

Swavesey Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes

Swavesey Annual Parish Meeting, held at The Memorial Hall, High Street
Wednesday 15th April 2015, 7.30pm

PRESENT

Chairman: Mr M Johnston (Chairman of the Parish Council)

Parish Councillors : Ms L Boyes, Mr J Dodson, Mr S Faben, Mr J Jullien, Mr C Parsons, Mr J Pook, Ms S Smith, Mr K Wilderspin, Mr W Wright

Parishioners : 32

District Cllr Mrs S Ellington, County Cllr Ms Smith (from 8.45pm)

Minutes taken by : Mrs L Miller

Total Present: approx. 50

Item

1 To receive apologies for absence

Parish Councillors: Miss H Parish

County Cllr Ms M Smith (for late arrival); Mr J Shepperson; Mrs H Allen (Conservative Parliamentary Candidate, South Cambs)

2 To sign & approve the minutes of the meeting dated 2nd July 2014

Copies circulated to Parish Councillors and members of the public.

The Minutes were approved and signed with no amendments.

3 Swavesey Parish Council - Annual Report

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a report outlining the main items occupying the Parish Council during the past year. A summary of the report is attached. The Chairman added that the full report would be available on the Parish Council's website.

He concluded by thanking Parish Councillors for their time and commitment over the past year, the Clerk, Linda Miller, Mr Alan Morris for his work on the Meridian magazine and village website and Mrs Polly Wilderspin for her time and work in keeping the village NHW Scheme together and working so effectively.

The Chairman also added that Mrs Linda Miller had now worked for the Parish Council for 20 years and to thank her, a bouquet of flowers was presented from the Parish Council.

Question from Mr Hunt: A planning application has been posted on the District Council's site, for discharge of conditions relating to the Fen Drayton Affordable Housing development, did the Parish Council have any comments? Also is a new planning application required as the development is now via the District Council?

Chairman & Clerk replied that the Parish Council has not received notification of this Discharge of Conditions application yet. The Council understands that a new planning application is not required as the original was in the name of Laragh House Developments who are still the applicants (although the District Council does now own the site). Also the design and layout has not been changed from the permission granted.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Meridian Magazine Committee, reported that in recognition of the Magazine's 25 years and 150th edition, a bench has been given to the village, installed alongside Swan Pond and a new noticeboard with a village information map will be installed shortly at the guided busway stop. The noticeboard has been produced with a grant from the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership.

4 Parish Council Accounts 2013 - 2014 Audited Parish Council Accounts 2014 - 2015 Draft - Subject to Audit

Copies of the accounts were circulated amongst the public.

5 Representatives from the following organisations gave reports and took questions**5.1 County Council**

Deferred until arrival of County Cllr.

5.2 District Council

Cllr Mrs Ellington gave a short report on items from the past year including:

- Further development is due to take place at west Cambourne, the drainage will be directed to Papworth drainage system, rather than Swavesey.
- District Council budget for 15/16 has been reduced by £830,000, which is £13.50 less per Band D property. SCDC will have to find £670,000 of savings. The Council does not intend to cut any services and will find the savings by sharing costs and services with neighbouring authorities, eg waste collection services (Cambridge City Council), planning services, legal opinion, administration tasks, etc.
- A new housing company has been established, Ermine Housing, which will buy up properties requiring renovation, in order to re-let as SCDC Housing.
- The Community Chest fund for local grant awards has re-opened and is a very good source of immediate funding for community projects up to £1,500.
- The District Council also supports the Community Warden Scheme with grant funding.

Question from Mrs Fuller – what is the percentage cut to SCDC funding from central government?
Cllr Mrs Ellington did not have the figure as a percentage but would find out.

The Chairman thanked Cllrs Mrs Ellington for her work on behalf of the village.

5.3 Neighbourhood Police & Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

A report from Mrs Wilderspin, Village NHW Co-ordinator had been circulated. The Chairman thanked Mrs Wilderspin for her work on this scheme and the success of the village-wide membership. No questions were asked.

5.4 George Long Charity for Swavesey Memorial Hall

Mr Wright, Chairman of Trustees, gave a report on the work of the Memorial Hall Trustees and thanked Mrs Nicole Mullee, Hall Administrator, for her work in managing and promoting the facilities at the hall.

Question from Mr Bond on behalf of The Royal British Legion, Swavesey Branch – The RBL has limited funds and is a registered charity. The Hall was built to commemorate those who had died in WWI and the Branch had asked the Trustees if they could use the Hall for the Annual Poppy Dance free of charge. The Branch was very disappointed that the Trustees had turned down the request.

Mr Wright replied that the Trustees understood the reason for the request but the Hall was also a charity and many other village charitable organisations use the hall and to allow one free of charge use would lead to similar requests from others. The Hall does not break-even and relies on an annual grant from the Parish Council. Trustees are not in a position to be able to offer free use.

Mr Johnston, Chairman of the Parish Council, suggested that the Branch write to the Parish Council to ask for a community grant which could cover the cost of the hall hire charge.

5.5 The Thomas Galon Charity

Annual report and accounts for the Charity had been circulated. Mr Day, Chairman of Trustees thanked Mr John Shepperson, who after 41 years as a Trustee and many of these as Chairman of Trustees, had recently stood down as Chairman. Mr Shepperson had led the Trust through changes to society and the way in which it can help local residents. He had also been instrumental in establishing the Hale Road Allotments on Trust land and had supported the Trust's help towards the Community Warden Scheme. Mr Shepperson still continues as a Trustee of the Charity. For the future, discussions include land negotiations with the Highways Agency, as part of the Trust land will be required for the A14 improvement scheme.

5.6 The Frere Cottages Trust

Mr Pook, Trustee, gave an explanation of the history and management of the four Cottages in Station Road. There were no questions raised.

5.7 Byways Committee

Mr Wilderspin, Byways Committee member, reported that the byways are private roads, maintained to agricultural status by volunteer local landowners. No questions were raised.

5.8 Swavesey Community Pavilion Trust

Mr Peet, chairman of Trustees, gave a report on the management and use of the Pavilion on the Recreation Green. The problems with the ground conditions on the Green over winter, with hardly any matches played for three months had hit the income of the charity. However the regular Café has helped and it is hoped this will do well over the spring and summer. The SWAG Bar had been a success, during the refurbishment of The White Horse Inn last year and small donations from local clubs have been gratefully received. The Parish Council was thanked for its support. No questions were raised.

5.9 Swavesey Action for Youth

Ms Smith reported on the activities of the Committee and that primarily it helps to support the Bethel Youth Café with funding towards equipment and activities. SAY also helps other village youth groups and is funded from the Parish Council and occasional grant applications.

On 14th June this year SAY will be organising a Youth Festival at the Village College, alongside the College's CMAT Cycle Challenge. The festival will promote different youth clubs and organisations in the village as well as provide a fun day for local children. Anyone involved with a youth group was encouraged to contact SAY to take part in the event.

5.10 Swavesey Festival Group

Ms Boyes, Chairman, gave notice that the 2016 Festival will be from 18th to 25th June and the theme will be musicals. Ideas for activities and events were invited. A fundraising Blues Brothers concert will be held on the Recreation Green on Sat 12th Sept.

(8.45pm – County Cllr Ms Smith joined the meeting)

5.1 County Council Report – deferred from earlier in the meeting.

County Cllr Ms Smith reported on the past year including:

- The Council was now a Committee run Council
- Current consultations included local Libraries and Boundary Commission Division Review. Residents were encouraged to participate and return their views on the consultations.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Ms Smith for her work on behalf of the village.

5.11 Hale Road Allotment & Gardening Association

Mr Richardson, Chairman of the Allotment Association Committee, gave an informative and entertaining overview of the very successful community allotment site on charity land in Hale Road, which is now in its third season. The site is full and there is a waiting list.

6 Parish Emergency Plan

Ms Smith reported that the Parish Council had reviewed the Village Emergency Plan and a new Plan will now be published. This will give information, contact details and assembly points for use in any kind of emergency in the village, eg localised flooding, power cuts, accident, etc. A request was made for local residents with skills or equipment which could be useful in an emergency to contact the Parish Council. The Council is also trying to find a suitable dry storage space where sand and bags might be stored for use during flooding situations.

7 Market Street Parking

Over the last year the Parish Council has been gathering information and reviewing options for improving the parking and highway safety in Market St, which is becoming increasingly congested. Two options for marking out parking bays, providing additional double yellow lines and cycle racks were circulated and on display. Comments received:

- No objections to marking out parking bays
- Herringbone parking would be easier to drive in and out of and was the preferred option of the County Council Highways Dept
- Provision of cycle racks by the village sign were welcomed
- An analysis of who currently parks there, what for and for how long had been carried out. It had been noted that employees of local businesses were using the area for all-day parking. The Parish Council would discuss this with local businesses to see if other arrangements were possible, to free-up space for short-term parking for those visiting the Post Office, shop, etc.
- Should residents parking be provided? This could not be in designated spaces but advisory spaces could be provided to try to help.
- Should loading bay or PO area parking be provided? Again advisory only space could be provided.
- No evidence of guided busway parking in Market St had been found

The meeting, by majority vote, agreed to mark up Market St with parking bays, provide additional yellow lines and provide cycle racks. The herringbone parking bay design was preferred.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their comments and these would be taken to the Parish Council to implement the changes.

8 Open Public Forum

Post Office – Proposed move to Middlewatch

Consultation currently open until 21st May on the proposal from the Post Office to close the stand-alone PO business in Market St and move it to within the CostCutter shop on Middlewatch.

Many comments and objections were voiced including:

- Where would customers park? Only parking on the highway is available. This would cause severe congestion along Middlewatch, the main road through the village. Already many residents have driveways blocked by parked vehicles visiting the shop or waiting for College students. Market St has a designated parking area and is not on the main road.
- Where will drivers turnaround when visiting the PO? Thoughts were that we would see dangerous u-turns in Middlewatch and local driveways.
- Highway safety a big concern – the proposed re-location is close to the junction of Gibraltar Lane, which is already a hazard, as parking restricts visibility and it can be extremely busy with pedestrians, cyclists and cars particularly at School and College start and finish times.
- Market St – this is the historic centre of the village with other local services close by. Moving the PO branch away from Market St would lead to additional journeys for residents and more use of the car, as many people would need to visit two destinations.
- Local businesses – there are a significant number of local businesses in and very close to Market St. Many walk to/from the PO to collect and deliver post daily. They would no doubt drive and park to/from Middlewatch if the PO is relocated, creating more congestion.
- Opinions were not against the CostCutter shop but were against the move away from Market St.
- Why is this being proposed, thoughts were that it was not at the request of the Postmaster? The PO works well in Market St, why does it need to move?
Cllr Mrs Ellington replied that she understood this was a change of business format from the Post Office centrally.
- Strong concerns were raised over loss of privacy and security for PO transactions across an open shop counter, with other customers within sight and sound. Currently the PO in Market St is far more private and secure.
- Could the Parish Council consult with the County Highways Dept for their thoughts on Middlewatch?
- Would the Parish Council ask someone from the Post Office to attend a meeting here to discuss this further with residents and listen to the concerns?

The Chairman thanked everyone for their thoughts and encouraged everyone to respond to the consultation and copy in the Parish Council, so it could consider and support the concerns. The Parish Council would contact the Post Office and ask if someone would attend a public meeting.

Cllr Mrs Ellington said she would find out if other villages had had similar consultations and proposals.

Scotland Drove – question asked as to why the large shed on the Traveller site alongside Scotland Drove is still there? The Clerk replied that retrospective planning permission had been granted by the District Council as it is understood the shed is used as a storage shed and garage for vintage vehicles.

Potholes – concerns were raised over the increasing number of large and deep potholes appearing and taking ages to be repaired, in particular in Ramper Rd, Buckingham Road, A14 flyover and Priory Ave. The Chairman replied that these had all been reported. County Cllr Ms Smith was aware of all of them and the County Highways Dept was working as fast as possible to manage them.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and reminded people that they could also attend Parish Council monthly meetings and raise questions and comments at the public forum sessions at the start of each meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 9.50pm

Signed & dated, Chairman

Signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting, approved at the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th April 2016