**Annual Swerford Parish Council Meeting**

**Wednesday 14th August at 7.30pm**

**Swerford Village Hall**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Present**

Councillors

Nick Davies, Roger Huyton, Jonathan Drinkwater, Leonard Tustian

Clerk

Jill Tinsley

Visitors

Richard Hall, Newton Scott, Robert Miller, Colin Ford, David Andrews, Anne Andrews, Annette Huyton, Liz Walkinshaw, Ingrid Salamon, Rhona Wylde, Sue Cave, Charlie Campion, Kate Campion.

1. **Declarations of Interest –** none
2. **Apologies for absence -** none
3. **Code of Conduct sent with agenda to councillors–** noted and agreed
4. **Election of Chair** confirmed as Nick Davies

Note: Our Annual meeting and election of chair which should have taken place in May took place at our August Meeting

1. **Approval and Signing of Minutes by Chair**

Annual Parish Assembly 31st May 2024

Parish Council Meeting 8th May 2024

Extraordinary Meeting 26th June 2024

1. **Matters arising from last minutes**

Insurance -to be considered later in the meeting

Playground -to be considered later in the meeting

Village Hall – to be considered later in the meeting

Communications -

Emails from those who would like to be on an emergency contact list have been forwarded to the clerk and then onto Sarah Heath. There is still time for others to add their email address. Please send to Swerfordparishclerk@hotmail.com

A section on the Village Website has been added for the Playground which now has the ROSPA reports on it.

**Action: Charlie Campion** to add information on the Charity to the website

**Action: Jill to ask Sarah Heath** to add the newsletter to the website

1. **20mph zone – decision to adopt in the village**

Following extensive consultations at previous parish meetings and the collection of written views a decision was made by the counsellors not to adopt a 20mph limit in the village. It was agreed that if at any time in the future West Oxfordshire council revise their advice the Parish Council will revisit the decision.

It was noted that grass verges had grown in some parts of the village obscuring the road and the 20mph request signs were obscured by foliage. It was suggested that a working party should be formed to clean the signs and cut back the foliage.

**Action:** **Jonathan and Leonard** to write to landowners requesting grass and foliage is cut back on the road side

**Action: Nick** to write to Andrew Beaney to ask for the road sides to be cut back.

1. **Co-option of new Councillor**

The Parish Council is still looking to appoint a fifth councillor. Anyone interested should contact the clerk. Liz Walkinshaw expressed interest but may not be eligible because she is lives outside the village.

**Action Jill** to contact Liz Walkinshaw about eligibility criteria

1. **Financial Governance:**

We urgently need to appoint a new RFO (Responsible Finance Officer) which is a mandatory requirement for the Parish Council. Anyone interested should contact the clerk.

In the absence of a RFO the following items due for discussion in August were postponed

* Audited accounts for 2023 – 24
* The Quarterly Bank reconciliation
* List of spends in this financial year
* Bank signatories review
* Internal Audit Effectiveness review
* Register of Assets review
* Approval of our Publication scheme review
* New NALC Financial Regulations to be adopted in 2024
* Appointment of our Internal Auditor for 2025

Budget Forecasts to be drafted by the PC ready for next meeting

1. **General Governance**

Confirmation of appointment of Jill Tinsley as Clerk from the 17th June 2024

Additional Parish Council Meetings 2024 to 2025

It was agreed that the council should hold 6 meetings (plus the Annual Parish Assembly) instead of 4 each year, in order to respond to matters, particularly planning applications in a timely manner.

**Revised dates for the following year are now as follows:**

18th September 2024 Parish Council meeting

20th November 2024 Parish Council meeting

22nd January 2025 Parish Council meeting

***(Note no meeting will be held on the 5th February as previously published****)*

19th March 2025 Parish Council meeting

7th May 2025 Annual Parish Council Meeting (election of Chair)

21st May 2025 Assembly ***(note not the 16th May as previously published****)*

16th July 2025 Parish Council Meeting

September 2025 Parish Council Meeting -Date to be decided

November 2025 Parish Council Meeting -Date to be decided

**Action Jill** to publish dates and amend standing orders

1. **Planning Applications:**

Since the last meeting the following applications were received.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date notified** | **Application**  | **Decision**  |
| 14.6.24 | Pomfret Castle 24/01561/S73 | No Objection Response already lodged |
| 26.7.24 | Pomfret Castle24/01794/LBC24/01793/HHD | No objection Response needed by 16.8.24 |
| 2.8.24 | Leys Farmhouse24/01867/HHD24/01868/LBC | No objection Response needed by 23.8.24 |
| 5.8.24 | Great Tew Quarry extension consultation  | Noted  |
| 5.8.24 | Land at Back End, Church End23/01193/FFUL | Note that the appeal was lost  |

1. **Insurance**

The £1000 excess for the village hall repairs will be paid by the village hall committee. All insurances for the hall and Parish Council are up to date.

1. **Defibrillator**

Update report from Clare Field:

Inspections are up to date. Clare is happy to continue to monitor the village defibrillator.

We thank Clare for her continued support.

1. **Trees on Parish Council land**

An Inspection of trees is required. Charles Campion advised that we need a Duty of Care survey on all areas of Parish Council land, followed by a Tree Management Plan.

**Action** Charles to send contacts to Nick. Nick to organise both.

1. **Playground**

**Update:** The ROSPRA report was completed in July for 2024. (Available on our website). In summary the playground is in poor condition and apparatus needs to be replaced/repaired,

Unfortunately, no one has come forward to form a playground committee so we are unable to take any ambitious projects forward, however the Parish Council is exploring the work and costs involved in keeping some parts of the playground open.

The mowing rota and the working parties have been successful however and will need to be coordinated again next year if we are to keep the playground open. Fortnightly checks have been carried out by Jill Tinsley

**Proposal for remedial works**

Jill Tinsley and Roger Huyton met with Harlequin playground company, recommended by OALC They suggested the following works which would cost approximately £9,000 inc VAT

* Replacement of swings with like-for-like equipment. The current grass surface is adequate if the new swings are lower.
* Repair of loose posts on the two balancing trails
* ‘A’ frame to be jet washed to improve grip
* Removal of tyre framed apparatus which is rotting and loose in the ground - further reduction of the nearby tree is necessary if it remains
* Recommended finger trap protection added to gate
* Sign with maximum age of 13 and Parish Council contact, to be added to gate

Other notes

* The slide is currently adequate if we continue with frequent strimming of grass sides
* The willow tunnel to be repaired again by the village with another working party
* Weekly or Fortnightly checks to be continued using new proforma provided by ROSPA
* Mowing rota to be set up for 2025

Richard Hall said that he would look to see if he could rebuild the swing himself according to current regulations.

**Action:** Richard to investigate and contact Jill

A decision whether to close the playground before repairs are carried out will be taken at the September meeting.

**16 Village Hall.**

Sue updated us on the events planned for this autumn which will be published on the notice boards

**17 Winter Preparedness**

Actions to be discussed at the September meeting

**AOB** *(Note no decisions may be made under AOB)*

It is with sadness that the Parish Council noted the death of Jean Horwood

We thank Roy for refurbishing all the parish benches

We have been notified by the Planning and Strategic Housing department at West Oxfordshire County Council of a consultation on the proposed Community infrastructure levy (CIL). The Parish Council will not respond to the consultation but individual comments can be made on <https://your>voice.westoxon.gov.uk/en-GB

**Jillian Tinsley -Clerk to Swerford Parish Council**