**MINUTES OF SWEFFLING PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

Held at Sweffling Village Hut on Tuesday 11 July 2023 at 7.30 p.m.

**1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES**

Present: Councillor Amanda Daniel (AD) Vice-Chairperson (took the Chair), Councillor Jill Abbott (JA), Councillor Steve Ashurst (SA), Councillor Jenny Tyson (JT), Councillor Lindsey Jennings (LJ), Councillor Audrey Lummis (AL) and Alyson Chilvers (AC) - Clerk

In Attendance: PC Amy Yeldham 1330, Community Engagement Officer and 4 members of the public.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor John Tesh (PJT) Chairperson, Stephen Burroughes – Suffolk County Council and Vince Langdon-Morris – East Suffolk District Councillor.

**2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**

(JA) explained that she was next door neighbour to a parishioner who had applied for planning permission and she was also Chairperson for The Hut Committee.

**3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

a) The minutes of the meeting held on 11.06.2023, having been read, were signed by (AD) as a true record and were unanimously agreed.

b) Matters arising: Volunteers using SPC equipment must have access to the equipment manual, training and PPE (personal protective equipment). Volunteers using their own equipment will be covered by SPC insurance as long as risk assessments are carried out.

**4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION INCLUDING POLICE, DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT**

PC Amy Yeldham 1330, Community Engagement Officer explained that the Police were no longer responsible for the Neighbourhood Watch and that this had been taken on by an independent not-for-profit organisation. Suffolk Police have now set up Police Connect which is a free messaging service and includes localised information on a variety of situations such as crime reports and emergency alerts. To receive this information you can register online at suffolk.police.uk/policeconnect or complete your details on the leaflets that (LJ) will distribute to all households. Amy concluded by explaining the importance of reporting anything suspicious and how this was beneficial to the Police. Crime Prevention is paramount and there is a whole range of informative leaflets available online explaining this.

**5. REVISITING AND UP-DATING REMAINING POLICIES NOT COVERED AT EGM**

a) Internal Control Policy, this was presented by (AD) and adoption was proposed by (JA) and seconded by (SA)

b) Risk Assessment (AD) explained that this covers financial risk, business continuity, records management and health and safety. It was agreed that as this report was so involved (AD) would scan all relevant documents and then send to Councillors so that they had more time to consider the report which would then be addressed at the September meeting.

c) It was agreed that the statutory policies would all be reviewed annually in future.

**6. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR’S GENERAL RESPONSIBILITES**

Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) – (AD) until the current audit is completed, this will then be handed over to (AC) the Clerk and (AD) has also kindly agreed to assist with the next audit if needed.

Planning and Litter Pick – (AL)

Alde Community Council – (JT)

Village Hut Committee – (JA) Chairman, (AD) and (JT)

Bowls – (JT)

Safeguarding Officer – (JA) - (training will be completed through the Church) and

Townland Trust

Church – (PJT) and AD

Tree Warden – (LJ) & (JT) to share

Tennis Club – (SA)

**7. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLORS WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR INSPECTION OF PHYSICAL ASSETS FOR REGULAR MAINTENANCE**

(SA) will inspect physical assets and will report if and when maintenance is required. This currently includes the wheeled strimmer although it has been decided that this is no longer practical to use. A local contractor, David Kindred, will inspect the Jubilee Field and cut as and when needed. It has been decided that a “chicken on a spring” would be an ideal addition to the play equipment for the children so (AC) will contact Stephen Burroughes to see whether he can offer a grant as previously indicated.

**8. VILLAGE MATTERS**

a) Sale of mower – (SA) has put the mower on an eBay auction with an asking price of £1,200, although we may have to accept a lower price. The auction comes to an end on Sunday 16 July 2023.

b) Parish Council Noticeboard – more space is required for Parish Council statutory notices and other information. on the noticeboard so (AD) proposed that SPC takes two thirds of the board instead of the one third currently used, this was seconded by (LJ). (LJ) has also had a further five keys cut at a total cost of £15.00 so that more Councillors could access the notices on the board however as (LJ) lives nearby she has agreed to post items on behalf of the Parish Council whenever possible.

