**Swerford Parish Council**

**Draft Minutes Parish Council Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday 17th August 2022 at 19:30 hrs**

**Swerford Village Hall**

**AGENDA**

1. **Declarations of Interest.**
2. **Apologies for absence.** 
   1. **The co-opting of Nick Davies as a new Parish Councillor.**
   2. Sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
   3. WODC to be advised and will, in turn, forward a Declaration of Interest through Clerk for completion and return.
3. **Code of Conduct.**
   1. A new Code has been introduced by WODC: circulated to Councillors on 29JUN22. To be noted.
      1. **Approval of Minutes:**
      2. Annual Parish Council Meeting of 25MAY22.
      3. Extraordinary Meeting of 27JUN22.
   2. Those of the Annual Parish Assembly of 20MAY22 will be presented at the next meeting. **Action:** GS.
4. **Matters arising.**
   1. Chapel End Pond. (CF agreed to take forward with JD.)
   2. Planting in St Mary’s Lane was discussed. It was thought that this is best left to the residents who are to be notified by the Chairman. **Action:** next Chairman.
   3. Blocked gullies in Chapel End. One has been unblocked but there are others still to be addressed. **Action**: JC agreed to follow up with Paul Wilson of N Oxon roads.
   4. Payment of the Annual Fee to the Information Commissioners Office has been made: a Direct Debit has been established to settle this annually and until further notice. Payment going forward was approved.
   5. Defibrillator. The possible relocation to St Mary’s was going to be looked into by JD. An update will be given in due course. In the meantime, CF has been examining options. Some complications exist with the phone box which is owned by BT. CF agreed to progress. The Council has made no final decision to spend the money required. **Action**: JD and CF.
   6. The proposed letter to our MP relating to the support of virtual PC Meetings where appropriate was passed to JC, but for obviously understandable reasons has been overlooked. WH will arrange for this to be given to the incoming Chairman for his consideration and despatch. **Action:** WH - Chairman.
   7. The issue of cabling in the road between Lansdowne Cottage/Robins Cottage was discussed. It was agreed that for various reasons (largely that the land is not Council land), further involvement by the Council is inappropriate. Mr Davey will be notified. **Action**: JC
   8. An update was given relating to trees in Chapel End: a new tree has yet to be agreed and an existing cherry tree is dying. CF agreed to progress, and to speak to Ben Acreman about the dying tree. **Action:** CF.
   9. Road Warning Signs. It was agreed that we should instigate 20 mph limit signs on the three entrances to the village. Their possible location was discussed. ND agreed to come up with a plan, and then (once approved by the Council) instigate with the help of Councillor Saul as necessary. **Action:** ND.
   10. The amended dates for the next Annual Parish Council Meeting to 10MAY23 and next Parish Assembly to 19MAY23 were ratified. Meeting dates for the following year are:
       1. 17 August 2022.
       2. 16 November 2022.
       3. 15 February 2023.
       4. 10 May 2023 (Annual PC Meeting).
       5. 19MAY23 (Annual Parish Assembly).
   11. The Annual Financial Risk Assessment (as circulated in Clerk’s email of 5JUN22) together with Publication Scheme (email of 29JUN22) were noted and approved.
   12. It was confirmed that the AGAR and related items as noted were completed.
5. **Financial Governance**:
   1. An up-to-date statement of Receipts and Payments, actual versus forecast, together with a Summary of Balances held was presented and discussed. The Current Account stands at £1,594.49 - the Deposit Account at £6,666.50. Once outstanding items are cleared (commitments made, and payments due (Village Hall and VAT rebates)), the notional value of monies held stands at £10,290.93. No Loans or Investments exist.

ND enquired as to the state of the Playing Field Reserves and it was confirmed that these are to provide for ongoing repairs and maintenance.

* 1. A list of cheques issued between 25MAY22 and 15AUG22 was presented. In view of the large cheque relating to the Village Hall windows, it was agreed that a reconciliation would be provided at the next meeting as to the recent costs on the hall’s modernisation, outlining those paid from Hall funds and those from the Parish Council. The matter is not in doubt as to what is what, but for the sake of good order and clarity it was felt that this should be on record. **Action**: GS.
  2. The required quarterly reconciliation of bank statements was considered fulfilled by the information provided in the statement of Receipts and Payments. It was agreed that the ‘quarterly’ requirement is hard to fulfil and that such reconciliations would in future be made up to the date of last statements received from the bank, provided that in all, total overall yearly reconciliations are given as soon as possible after year-end.

1. **General Governance:**
   1. JC resigned as Chairman and as a Parish Councillor effective at the end of the meeting. He will forward a letter, or email, addressed to The Parish Council advising this as soon as possible. This is required for legal reasons. **Action**: JC.

It has yet to be agreed who will take on the role of Chairman. It was noted that if a new Chair cannot be elected immediately, this must be agreed before the next Council Meeting and a Declaration of Acceptance of Office by the new Chair be to hand.

* 1. Bank signatories were briefly discussed as these are due for annual review. In view of the resignation of JC it was resolved that he be removed from the list with HSBC and be replaced by ND. That will leave JD and ND as authorised signatories. Ideally:
     1. Three would be better: to be resolved going forward;
     2. Online banking needs to be arranged with HSBC. Despite the feeling that this is almost insurmountable, it was noted that this should be a very simple process. **Action:** JD.
  2. It was agreed that the Internal Audit had been extremely effective. GS was authorised to speak to our Internal Auditor to extend the relationship, if needed at a higher fee level. Proposer: GS, Seconder: JC. **Action:** GS.
  3. The updated Register of Assets was noted and approved. It was thought that bi-annual review was acceptable to our auditor, unless there is a significant change in the assets held. It was agreed that this be the case going forward.

1. **Planning Applications:** The appeal by Netherby Farm was noted. It

was agreed that the Council had no further input at this time, objections having been made by email on 3AUG21.

1. **Playground.**
   1. JC confirmed that the monthly visual checks had been made.
   2. Managing the mowing was discussed. It was agreed that continuing to rely on village volunteers is not reasonable and that an approach be made to Nick Tustian to see if he might be interested in doing this. JC advised that he would progress. **Action**: JC.
   3. The ROSPA Report had just been received and this needs further examination. The general feeling is that the facilities are in reasonable order but need watching. **Action:** to be decided. A volunteer/team is needed to take this on with the monthly visual checks.
2. **Village Hall**.
   1. A brief update. Of major note:
      1. of the cost of the windows just done (see above) about £1,000 came from the Parish Council. But as noted above, this will be made clear in a more detailed reconciliation. **Action**: GS.
      2. The crack in the wall has just re-appeared. This is of concern and disappointing. The Village Hall will take this forward. (It was noted that as the freeholder the Parish Council has a real interest: the problem is being managed by the Hall Committee.)
   2. Village Hall Insurance renewal is being managed by the Hall and JC/GS confirmed this to be in hand.
3. **Swerford Charity**.
   1. A copy of the Accounts submitted to the Charities Commission will be forwarded. **Action:** CF.
4. **Any Other Business.**
   1. Winter Preparedness. There is noneed for further salt bags or new bins. WODC would like a Nil Return. **Action:** WH.
   2. Renewal of OALC Membership was approved.
   3. Hook Norton Village Museum has asked for any guidance that we might be able to offer with regards to maintenance of their clock. Mel Poke has kindly advised that while he has nothing to do with its maintenance, he will give them a call. It was suggested that JD might let St Mary’s know of this request to see if there is anyone there who can assist further. **Action:** JD.
   4. CPR training remains a possibility. CF is monitoring. Cost issues exist.
   5. The ‘Welcome Pack’ will not be discussed further.
   6. CF again raised the issue of styles, the responsibility of landowners. A notice is to be put on the village WhatsApp circulation list to request that anyone who knows of styles that need repair should advise the Council (of location and name of owners, preferably with the name of the farm/holding). **Action:** to be decided.

William Haddon, Clerk 20 August 2022