

SULGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF AN ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 12TH MAY 2015
IN SULGRAVE CHURCH HALL AT 7.45PM

Councillors Present

Andrew Waite, Chris Jackson, Jo Powell, Will Priestman, Graham Roberts, David Walker, Christine Coles (Parish Clerk) and three villagers.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Elections

1a. Election of Chairman

Cllr Waite was voted to be Chairman.

1b. Chairs Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office form

Cllr Waite signed the form.

1c. Election of Vice-Chair

Cllr Roberts was voted to be Vice-Chairman.

2a. Introduction and Welcome of New Councillors

Cllr Waite noted that the council have said goodbye to three councillors, Clare Pollak, Sally Harding and Tom Russell. He said it was great to welcome three new councillors, Chris Jackson, Will Priestman and David Walker.

Each councillor then introduced themselves.

Chris Jackson lives at Middle Barn on Manor Road and mover to Sulgrave a few years ago. He is a structural engineer and feels it is the perfect way to join in .

David Walker lives at Swallow Cottage on Manor Road. He is self employed as an adviser to an Agricultural Insurance Business. He has previously been a Councillor for two villages in Kent and wants to make a contribution to the village.

Will Priestman lives at the The Limes in Manor Road. He spent twenty years in Sales & Marketing. He then became a BBC presenter but had to give this up due to health issues. His time is now spent with his girlfriend with a singing group travelling around the world. He moved to Sulgrave from London and is hoping to make a difference.

2b. To discuss the roles of Councillors

The following areas of responsibility were agreed:

Councillor	Area
Chris Jackson	Planning/Quality Status/Utilities
Jo Powell	Environment & Heritage/Cultural Activities
Will Priestman	Communication/Cultural Activities
Graham Roberts	Environment & Heritage/Utilities
Andrew Waite	Planning/Environment & Heritage
David Walker	Communication/District & County Council Consultations

The Chair agreed to write to all councillors about the other projects that the Parish Council are currently working on.

3a. Apologies

None

3b. Declaration of Interest

The Chair declared an interest in the planning application at Fleet Farm.

4a. To approve and sign minutes of the meeting of 17th April 2014 and 12th March 2015

The minutes were agreed and signed. Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by the Chair.

4b. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. To receive an update on the village lighting project

Cllr Roberts had circulated documents before the meeting relating to this project. For the benefit of the new councillors he explained the previous Parish Council had resolved to carry out a programme of works to replace the current street lighting. This would enable the Parish Council to meet government and authority requirements and make energy savings. The project was started in 2011 when a consultant engineer was engaged to give advice on recommendations to improve and replace the lights. Based upon his recommendations the Parish Council obtained quotations and got budget prices. A series of consultations with residents were then held. Villagers wanted a more traditional style of lantern so a second consultation was put out in February 2015. There are two traditional styles identified that are appropriate to the village and one more modern style which was completely rejected. Cllr Roberts was delighted with the response as 20 votes each were received for the other two styles. However, there is a cost difference for the traditional lanterns and the previous budget is now more than 12 months out of date.

It was agreed to engage a consultant to help with the development and consider the practical implementation of the scheme. Chris Barnes was engaged to look at Phase 1 of the contract. This involved consultancy advice, reading the procurement spec looking at other aspects such as Highways and Conservation approval. It then drew attention to other documents such as design and management of the job. Phase 1 has now been completed satisfactorily.

Phase 2 in summary involves advising and assisting in drawing an appropriate tender list of contractors, attending the site during the tender process for one day to enable companies to meet on site, to assist in assessing the tenders returned to the Parish Council and in appointing a Contractor to carry out the works, to chair the pre-contract meeting with the Parish Council and Contractor, to carry out the contract administration on behalf of the Parish Council, to act as a Principal Designer, to assist the Parish Council in agreeing the final account with the contractor. The cost for this work is £1650.00 plus VAT. This includes all reasonable expenses and travel to the meetings identified in the Sulgrave area.

Cllr Roberts has prepared a request for quotation and this has been sent to Chris Barnes for comments and amendments. The Parish Council will have to decide about seeking a Public Works Loan over a period of years. It was noted that the Parish Council are not obliged to accept any tender. Chris Barnes has a good track record with these projects and has worked as a Health and Safety Advisor. He is well placed to do this work and is good at managing projects. Cllr Roberts attended a meeting with him and the SNC Conservation Officer. The Parish Council did not know anyone else with the equivalent skills.

Cllr Roberts then spoke about the funding. The Parish Council have been successful in receiving an SNC New Homes Bonus Grant of £3K and County Cllr Ben Smith in 2011 gave £750.00. Total funds to date are £3750.00. It is hoped the Parish Council can contribute some money towards the scheme. The Chair added that the community could be asked to contribute.

Cllr Roberts proposed that Chris Barnes is engaged to carry out Phase 2. The Chair seconded this and said it was right that he guides the project along. All the councillors voted in favour.

6. To discuss and agree whether or not to withdraw the Council's objection to the proposed diversion of bridleway AY4 - Lamby Manor Tunnel

The Chair advised that a proposal was sent round one year ago. The tunnel is in a poor state of repair and it was suggested to divert the bridleway across the railway line and down. The Parish Council objected at the time as they felt there might be an opportunity to repair the bridge. Colin Wootton saw the opportunity to divert the route. He put that idea forward on behalf of the Parish Council and negotiated with the land owner/tenant. The Footpaths Officer said that some areas are boggy and unsuitable for being a path. 5 years ago the cost to carry out the repairs was £50K. Nothing has been done to clear the vegetation or assist in the drainage over the years.

The Chair has asked for advice from Sarah Clarke who is the Definitive Map Officer for Northants Highways. If the Parish Council decide to withdraw their objection the order could be confirmed as an unopposed order. The works would be completed (installation of two bridle gates crossing the former railway) and the old route would be extinguished. If all the objections were not withdrawn, the matter would be referred to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) to determine. As this involves a lot of preparation of paperwork which has to be borne by the County Council and cannot be recovered from the applicant, Northants Highways are reluctant to proceed in this way. If this option was chosen, PINS would decide whether to resolve the matter by written representation, public hearing or public inquiry. The Parish Council would be required to contribute to this process and submit evidence. If the order was referred to PINS they may decide to confirm the Order as made, confirm it with modifications, or not confirm the Order which is no further forward. If the objections to the Order were not withdrawn but Northants Highways did not wish to refer the matter to PINS, they would have to consider other possible options on how to resolve the matter.

Cllr Walker asked who the land belongs to. It belongs to All Souls College and the tenant is Graham Humphries. It is unclear when ownership of the tunnel was passed to him. It was felt the onus should be on the owner or tenant and the responsibility to repair lies with that person. The Chair was unsure if something that is unaffordable can be enforced.

From the floor Mr Christy was in favour of going back to the tenant as the tunnel is part of railway history. If they cannot repair it, they will have to fill it in. As the bridge falls within the parish boundary, there is a duty of care to consider. He also suggested contacting Dame Jill Knight of the House of Lords as she may know the Master of the College.

Cllr Walker made the point that the Parish Council cannot apply for external funding until a definitive refusal to fund is received from the person who has the responsibility for it. Cllr Priestman was in favour of going back to the owners.

Cllr Jackson said the main bridge barrel is very unlikely to collapse, although some bricks may come loose. Without the tunnel being properly secured the danger will remain for a long time and it is a big issue that has to be dealt with. The main structure is fine but the ends are more likely to collapse in time. He asked about ownership as most railway structures are owned by a Government Board.

It was agreed that the Chair write back to Angus Richards and Sarah Clarke of Northants Highways to maintain their objection as written with no change. The Parish Council are willing to negotiate further and consider the other possible options offered by Sarah Clarke.

7. Councillors Reports

Cllr Roberts has spoken to the grass contractor about cutting the grass shorter as the grass is growing very fast. He asked about any events coming up to enable the grass to be cut beforehand. There is the Open Gardens on 31st May. The grass is cut about 12 times per year and some areas are allowed to grow wild. A three year contract has been agreed for a fixed price. Cllr Walker complimented the work and said the service was excellent.

The Chair attended the Wings For Life Charity race meeting in the Church Hall on 27th April.

The Chair spoke about ongoing projects such as the new signboard, the repair/replacement bus shelter and the improvements to the Church Hall.

Cllr Powell has looked at funding for the tunnel work and she could only find about £10K. There is little funding available.

8. Finance

To agree two new cheque signatories

It was agreed that Cllr Roberts and Cllr Priestman would be the two new signatories to replace Clare Pollak and Sally Harding.

The following payments were approved:

£102.00 to TB Sports Fencing (repair of basketball hoop from 2014/15 accounts)

£205.89 to EON (electricity)

£83.32 to EON (street lighting maintenance)

£236.49 to NCAALC (membership)

£53.04 to Cllr Roberts (purchase of litter pick equipment)

£156.00 to Borneo Martell Turner Coulson Solicitors (shop lease renewal)

£600.00 to Nene Construction Management Services Ltd (work by Chris Barnes on street lighting project)

£576.00 to RD Landscapes Ltd (grass cutting April)

£18.00 to SLCC (Clerks membership)

£35.00 to Northants ACRE (membership)

£225.00 to R Fletcher (internal audit)

Proposed by The Chair and seconded by Cllr Roberts.

