

SULGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF AN ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 11TH MAY 2017
IN SULGRAVE CHURCH HALL AT 7.30PM

Councillors Present

Graham Roberts, Troy Daniels, Chris Jackson, Laura North, Will Priestman, David Walker, Christine Coles (Parish Clerk) and fifteen villagers

Cllr Roberts welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Elections

Election of Chairman

Councillors voted Cllr Jackson to be Chairman.

Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office form

Cllr Jackson signed the form. The Parish Clerk will keep it on file.

Election of Vice-Chairman

Councillors voted Cllr Daniels to be Vice-Chairman.

The new Chairman gave a vote of thanks to Cllr Roberts who had stood in as Chairman since December.

2. Apologies

None

2b. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Roberts declared an interest in the financial payment to be made to Janet Smith.

3a. To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March, 13th April, Annual Parish Meeting of 13th April and 25th April 2017

An amendment was made to the minutes of 2nd March, proposed by Cllr Walker seconded by Cllr North to read as follows:-

Item 5, paragraph 5, Cllr Walker responded

To now read 'Cllr Walker mentioned that the residents near lamp no 11, who had complained about excessive brightness and residents in general would be disappointed to learn it was not now realistic to assume that it would be possible to adjust the brightness of the lamps. Villagers and the Parish Council had previously been informed on several occasions during the consultation process prior to their installation that such adjustment to the lamps would be made if they were found to be too bright or intrusive'. The minutes would be signed off at the next meeting.

The minutes of the two Parish Council meetings held on 13th April were both approved and signed as a true record of the meetings. The minutes of 25th April were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.

3b. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. To discuss the transfer of the parcel of land behind the village shop

The transfer has taken place and the parcel of land now belongs to the Parish Council. A series of documents relating to the transfer and obligations were passed to Cllr Roberts quite late and there was no time for them to be scanned and circulated before the meeting.

Mr Prior asked if the covenants of the old owner pass to the new owner? This becomes part of the transfer documents and it was confirmed that land carries the covenant and not the owner.

An additional lease between the Parish Council and Village Shop has been supplied. The covenants have been transferred into the lease and the tenants obligations have been added as an addendum. The invoice for the legal work is £665.00 for work from 24th June 2016 to 24th April 2017. Mr Thomas has only charged for 2.5 hours of his time. A vote of thanks was given to him. Cllr Roberts proposed that this invoice be accepted under Finance.

Mr Johnston spoke on behalf of the Village Shop and confirmed they had had a goodwill relationship with Mr Todd for ten years. Mr Todd had suggested to formalise the gift of land. The land is now in the ownership of the Parish Council and it will be useful to the shop and village. The Shop Committee have paid £500.00 towards the cost of a site plan and he asked who is responsible for paying it? Cllr Roberts confirmed that when matters were first discussed at a Parish Council meeting on 13th June 2016, Mr Prior of the Shop Committee said they would pay the legal costs. This fact was recorded in the minutes. At that time, Lewis Thomas, the solicitor suggested to the Parish Council that they got that commitment in writing but it was not felt necessary as there was an excellent relationship between the two parties. Mr Prior replied that what he had said and meant were two different things. The shop were hoping to negotiate and buy more land from Mr Todd. A site plan was necessary as nothing existed. The purchase of the extra land did not happen.

Disappointment was expressed by the Parish Council that it had taken so long for the matter to come to them. Mr Prior replied that the matter was not meant to be common knowledge at first although it was noted it has been general conversation in the village since Christmas. Mr Johnston felt that there were other underlying issues. It was agreed the shop is a critical resource for the village and the community has already invested a lot of money and hours of time.

A Public Works Loan was originally taken out to purchase the Reading Room and convert into a shop. The two payments each year cost £2716 and the Parish Council receive £1500 back in rent from the shop. This is not a normal landlord/tenant relationship as a normal landlord would be covering all costs from the tenant. The rent was reviewed by the Parish Council in 2015 and not increased. The difference of £1216 is paid out of the precept which is public money to spend on all the village. It was agreed the shop is an asset of great value but there are other important assets such as Castle Green, Allotments and Pocket Park.

Cllr North asked if the shop is making money? Mr Prior replied no and the deficit is now £2.5K cumulatively. The village have given £30K in donations. There are 175 paid up members and 30 to 40 have been lost over time.

