

SULGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON THURSDAY 5<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2023  
IN SULGRAVE CHURCH HALL AT 7.30PM

Councillors Present

Richard Fonge (Chairman), Jen Castle, Neil Higginson, Mike Powell and Will Priestman

Christine Coles (Parish Clerk), and three villagers

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He congratulated Caroline Grant who received an MBE in the New Years Honours List for her work with disabled children.

**23/01. To receive apologies for absence**

Cllr Staples (holiday), Colin Wootton and Martin Sirot-Smith

**23/02. To receive Declarations of Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct relating to business on the agenda**

There were no interests to declare.

**23/03a. To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022**

The minutes were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**23/03b. To note any matters arising from the minutes not included on this agenda for report only**

The street light outside the shop is still not working. The Parish Clerk chased EON and the lantern driver was faulty. A new one has now been ordered.

The silhouette soldier has been stored away.

The farm gate by Magnay's field has been fixed.

**23/04. To receive an update on HS2**

There is no further update. The Chair wrote to HS2 about the number of earth moving vehicles parked up. They replied that they are needed and being stored.

**23/05. To receive an update on the Christmas celebrations**

Carol singing took place and the Chair thanked all who had helped. The Chair thanked Graham Trower for dressing the tractor and trailer. A cheque for £365.00 was passed to the SANDS charity. Another cheque payment of £50.00 was given to the Church who can claim gift aid.

The tree was placed outside the village hall and thanks was given to Ian Cherry for his work. The tree has been taken down and the wood chopped up. Councillors were asked their thoughts about location and they felt that Castle Mound was more user friendly and the tree seen by more people. The lights were not very bright. The PC will get feedback from the village and review the position for December 2023 in September.

**23/06. To receive an update on the outstanding Highway work**

The potholes and state of Magpie Road have been reported. The Chair wrote to Highways re the repair of the path on Helmdon Road which took 3 vehicles and 7 men.

**23/07. To receive an update from Sulgrave Manor**

The Manor has been closed for the winter and undergoing a big Spring clean. The sale of Kiln Cottage is still in the solicitor's hands. Carole Souter has taken over as Chairperson and her details are on the website. This is good news.

**23/08. To discuss the Best Village Audit Report**

Following the judging of the Best Village Competition, an audit report was sent. The Manor is a big draw for overseas visitors but it was felt that more information or signage would have been useful. The new refurbished village hall, funded by a grant from HS2, is a great meeting space. It is used regularly. The entrance to the hall is poorly signed and difficult to see. The set of stocks are a fun item but with little information to explain why they were there, where from or when they were used. The Church is a wonderful asset and the churchyard is attractive. They liked the small library where residents could swap books, games and DVDs. The Star Inn PH is a welcoming place to eat and drink. The community shop has been going for 15 years and is a great asset for the village. There is concern that no new younger permanent volunteers are coming forward. There are a number of regular activities but not many were aimed at younger/teenage residents.

The Parish Council deliver a welcome pack for new residents but it was felt to not be terribly informative. The booklets about local walks could be included in the welcome pack. There is engagement with other nearby villages re clubs but nothing formal for partnering on transport or planning. There is a large allotment area, owned by the Parish Council and managed by volunteers. This led to the play area and pocket park but signage was poor.

Areas for Improvement

Sulgrave has wonderful buildings and green spaces and most of the historic parts have good board sites to give more detail about the history. One major issue was the lack of quality signage in other areas. It gives the impression of the village looking inwards. The noticeboards could be clearer and better laid out. The welcome pack could be more expansive with the information it holds. There is an effort to include older groups in the village but nothing specific for babies/toddlers, young families or teenagers. Sulgrave is a lovely village with a nice group of people and happy with what it has. They liked many facilities, historical sites and green spaces but felt that more could be done around future planning and the changing demographic of the village. The bronze award was given.

The comments were noted by the Parish Council and agreed they would not enter the competition in 2023.

**23/09. To discuss the new VAS and agree purchase costs**

Cllr Priestman has received a price for a new sign from Coeval. The cost is £2922.00. It is smaller than the one positioned on the Helmdon Road. The Parish Council are still awaiting a price from WNC for a pole but a rough cost is between £1000-£1200. It was agreed to accept the price of the sign and pole.  
*Action: Cllr Priestman to order the sign.*

**23/10. To receive an update on the church hall survey**

The survey is complete but no analysis of the results have been done. Half of the village have children. A meeting will be held with the PCC on 25<sup>th</sup> January.  
*Action: Cllr Powell to prepare results for that meeting and update the Parish Council in February.*

**23/11. To discuss ideas for the Kings Coronation in May 2023**

The Coronation will take place on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Sulgrave Manor are putting on an event on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon. A village event could be held on Castle Green, similar to the Platinum Jubilee party on the afternoon of 6<sup>th</sup> May. The Castle Green Committee confirmed a joint exercise between the Parish Council and them could be organized from 4pm onwards. The PCC are meeting in early February. The newer people in the village will be asked if they want to be involved.  
*Action: The Parish Clerk to get sizes and prices of marquees from Cotswold Marquees. Cllr Priestman to ask Sulgrave Manor if the village can use their facilities.*

**23/12. To receive an update on the library**

The library is going well and being used by lots of families with children. The lady who runs it would like it more user friendly by putting in a small carpet area with chairs and a table. The PCC want to remove 5 pews in the north west corner and the book shelves could be moved to that position. The idea was agreed in principle and some prices will be obtained.

**23/13. Finance**

*The following payments were approved under statutory powers:*

£16.75 to Parish Clerk (SLCC Membership)  
£2.00 to Northants CALC (VAT recovery)  
£12.00 to N Higginson (batteries for Christmas lights)  
£358.69 to Parish Clerk (hours)  
£89.60 to HMRC  
£12.90 to Parish Clerk (mileage)  
£240.00 to Complete Ground Management Ltd (leaf clearing by Stocks)  
£44.20 to Texprep (newsletter copying)  
£40.78 to Colin Wootton (website domain renewal)

*To set the precept for 2023/24*

A draft budget sheet was produced and circulated. Estimated expenditure for 2023/24 is £19.5K and estimated income is £18.3K. There will be many price increases, grass cutting by 11% and street lighting by 15%. It was agreed to increase the precept by 3% and set it at £15,791.00.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to notify WNC.*

*To approve a rise in pay and band for the Parish Clerk*

A pay rise in line with NJC Award was approved and will be backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

**23/14. To receive an update on Planning**

Four applications had been received:

*WNS/2022/2293/TCA, Tree work at Bower House, Park Lane. For info only.*

*WNS/2022/2176/TCA, Tree work at Queens House, School Street. For info only.*

*WNS/2022/2337/FUL, Variation of Condition 2 of S/2019/2141/FUL at The Old Windmill*

*WNS/2022/2418/FUL and WNS/2022/2419/LBC, Erection of new garden equipment store at Sulgrave Manor. The shed is already in place and this should be a retrospective application.*

*Action: The Parish Clerk has advised WNC.*

**23/15. To receive Councillors Reports**

The collapsed wall on Castle Green has been reported to Mick Scott. It is a traffic hazard.

Pocket Park – Cllr Castle is looking to replace a piece of equipment. She will contact Kompan for ideas and prices and contact Sulgrave Charities for a donation.

The Chair took the mower to Pile & Son to be serviced. It will be delivered back FOC.

The Chair removed overhanging trees on the dip in Helmdon Road.

On 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023 there are two vehicles travelling to Ukraine. The Chair congratulated Steve and all at the Star Public House for raising the money to buy two vehicles. He wished them all well.

**23/16. Public participation session (Members of the public are invited to address the council. The session will last for a maximum of fifteen minutes with any individual contribution lasting a maximum of 3 minutes)**

There were no matters to discuss.

**23/17. To consider matters for the next meeting**  
Results of village/church hall survey  
Plans for Kings Coronation

**23/18. Date and Time of Next Meeting**  
Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 8.45pm.

DRAFT