

SULGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON THURSDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2015  
IN SULGRAVE CHURCH HALL AT 7.15PM

Councillors Present

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

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The first part of the meeting would be to openly discuss the village lighting scheme. A lot of work has already been done and there is a choice to be made between two lantern types. The Chair then handed over to Cllr Roberts.

**Open Forum - To discuss the replacement village public lighting scheme**

Cllr Roberts noted that a two page summary was put in the last newsletter and this project has been ongoing for some time now. There have been a number of consultations and villagers invited to meetings. The Parish Council have been discussing the need to replace the lighting as there is an obligation through government to replace mercury vapour lights which are to be taken out of service from April this year. A professional survey was undertaken two and a half years ago to look at the condition of the existing lights. A number of steel brackets and concrete columns are corroded and the electrical systems are in a poor state of repair. The recommendation was to look at the whole system and various different solutions were explored. Following this a consultation was undertaken to look at the style and type of fitting proposed. 43 responses were received. One person voted for the contemporary urban lantern, the Phosco (Option B), twenty people voted for the Victorian style lantern and twenty two people voted for the Strand style (Option A).

In view of the higher cost of Option A (the Strand lantern) Vs Option B (the Phosco lantern) the public meeting has been called to outline these two proposals.

Costings have been prepared for Option A and Option B. The total project cost for Option A, the Strand lantern is £53K and for Option B, the Phosco lantern, the cost is £29K.

The Parish Council have agreed to contribute £13K from their own reserves and there is a grant of £3K coming from SNC, the New Homes Bonus Grant. There will be a need to take out a Public Works Loan to pay the difference in price between the sums raised by the Council and the cost of the project. The loan can be taken out over 30 years, which is the life of the system and at a fixed rate of interest. There are other benefits to consider:- Option A - These are modern fittings and will use less energy. Maintenance will be low and they will only require cleaning. Option B will required some maintenance and the light fittings are not as long lasting.

The current lighting system costs about £2K per year with energy and maintenance costs, Option A would secure a far greater saving than Option B and this has been taken into account when considering the payback for a Public Works Loan. To pay off the Public Works Loan the annual increase in the precept is as follows. Option A would be an additional £6.18 per household per year and Option B , an additional £3.55 per household per year. These figures are based on a Band D household.

Cllr Roberts reminded everyone that the original design for Option A was a loop but the latest design is a right angled bracket. There are a number of fittings on wooden poles which have two services attached to them, BT and electrics. The Parish Council have already agreed to leave the cropped wooden poles in place and put a new bracket on them. This has already been decided because of cost. There are a couple of exceptions to concrete fittings. Cllr Roberts also noted that a lot of the existing fittings are covered in ivy. This will need to be cleared away and villagers will see a difference in the light being made available. There was one light which could not be found because it was covered in so much overgrowth.

Questions from the floor:-

Mr Nicholls asked what is the life span of a wooden pole? The wooden poles are the responsibility of the service provider and they would be obligated to replace if they became rotten. The cropped wooden poles are the responsibility of the Parish Council and have to be inspected every five years.

The question was asked how easy it will be to dim the lights? The lights can be dimmed and are programmable but a contractor would have to come back to change the settings.

Mr Christy agreed that Option A would give the right look for the village being in a Conservation Area and felt it would be good value for money.

The villagers present voted unanimously for Option A. A further consultation would be needed about the dimming of the lights. The next stage is to apply for a Public Works Loan and if approval is given, the contractor can start work in the New Year. Any fine tuning of the system would incur extra cost to the Parish Council.

On a separate note, Mr Fonge advised that the two cottages in Manor Road have been stripped and are starting to be re-thatched. Mr Wootton agreed to take photos of the cottages for the website.

**2a. Apologies**

Councillor Priestman and Rodney Henn

**2b. Declaration of Interest**

Cllr Jackson declared an interest in the planning application at High Barn, Manor Road.

**3a. To approve and sign minutes of the meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

The minutes were approved and signed.

**3b. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**4. Pocket Park – To discuss the management of the pond and any progress to repairs to equipment**

Councillors would continue to look at ongoing maintenance of this area and the potential to find a contractor to look after the pond area. The Parish Clerk has contacted TB Sports Fencing about repairs to the basketball hoop and Kompan Ltd about the missing rider sleeve on the zip wire.

**5. To agree a proposal to seek a Public Works Loan for the replacement of the village public lighting scheme**

The Parish Council resolved to see a Public Works Loan for the sum of £37,000 over a 30 year period from the Public Works Loan Board and submit the appropriate documentation to Northants CALC. Proposed by Cllr Powell, seconded by Cllr Walker. All councillors voted in favour.

*Action: Cllr Roberts and the Parish Clerk to prepare the paperwork.*

**6. Sign board and Bus Shelter - To discuss options for the repair or replacement of the bus shelter and provision of additional notice boards**

The existing bus shelter is looking sad and in need of repair or replacement. The notice board is not big enough to put all Parish Council notices on. The Chair has seen examples in other villages where the bus shelter and notice-board are combined and suggested this idea at a previous meeting. Two photo examples were circulated before the meeting. The Chair has obtained a couple of different quotes. The first contractor has quoted £4185.00 & VAT to replace the bus shelter. A second quote is to repair the bus shelter at a cost of £1896.00 & VAT. Cllr Walker referred to the second quote about the blue engineering blocks which would be put around the bottom and asked if they would look nice. The quotation could be refined more and replaced with stone blocks. This would add to the cost.

Cllr Roberts felt that to make the bus shelter into a notice-board would encourage more people to cross the road on what is already a dangerous and blind bend. He would support the renovation of the bus shelter. There is no pavement on that side of the road and it does look like the Post box will not be

moved. Perhaps the Parish Council are trying too hard to combine both projects. The question was asked who will look after the key to the notice-board if it is locked? A big board may detract from the rural character of the village. One benefit to a smaller notice-board is that notices do get changed regularly. Mr Bates suggested that a replacement bus shelter might be the better option as the repair cost is quite high in comparison to a new one.

*Action: Councillors to think about the suggestions raised tonight. The Parish Clerk to ask Cllr Ian Morris if he has any grant money available to help with these costs. This item to be kept on the agenda.*

**7. Bridleway AY4 - To discuss the suspension of the route under the old railway bridge and the previous proposed diversion of the route**

The railway bridge has been disused for some time now and is in a bad state of repair. A proposal was recommended to NCC Highways but was rejected. Now Highways have suspended the route amid safety concerns.

Mr Wootton has been talking to NCC Highways as he was a fellow complainant and objector to the original proposal. He has tried to help the Parish Council reach an agreement but the situation is still unresolved. NCC have no money in their budget to pay for the repairs but it is their statutory duty to keep the bridleway open. NCC are hoping that objections will be withdrawn.

Mr Bates asked whose responsibility the repair was. It is the landowner but responsibility would fall to the tenant. Mr Fonge said the tunnel was built to make sure the bridleway was retained. He walks the route three times a week and the route is used by the Grafton Hunt and not leisure riders. He suggested that the British Horse Society are contacted. Cllr Jackson advised that there are various groups such as Sustran who would object to a right of way closure. A temporary order would be valid for six months and then the matter would be escalated to the Secretary of State.

*Action: Cllr Jackson agreed to speak to Colin Wootton about the different groups that could be contacted.*

**8. Councillor Reports**

The Chair was pleased to advise that the missing section of the highway in Little Street will be reinstated on 28<sup>th</sup>/ 29<sup>th</sup> October.

The broken square flagstone outside Corner House, Helmdon Road has been repaired by Highways now.

Cllr Walker asked if a reminder could be put in the newsletter and on the website about what can and cannot be placed in the blue recycling bins. The Parish Clerk to ask SNC for an article.

**9. Finance**

The following payments were approved:

£30.00 to the Parish Clerk (contribution to broadband costs)

£576.00 to RD Landscapes Ltd (2 cuts in September)

£83.32 to EON (street lighting maintenance)

£120.00 to BDO (external audit 2014/15)

£36.00 to CPRE (membership)

An additional payment of £240.00 for Nene Management Services Ltd was approved. This payment was received after the agenda had been distributed.

Proposed by Cllr Walker and seconded by Cllr Powell.

*To accept and approve the Annual Return 2014/15*

The Annual Return was approved and accepted by the Council. There is one issue arising. The asset register requires more detail. The appropriate notice has been put on the notice-board.

*To accept the cost of £150.00 to repair the bench on the Gated Road*

(The cost to be split - £75.00 from the Parish Council and £75.00 contribution from Mrs Tattersall)

This cost was approved by Councillors and they agreed the bench could be added to the Parish Council Asset Register.

*To approve an application for a grant from 'the transparency fund'*

The Parish Clerk advised there is money available for parishes to help in the setting up and running of websites. She suggested that a grant of application of £150.00 is submitted to cover the cost of scanning and emailing information to Colin for inclusion on the website. All councillors approved.

#### **10. Planning**

One application had been received since the last meeting:-

*Re Application S/2015/2178/FUL, Upgrade of telecomms apparatus to facilitate 4G services including replacement of existing 15m high monopole and associated 3 no. antennas with a new 20m high monopole supporting 3 no. antennas with ancillary development at base station 113194 on land off at Weymss Farm.* No objections raised. Cllr Jackson suggested that the Parish Council write to show their support for this project.

Another application had been received on the day of this meeting.

*S/2015/2287/FUL, Removal of conservatory and proposed new single storey rear extension at High Barn, Manor Road.* This is now in circulation. Responses have to be made by 26<sup>th</sup> October.

#### **11. Correspondence**

- SNC, Gambling Act 2005 – Consultation on Statement of Licensing Policy
- HS2, Autumn Update 2015
- SNC, Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- Towcester Area Door to Door, Appeal for Volunteer Drivers
- Northants Highways, Community Liaison Changes
- Northants CALC, Transparency Fund

#### **12. Matters for consideration at the next meeting**

Pocket Park

Repair/replacement of the bus shelter and notice-board.

#### **13. Date and time of next meeting**

Parish Council Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at 7.15pm at the Church Hall.

Meeting closed at 8.25pm