

SULGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2014
IN SULGRAVE CHURCH HALL AT 7.45PM

Councillors Present

Andrew Waite, Sally Harding, Clare Pollak, Jo Powell, Tom Russell and ten villagers.

1a. Apologies

Cllr Roberts

1b. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2a. To approve and sign minutes of the meeting of 11th September 2014

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

2b. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising to discuss.

3. Councillors Reports

Pocket Park - Cllr Russell spoke about Pocket Park and maintenance work to the forest. He, Cllr Harding and George Metcalfe met with Helen Timms to discuss the issues. Helen cannot get involved in the groundwork around the play equipment which has subsided. The pond would require a specialist looking at it and there is a person to contact in Brackley. There will be a need for ongoing maintenance with the pond area. Mr Metcalfe raised the issue of the Pocket Park being managed by the community. The grass contractor strims the grass and the community have in the past got involved either once or twice a year. Trees were planted by families and should not be removed. Helen had recommended coppicing and trimming dead wood to let more light in. The hedge to the right could be trimmed to waist height which would be a two day job. There would be an extra cost to dispose of the waste or a landowner could be approached to ask if it could be burnt. Another idea put forward was to get a gang of volunteers together to do some of the less heavy work. The Chair asked when the work should be done and the best time would be Autumn/Winter. Cllr Pollak said that hedges should not be cut after the end of February. Helen could not commit to doing the work. The work done with the chainsaws would have to be done when the park was empty. The opposite hedge by the stream requires some trimming. There are various other issues to address such as regenerating interest in people looking after the park and the need to find a Pocket Park Warden.

Action: Cllr's Russell/Harding to get three quotes and contact adjacent landowners for discussion at the next meeting.

Memorial Tree - Councillors discussed the memorial tree for the triangle in the centre of the village. This has been sponsored by Nellie Stallabrasses family. Paul Lewis was paid for the removal of the old tree and Nellies family are purchasing the new tree. A tree has been identified and will be ordered at the end of October. Mr Metcalfe noted that a lot of thought has to be given about its type as it will be there for the next 50-100 years. There are other factors to consider such as its height and it should be of medium size. The Chair thanked him for his comments. An order for the tree has not been placed yet and the comments made tonight would be considered.

Finger Post - Cllr Powell reported the finger post at The Magpie end which has been knocked over.

Action: The Parish Clerk to report to Street Doctor.

New Notice-board - After the last meeting the Chair agreed to contact Warmington and Mollington Parish Councils about their notice-boards which both had a canopy. Both were built by the same person who has since retired and the cost was about £4K. It is hoped that a cheaper board can be sourced and funding found.

Action: The Chair to get more information and costs.

Defibrillator - The Chair has spoken to Richard Macdonald and this matter is still being considered.

Bus Shelter - This is work in progress. The Chair will complete a schedule with costs for the shelter to be repaired in the Spring.

Improvements to Church Hall - This is work in progress. The Chair to take more measurements and draw up plans.

4. To discuss issues relating to Pocket Park equipment

The equipment will require maintenance and this item is to be kept on the agenda. There are issues with the Flying Fox and climbing frame.

Action: Cllr Harding to take photos of the problems and email to the Clerk who will forward to the supplier.

5. To receive an update on the village lighting project and discuss the consultation document

SSE Lighting Services have confirmed that the price will remain fixed for the duration of the works.

For the benefit of those at the meeting, the Parish Council are looking at lighting as the existing bulbs will become obsolete soon. The current standards have been in for 20 years and some are in very poor condition. This will be a big project.

Cllr Roberts had prepared a consultation document to go in the next newsletter and circulated the draft to councillors. Cllr's were happy for it to be included in the November edition.

6. To discuss the renewal of the Shop Lease agreement

The shop lease is now due for renewal and was last renewed in September 2009 for five years. At that time the matter was discussed in great detail over two council meetings in May and June 2009 respectfully. The current rent received from the shop is £1500 per year. The Chair noted that little has changed in that time. The Parish Council need to be sure they are doing the right thing for the village and have asked to see a copy of the latest accounts. The Parish Clerk has written to Lewis Thomas to ask if he will help with the paperwork again.

From the floor Mr Christy felt the shop is a community asset and a lot of hard work was put into opening it. The shop has been open for ten years and is trading successfully. People are buying local and the card system has proved useful. This has improved takings and the committee will be investing in an upright freezer soon. Any increase in rent would put future capital at risk. Three other villages in Northants have taken the lead from this shop.