The Chair noted that the Parish Council were under the impression that the transfer was not going to cost the Parish Council and the budget was set in January without allowing for this expenditure. Had they known about this cost, there may have been a level of rent attached to the lease to recoup the money over time. The Chair was pleased that a lot of views had been aired tonight but he is keen that the issue is resolved quickly. It was also agreed that solicitors should not be involved any more and there be no more external costs.

Cllr Walker referred to the budget sheet as there is £2100 allocated to the Village Shop. Cllr Roberts confirmed that this money is in case of an emergency such as major repairs to the fabric of the building. The initial sum put aside each year was £200 but has now been increased to £250.

It was agreed that the Shop Committee should meet to discuss their options. They will communicate with the Chairman of the Parish Council and a proposal put forward for proper discussion at the next council meeting. The invoice from Fisher German was passed to the Parish Clerk who will scan and circulate.

5. **To agree the procedure for the co-option of a new Councillor**

Cllr Walker had sought guidance from NALC and exchanged emails with Councillors a few months ago. A draft was circulated in late February/early March and there were no comments. Therefore the document dated 11th May was accepted as the correct procedure.

6. **To discuss land within Parish Council Ownership and any required measures to confirm ownership**

The Chair is unsure of exact land ownership in the village and this will form part of the Asset Management Plan. Cllr Roberts confirmed that the Parish Council own Castle Green, Pocket Park, the allotment area, the small parcel of land behind the shop, the small piece of land called 'the Pound' and the Stocks. Castle Mound is privately owned.

7. **To receive an update on the Defibrillator and Village Guide Information Board**

During March 2017 a project group consisting of Parish Council members and the Sulgrave Village History Society met to progress the project. The group determined the layout of the guide and defibrillator within the phone kiosk and to seek permission to reproduce the contents of the two village leaflets for the information guide. BT then advised that due to structural safety issues with the kiosk the Parish Council would not be able to adopt it and it would be removed in due course. This would involve the removal of the kiosk and concrete slab on which it sits, the reinstatement of the surface to match the surroundings, the disconnection of the power supply and its pot ending and the safe sealing of electrical wires below ground level. Further enquiries raised the possibility of the Parish Council replacing the removed kiosk with its own structure but determination had to be made as to the owner of the site. Whilst the enquiries were ongoing, the project group undertook several actions to progress the project to investigate the type and cost of buying or building and installing an alternative structure on the site if the Parish Council were permitted to do so, investigating funding sources for the project including the New Homes Bonus Community Grant and enquiring to determine the cost of connecting power to any new structure on the site. On 8th May BT advised that the land on which the kiosk sits is the property of BT and the Parish Council are prohibitive from placing a structure on the site. This means the specific project to reuse the kiosk is no longer viable and should close. It was noted that both the village guide and defibrillator have significant value to the village and alternative sites should be identified.

Cllr Daniels recommended to the Parish Council to:

1. Close the current defibrillator and village guide project with immediate effect.
2. Undertake to identify suitable alternative sites for the defibrillator and village guide.
3. Communicate to the community, through all appropriate means, the closure of the project, the rationale for the project's closure and Council's commitment to finding alternative sites for both the defibrillator and village guide.

Councillor's agreed to these recommendations. Cllr Daniels then thanked Mr Wootton and Mr Sirot-Smith for all their work.

From the floor Mr Sirot-Smith of Sulgrave Village History Society said they would start again and look at new sites for the village guide as the initial concepts had been turned down. He thanked Cllr Daniels for his work. An idea to be explored is a new bus shelter and information board. There is plenty of land which is centrally sited. The project could be funded through the New Homes Bonus Grant or other grants.

It was noted that defibrillators have been seen in many different places in the country, under walls of private and public properties and on listed buildings.

8. **To discuss the future printing of the newsletters**

The Parish Council have been using Texprep in Brackley for the last two months. They are doing a good job but the newsletter is not in colour. Sulgrave Manor have quoted a price but they require ten days notice which is not possible. Everyone agreed it would be nice to have the newsletter in colour but it is not a necessity. It was agreed to carry on using Texprep but review on a regular basis. A vote of thanks was given to Janet Smith who compiles the newsletter.

9. Councillors Reports

Cllr North has taken responsibility for Pocket Park. She has created a rota for fathers. There has been a lot of rubbish in the park over the last two months. A polite notice will be put up asking people to take their rubbish home. People have witnessed a couple of youths drinking in the hut. They will be spoken to if seen again.

Cllr Walker referred to the HS2 Community and Environment Fund which has £15M in the pot. He has spoken to the Manor. Money could be used to upgrade the Church hall as there is no village hall. One condition is that the Church should not constrain its use and this has been confirmed by the PCC that there are no restrictions. It was thought the Church was on a 25 year rolling lease but this is not the case. From the floor Mr Prior confirmed the lease terminates in 2025. It is a fixed term lease with five year break clauses so that the lease can be broken by either party. The next break clause is due in 2020. Cllr Walker to find out if an application can still be made.

10. Finance

To approve a salary increase for the Parish Clerk in line with the 2016-2018 National Salary Award from NALC/SLCC

An increase of 1% was agreed to take effect from 1st April 2017.

The following payments were approved under statutory powers:

£228.00 to R Fletcher (internal audit)

£3.68 to Janet Smith (refreshments for Annual Parish Meeting)

£665.00 to Borneo Martell Turner Coulston (charges re gift of land behind shop)

£35.50 to Texprep (printing of Newsletter)

£35.00 to Northants ACRE (membership)

£20.00 to Mr Priestman (work to remove overhanging branches to roadside)

£251.64 to Northants CALC (membership)

£386.32 to Parish Clerk (hours)

£21.08 to Parish Clerk (mileage)

£35.50 to Texprep (copying of May newsletter)

£300.00 to RD Landscapes Ltd (grass cutting)

Proposed by Cllr Priestman and seconded by Cllr Daniels.

Annual Return for year ending 31st March 2017

The Clerk advised that the internal audit has been carried out.

To approve Section 1 of the Annual Return 2016/17

Section 1 was approved and signed by the Chairman and Parish Clerk.

To approve Section 2 of the Annual Return 2016/17

Section 2 was approved and signed by the Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer.

11. Planning

- *S/2017/0529/FUL, Conversion and extension of garage to create living accommodation, single storey side and rear extensions at The Braid, Little Street. No objections. Approved by SNC.*
- *S/2017/0678/LBC, Removal of plasterboard ceiling in the kitchen, insertion of insulation between the joists and replacement plasterboard ceiling marked as area S2/S3. Raise RSJ by three brick courses in area marked G4/G5 and replacement French doors on east elevation marked F11 at The Watermill, Stockwell Lane. No objections. Approved by SNC.*

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

S/2017/1162/LBC, Variation of Condition 2 (plans) of listed building consent S/2016/0820/LBC (New internal doorway at first floor level) to change the position of the proposed doorway at The Thatched House, Manor Road. Under consideration.

12. Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received and distributed:

- SNC, New Homes Bonus Allocation
- NCC Highways, Definitive Map and Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- SNC, Funding Fair at Towcester Racecourse on 6th June. On notice-board.
- Northants CALC, Transparency Fund 2017/18
- Mobile Library Service Timetable for June to November 2017. On notice-board.

Two items of correspondence was highlighted:

- NCC Highways, Definitive Map and Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The Parish Clerk has two hard copies of the map and a questionnaire that has to be completed by 1st July. Colin Wootton confirmed the definitive map is on the website. To be discussed at the June meeting.
- Northants CALC, Transparency Fund 2017/18. There is money available for the Parish Clerk to claim for her time in preparing and sending the documents to Colin Wootton for the website. This will be the last year of funding. The Parish Clerk to complete the form.

13. Open Forum

Mr Prior spoke about the storm drains in Park Lane and near The Stocks. Cllr Walker confirmed that the matter was raised with County Cllr Ian Morris at the Annual Parish Meeting. There has been an email exchange since that meeting. He has asked for the sucker machine to come out to the village to clean the gullies. An engineer's survey may be needed after.

Cllr Roberts announced that he would be standing down after this meeting. He gave thanks to the Councillors and Parish Clerk for their support.

14. Matters for consideration at the next meeting

Councillor Responsibilities
Update on Defibrillator and Village Information Guide

15. Date and time of next meetings

Thursday 15th June 2017 at 7.30pm
Thursday 13th July 2017 at 7.30pm

Before the meeting ended the Chairman gave a vote of thanks both to Andrew Waite and Graham Roberts for their long service on the Parish Council. Graham was presented with a gift.

Meeting closed at 9.25pm