

SULGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON THURSDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014  
IN SULGRAVE CHURCH HALL AT 7.45PM

Councillors Present

Andrew Waite, Graham Roberts, Sally Harding, Jo Powell, Tom Russell and three villagers.

**1a. Apologies**

Cllr Pollak

**1b. Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

**2a. To approve and sign minutes of the meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

The minutes were agreed and signed. Proposed by Cllr Powell and seconded by Cllr Russell.

**2b. Matters Arising**

It was agreed that the standard of grass cutting has improved. This comment would be passed onto the grass contractor by Cllr Roberts.

**3. Councillors Reports**

Pocket Park - Cllr Russell has strimmed the wooded area in Pocket Park but the wooded part at the back is very dark. He has asked Helen Timms for her advice as to what needs doing and the cost. She has suggested to thin out the woodland and start with coppicing the squirrel damaged trees. This work would let more light in and make more floor space. The approximate cost is £280 for two chainsaw operators to work for one day. The logs and branches would remain in piles for the habitat. The Chair felt this was a good idea but one day might not be enough time to do the work. He recommended Cllr Russell speak to George Metcalfe as he was the original designer of the area. The area does not need to be kept too neat as there is a lot of wildlife habitat and might need occasional attention every two years. The area is very overgrown and the Parish Council have a duty of care to keep the area safe for everyone to use.

An email from a villager had been received about the area being overgrown. A suggestion was made to put another note in the newsletter asking for a Pocket Park Warden. A volunteers day could be held in the Spring. Cllr Russell to ask Helen Timms for some advice on ongoing maintenance work that would be needed and the cost and frequency of it.

Ash tree dieback - Cllr Russell reported that the problem is getting progressively worse and getting closer. Cllr Russell will keep an eye on the problem. There is little that can be done and the media have gone very quiet.

**4. To discuss the condition of the bus shelter and possible remedial work**

The shelter was repainted internally in August by the Parish Enhancement Gang and concern was expressed by Cllr Pollak as the timber base is very soft. The earth around the back of the shelter has built up around the base and the base is saturated. The Chair suggested that the back is dug out so that the soil level is reduced to ground level and a french drain put in with gravel. In the longer term the Parish Council should look at repairing the base. He thinks the work needs doing but not yet. The Chair asked councillors for their views. Councillors agreed with the ideas suggested. *Action: The Chair to prepare a schedule and get quotes for the work to be done in the Spring.*

**5. To discuss the post box and proposals for re-siting**

The new owners of the Old Shop have asked the Post Office if the post box can be moved which they are obliged to do as the post box is on private land. The process of finding a new location nearby would be time consuming before new posting facilities are available (up to 38 weeks) as searches will need to be undertaken with all utilities. The Parish Council are allowed to say their preferred location.

The Chair noted that he hopes the box can be sited in a similar manner as now on a pole. If the post box was going to be attached to the wall of the shop then listed building consent and planning permission would be needed. There are also drainage issues by the bench.

From the floor Mr Christy asked if the post box could be placed opposite the shop on the hardcore by the bus shelter where there is plenty of space. Another suggestion was to put the post box to the right hand side of the shop on the grass embankment. These options to be considered by councillors.

The preferred new location of the Post Box was agreed by Councillors as being on the right hand corner of the building within the grass verge and facing the highway with the front face of the box in line with the face of the front wall of the shop. The box is not to touch the building but should be sited close to it. Mr. Holden was asked if he would consent to the existing box remaining outside the old shop while the process to install the new box was completed. He agreed to this and would be happy to confirm this in writing.

*Action -The Parish Clerk will send the description of the proposed location of the new box to the Post Office for them to consider. The Parish Clerk will also write to the owners of the Old Shop to seek their written confirmation that the box may remain in place until the new one is installed. This agreement will then also be sent to the Post Office.*

Mr Holden, who is the new owner of the Old Shop was at the meeting and gave an update of the current building work. Nothing has changed since the original planning permission was given. They are currently repairing the garage roof. Their desire is to have a single storey extension with a pitched roof and they will have to apply for planning permission. They would like to restore the building to its former glory and let it stand for another 300 years. Mr Holden welcomed questions from any residents and suggested that anybody could call in to see the work they are doing. The Chair asked about the outside sign. Mr Holden advised that he is re-pointing and firming up the gable end. Some of the sign will have to go and the colour has slightly returned. He has asked the Conservation team at SNC how the sign can be preserved. He has contacted Unilever but he is not allowed to re-instate/restore/cover or spray the sign. He has done a lot of research into the subject and Alan Munn of SNC is trying to find a solution.

Mr Christy asked for clarification about the lime mortar to be used which is a requirement stipulated by SNC. Some recipes are a bit soft and there is no provision for colour. The Chair gave some technical advice on lime mortar which Mr Holden made a note of.

**6. Street Lighting - To discuss potential contractors for carrying out the work**

The current lighting system will need to be replaced as the existing bulbs will be obsolete soon. A detailed tender was sent out to various companies in May. Only two companies responded within the agreed time frame which was disappointing. A detailed proposal was received from SSE and their approximate quote is £23,453.00. The second reply from Allan Peacock was very weak and the total cost of their quote is £22,484.45.

Cllr Roberts has asked for the quotation validity to be extended until the end of October. Additional money will be needed for traffic management and the Parish Council would have to pay for this. There would also need to be a Clerk of the Works who would have the responsibility of managing the whole project. They would report to the Parish Council and this could cost £2-3K.

All concrete and steel lanterns will come down. The cropped wooden poles will be replaced with lanterns. The poles on brackets on BT poles will be replaced. There are fourteen brackets on existing BT columns and eleven would be new lamp columns.

The project could be funded through a Public Works Loan which would be quick and efficient. The application would go through Northants CALC and have to be approved by the Department of Communities. To borrow £25K over 20 years, the half yearly payments would be £882.00. The total cost would be £35,288.00. If a loan was taken out over a shorter period the half yearly payments would increase.

Cllr Roberts suggested that he tell SSE that they are the preferred supplier to keep them interested. They could ask questions for clarification and give a timeline of work to be done in Spring 2015. Cllr Roberts suggested that the village are consulted via the next newsletter. Councillors agreed with this proposal.

Thanks was given to Cllr Roberts for his work.

**7. To discuss a need for a new signboard for the village, location and potential funding**

There is a need for a new notice-board as the current ones are always very full. There is land in front of the church which belongs to Highways which could be used to site a board. Councillors were shown examples of a couple of other villages who have boards with canopies.

From the floor Mr Holden suggested that a notice-board could be mounted inside the bus shelter. Lighting would have to be considered and the area measured to see if one fits inside.

*Action: The Chair to ask Mollington and Warmington PC where they purchased their boards from.*

**8. To discuss issues relating to Pocket Park equipment**

Some issues have come up recently about equipment and in particular the degradation of the area around the Flying Fox. The grass is growing up between matting and is growing year on year. Councillors felt that it would be expensive and a lot of work to rip up and start again. Cllr's Russell and Harding suggested the area is rolled each year and it will get better as the land is allowed to settle. The area to be checked again in the Spring. The holes could be filled with soil and supplemented with bark chippings. The Chair suggested that Helen Timms is asked about how ground levels can be managed and will discuss pricing for regular maintenance of the vegetation around the pond.

*Action: Cllr Russell to ask Helen Timms for advice.*

A broken basket ball hoop in Pocket Park was reported to the Parish Clerk.

*Action: Parish Clerk to report to TB Sports Fencing who supplied and installed the equipment.*

Pocket Park and equipment to stay on the agenda.

**9. Finance**

- a) *To approve the following payments:*
- £50.00 to Parish Clerk (float)
  - £946.80 to Rivermeade Signs Ltd
  - £276.00 to RD Landscapes Ltd (grass cutting)
  - £208.18 to EON (electricity)
  - £276.00 to RD Landscapes Ltd (grass cutting)

These payments were proposed by Cllr Powell and seconded by Cllr Pollak.

## 10. Planning Applications

Three applications had been received since the last meeting:-

- *S/2014/1359/LBC, Replacement of two rear facing first floor windows at the Old Bakehouse, Little St. No objections were raised.*
- *S/2014/1341/LBC, Internal alterations to provide new kitchen, downstairs cloakroom and en-suite bathroom at first floor at Forge Cottage, School St. No objections were raised.*
- *S/2014/1503/FUL, Proposed single and a half storey side extension - resubmission of Approval S/2014/0769/FUL at Bower House, Park Lane. No objections were raised.*

An update was given on older applications:

- *S/2014/0769/FUL, Proposed single and a half storey side extension. Approval has been given.*
- *S/2014/0850, Proposed single storey and part two storey front extension. First floor rear extension and single storey rear/part two storey extension at The Limes, 2 Manor Road. This was withdrawn in July.*

## 11. Correspondence

**From**

- Royal Mail, Moving of post box
- SNH, Environmental Works 5 Year Programme - Stage 1 Consultation
- NCC, Sulgrave Stocks - Ownership and maintenance
- Northants CALC - Increase in membership fees from April 2015
- Northants CALC, Notice of AGM on 18.10.14

**To**

- Clemmie Reed of Red Bull Events, Feedback from Wings for Life World Run

The Clerk highlighted two items of correspondence:

- SNH, Environmental Works 5 Year Programme - Stage 1 Consultation. SNH are consulting on parking problems. The consultation will run until 29<sup>th</sup> September. The Clerk to contact each person on the list with a letter and criteria form to complete.
- NCC, Sulgrave Stocks - Ownership and maintenance. In 1991, the Parish Council wrote to the County Archaeologist stating that the stocks belonged to the Parish Council. NCC have never disputed this and would support this assertion as the stocks were built initially to assist the local community to administer local justice to local felons. The stocks would have been considered part of the community and either owned by the local administration or the Lord of the Manor in feudal times. In 2013 the County Council commissioned a survey and determined the maintenance requirements in the immediate and longer term future. No immediate work was identified although some redecorating of the metal works was identified in the medium term. The County Council intends to carry out these works over the next few months to ensure the stocks are in good condition for the future. Given the historical context of the stocks, ownership and current budget constraints, this will be the last maintenance work proposed and carried out by the County Council. The Parish Council will be responsible for the Stocks in the future.

## 12. Open Forum

Cllr Harding asked if there was an update on the defibrillator. If the village shop wall is not a suitable location, it could be placed inside the bus shelter.

The Chair advised that he has produced rough drawings to upgrade the church hall. Whilst visiting to measure up, he found storage space about the toilets. This area could be used to store the equipment

such as the marquee, lights and barbecue which are going to be purchased from the Pocket Park grant.

Ideas to improve the entrance, create more storage space, replace the kitchen area, insulate the floors and walls, new heating, new lighting, new decorations, and removal of stage area are being explored.

Mr Christy spoke about communication and how sad it is to see very few residents at the meeting. He asked if the minutes could be more accessible to show what work is being done. The website to be updated with the newsletter and the minutes of past meetings.

**13. Date and time of next meeting**

Parish Council meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2014 at 7.45pm at the Church Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm