

SULGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 9th JULY 2015
IN SULGRAVE CHURCH HALL AT 7.45PM

Councillors Present

Andrew Waite (Chair), Jo Powell, Will Priestman, David Walker, Christine Coles (Parish Clerk) and three villagers.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1a. Apologies

Councillor's Jackson and Roberts

1b. Declaration of Interest

There were no interests to declare.

2a. To approve and sign minutes of the meeting of 11th June 2015

An amendment to page 2, item 4 first sentence, 'Stone Cottage' to read 'Stone Court'. The minutes were then agreed and signed. Proposed by Cllr Walker and seconded by the Chair.

2b. Matters Arising

The Parish Clerk clarified the statement made at the last meeting following the report from the internal auditor about the lack of budgetary process in setting the precept. A budget sheet will be prepared by the Chair and Parish Clerk next year.

3. Councillors Reports

Cllr Walker has been looking at how to stay involved in HS2 and he advised that he has joined the mailing list for the NCC HS2 Liaison group. There is a meeting in Towcester on 25th September. He has also joined the SNAG emailing list via Mr Bodman but there is no date yet for a meeting. There is a meeting on 24th July which he and Cllr Andrea Leadsom will attend. A recent discussion was held in house three weeks ago. HS2 are buying more land in Lower Thorpe and Lower Boddington but there is nothing that will affect Sulgrave. HS2 will not be connecting with HS1 and this could be an area to connect to.

Cllr Walker spoke about the grass verge at the top of Stockwell Lane which is a focal area with the tree in the middle but cars and trucks park there. He asked councillors to think about what could be done to the area to improve it.

Cllr Powell had spoken to the Arboricultural Tree Officer at CDC to ask if they could look at the beech trees by the Stocks. She was told that if they are owned by the Parish Council, then a private person needs to inspect them. The trees were last inspected in 2009 and now have ivy growing up them. To be covered under item 5.

4. Finance

The following payments were approved:

- £576.00 to RD Landscapes Ltd (grass cutting June)
- £10.00 to SNAST Neighbourhood Watch
- £82.80 to John Hicks (play inspection)
- £50.00 to Parish Clerk (float)
- £83.32 to EON (street lighting maintenance)

Proposed by The Chair and seconded by Cllr Powell.

5. **To discuss the condition of the beech trees by the Stocks and to look at previous reports received**

Clare Pollak had forwarded old emails relating to the beech trees from 2009. The Chair thanked Clare for this information. At that time a number of people had said the trees were big and were shedding leaves. The Parish Council approached Ben Acreman who recommended putting a brace on 1 tree and thinning the crown by 15%. The Parish Council then consulted the Tree officer at SNC. SNC advised that they did not think the thinning was necessary as mature beech trees do not like being reduced. They inspected the trees and noted that the western part was infected and suggested that the extent of decay was investigated by a professional consultant. Bruce Hatton was contacted and he advised the best way to determine the extent of decay was to undertake a Picus tomography test. The test was done in December 2009 and showed that although there was some evidence of rot in the trunk, the tree was healthy and safe for the time being. The test was then repeated in 2012 and showed no alteration in the rotten area. Councillors agreed to ask Bruce Hatton to visit and inspect the trees again when convenient for him when he is in the area. He may be able to give advice on the care of the trees and the ivy which is growing on it. This visit could be tied in with inspecting the trees in the Church Hall car park as one has a hole in it.

Action: The Chair to contact Bruce Hatton and ask him to inspect the trees when he is next in the area.

6. **To discuss and agree maintenance work (£85.00) to the bench on Manor Road and to discuss the bench in Pocket Park woods**

Cllr Walker asked if the Parish Council could consider adopting the bench outside Mr Harrison's house on Manor Road. It was given to the village by the Gardening Society 20 years ago. It was agreed the bench could be adopted and put on the asset register. The cost of £85.00 to repair the bench was approved.

Action: Cllr Walker to tell Dominic North to proceed with the repair and the Parish Clerk to email him. The Parish Clerk to add the bench to the asset register.

Cllr Walker also spoke about the bench in the Pocket Park Woods which again was given to the village by the Gardening Society. It was agreed the bench should be added to the asset register.

Action: The Parish Clerk to add the bench to the asset register.

7. **Planning**

Two new applications had been received by the council

- *S/2015/1420/PA, Determination as to whether prior approval is required (under Class Q of Part 3 of the above order) for the change of use of an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) in respect of: the transport and highways impacts of the development; noise impacts of the development, contamination risks on the site; flooding risks on the site; whether the siting and location of the buildings makes it impractical or undesirable to change the use; and the design and external appearance of the building at Coolington Barn, Helmdon Road, Weston.*

Cllr Jackson advised that under recent planning law changes the conversion of an agricultural building such as a barn can now be carried out as permitted development rather than requiring planning permission (General Permitted Development Order 2015). The order limits the scale, type, appearance of the development within the existing structure. Cllr Jackson suggested that the council respond in a neutral way and let SNC make the decision. Cllr Walker is unhappy with the planning legislation but that cannot be changed. He felt it might be the best time to raise the issue of public access. Cllr Roberts had no objection and advised he would rather see the building refurbished in an attractive and sensible manner. He noted that the concrete road is not marked as a right of way and may be difficult to argue. The Chair was against the proposal as the application is in open countryside and outside of the village confines. A protected species survey would be needed. Cllr Walker added that an owl box is in the barn. He suggested that the Parish Clerk contact Weston to see if they had any comments to make.

Action: The Parish Clerk to contact Weston and ask for the views. The Parish Clerk to collate councillors views and reply to SNC.

- S/2015/1444/LBC, New Door in place of a window on rear west elevation at The Old Farmhouse, Manor Road. Councillors had no objections.

8. Correspondence

- Waldon Telecom Ltd, Proposed base station upgrade. No objections were raised.
- John Hicks & Associates, Pocket Park Play Inspection Report

The Parish Clerk to forward the inspection report to councillors. Cllr Walker reported the basketball hoop nets which are broken and the backing board which is coming away. Councillors discussed the grass cutting in Pocket Park which is cut nicely. However there are nettles adjacent to the back gardens in Towrise which are long and have not been strimmed. The pond area is completely inaccessible. It was last cleared 2-3 years ago. At the time the Parish Council asked if anybody would like to take on the role of scheduled maintenance but nobody came forward. There are nesting birds and newts in the pond. Tom Russell previously did some work. It was agreed that Tom and Helen Timms would be contacted for further advice. This item to be discussed at the next meeting in August.

9. Open Forum

The Chair thanked Clare Pollak for previously looking after the signboards which are placed on the road before a meeting and taken inside afterwards. He asked councillors to think about someone taking over the role and being responsible for them.

Potholes outside Kirkleys, Magpie Road and one beyond the Stables on Manor Road.

Action: The Parish Clerk to report to NCC Street Doctor.

A discussion took place about the postbox as it has been moved from outside the old shop to outside the church. A site meeting was held in January with the Post Office and Parish Clerk and two sites were agreed. The first was next to the new shop but the Post Office felt that underground services might prevent them from putting the box here. The second option was across the road next to the bus shelter. The Parish Council noted their disappointment that they could not be part of the discussion with the Post Office about the final position.

Action: The Parish Clerk to email the Post Office.

Janet Smith asked the Chair for an update on the Church Hall improvement plans. The Chair replied he has been looking at them for a while but time is an issue.

Action: The Chair to circulate to other councillors for them to talk again and look at ideas.

10. Date and time of next meeting

Parish Council Meeting on Monday 10th August 2015 at 7.45pm at the Church Hall.

Meeting closed at 8.55pm