

SULGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 2ND FEBRUARY 2017
IN SULGRAVE CHURCH HALL AT 7.30PM

Councillors Present

Graham Roberts (Chairman), Troy Daniels, Chris Jackson, Will Priestman, David Walker, Christine Coles (Parish Clerk) and eleven villagers

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1a. Apologies

None

1b. Declaration of Interest

There were no interests to declare.

2. Co-option of new Councillor

There is a vacancy on the Parish Council due to the resignation of Andrew Waite in December. A formal notice supplied by SNC was published on the notice-board for 14 days and the deadline was 11th January. SNC confirmed that nobody had put forward any names so the Parish Council were able to fill the vacancy by co-option. A villager has come forward and been welcomed but concern has been expressed within Council that the position has not been widely advertised. This course of action was agreed at the last meeting in January. The Councillors were then asked to vote whether to co-opt tonight or place an advertisement. Three Cllr's voted to advertise and two voted to co-opt.

Action: It was agreed to put a revised vacancy notice on the notice-board, website, in the shop and pub and the deadline will be 24th February. This will give enough time for the candidate's details to be circulated to Cllr's for co-option to take place at the next meeting on 2nd March.

3a. To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting of 5TH January 2017

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr Priestman and seconded by Cllr Jackson.

3b. Matters Arising

Street lighting matters - The Chair has tried to make contact with T Clarke but has had no response. He will continue to chase them. From the floor Mr Waite suggested that The Chair makes contact with Chris Barnes to ask for help.

A letter of thanks was sent to Mr Cherry about the hedge cutting that he had done in the village.

The appointment of a Vice-Chair was discussed. It was agreed that as there are two meetings left of this current year, the appointment could wait until the meeting in May.

4. To receive an update on the adopted pay-phone kiosk

A reply had been received from BT about the electric supply. BT will retain responsibility and pay for the power supply for the time being. They do reserve the right to have it disconnected at some point but do not envisage this happening in the foreseeable future. If the kiosk is for a defibrillator they will pay for the supply for a minimum period of seven years after which they reserve the right to have it disconnected. Should they decide to do this they will give the Parish Council the opportunity to take over the supply. The measurements of the cabinet had been received and passed to the Historical Society. The ideas from the History Society were then presented to the meeting by Martin Sirot-Smith. The group are proposing to make use of the box by displaying four leaflets.

The leaflets will be blown up to scale so they are readable. It is proposed to use both sides of the kiosk panels and keep the spirit of what George Metcalfe has done in the past. The approximate cost of the work is £650.00. The installation will be done by volunteers. The Parish Council recognised the work done and thanked Mr Sirot-Smith and Mr Wootton.

Action: It was agreed that Cllr Jackson would measure the kiosk and produce a rough drawing showing the cabinet and maps. Cllr Daniels agreed to Chair a Sub Committee to manage the project and talk further with the History Society.

5. To receive an update on the AY4 footpath

The tunnel was closed more than 2 years ago. A proposal was put forward some time ago for a diversion but opposed at that time by the Parish Council and Mr Colin Wootton. That proposal was not progressed. Meetings then took place with NCC Highways and the landowner.

A new proposal has now been put forward in line with what was proposed before. The path will go up and over the embankment. Although this has been long awaited, there was disappointment at the lack of detail in the plans. Cllr Jackson noted that it was in everyone's interest to not object but try and progress this as quickly as possible. The path will be created and cleared by the landowner or tenant farmer. Part of the non objection response will be to ask for a good quality path and to ask the long term future of the tunnel. The Parish Council to suggest putting a small kissing gate at the bottom. From the floor, Laura North asked if this would be a problem for the hounds and it was felt it would not be. Thanks was given to Colin Wootton.

Action: Cllr Jackson to draft a response and circulate to Cllr's.

6. To discuss the work at Pocket Park

Mr Fonge noted that work will take place on Monday 6th February. The hedge will be removed and burnt and the lower branches will be used to fill the gaps. A note was put in the newsletter as agreed at the last meeting. Mr Fonge has spoken to Sulgrave Manor who have agreed that he can use their ride on mower to cut Pocket Park more regularly during the summer.

Mr Fonge then spoke about an oak tree which was planted in 2012 to commemorate the Queens Diamond Jubilee. It was planted by Alec Cave, the eldest resident at the time, on land between Madams Close and the Manor. It was planted here as there was nowhere else for it to be planted. He suggested that it is now moved to Pocket Park but it would need replanting in the next 2-3 weeks. All Councillors felt this was a good idea. Thanks was given to Mr Fonge.

Action: Mr Fonge to arrange the re-planting with The Manor.

7. To agree to adopt Standing Orders Version 1

The original draft was circulated by the Parish Clerk. All comments are to be consolidated and a new draft circulated. Councillors discussed the new Co-option Procedure which will be its own policy although parts of it will be included in the meeting procedure paragraph of Standing Orders.

Action: Cllr Walker to draft a new document and circulate.

8. To receive an update on the transfer of land

Mr Thomas had sent an email update to the Parish Clerk on 1st February. There have been significant delays as the usual period for a transaction of this nature would be concluded in 6-8 weeks. This matter has been ongoing for eight months. Mr Lewis is doing his best to contain the fees at £500 plus VAT and disbursements. He is unlikely to continue to provide assurance unless the matter is completed within the next month or so. The plan prepared by Fisher German on behalf of the shop has yet to be agreed. However Mr Prior has found an old email saying it has been approved.

Action: Mr Prior to contact the vendor. Mr Prior to forward the plan to Mr Thomas. If there is no resolution by the next meeting there will be more costs involved. The Parish Council will then have to ask Mr Thomas for another quote.

9. Councillors Reports

Clr Roberts has made contact with Mr Barlow about the leaning tree and arranged a site visit on Saturday 4th February.

10. Finance

The following payments were approved under statutory powers:

£134.11 to EON (electricity)

£12.50 to Janet Smith (refreshments at December mtg)

£210.00 to Sulgrave Church Hall (use of hall for meetings)

£521.21 to Sulgrave Manor (copying from August 2015 – Jan 2017)

£692.64 to J George (notice-boards)

£349.80 to Parish Clerk (hours)

£31.62 to Parish Clerk (mileage)

£14.99 to Mr C Nicholls (fixings for new notice-boards). Thanks was given to Mr Nicholls for his time.

An additional invoice was passed to the Parish Clerk by Martin Sirot-Smith. There is a payment of £1392.00 to be made to M & P Scott for the repair of the wall (5M section) at Castle Green. This invoice is under budget and the work was approved at the December meeting. It was therefore agreed to accept and pay this invoice tonight. Reference has been made to the 3M section which will need revisiting with a view to linking up to the completed section.

To approve a grant application from the Transparency Fund for 2016/17

The Parish Council have a legal duty to put documents and end of year financial information on the website through Colin Wootton, the webmaster. There is money available from the Transparency Fund to cover the time incurred by the Parish Clerk to do this. It was agreed that the Parish Clerk can submit a grant application to Northants CALC to cover this time.

11. Planning

- *S/2016/2914/FUL and S/2016/2915/LBC, Internal alterations, new fenestration and a self contained annex at The Watermill, Stockwell Lane. Approved by SNC.*
- *S/2016/3182/TCA, Felling and removal of one apple tree at Eagles Court, Helmdon Road. For info only.*
- *S/2017/0162/TCA, Reduce size of Prunus Lisitanica (Portugal Laurel/Choke Cherry) by 50-75% at The Cottage, Manor Road. For info only.*

An additional application was received after the agenda had been published:-

S/2017/0159/FUL, Single storey rear extension, garden shed at rear, 1.8mtr metal railings and gate at front of The Old Wesleyan Chapel, Manor Road. Under consideration. Comments to be made by 15th February.

12. Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received and distributed:

- Richard MacDonald, AED dimensions
- Northants CALC, New External Auditor
- Northants Highways, AY4 footpath update
- Northants ACRE, Best Village Competition, Judges wanted. Poster to go on the board.
- Northants Highways, Community Enhancement Gang. Comments to be returned by 24th February.
- Pitsford Parish Council, Street Lighting Projects. Passed to the Chair to make contact with them.

Several items of correspondence were highlighted:

- Northants CALC, New External Auditor. BDO the current external auditor will complete the audit for the year ending 31st March 2017. PKF Littlejohn will carry out the external audit (for those that will still have one) for the year ending 31st March 2018 in the summer of 2018.

- Northants Highways, Community Enhancement Gang. The Parish Clerk has asked NCC if the gang came to the village last year which they are checking. The Parish Clerk to circulate last years list to Cllr's.

An item of correspondence was circulated after the agenda had been published. It refers to a Castle Green Site Inspection which was carried out on 31st July 2016. The report covers tree work as some need attention, the wildflower area which is overgrown and needs to be reduced in size, the disabled access path which has been lost again. The recommendation is to seek the advice of an aboralist. Cllr Walker asked for further details about the disabled access path. Plastic mesh was put down and where the grass has grown, the path has disappeared underneath. It is not marked. Cllr Walker asked if there is an obligation to have disabled access. The Chair recalled that there was no obligation when the previous decision was made.

Action: Cllr Priestman to ask the Castle Green Committee to get quotes and come back to the Parish Council with costs.

13. Open Forum

Mr Prior reported the Green by the Stocks which is covered in leaves and preventing the grass underneath from growing. Mrs Pollak asked if care could be taken with the crocuses growing underneath. A suggestion was made for the Community Enhancement Gang to do this work but it will be too late. It was agreed a small working party would help Mr Prior in clearing the leaves soon.

Mr Prior has reported the storm drains in Park Lane and outside the Church Hall which are blocked. The drain in the middle of the Stocks Green overflows and floods the Green with an offensive smell. The drain outside Hangland, Manor Road was reported. The Parish Clerk to report all the blocked drains to Street Doctor.

A footpath obstruction was reported outside Nutcracker and Star Cottage on Manor Road. The previous tenant put their bins at the back of the property but they are now being left on the footpath. The Parish Clerk to write a letter to the occupants.

Mr Fonge had investigated the use of bird scarers which was raised at the last meeting. They are light sensitive and should be used half an hour before dawn.

Mr Waite asked if the asset register had been circulated with Council. Cllr Daniels confirmed that a copy had been circulated. However there is more work to be done to produce a plan and include maintenance and costings. Mr Waite noted that the Stocks are the responsibility of the Parish Council and could be brushed down. Mr Waite agreed to have a look and advise the Parish Council on how to preserve them.

14. Matters for consideration at the next meeting

Litter pick to be arranged for early April. The Chair to circulate dates.

Co-option of new Cllr

To agree a co-option policy

To agree Standing Orders

To discuss the pay phone kiosk

To receive an update on the street lighting

To discuss the transfer of land

15. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 2nd March 2017 at 7.30pm in the Church Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.00pm