**Swerford Parish Council**

**Parish Council Committee Meeting**

**Thursday 18 August 2021 at 19:30 hrs**

**Swerford Village Hall**

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

**Residents:** Mr C Ford, Mr D. Lang, Mr R Miller, Ms L Peachey, Mr J Sealey, Mr N Scott.

**Draft Minutes**

1. **Declarations of Interest.**

LT declared an interest in the subject of glamping as well as being the proprietor of Ash Hill Farm, subject to later discussion.

1. **Apologies for absence.**

None.

1. **Code of Conduct.**

Acknowledged and noted.

1. **Approval of Minutes:**
	1. Proposed by JD and seconded by GS, the minutes of 4MAY21 were approved.
	2. Proposed by LT and seconded by GS, the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of 21JUN21 were approved.
2. **Matters arising.**
	1. It was noted that a general complaint to WODC Planning had not been formally made. Further consideration will be given. **(Action: JC.)**
	2. The next series of Meeting dates were noted:
		1. Council Meetings: 18AUG21, 17NOV21 and 16FEB22.
		2. Annual Parish Assembly: 22APR22.
		3. Annual Parish Council Meeting: 25MAY22.
	3. The renewal of Council insurance through Came & Co. was formally ratified. Some discussion occurred as to the increase in premium, the reasons for which were accepted.

While not on the Agenda, JC outlined the subject of listing the stone stiles in the Parish (one in Castle Field, the other near the old Griffin). Basically, Oxfordshire County Council are opposed and, as such, this is unable to be progressed. Their logic was not obviously clear.

1. **Financial Governance**:
	1. An up-to-date statement of Receipts and Payments, actual versus forecast, together with a Summary of Balances held was presented by GS. This was briefly discussed.

No Loans or Investments exist. Balances with HSBC currently total: £6,665.16 (Deposit) and £3,696.88 (when adjusted for unpresented items). The VAT position is up-to-date: a further claim in the normal course of business will be made later in the year.

A list of cheques issued since 1 March 2021 was presented (in future to be part of the Agenda):

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Payee** | **Comment**  |  | **Number**  | **Date**  | **Financial Year** | **£ Gross**  | **£ Excl**  **VAT** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| OALC | OALC 2021-22 membership |   | 100410 | 13/3/21  | 2021-22 | 146.16 | 121.80 |
| Jonathan Drinkwater | Mower petrol |   | 100415 | 28/4/21  | 2021-22 | 20.00 | 16.67 |
| Came & Co | General insurance |   | 100416 | 24/5/21  | 2021-22 | 548.87 | 548.87 |
| Came & Co | Mower insurance |   | 100417 | 24/5/21  | 2021-22 | 89.60 | 80.00 |
| Ell-Jay Books | 2020-21 internal audit |   | 100418 | 21/6/21  | 2020-21 | 100.00 | 100.00 |
| ROSPA Play Safety | Playground annual inspection |   | 100419 | 15/8/21 | 2021-22 | 82.20 | 68.50 |
| Giuseppe Grassi | 31 July raffle prizes | No | 100420 | 15/8/21  | 2021-22 | 100.00 | 100.00 |
| Colin Ford | Mower petrol | No | 100421 | 15/8/21  | 2021-22 | 37.62 | 31.35 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

* 1. The payment of £100 to the Internal Auditor was approved.
	2. The situation vis-a-vis bank signatories was briefly discussed (the Council’s required Annual Review). A third signatory is required, the ‘emergency’ Covid provisions not yet completed. JC felt this is best done when a new Councillor is appointed**. (Action: JC/GS.)**
	3. The Internal Audit Effectiveness Review occurred (however brief). It was agreed that the new Auditor had put in much time and effort in presenting a comprehensive, and helpful, audit.
1. **General Governance:**
	1. Councillors, as well as the Clerk and RFO, were reminded of the legal requirement related to the Transparency Code for Smaller Companies, details of which had been recently circulated.
2. **Planning Applications:**

The situation related to recent Planning Applications was noted. (These are included in the Agenda for the purposes of public information.)

Netherby Farm.

Jeremy Sealey (JS) and Laura Peachey (LP) were interested to more fully understand the Council’s reasons for objecting to their recent Planning Application. JC outlined the approach taken by the Council, particularly as related to ‘newbuild’ applications and WODC’s Local Plan. Amongst other things, it was explained that it is current Parish Council policy that any new dwelling will be opposed (some further examples were outlined) in accordance with the Plan.

A discussion occurred about the farm’s entrance onto the A361, the point being made by JS that WODC were happy with the new access.

( LS and JP are relative newcomers to the Parish. They were unaware of the activities that occur in the village from time to time (for example in the Village Hall) and contact details were taken to ensure that they are added to Circulars (Village Hall, Parish Council, Swerford News) so as to be able to participate more fully in village life. **(Action - JC**. **Clerk also to advise Church Warden for inclusion in St Mary’s circulars.**))

1. **Playground.**
	1. The playground is visited on a regular basis and, to that extent, monthly checks, (required for insurance purposes), are made - sometimes visually, sometimes more practically. Safety is paramount. But these checks need to be formalised. **(Action: JC.)**
2. **Village Hall**.

That the Village Hall Insurance Policy had been renewed was noted.

JC advised that ongoing discussion with insurers was positive and that work on the cracks is awaited.

1. **Swerford Charity Annual Report**.

CF advised that the Accounts of the Charity had been finalised and the Charity has funds. Their annual Charity Commission submission is pending and once finalised, a copy will be available to the Council**. (Action: CF.)**

1. **Any Other Business**
	1. New developments in terms of Glamping and/or Temporary Camping activities in the Parish were outlined by JC. Concern was expressed from the floor. Regulation of such activity is complicated and the balance between villagers, proprietors, and what recourse might exist when discontent arises is not straightforward.

It was acknowledged that landowners with suitable facilities have every right to consider acceptable business opportunity. And that there is no obvious reason why, in a small community such as ours, the expectations of neighbours will not be given full consideration. The Parish Council has no authority in this regard, other than perhaps to represent what are considered the general views of villagers to owners. Accordingly, it was agreed that some form of ‘Code of Conduct/Expectation’ will be put together for circulation to owners of such sites. **(Action - JC.)**

* 1. After a general introduction by JC as to the problems experienced with Ash Hill Farm, various attendees expressed robust views as to the unacceptable handling of fallen stock, the resultant foul smell, and the fact that there had been no response to several prior complaints, thus bringing this matter to the Council. A full discussion occurred and it was agreed that LT will submit a clear plan as to how he will handle fallen stock in the future. This will include any needed storing of such stock well away from the neighbours (and indeed the village) in the event that swift removal is not possible. **(Action - LT.)**

Most helpfully, LP/JS, farming neighbours and also used to managing the same problems, offered to assist LT in whatever way they could. This was much appreciated.

* 1. The Village Hall Committee will consider how best to progress suitable village celebration of the Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations in 2022**. (Action - GS.)**
	2. Salt Bags and Bins and refills will be considered and a request sent to OCC highway.enquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk \*tel: 0345 310 1111. **(Action - JC.)**
	3. CF raised the issue of some form of modest upgrade to the pond on the hill out of Chapel End so as to make it into a more attractive amenity. It was agreed that this is an excellent idea and might be progressed subject to a very brief plan and budget being proposed to, and agreed by, the Council. **(Action - CF.)**
	4. A new Parish Councillor is sought to replace Jane Abbott. **(Action - JC/Council.)**
	5. It was not thought necessary to support the Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association.

While not discussed at the Meeting, the following general matters will be taken forward in due course:

* 1. **CPR training** originally targeted for JUL20.
	2. Location of a new **Chapel End tree.**
	3. Re-institution of a village **‘Welcome Pack’** - volunteers needed!
	4. Road **Warning signs** on Chapel Hill.

**The Meeting ended at 9.00 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 17th November 2012 at 7:30 pm in the Village Hall.**

W Haddon (Clerk) 23 August 2021