

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SWEFFLING  
PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday 14 September 2021 at 7.30 pm., taking place  
at the Sweffling Village, Hut, Low Road, Sweffling.

Attendance and apologies:

**PRESENT:** John Stanley in the Chair

**COUNCILLORS:** Jude Chin (JC), Julia Kinsey (JK) Audrey Lummis (AL), Erika Spall (ES).

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Michael Smithson, Clerk to the Council.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Debbie Smith was also in attendance.

There being a quorum the Chair formally opened the meeting and welcomed all attending

1. **APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Cllr John Tesh on account of ill health and Cllr Maurice Cook on account of attending other meetings. Both apologies were accepted.

2. **To receive declarations of interest and to consider requests for dispensations:**

2.1. There were no declarations of interest and no requests for dispensation.

3. **Minutes of the previous meetings:**

3.1. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2021 having been circulated prior to the meeting, it was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that except as to the list of members of the public which was incomplete and subject to correction on that respect, the minutes represented a true and fair record of that meeting and accordingly the Chair was **authorised to sign** the same as amended.

3.2. There were the following **MATTERS ARISING:**

3.2.1. It was noted that all matters arising were covered in the Clerk's September Report (copy annexed) being referred to below at **Item 5**

4. **Public participation incl. Police, District and County Councillors' reports.**

4.1. The Clerk mentioned that a report had been received from District Councillor Maurice Cook, which had been circulated before the meeting and was taken as read. The Chair thanked Cllr. Cooke for the document.

4.2. There were no questions arising out of the report, except that:

4.2.1. Cllr chin asked if there had been any progress in relation an internet connection and to holding online meetings. The Clerk advised that from a legal perspective such meetings were not permissible and in any event Cllr cook has already advised that the "gizmo" for obtaining access was less than efficient.

4.2.2. The Clerk mentioned that there was a strong likelihood that grants would be available to The Hut committee to install Wi-Fi which would be useful to the village in an event.


4.2.3. The availability of local Early Years Learning was raised and thought to be too remote geographically.

5. **Clerk's Report** (copy attached).

5.1. The report, having been distributed by email prior to the meeting was taking as read, but several points were amplified namely:

5.1.1. There were delays in identifying and **appointing a successor**. The Chair felt hamstrung by the delay from the District Monitoring Officer who had yet to determine the two complaints made against him by resident Mr Robert Rusack. It was always possible that the Chair might be suspended in the event of a full enquiry (which he said he would fully welcome) being recommended, he therefore felt that it would have been inappropriate to advance matters in the circumstances, given that his own future was uncertain. He had however spoken to a number of local Chairs and it was apparent that there was a shortage of properly qualified individuals who might take on the role. Several informal approaches had also been made both by the Chair and by the outgoing Clerk to no avail. It would therefore be necessary to attempt to handle matters in the short-term by redistributing some of the Clerk's tasks. This would be dealt with in more detail below at item 8, Questions to the Chair.

5.2. The appointment of a successor member to fill the vacancy created by former Councillor Wyard's resignation remained unresolved, except that as the committee had been made aware



by the Clerk an application for co-option had been recently made by Debbie Smith who had expressed an interest on being co-opted onto the Council. The statutory steps having been taken and the appropriate time limit having expired, the Clerk advised that it was now open to the Council to make an appointment. Cllr Spall proposed it was and seconded by the Chair that Debbie Smith should be appointed to the Council by Co-option. Her application form having been distributed beforehand, the resolution was therefore put that Debbie Smith be so appointed. IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT subject to Debbie Smith completing and appropriate DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE the form of which would be emailed to her by the Clerk tomorrow her appointment would thereafter be formalised. Following receipt of the form of Declaration, it would be necessary for the Council to notify Democratic Services which would then email a link to Ms Smith allowing her to complete the appropriate online statutory declaration within the District Council's Register of Interests (ROI). The chair congratulated Ms Smith on her appointment and welcomed her to the Council.

5.3. The Clerk's departure, as previously discussed at the July meeting, necessitated an immediate change in the bank mandate. The Clerk confirmed that he would contact Barclays Bank tomorrow to advance matters to for example remove himself from the mandate as of 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

5.4. Digital banking, it was unanimously agreed would be best left in abeyance pending the appointment of and a new Clerk

#### 5.5. Jubilee Field.

5.5.1. A number of relevant matters of interest were discussed, namely:

5.5.1.1. Agricultural contractor James Rogers had successfully cut the field on three occasions.

5.5.1.1.1. The first cut had taken place On 15 June 2021 At a cost of £150 + VAT. Given that the fields had not been mown for some considerable time the price charged reflected the additional work to reduce the grass to a reasonable level.

5.5.1.1.2. A second cut took place in July At a cost of £150 plus VAT and included the cost of removing a dumped lump of iron and concrete which represented a potential health and safety hazard

5.5.1.1.3. The third cut had taken place on 19 August 2021 at the cost of £130 plus VAT, which was likely to be the normal price.

5.5.1.2. A car had been reported as having been recently parked at the rear of one of the properties in Blyth Villas. Apparently, this had not been an uncommon practise in the past but to prevent such steps occurring in the future the gate would be locked and a duplicate of the key would be provided by the Chair to James Rogers to allow access for grass cuts.

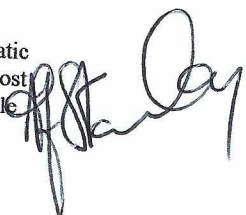
5.5.1.3. The Chair had applied to Adnams Brewery which some time ago had formed a trust for the benefit of good causes in the area and funds had therefore been applied for from the Trust to finance the provision of a second goal in the Field. It was likely that this application would be considered October 2021. Adnams Trust had provided the funding for the initial set of goal posts.