9. Planning

New applications received

- S/2015/0516/TCA, Fell 1 Hawthorn Tree at Madams Close, adjacent to Little Street. For info only.
- S/2015/0576/TCA, Cut back overhanging branches of 4 grey poplar trees by 2-4 metres at Olde Bakehouse, Little Street. For info only.
- S/2015/0670/TCA, Fell apple tree at Dove Cottage, Church Street. For info only.
- S/2015/0673/TCA, Removal of 2 x Norway spruce trees at Apple Acre, Manor Road. For info only.
- S/2015/0549/FUL, Demolition of existing barn and erection of two new dwellings, car ports and associated works at Bentley Farm Bungalow, Helmdon Road. Objections were raised. This was a second application.
- S/2015/0728/FUL, Residential development of 4 no dwellings at Fleet Farm, Little Street. Under consideration.

Approval by SNC

- S/2015/0105/FUL, Single storey rear extension pitched roof to porch at front and window to east elevation at Belmont, Little Street
- S/2014/2488/FUL and S/2014/2489/LBC, Demolition of single storey extension. Replacement single storey extension. Relocation of rooflight and replace door with window in east elevation. Alterations to internal layout at Old Sulgrave Stores, School St

10. Correspondence

- SNC, Confirmation of New Homes Bonus Grant
- Borneo Martell Turner Coulson Solicitors, Renewal of Shop Lease until 16th September 2021
- EON, Change to deemed contract rates on 1 May 2015

- Ian Shanks of NCC, Work to Stocks
- NCC and Northants CALC, Superfast Broadband

One item of correspondence was received:

Email from Northants County Council to confirm that planned maintenance of the Stocks has been completed by them. NCC will not be undertaking further maintenance work to the stocks in the future. Cllr Roberts spoke about the Stocks and the area underneath which is in a poor condition. He felt it would be nice to try and improve the area. A tree report was received a few years ago and the recommendation then was a small amount of trimming.

Action: The Parish Clerk to find the old tree report.

11. Open Forum

Mr Wootton gave an update on the windfarm. The Parish Council objected and there were two public inquiries. Colin Wootton represented the Parish Council and was a member of the Action Group. After the second public inquiry Mr Eric Pickles decided to call in the appeal for his own determination. At the time he felt that too many were being let go. It took one year and in December 2014 he decided to dismiss the appeal. This was against the advice of the inspector and it was a finely balanced decision. Broadview then had six weeks to make a High Court Challenge. Broadview have appealed as they knew that Andrea Leadsom MP had been lobbying the Secretary of State during the long period of consideration and they felt they were being disadvantaged. The Action Group had a good barrister called Richard Honey. Colin Wootton has agreed to be a witness again and provide a witness statement. Under the new Government, Andrea Leadsom is now Minister for Energy and Climate Change.

Mrs Tattersall first expressed her gratitude to the outgoing councillors. She reported two stone steps in front of her property on highway land which were damaged by a lorry 18 months ago.

Action: The Parish Clerk to take a photo and report to Street Doctor.

Mr Taylor asked if there was an update on the defibrillator. The Chair replied that the Parish Council were asked to comment on the matter and the defibrillator was going to be installed next to the shop. It is not a Parish Council project but the Parish Council are keen to support it.

Action: The Parish Clerk to ask for an update.

Mr Taylor asked about the siting of the postbox. The Chair replied that the matter is in hand. A site meeting was held with the Parish Clerk and Post Office to agree the best place for it. The process could take up to 40 weeks. Once the site has been agreed the postbox will be moved on the same day. The postbox has been repainted.

A discussion took place about dog mess which is on the increase again. Other villages have them and the opinion is divided on the merits of dog bins. By having a dog bin focuses the problem to one place and the owners are the problem. A suggestion was made to offer pooper scoopers and bags. The Chair felt that dog bins suburbanise a rural setting. He was happy to have another debate about the subject at another meeting and for the Parish Council to send out another questionnaire.

Mr Taylor asked for an update on the footpath in Little Street. The Chair replied that a golden topping is being laid soon and will be filled back to the level of the kerb. It should match the existing surface. If there is money left over the pavement by the kissing gate to Madams Close will be infilled.

12. Date and time of next meeting

Parish Council Meeting on 11th June 2015 at 7.45pm at the Church Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.25pm