10. **Road Warning signs** on Chapel Hill.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:30 p.m.

W Haddon

2 August 2020