

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SWEFFLING PARISH COUNCIL
Tuesday 8th March 2022 at 7:30pm, taking place at the Sweffling Village Hut, The Street,
Sweffling.

1. Attendance and apologies:

- **PRESENT:** John Stanley in the Chair.
- **COUNCILLORS:** Julia Kinsey (JK), John Tesh (JT), Audrey Lummis (AL).
- **IN ATTENDANCE:** Erika Spall, Clerk to the Council.
- **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Members of the Hut Committee, Amanda Daniel, Jill Abbott.
- **APOLOGIES:** Jude Chin (JC).

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

- There were no declarations of interest and no request for dispensation.

3. Minutes of the previous meetings

- The previous minutes from 11/01/2022 & 19/01/2022 were voted as correct and these were signed on the basis of representing a true and fair record of that meeting and accordingly the Vice Chair and Chairman was authorised to sign the same as amended.

3.1 Matters Arising

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

- The Clerk reported that a report has been received from District Councillors and has been posted on the village website.
- Chair (JS) notes that the report was thorough and to ensure we thank Maurice Cook for his informative report.
- John Stanley (JS) highlights that he was surprised about the housing issues raised in the District Councillors report and raised that Framlingham are having an extraordinary meeting as there has been a proposal to build houses near Victoria Road. John Stanley informs the council that Framlingham Town Council rejected this proposal, but the district planners approved it. John Stanley highlights that Framlingham Town Council are considering taking it to judicial review. It comes as Framlingham expressed that the district planners have not used the local plans. John Stanley (JS) expressed Sweffling Parish Council has experienced similar issues.
- Julia Kinsey (JK) has collected the Oak Tree but did not receive the plaque, the Clerk is chasing this up. Julia Kinsey (JK) is to plant the Oak Tree on Jubilee Field tomorrow.
- Jill Abbott raised a query regarding buses in the village and a request to use Jubilee Field for an easter egg hunt. The Chairman requested that this be discussed under agenda item 6b (Jubilee Field) and confirmed that the discussion of buses will be added under agenda item 6 (Village Matters).
- The Chairman (JS) raised two other agenda items to discuss under agenda item 6 (Village Matters) which were 'Bird Scarers' (6D) and 'Dangerous Dogs' (6E). The Chairman outlined that Buses would be 6F.

5. Election of Two Councillors

- The Chairman outlined that when the notice of vacancies was publicised via the village notice board and website that it was clear how the procedure worked and that if one or two members of the public applied then a co-option would've took place.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SWEFFLING PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday 8th March 2022 at 7:30pm, taking place at the Sweffling Village Hut, The Street, Sweffling.

- The Chairman (JS) highlighted that the Council received notice that there has been 10 residents or more that have requested an election in the Parish. The Chairman highlighted several points of the election process, outlining that the election opened last week and that they close at the end of this week (11/03/2022). The Council will not know the outcome of the election until after 4pm on the date above.
- It was noted that if no more than two members of the public have applied then the election would be an uncontested election and they will serve immediately as Parish Councillors. If there are more than two applicants then there will be polling in the Village Hut from 7am – 10pm and the count will commence shortly after closing and make an announcement that evening.
- The Chairman expressed that the election would cost the Parish a considerable amount of money, around £1,800 - £2,000.
- The Clerk informed the Council that it will cost approximately £1,800 for a full election. It was acknowledged by the Parish Council from the Chairman (JS) that despite if the election goes forward as uncontested there will still be costs incurred.
- It was expressed by The Chairman (JS) that one of the residents that requested an election has previously on at least on occasion described the Parish as a 'fractured village'. The Chairman articulated that if a village is described as 'fractured', calling for an election is one of the most divisive things that can happen.
- Cllr Tesh (JT) questioned if this would be for one year. John Stanley (Chairman) highlighted that elections would be next year (2023) and discussed the Councillors previous experiences with the election process and highlighted that there were 7 of them and all were elected uncontested.
- The Chairman (JS) suggested it was likely that an election will be called again next year and highlighted that when setting the budget next year for 2023/2024 the Council will need to consider current loss from this year's election, which we didn't have in our budget and further expenditure for another election next year. Which is a result of the current call for an election and the Chairman expressed that it will be the Parish Council that will suffer from this and the people of the Parish because the Council will need to increase the Precept which would result in another Council Tax increase.
- Cllr Tesh (JT) referred to the cost of the election being an incorrect use of council money and noted that the council money is from the residents of the village, who highlighted by Cllr Tesh (JT) are mostly pensioners.
- The Chairman (JS) expressed that this was the result of 12 people calling for an election of which two were not on the electoral roll at this time and were not considered on this occasion. The Chairman (JS) highlighted that it's the residents requesting the election that will be costing the Parish Council the large sum of money mentioned above.
- Cllr Tesh (JT) expressed that he would stand down from his position as Parish Councillor if this meant it would preserve the Councils funds and prevent an election. The Chairman (JS) suggested that Cllr Tesh (JT) reconsiders that decision and wait until the election vacancy closes and rediscuss afterwards.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SWEFFLING PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday 8th March 2022 at 7:30pm, taking place at the Sweffling Village Hut, The Street, Sweffling.

- Cllr Lummis (AL) showed support in Cllr Tesh (JT) decision and highlighted that they would do the same.
- The Chairman (JS) requested that Councillors wait and have a discussion possibly on Monday, when the Council knows what the outcome of the election vacancy details are. John Stanley proposed that Cllr Lummis (AL) and Cllr Tesh (JT) reconsider their position at the next election 2023.
- The Clerk to let the Parish Council know the results of the election application stage.

6. Village Matters

A) BT Plans for Telephone Lines

- Cllr Kinsey (JK) previously circulated an article among Parish Councillors raising awareness of BT Plans for Telephone Lines in the future.
- John Stanley (Chairman) expressed that BT are eventually going to move everything digital.
- Cllr Kinsey (JK) expressed that the 4G signal in the village isn't good enough that you can get a signal and sometimes it's gone off in a power cut.
- The Chairman articulated that since Cllr Kinsey (JK) raised this concern the Chairman (JS) has been following this and notified the council that this is common concern from residents across the country.
- John Stanley (JS) suggested that the Parish Council write to our Local MP and ask him what he thinks. John Stanley (JS) notes that it's going to be rural areas that suffer badly from this.

B) Jubilee Field

- The Clerk reports that they've received a written complaint about the recent damage to Jubilee Field caused by large machinery that has had access to the playing field to carry out maintenance on a residents back garden, which belongs to said resident.
- The Clerk highlighted that it wasn't appropriate that Jubilee Field was accessed for this purpose via the top of the field from the farmland, running over trees planted by the parish and leaving large, indented tractor marks across the field.
- John Stanley (JS) mentioned that prior Jubilee Close being built that Jubilee Field was an open space/ground. The Chairman informed the council that residents accessed their back gardens via the playing field.
- The Chairman informed the Council that he was approached by No.6 Blyth Villas to remove some trees from their garden, repair a fence and carry out some maintenance on their garden.
- John Stanley (JS) claimed that he didn't know they had already accessed Jubilee Field via the agricultural field. The Chairman approached No.6 days later and was informed that they had contracted Covid which is preventing them from removing the machinery from the field.
- John Stanley (JS) highlighted that there is a digger in No.5. The Chairman (JS) highlights there is a lot of damage done by the tractors used by No.6 John Stanley (JS) claims the field will recover and has asked No.6 when finished to rectify the damage that has been caused by them.
- Cllr Tesh (JT) informs the council that if it's deep wheel ruts, it won't recover unless it's helped.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SWEFFLING PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday 8th March 2022 at 7:30pm, taking place at the Sweffling Village Hut, The Street, Sweffling.

- The Chairman (JS) proposed that it would benefit the council if Cllr Tesh (JT) takes a look at Jubilee Field.
- Cllr Tesh (JT) claims that the field will need some topsoil to rectify the damage.
- John Stanley (JS) proposed that by Cllr Tesh (JT) taking a look The Chairman can articulate this to No.6 what we will be needed to repair the field.
- The Chairman (JS) claims that as a Parish Council we have to be on occasions 'neighbourly' to the people who live there on that land (Blyth Villas).
- John Stanley (JS) suggests that there is insufficient parking available to Blyth Villas and claims if someone is repairing a car it's easier to do so on Jubilee Field rather than out the front of their property.
- The Clerk suggests that this should always be approved by the full council rather than one individual.
- John Stanley (JS) gave the key to No.6 because he believed they needed access to the field to take the trees out in their garden.
- The Clerk reports they will need the keys to Jubilee Field to install the gym equipment on the field.
- The Clerk questioned who has the key to Jubilee Field and The Chairman informed the council that No.6 has the keys.
- Cllr Tesh (JT) informs the council that No.6 shouldn't have to be chased on this and should've done this without prompting from the Council.
- John Stanley (JS) believes that No.6 will reinstate Jubilee Field.
- The Chairman (JS) highlighted that at one time No.5 had their garden extended onto Jubilee Field which has since been reversed.
- The Clerk questioned The Chairman on when the machinery will be removed and when access will no longer be needed.
- The Chairman (JS) didn't know at this time as he hasn't spoken to No.6 as they haven't been home.
- John Stanley (JS) informs the council that he will find out when this is going to happen and it'll happen as soon as it can happen.
- Cllr Lummis (AL) questioned why the digger is currently in No.5.
- The Chairman (JS) informs the council that this is due to the trees being removed where in between both properties and that the fencing panels installed were in between both properties. John Stanley (JS) was unsure why the digger is in No.5.
- Cllr Tesh (JT) raised the question of the grass cutting of Jubilee Field and if this has been resolved.
- The Clerk reports that when they spoke to Cllr Kinsey (JK) that Cllr Kinsey knew someone who wanted to use the ride on mower.
- John Stanley (JS) expressed that Cllr Kinsey (JK) at the last meeting was going to speak to James Rowe about what they use on the Townland Meadow and he uses his fathers tractor to do that.
- Cllr Kinsey (JK) highlighted that a ride on mower is not fit for purpose for Jubilee Field.
- The Chairman (JS) notified the Council that we haven't heard from the Townland Trust about what they're doing with their half of the ride on mower.
- Cllr Tesh (JT) spoke to Shelia as a Trustee, and it seems each party is waiting for the other one.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SWEFFLING PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday 8th March 2022 at 7:30pm, taking place at the Sweffling Village Hut, The Street, Sweffling.

- John Stanley (JS) approached the Townland Trust requesting they get back to them but since have not had any response.
- Cllr Kinsey (JK) suggested that we approach the Townland Trust and sell the mower and divide the cost if not fit for purpose.
- The Chairman (JS) highlights that we do need a tractor and a topper to cut Jubilee Field.
- Cllr Kinsey (JK) is to ask James Rowe if he's happy to use his father's tractor to cut Jubilee Field and to let The Clerk know.
- The Clerk reported that they'd be in touch with Debbi Taylor to enquire who cuts their Parish's grass which currently is done by Norse for a reasonable sum and awaiting a quote.
- The Clerk emphasised the importance of ensuring we have someone in place to cut the grass as a measure to prevent the grass becoming significantly overgrown like last year.
- The Parish Council to contact the Townland Trust to inform them that the Council are happy to sell off the mower and split the costs. Cllr Kinsey (JK) to speak with Sandy.
- Cllr Tesh (JT) has spoke to a couple of people and they have been non-starters.
- Jill Abbott (JA) informed the council that James Loveridge would like to request permission to have an easter hunt on Jubilee Field.
- The Clerk questioned what this would look like and if they would be asking for donations so children can attend.
- Jill Abbott (JA) reports that the specifics of the event are unclear yet.
- John Stanley (JS) to speak with James Loveridge r.e Easter Egg Hunt.