Mrs Blayney felt that prices would have to increase if the rent was increased. They are not making huge profits. Cllr Pollak noted that the shop does improve the value of houses in the village.

The Chair said he was mindful of all the facts presented tonight and the Parish Council propose to do more work and involve the shop committee in their discussions. To be carried over to the next meeting.

7. To discuss forthcoming Local Elections in May 2015

There will be forthcoming local elections in May 2015. The Clerk is attending a training course in November and she has prepared a flyer for the next newsletter. She has asked each councillor to write one piece for the newsletter of their work as a councillor each month starting in November.

Action: The Chair to draft the first article.

8. Finance

a) *To approve the following payments:*

£120.00 to BDO LLP (external audit)

£83.32 to EON (street lighting maintenance)

£210.47 to EON (electricity)

£36.00 to CPRE (membership)

£307.40 to Parish Clerk (hours)

£31.62 to Parish Clerk (mileage)

A cheque payment of £1578.00 was received from the Sulgrave Castle Archaeology Group to reimburse the Parish Council for the two payments made to Rivermeade Signs Ltd. The VAT is to be put into a designated maintenance account for the Archaeology/Castle Sign. The sign to be added to the insurance policy.

b) *To approve and accept the Annual Return 2013/14*

The external audit is complete and the Clerk presented the Annual Return to the council. There were two issues arising. The first is the figures which are incorrect by £1. The second issue is to update the asset list and include the bench. There are other items to add to the list including the Stocks and Castle Signboard which has just been purchased. The Parish Council then approved and accepted the Annual Return. The appropriate notices have been put on the board.

10. Planning Applications

There were no new planning applications to discuss.

11. Correspondence

From

- Northants Street Lighting. An email to confirm that there is a project to upgrade lights maintained by Northants County Council only but there are no plans to include the lights under the ownership of Sulgrave Parish Council.
- Clemmie Reed of Red Bull Events, Wings for Life World Run 2015, Residents Letter. The Chair had written to complain about last years event and the communication and organisation of it. Clemmie has drafted a new residents letter, press release and map for 2015. Once the details are confirmed they will be put on the website and in the newsletter. She has confirmed the pub and Sulgrave Manor will not be affected but the residents of Little Street will be.
- SNC, Housing Needs Online Survey. This information is on the website.

12. Open Forum

Mr Wootton advised that he is hoping to amend the website because currently each new event takes priority over the last.

Mr Taylor of Manor Road spoke about the concerns in Manor Road about sewage which has been seen flowing through the surface water gully. Anglian Water had jetted the gulleys but sewage is still coming out at the Manor end. Anglian Water have tested the sewer and the integrity is fine. It has been suggested that someone has made an illegal connection to the surface water system.

Anglian Water are going to use marker dye and go house by house to get to the bottom of it. It has been agreed that the dye testing will commence on 14th October. If no discovery is found, there will be a rethink. They have promised to send a status report after 20th October. From the floor Mr Christy suggested the Parish Council also write to complain.

Mrs Blayney asked if the new developments in Little Street could be renamed as there is a lot of confusion with deliveries.

Action: The Parish Clerk to ask the procedure.

Mr Metcalfe advised that as part of the contract for grass cutting, it was agreed that the long grass in Pocket Park would be cut in September before it gets too damp and heavy. This has not been done and he has called Philip Daynes but without any success.

Action: The Clerk will ask Cllr Roberts to check the current contract and contact Philip Daynes.

Mr Wootton noted there is no update on the windfarm planning application. MP Andrea Leadsom has sent a letter to Mr Kris Hopkins, Department of Communities and Local Government to ask for an update.

The question was asked if the hedge in Pocket Park could be laid instead of cut down. It is beyond that stage and would be expensive. It possibly could be trimmed and laid in future. There are volunteer groups in the county who might be able to help with hedge laying. The Chair added that Pocket Park is a fantastic facility but it requires regular maintenance. The council could consider paying someone to regularly maintain the pond area. Mr Metcalfe noted that the Parish Council should actively try and involve the community and it requires more creative thinking. The failure to find a Pocket Park Warden has cut the village off from any help the County can provide with Pocket Parks.

Mr Pollak advised that the CPRE and NCC have produced a book which features Sulgrave. The cost is £17.50 but would be less for members.

13. Date and time of next meeting

Parish Council meeting on 20th November 2014 at 7.45pm at the Church Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm