

SULGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF AN ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON THURSDAY 4<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023  
IN SULGRAVE CHURCH HALL AT 7.30PM

Councillors Present

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

Christine Coles (Parish Clerk) and six villagers

**23/61. Elections**

*Election of Chair and Signing of Acceptance of Office form*

It was proposed by Cllr Castle and seconded by Cllr Higginson that Cllr Fonge be Chairman. He signed the Acceptance of Office form.

*Election of Vice-Chair*

It was proposed by Cllr Castle and seconded by Cllr Powell that Cllr Priestman be Vice-Chair.

**23/62. To receive apologies for absence**

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

**23/63. To receive Declarations of Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct relating to business on the agenda**

There were no interests to declare.

**23/64a. To approve and sign the minutes of the meetings held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March and 6th April 2023**

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

**23/64b. To note any matters arising from the minutes not included on this agenda**

The new PA system was purchased and will be tested on Saturday ready for the Coronation celebrations on Sunday.

**23/65. To receive a report from Cllr A Eastwood on behalf of West Northants Council**

Cllr Eastwood is one the three West Northants Councillors for the Silverstone Ward. The ward is divided to best represent the parts in which they live. Cllr Eastwood looks after the northern section with 14 villages and most queries re HS2 as 8 villages have the track passing through. Charles Manners covers the middle section involving Woodend and Greens Norton. Dermot Bambridge looks after Silverstone, Abthorpe, Wappenham, Syresham, Radstone and Whitfield. Currently the Boundary Commission is reviewing the West Northants wards and the number of Councillors serving them. The latest proposal is to suggest this ward takes in Whittlebury which is currently under Deanshanger ward. The proposal is to remain with three Councillors. The three of them support the changes with one further proposal which is to bring Thorpe Mandeville back into this ward. The only downside is that the new proposal would see the number of parishes we serve increase from 26 to 29.

In January WNC were working to close a £6M hole in the draft budget. This was mainly due to rising costs due to a great extent to children's services and adult social care, not to mention increasing salaries and other costs. The average Council Tax rise is 4.99%, significantly below current inflation rates and in line with the Governments allowance, crucially generating extra funding of around £12M towards bridging the shortfall. 2% of the increase going towards funding adult social care. This represents an average increase on a Band D property of £86.02 a year, the equivalent of £1.65 a week.

The green bin collection has gone up from £43 to £55. Costs for collecting all waste have increased significantly as has diesel fuel and the income from selling recycled has dropped and in some cases we now have to pay for them to be taken away.

At the beginning of the year the planning department was in a state of chaos. A lot of changes have taken place, sadly old officers have departed, new officers booked and WNC are slowly witting down the number of back dated applications and should be back up to speed by September.

The storage units on the A43 were discussed. DHL is the largest application and mainly to the north of Bell Plantation Garden Centre on the A5. The truck stop in Syresham is against policy for that location and WNC Highways and residents have objected.

There is exciting news in Northampton where the goal is to get life back in the town and make it somewhere people want to visit. The Sponne Arcade car park in Towcester is due to fully open on 30<sup>th</sup> May. Louise Seymour has joined the staff at Angel Square to join the dots and stimulate re-generation in Northants and develop cultural links for music and art. The Northants Art Museum on Guildhall will house the contents of the spectacular Leather museum later in the year complete with a George III leather lined toilet.

A marshall was engaged last year to help monitor the work of Fusion and HS2.

Ofsted have upgraded their annual report on schools across WNC and SEND has been fully launched across the county. A consultation has begun about school buses. Climate Change and sustainability are not the sole responsibilities of the G7 or Cop 20. It's our responsibility to monitor our own behaviour.

From the floor a villager asked about planning pre-applications which WNC had stopped. This was due to staff shortages. Cllr Eastwood replied it will start again soon.

**23/66. To receive an update from Sulgrave Manor**

The Chair and Cllr Priestman wrote to the Manor about the proposed £5 charge. The Manor replied that each country house in the UK charges and they felt it was a cheap price to pay. The house is open 3 days a week for 7 months a year. Last year 44 villagers signed up out of a population of 400.

*Action: The Chair and Cllr Priestman to respond.*

**23/67. To receive an update on HS2 work**

An oak tree was delivered and will be kept safe until ready to plant next Winter. Councillors to think of where it can be planted in between times. Another footpath is closed without notification and the area is fenced off.

**23/68. To discuss the update of the play equipment in Pocket Park**

Sulgrave Charities have offered to replace some of the existing equipment. The equipment in place now is over 13 years old.

**23/69. To receive an update on the plans for the Kings Coronation in May**

The marquee was put up today and will be up until Monday. Sulgrave Charities have agreed to pay for the childrens mugs. The King will be toasted and the Brass Band will play. Three people have been invited to bring cars onto the field. Cllr Eastwood congratulated the Parish Council on organizing a village event.

**23/70. To discuss speeding through the village and on the side roads**

A complaint has been received from a resident of Park Lane about speeding delivery drivers. The Chair moved the 20mph sign to try and help the situation. A lot of people walk along this lane. The idea of a cardboard policeman was discussed which might be a deterrent.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to get a price.*

**23/71. To discuss the results of the shop survey**

There was a good response and 85 people responded. The deadline will be extended another week to try to get to 100. A highlight is the positive community element of the shop and volunteers.

Once the survey ends Cllr Powell, the Chair and Cllr Higginson will gather the results and report to the shop meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> May and PC meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> June.

**23/72. To discuss the storage of PC files, shop paperwork and church hall equipment**

The idea of a storage container was discussed to be placed in the car park. The size is 10ft x 8ft and the cost approximately £1500.00. Delivery is £350.00. The Shop will share the cost with the Parish Council. The Church Hall will contribute the land.

It was noted that containers do become damp in winter so everything will need to be put in storage boxes. The PCC will have to apply for permission from the Diocese. It will be a benefit to the whole community and could be hired out for short term storage. The appearance was mentioned and ways to disguise how it will look.

**23/73. Finance**

*The following payments were approved under statutory powers:*

- £584.40 to Communicorp (Coronation mugs) – 22/23 payment
- £604.80 to Marcus Young Landscapes (dog bin emptying) – 22/23 payment
- £148.80 to EON (repair of light outside shop) – 22/23 payment
- £29.23 to A Osmond (tree work) – 22/23 payment
- £61.60 to Texprep (newsletter copying) – 22/23 payment
- £1176.00 to DJ Marquees (balance for marquee for Coronation)
- £216.51 to NPower (electricity)
- £309.78 to Northants CALC (membership)
- £13.20 to Parish Clerk (cotton typing tape for archive minutes)
- £240.00 R Fletcher (internal audit)
- £42.00 to Northants ACRE (membership)
- £18.00 to Parish Clerk (SLCC Membership)
- £250.00 to Brackley & District Band (Coronation celebrations)

**23/74. To receive an update on Planning**

Two applications had been received since the last meeting:

- *WNS/2023/0315/TCA, Tree work at Bentleys Farmhouse, Helmdon Road. For info only.*
- *WNS/2023/0279/FUL and WNS/2023/0280/LBC, Extensions and alterations, rear extension to kitchen, internal alterations to create ground floor toilet and first floor en-suite shower room, proposed potting shed and workshop to replace demolished garage at The Old Wool House, Little Street. Supported by PC.*

**23/75. To receive the following correspondence**

- EON, Maintenance of LED lanterns and Electrical Testing. Costs have increased for the first time since 2017. Lights should be electrically tested every six years. The cost is £27.00 excluding VAT per light. This will be discussed at the end of the year to include in next years budget.

**23/76. To receive Councillors Reports**

Grass cutting has started but the weather has been wet and cold. The village and Castle Green will look nice for Sunday.

The History Society Signboard will be erected on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May.

The light outside Anne Dydes house is shining into her bedroom window. The light has a shield on it but it was knocked.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to ask EON to quote to repair.*

- 23/77. 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)**  
No matters were raised.
- 23/78. To consider matters for the next meeting**  
Shop survey results.  
Placing of container in church hall car park
- 23/79. Date and Time of Next Meeting**  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 7.30pm.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm.