**SWEFLING PARISH COUNCIL**

**Meeting Tuesday January 9th 2024 7.30pm**

**at Sweffling Village Hut, The Street, Sweffling, IP17 2BN**

 **Minutes**

* **Attendance and Apologies**

Present: Prof John Tesh (JMT) Chair, Amanda Daniel (AD), Audrey Lummis (AL), Steve Ashurst (SA), Jill Abbott (JA), District Councillor Vince Langdon-Morris(V.L-M), and 7 Members of the public.

Apologies from: Cllr Jenny Tyson, District Councillor Owen Grey, County Councillor Stephen Burroughes.

Cllr Lindsey Jennings had sent a letter of resignation - due to family circumstances she is currently no longer able to attend any meetings. The Chairman accepted this resignation with regret, but asked that Lindsey’s environmental expertise be available to the Council, if needed.

* **To receive Declarations of Interest and to consider Requests for Dispensations.**

None were received.

 3. **County and District Councillors’ Reports**

V L-M our District Councillor asked if he might have a few words before he departed for another PC meeting.

 He thanked SPC for holding a public meeting regarding the National Grid Consultation for the SEALINK project.

 He reported that the National Grid will now consider off shore options and he will feed back information to us.

 **Regarding Flooding** – he reported that Framlingham Town Council are hosting a meeting on Sunday 21st  January 2024 at Castle Community Rooms time tba. SPC need to book with the Town Council and collect local questions to submit. The County Council is taking 18mths – 2 years to produce a risk assessment and this is felt to be too long to wait. He wants TCs and PCs to take ownership of their problems and possible solutions. Although the Framlingham meeting is for parishes along the River Ore, there is the possibility of SPC and other PCs along the River Alde buying some of the consultants time to do local surveys. The consultants will lead the meeting. OG via V L-M will feed back. There was a flood problem because of the effect of the Snape floodgates being either open or closed so The Environment Agency and Suffolk County Council will both be attending the public meeting.

 4. **Minutes of the previous Meeting**

a) Having been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting, councillors unanimously agreed the minutes of 14/11/23 to be correct. The Chair was duly authorised to sign them as a correct record.

b) Matters Arising.:

**Flooding**

JMT led discussion with councillors and 7 members of the public about the courses of the floodwaters and the debris left. Both JMT and OG think that the problems down Holden’s lane are the Highways’ responsibility but it may depend on where boundaries lie e.g. verge between Gull and road. Riperian responsibilities are understood but Orwell have not been in to clear their ditches behind Jubilee Close (member of public reported sand and silt in ditch). The Street where the Gull overflowed by the Hut is thought to be the Highways’ responsibility.

Holden’s Lane brought water down from fields higher up and the drains both open and closed did not cope with this run-off- the public suggested a survey of the ditches. SA proposed a meeting with interested residents the following Saturday to walk around village and understand where possible problems of drainage lay and what needs to be done to free up The Gull which has become full of sand, stones and debris and in places the banks are eroding.

JA to provide SA with a list of Alde PC clerks so that a joint contingent can make a presence at the Framlingham meeting on Sunday 21st January and find out how to get funding.

 **Trees from the Woodland Trust**

SA reported that after contacting the Woodland Trust to ask if the trees could be delivered before March, he would receive 100 trees from a different source in mid January. As they are not bare-rooted they could be planted at any time.

 **5. Up-date on Vacant Position of Clerk**

 a) An application had been received from a highly qualified person; however when she realised the rate of pay she withdrew. There was discussion around this and regarding whether number of meetings would make a difference. JA proposed SPC advertise for a clerk to work for 3.5 hours per week in line with the rate of pay from April. AL seconded and all agreed. SALC to be informed re the advert.

b) **Sharing of Clerk’s Responsibilities**

JA proposed that other sections of the clerk’s responsibilities be shared amongst councillors. AD seconded.

All agreed and volunteered: Liaising with County and District Councillors – JMT

Planning – JT to be asked Footpaths – SA

Liaising with local landowners – JMT Budgeting and accounts – AD

Administration of website – SA Village newsletter – JMT

Agendas and minutes of meetings – JA Answering emails - AD

 **6.** **Finances**

a) **To authorise cheques for signature**

British Legion Poppy Appeal £

Refund JMT for Wreath (Rememberance Service) 20.00

Refund AD for CAS (SSL cert) paid 39.00

Refund AD for HMRC Payroll taxes paid 48.40

 ---------

 107.40

 b) **To receive and approve payments since last meeting.**

 HMRC payroll taxes for AC clerk’s final salary 48.40

 CAS for SSL certificate 39.00

 Received and approved (paid as above)

c) **To receive and approve the financial report from the RFO including balances from Barclays Bank**

**Statements**

SPC Community Current Ac Balance £4,522.10

SPC Business Premium ME Balance £4,920.04

Balance per Cashbook agreed to statement 9th January 2024, - Approved.

 After discussion on costs SA proposed we pay £8.50 a month for Business Banking. AD seconded and all agreed. This will enable AD (temporary RFO) to access online banking with 2 authorised signatures. There is no cost for the first year.

**d) Precept 2024/2025**

Although we are now making a saving in the absence of a clerk, AD proposes we budget as agreed at the last meeting, as we are hoping to appoint a clerk. All in favour. Precept will be set at £5000 as agreed at the November meeting. AD to send to ESDC for end Jan.

 AD (RFO) confirmed that she has made a re-declaration of compliance to the Pensions Regulator regarding Clerks employed by the Parish Council and this has been acknowledged.

 **7.** **Correspondence**

**a) Up-date on PC Website and Wix**

AD reported that the Wix Domain is not connected to the website.

For the time being both email addresses will continue to be used for the P Clerk.

**b) National Grid Consultation - SEALINK**

Information regarding a Consultation by National Grid re the building of giant infrastructures just east of Saxmundham, came too late for our November meeting – even though the deadline for the PC response was 18th December. SP Councillors attended an exhibition to explain the project, but they remained concerned of the huge impact this would have on local communities, wildlife and tourism. SPC decided to hold an open meeting in the village to up-date parishioners on the proposals which would not benefit Suffolk in any way. It would merely use the Suffolk coast to bring electricity ashore in vast cables (from wind-farms) so that it could be converted from AC to DC, returning them to the North Sea down the coast to Kent where the electricity is to be used.

**c) Input by Suffolk Energy Action Solutions**

At the open meeting held in the Hut on December 12th, tin the Village Hut, the local group ‘Suffolk Energy Action Solutions’ (SEAS) gave an illustrated talk on what might be expected to happen if National Grid put their plans into action. They explained how countries on the continent were building their convertors in the North Sea and using Brownfield Sites rather than destroying sensitive environmental areas. Around 20 residents attended the meeting and unanimously agreed to propose the plans to use the Suffolk coast in this way. As a result SPC sent a response to National Grid, (and others listed here), opposing the project and requesting that more research be directed towards offshore solutions.

Response sent to contact@sealink.nationalgrid.com john.pettigrew@nationalgrid.com katherine.jackson@nationalgrid.com mike.elmer@nationalgrid.com Fintan.Slye@nationalgrideso.com Jonathan.Brearley@ofgem.gov.uk Secretary.State@energysecurity.gov.uk minister.stuart@energysecurity.gov.uk minister.bowie@energysecurity.gov.uk therese.coffeymp@parliament.uk

bcc: info@suffolkenergyactionsolutions.co.uk

**d) Up-dates on Storm Babet –** covered in previous points.

 **8. Planning Matters**

**a) To receive Planning Decisions –** None received

**b) To consider any Planning Applications -**

AD to access ESDC planning portal to see if there are any planning applications.

 **9. AOB None received**

 **10. To confirm the next meeting of the Parish Council**

Confirmed as Tuesday 13th February 2024 at 7.30pm

The meeting ended at 9.45pm. Minutes by Cllr Jill Abbott.

Signed ……………………………………….Chairman

 Date……………………………………..