**Swerford Parish Council**

**Parish Council Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday 16th November 2022 at 19:30 hrs**

**Swerford Village Hall**

**AGENDA**

The Minutes (in due course) are to confirm that it has been agreed, prior to this Meeting, that Gavin Strachan (GS) has been appointed Chair for the following year, and that he has signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. The appointment of a Vice-Chair may be considered in due course.

1. **Declarations of Interest.**
2. **Apologies for absence.**
3. **Code of Conduct.**
4. **Approval of Minutes of the Meeting of 17th August 2022.**
5. **Matters arising.**
   1. Forms relating to Nick Davies’ appointment have been completed as required.
   2. The draft minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly of 20MAY22 to be presented and approved. (Action: GS.)
   3. Chapel End Pond. (Action: Colin Ford (CF) and Jonathan Drinkwater (JD).)
   4. Planting in St Mary’s Lane. It was agreed that that this is best left to the residents, to be notified by the Chairman.
   5. Blocked gullies in Chapel End. One had been unblocked but there are others still to be addressed. John Chaplin (JC) had agreed to follow up with Paul Wilson of N Oxon roads.
   6. Defibrillator. The possible relocation to St Mary’s was going to be looked into by JD. In the meantime, CF had been examining options as a to a second machine. Some complications exist with the phone box which is owned by BT. Further CPR training is also considered a good thing. CF agreed to progress. (The Council has made no final decision to spend the money required.)
   7. The proposed letter to our MP relating to the support of virtual PC Meetings.
   8. The issue of cabling in the road between Lansdowne Cottage/Robins Cottage. It was agreed that for various reasons (largely that the land is not Council land), further involvement by the Council is inappropriate. Mr Davey was to have been notified by JC.
   9. The new tree in Chapel End. (Action: CF who would also speak to Ben Acreman about the dying cherry tree.)
   10. In view of the large cheque given to the Village Hall by the Parish Council relating to the repair of windows, it was agreed, for the sake of good order, that a reconciliation would be provided as to recent costs on modernisation. This would outline that paid from Hall funds and that by the Parish Council.
   11. JC’s formal letter of resignation was received by the Clerk.
   12. GS was to renew the appointment of our Internal Auditor at a fee level to be agreed.
   13. The Clerk submitted the Salt Bin and Refill return to WODC.
   14. Hook Norton Village Museum and the maintenance of their clock: JD would let St Mary’s know to see if there is anyone there who can assist further to Mel Poke’s helpful involvement.
6. **Financial Governance**:
   1. An up-to-date statement of Receipts and Payments, actual versus forecast, together with a Summary of Balances held to be presented and discussed. No Loans or Investments exist.
   2. A list of cheques issued from 16AUG22 to be presented.
   3. It was agreed in the meeting of 17AUG22 that the requirement for a quarterly reconciliation of bank statements is considered fulfilled by the information provided in the statement of Receipts and Payments. And that such reconciliations would in future be made up to the date of last statements received from the bank. This is provided that in all, total overall yearly reconciliations are given as soon as possible after year-end.
   4. Budget forecast for 2022-23 (including a brief summary related to the Village Hall) to be presented, reviewed and approved in principle. (Note separate column for S.137 expenses.)
   5. Consider forthcoming Precept for FEB23 meeting approval.
7. **General Governance:**
   1. Bank signatories. In view of the resignation of JC it was resolved at the last meeting that he be removed from the list with HSBC and be replaced by ND. That would leave JD and ND as authorised signatories. Ideally:
      1. Three would be better: to be resolved going forward;
      2. Online banking to taken forward by JD.
   2. Review and approve updated (and previously circulated):
      1. Standing Orders;
      2. Financial Regulations;
      3. Financial Timetable.
8. **Planning Applications:**

The following Applications were received since the last PC Meeting:

* 1. 22/02330/FUL. Netherby Farm. Objection again raised detailing also the Council’s comments of March 2022.
  2. 22/02337/HHD. The Old Cottage. No Objection 5OCT22.
  3. 22/02687/HHD. Orchard Close. No Objection 7OCT22.

The vexed question of Planning Applications where the Parish Council has raised objections has been the subject of considerable time in the Council and discussion/concern with WODC. It is probably not worth going into all of this in great detail yet again. But the subject of formal Parish Council ‘policy’ and the realities related to this, has come up from time to time (eg external electric vehicle cabling, solar panelling and the like). The Council has very limited power or, as it has been shown from time to time, influence, on matters of a statutory nature, for example as related to say, planning. To be discussed.

1. **Playground.**
   1. Monthly visual checks are a requirement of our insurance cover.
   2. Nick Tustian was approached by JC, and subsequently by the Clerk, as to further interest in mowing the playground. He has no interest post what has been agreed - that is until the end of this ‘season’. A solution needs to be found on a commercial basis, it having been accepted that the continual reliance on volunteers is impractical.
   3. The ROSPA Report had just been received at the last meeting and needs further examination/address. Whilst the general feeling is that the facilities are in reasonable order but need watching, a volunteer/team is needed to take this on with the monthly visual checks.
2. **Village Hall**.
   1. Update (in addition to clarification of Council monies spent as noted above).
3. **Swerford Charity**.
   1. A copy of the Accounts submitted to the Charities Commission has been promised.
4. **Any Other Business.**
   1. A letter has been received from John and Maggie Chaplin thanking the Council for their farewell gift and giving their best wishes for the future.
   2. Road Warning Signs. ND has been investigating in depth.
   3. The replacement of JC as a Parish Councillor.
   4. Replacing the RFO and Clerk. A circular was put out to the village: no interest has been expressed. An update.
   5. A request has been received to take up the condition of the trees along the road by Swerford Park. This is thought to be a WODC or OCC issue as the trees appear to be in the road. One recently crashed and there is a feeling that some may be dangerous if not cut back.
   6. Stiles. A list of six stiles requiring repair has been circulated within the Council by CF. This details their location and ownership with supporting photographic evidence. Repair is the responsibility of landowners. (It is not clear whether or not a notice was put on the village WhatsApp circulation list requesting details of any stiles thought to need repair. If so, there has been no feedback other than by CF a long-time champion of this cause.)

Access for dogs is a further issue.

* 1. State of our Rivers. A request was received to put up a flyer related to the appalling amount of sewage in the Evenlode and connecting tributaries and that this be (briefly) discussed at this meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 15th February 2023.

William Haddon, Clerk 10 November 2022