5.5.1.4. Cllr Spall had been in touch with Orwell Housing which seemed willing at her request to assist with potential obstruction of the field access gate by providing at its own expense a simple "No Parking" sign to be fixed to the Field gate.

5.5.1.5. A detailed discussion to place as to the longstanding proposal to erect a circular memorial bench on the Field. The meeting felt that this project might on reflection need to be scaled back to a simpler and more straightforward bench. Given anticipated expenditure and as commented on by Cllr Chin, the Council would not be able to buy and install such a bench, without considerable contributions from outside sources. Cllr Kinsey agreed to speak to resident Jill Abbott to see whether an approach might be made by her to Jo Goodman the widow of Keith Goodman, a former Chair of the council and the individual most closely associated with the acquisition of Jubilee Field and in whose memory the bench was to be made. It was also possible that District Council funds might be available, but the starting point would be to see what if any funds might be forthcoming from Jo Goodman.

#### 6. Other matters including correspondence:

6.1.1.1. Suffolk Police have asked for any interested councils to apply in a pilot scheme for an attempt to reduce speeding on county roads backed up by automatic number plate recognition technology (ANPR). Except for the B1119. As the most likely person to benefit from such a scheme, would be Cllr Tesh, who was unable





to attend this meeting. The chair confirmed that he would get in touch with him to see whether or not he felt it appropriate for the Council to participate in the scheme.

6.1.1.2. The Clerk referred to correspondence received by email from Sizewell C which had been previously distributed to the Councillors as to which a further opportunity was being made available by the proposed developers to have parish and other councils representatives at an update meeting to explain the current status quo. Once again this was a matter which Councillor Tesh had shown a particular interest and the Chair agreed he would mention this opportunity by way of a reminder whilst raising the subject of the ANPR trial scheme.

6.1.1.3. Cllr Kinsey had for family reasons been unable to advance the draft **Safeguarding Policy** over the summer and reported that some minor amendments were still required, which she would deal with ASAP.

6.1.1.4. The final matter discussed related to the proposed Suffolk festival. It was felt that this might be of interest but a decision as to participation would be deferred initially to the next meeting.

## 6.2. Planning Committee.

6.2.1. The only item thought to the meetings attention related to planning application relating to Dernford Hall (reference DC/21/4137/DRC) relating to an application for the discharge of a listed building condition. No action is required by the Council

## 7. Finance:

7.1. No **Bank Reconciliation**: for the period ending 02 September July 2021 had been submitted, as the up-to-date Cashbook circulated to the Councillors in advance of the meeting, (copy annexed) and copy bank statements (circulated in advance) were sufficient to identify the current cash position to the meeting. The only unrepresented cheque is the August cheque issued to James Rogers in the sum of £156.00 including VAT. After considering that liability the combined funds of the Council stood at £6985.00. Several additional cheques would however be presented for payment as per Item 7.3 below.

7.2. Receipts & Payments since last meeting: A copy of the **Cash Book** for the Council (copy annexed) made up to date to the 1st of September 2021, was produced by the Clerk and noted by the meeting and **unanimously approved**.

7.3. Likewise, a schedule of **cheques for issue** in settlement of outstanding invoices (copy annexed) was put before the meeting and **unanimously approved** for payment.

7.4. The **Annual Budget** (copy annexed)

7.4.1. As a consequence of the new and substantial expense being faced by the Council in relation to cutting the grass at Jubilee Field, a substantial deviation from the budget set during January this year was beginning to show itself. This imbalance was pointed out by Cllr Chin, who remarked that the precept might need to be increased next year 2 meet the shortfall which might occur this year. The meeting was however generally of the opinion that the Field was an asset and a benefit to the amenity of the village and as such must be maintained to a reasonable standard.

7.4.2. In previous years the grass cutting had been undertaken by Andy Franklin and Steve Smith who had provided their services free of charge.

7.4.3. Given that the field is now being mown by a contractor the need for the ride on mower was redundant might now be sold. After discussion it was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that reasonable offer of £300 made on behalf of the Townland Trust should be accepted.

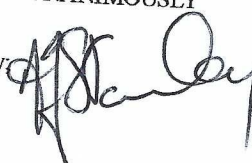
## 8. Correspondence.

8.1. All items of material correspondence received are already dealt with above.

## 9. Questions to the Chair.

9.1. In response to questions to the Chair as to a temporary division of work to cover tasks which would otherwise have been dealt with by the Clerk, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** as follows:

9.1.1. minutes of meetings would be taken by Cllr Kinsey.

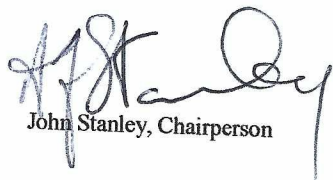


- 9.1.2. bank statements would be directed to Cllr. Chin;
- 9.1.3. preparation of cheques would be undertaken by the Chair together with agenda preparation in conjunction with Cllr. Kinsey; and
- 9.1.4. management and control of emails as well as the website Would be undertaken by Cllr. Spall

**10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:**

The Chair gave confirmation that the next Parish Meeting would take place at the Village Hut on Tuesday 12th **OCTOBER 2021**, 7.30pm.

There being no other competent business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.45 pm

  
John Stanley, Chairperson

12/10/2021  
Dated [ ] October 2021