**9. FINANCES**

It appears that Barclays Bank have not actioned the new mandate as statements are still being posted to the previous chairman.  (AD) has no community account bank statement for April 2023 which means that the community account page of the up to date cash book had been circulated to councillors as unreconciled. The Business Premium Account has been reconciled.  As the mandate has not been actioned and John Tesh is away, the bank has not acknowledged the current signatories and we are having to ask previous signatories to sign the Parish Council cheques. The 2022/23 audit process was difficult as the Parish Council had no Clerk or RFO for almost the entire 2022/23 period. (AD) and (JA) have taken on the audit preparation work which was substantial including missing and unreviewed documents and the majority of documents not posted on the web site which is one of our statutory duties.  (AD) is acting as RFO until the uploading, updating and audit process is completed and she can then hand over to (AC) the new Clerk. (JA) gave (AD) £80 cash from the sale of spare Coronation mugs and this will be banked.  (AD) will also bank a replacement cheque for £100 from Alde Community Council for the Jubilee celebration which was originally dated April 2022, but had not been lodged and was therefore out of date.

**10. PLANNING MATTERS**

Report on ESC Planning Forum 07.07.2023 – (AL) and (AC) attended this meeting where the ESC Planning Department explained the various responsibilities within the department. The planners agreed that there was a tremendous amount of information to take on board within the meeting but we at least had an overall idea of the processes within the department. There was a short question and answer session towards the end of the meeting and it appeared that most Parish Councils had the same issue with regards to being notified of planning applications so it was suggested that individuals could sign onto the planning portal independently to gather this information.

Dernford Hall Barn – Planning Application – (JA) explained that Dernford Hall Barn was not going to be turned into holiday lets but essential construction work needed to be carried out in order to keep the building in good repair and as the building is listed, planning consent needs to be approved. If anyone would like to make a comment on the application please notify the Clerk (AC) by Friday 14 July 2023.

**11. DECISION OF SPC HEADED NOTEPAPER FROM DESIGNS BY SUE ASHURST**

Sue Ashurst had presented three alternative designs and was thanked for these.  It was agreed that the village sign logo would also be supplied as a separate file so that it could be re-sized as required and used for various purposes. AD explained that it is a requirement that all Parish Council documents have a header, footer or both, on every page and this must include the subject of the document, the date of the document, the name of the Parish Council and the page number of total number of pages, e.g. Page 1 of 3, so the headed notepaper needs to accommodate this with the heading not taking up too much space on the page.

**12. CORRESPONDENCE**

SALC are organising training courses for new Parish Councillors, these consist of two sessions at a cost of £30.00 per session. (LJ) and (SA) will decide upon convenient dates and attend the courses between them.

Vince Langdon-Morris (ESC) supports the work that has been carried out on the Jubilee Field.

Mike Smithson has asked if SPC would like to have a representative on The Hut committee. He wants to reinstate The Hut’s charitable status and they can have a representative from three organisations. Alternatively would SPC be content with the general publication of the minutes and general entitlement to attend meetings. It was agreed that as there are three parish councillors on the hut committee there is no need to appoint a specific councillor but if in future there is no parish councillor on the Hut committee, then a councillor will be appointed.

**13. QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIR**

Debbie Thornton (member of the public) asked who was responsible for clearing the public footpaths as the path between the Church and Mill Lane had become overgrown with brambles. The Clerk (AC) will go onto the Highways website and report this. Contact details of the Clerk will also be displayed on the Notice Board so that in future parishioners would know who to contact with queries.

More incidents of dogs fouling on footpaths have been reported so (JA) will collect the dog fowling signs from NORSE in Ufford.

(JA) will carry out the Clerk Survey for the East Suffolk Community Partnership.

The Clerk (AC) thanked (AD) and (JA) for all their hard work in preparing and taking responsibility for the current audit, this has taken up a tremendous amount of time and hard work and SPC expressed their sincere gratitude.

**14. TO CONFIRM THE NEXT MEETING OF SPC – TUESDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT THE HUT, STARTING AT 7.30 P.M.**