**Swerford Parish Council**

**Parish Council Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday 17 November 2021 at 19:30 hrs**

**Swerford Village Hall**

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

**Residents:** Jill Tinsley.

**Draft Minutes**

1. **Declarations of Interest:**

It was thought by all present that there were no conflicts of interest to declare.

1. **Apologies for absence:**

The Clerk, Mr William Haddon, offered his apologies for absence as a result of ill health. The minutes were therefore taken by GS.

1. **Code of Conduct:**

This was acknowledged and noted.

1. **Approval of Minutes:**

Proposed by JD and seconded by GS, the minutes of the meeting held on 18 August 2021 were approved.

1. **Matters arising:**
	1. WODC Planning. The Chairman commented that planning applications are taking a long time to process, and in addition it seems that WODC has no methods of policing the aftermath of any decisions that are finally made. A discussion ensued in which it was noted that WODC does not compare well with Cherwell DC. It was agreed that the Chairman should contact WODC Cllr Andrew Beaney. **(Action: JC.)**
	2. Netherby Farm. Contact had been made by the Clerk, the first event being the Harvest Festival Service. Other village bodies (Hall, Newsletter, St Mary’s), were advised for inclusion in appropriate Circulars. The contact was welcomed.
	3. Completion of the ‘Code of Conduct/Expectation’ and its circulation to owners of known village Glamping and/or Temporary Camping sites. JC had sent a draft to Jonathan Warr, but had not as yet received a response.
	4. A Plan of Action re Item 12 (b). See further below at new 12 a.
	5. Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Celebrations in 2022. GS reported that the Village Hall planned to have a lunch for residents in the grounds on 5 June 2022.
	6. Salt Bags and Bins refills. A pallet load of salt bags had been delivered to LT’s yard from which the PC could distribute as necessary.
	7. A brief plan and budget for the Chapel End pond had been sent by Colin Ford to JC who agreed to circulate it to the PC. **(Action: JC.)**
	8. A new Parish Councillor to replace Jane Abbott. See below at 12 h.
2. **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.
	2. No Loans or Investments exist. Balances with HSBC currently total: £6,665.33 (Deposit) and £5,237.28 (when adjusted for unpresented items and after VAT is reclaimed in the normal course of business later in the year).
	3. A single cheque has been issued since the previous meeting: This is an S.137 payment, see details below. Its payment was proposed by JD and seconded by JC.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Payee** | **for** | **S.137****expenditure?** | **cheque no** | **date of** **cheque**  | **financial year** | **£ gross amount** | **£ amount** **excl VAT** |
| Royal British Legion | 2 wreaths | Yes | 100422 | 2 Nov 21 | 2021-22 | 50.00 | 50.00 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

* 1. Presentation of last year’s Audited Financial Statements. These were proposed by JD and seconded by JC, and were approved.
	2. Presentation of Internal Audit comments. The comments were accepted and, after GS’s consultation/approval with the internal auditor, it was agreed that the comments should be reported in full on the website. **(Action GS.)**
	3. Consideration of forthcoming Precept. After discussion, it was proposed by JC and seconded by LT, and agreed by all, that the Precept for 2022-23 should be increased by 5% over the current figure. This percentage increase was arrived at based on the current inflation rate of 4% plus a further 1% as a start towards budgeting for the likely greater possible use of contractors.
	4. It was noted that a Pro-forma Budget Forecast for 2022-23 (including that from the Village Hall) is due to be completed ‘in principle’ for approval at the next PC Meeting. A separate column related to S.137 expenditure is required to be shown where appropriate. GS to make a simple form and send it to JC and subsequently GS to put it on the website. **(Action GS.)**
1. **General Governance:**
	1. The Transparency Code for Smaller Companies, the details of which were circulated prior to the PC Meeting, were approved.
	2. The following were circulated prior to the meeting, and were approved:
		1. Standing Orders.
		2. Financial Regulations.
		3. Financial Timetable.
	3. It was noted that a review of the website is due by the next PC Meeting.
2. **Planning Applications:**

The following applications were received and had been responded with no objections made:

a. 21/02734/LBC, Cowslip.

b. 21/03360/HHD, Lyndhurst.

1. **Playground:**

It was confirmed by JC that monthly visual playground checks (required for insurance purposes) are being made.

1. **Village Hall**:

JC with GS gave a brief update on the Village Hall. The Village Hall committee proposes to renovate the fenestration and doors and convert the current complex heating/cooking systems to all-electric. However, sickness within the locally-based window joinery company and the high level of business with the locally-based electrical contractor has meant that the Village Hall Committee has been forced to look further afield. To facilitate research on electrical contractors, Jill Tinsley agreed to provide names of possible contractors that she had recently contacted to GS.

1. **Swerford Charity Annual Report**.

A copy of the accounts submitted to the Charities Commission will be provided when completed. **(Action: Colin Ford)**

1. **Any Other Business**
	1. Ash Hill Farm. LT raised an objection as to why the complaints about fallen stock had been allowed to be aired at the previous parish council meeting as the case was by then already in the past, he had disposed of the carcase, and, in addition, why had the complaints not been advised to talk to him. JC responded that residents of Swerford had a right to air their grievances to the Parish Council, and that in fact JC had advised them to talk to LT.

LT was also concerned that village-member attenders at the earlier PC meeting had been allowed to make verbal representations. JD suggested that they were allowed to participate in this way, but they were not allowed to take any decisions. It was agreed that the PC required clarification on this and LT proposed that the Clerk should be asked to find out the procedures for village residents’ participation in Parish Council meetings. **(Action: The Clerk.)**

* 1. Electric Car Charging and Installation of Charging Stations. The Council had had a formal request to consider its policy. After debate, it was agreed that the PC could not hold a view on as the position is evolving rapidly. The PC is, however, sympathetic to the problem, and for those who are unable to charge cars on their drives some house-holders will have to park as close to their houses as possible – but are advised that they are not allowed to leave trailing wires.
	2. WODC Litter Bin Placement and Renewal Programme. WODC has confirmed that it can provide bins that can take dog and litter waste at a cost of £421.85 each. UBICO is its waste contractor who charge £381.16 p.a. to empty on a weekly basis. The position was noted, but was not felt appropriate for Swerford.
	3. Swerford Orchard. Fiona Kerlogue (FK) had made enquiries of the PC about Swerford Orchard. The notice at the entrance does not explain its status, and the site might be good site for planting more fruit trees as part of Swerford’s contribution to combating climate change. In addition, the fruit could be made available to villagers. As to the costs involved, including the ongoing costs of pruning, FK had written she would be happy to explore any issues.

It was confirmed that the orchard is the responsibility of the PC. JD advised that it is an exercise space and not an amenity space, and one day could be the location of a tennis court (required space 80 x 40 ft plus run off etc). However, it was agreed that FK should be encouraged to assess costs etc for presentation to the PC. **(Action JC to write to FK.)**

* 1. Osney Mill Certificate of Lawful Use application. JC had written to Cherwell DC saying that Osney Mill impacted Swerford a great deal more than Hook Norton, and that if Cherwell is to grant a Certificate of Lawful use then Swerford PC would want to be involved in the application of any restrictions on activities.
	2. It was noted that geoff.saul@oxfordshire.gov.uk, 01608 648020, is Swerford’s new County Councillor.
	3. St. Mary’s Lane. JC had recently walked down St. Mary’s Lane with JD and had noted that there are shrubs etc that will become a problem, such as along Maurice George’s wall, and as a result action would have to be taken. **(Action: JC)**
	4. New councillor(s). JC reminded the PC that after Jane Abbott’s resignation and, following advice from WODC, an invitation for a new councillor had been put on the PC notice board. Nobody had applied, so the PC now has the ability to co-opt someone. LT suggested that Robert Ashfield of Draycott Cottage should be approached. **(Action: JC)**

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

* 1. **CPR training** originally targeted for July 2020.
	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 9.20 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 16 February 2022 at 7:30 pm in the Village Hall.**

GMJ Strachan for W Haddon (Clerk) November 2021