C) Village Hut

- The Chairman (JS) noted that the Hut Committee in November last year felt it could no longer continue as they couldn't appoint officers and asked the Parish Council to consider taking the Hut on. If the Council were to do this we would run it as a sub-committee.
- The Chairman (JS) discussed the conveyancing document (**please refer to the document attached for further details**).
- Cllr Tesh (JT) suggests the council looks into taking the hut over further in regard to ownership of the village hut and land.
- Cllr Kinsey (JK) mentions that presumably the Parish Council will need a solicitor to confirm that Sweffling Parish Council are the new trustees who will also check the heritage etc.
- Kirsten Stanley (Hut Committee Member) asked the Parish how much would this cost the council and believed this to be a complicated way to look into the ownership of the Village Hut.
- The Clerk and the Council all agreed that the Council will need to double check all legislation regarding taking over the Village Hut.
- Cllr Kinsey (JK) asked if there would be a solicitor we can get through SALC and questioned whether they could help out with funds.
- Kirsten Stanley (KS) highlighted several issues that need attending to in the Village Hut (**please see attached report for further details**).

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SWEFFLING PARISH COUNCIL
Tuesday 8th March 2022 at 7:30pm, taking place at the Sweffling Village Hut, The Street,
Sweffling.

- The Chairman (JS) suggests that if the council took on the Village Hut that could have a better chance at getting Wi-Fi in the hut via grants.
- The Chairman (JS) proposed that the Parish Council move forward with the notion of taking over the Village Hut pending seeking legal advice. This was agreed by the full council.
- Kirsten Stanley (KS) asked if the Hut Committee would be allowed to attend Parish Council meetings to discuss the Village Hut.
- The Clerk reported that once the Village Hut was under SPC jurisdiction that there should be separate meetings for the Village Hut Sub-Committee, which should be minuted and recorded.

D) Bird Scarers

- The Chairman (JS) notified the council that he had received a complaint about the bird scarers. There appears to be more of them and/or louder. The complainant has bird scarers around their property on neighbouring land.
- Cllr Kinsey (JK) highlights the bird scarers aren't there long term.
- Cllr Tesh (JT) informs the council that they are only there until the crops are established.
- The Chairman (JS) is unsure how the council could tackle this complaint as it's a common element within villages.

E) Dangerous Dogs

- The Chairman (JS) informs the council that there was an incident the other day in the village where two dogs escaped from a resident's property. They didn't cause any damage but were in 'attack mode'. The Chairman has reported this to the owners.
- One of the two residents who were approached by the dogs luckily had a walking stick which prevented a serious attack.

F) Buses

- Jill Abbott (JA) questioned about the notice that has been displayed near Holdens Lane.
- The Clerk reports an email was received by 'Connecting Communities' about the advertisement.
- Jill Abbott (JA) requested that the council request further information on this.
- The Clerk will get in contact with Connecting Communities for further information.

7. Planning Matters

- The Clerk reports there has been several planning applications put through which can be accessed via our Planning section on our website (www.sweffling.com).
- The Chairman (JS) and Cllr Lummis (AL) provided the Clerk with comments on behalf of the Parish Council.

8. Finance

- The Clerk reports that last year the Clerk was supported by a resident in the village with the Internal Audit.
- The Internal Audit will need to be completed by SALC which the Clerk reports will cost between £109 - £161.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SWEFFLING PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday 8th March 2022 at 7:30pm, taking place at the Sweffling Village Hut, The Street, Sweffling.

- The costs highlighted above were agreed by the Council and approved that the internal audit be carried out by SALC.
- The Clerk requested that The Chairman meets up with The Clerk to discuss the progress of Online Banking.

9. Correspondence

- An email complaint was received by The Clerk regarding the damage done to Jubilee Field and highlighted that the ground has been severely uneven and that this should've not been allowed to go ahead.

10. Questions to the chair

- No questions.

11. 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 April at 7:30pm.

Meeting closed at 9:03pm.

Notes regarding the conveyance of the Village Hut.

The Hut was originally a building used by troops during WW 1. It may have been an officer's mess room. It was given to the Village at the end of the war and at first was located behind the church. After some issues with church officials it was moved to its present location.

The piece of land it sits on was owned by Major Borrett. In the conveyance document it is described as a piece of land 91 feet along the road and 80 feet back including the Hut.

The land was in the Borrett family as far back as 1911 and came to Percy R Borrett (The Major) in January 1926. At some time before 1938 Major Borrett had agreed to donate the land and the Hut to the Village. There does not appear to have been a formal agreement at that time.

Major Borrett died on the 19th September 1963 and his will had been written in March of that year. This estate passed to his widow Dora and his son John Alistair. Dora died on 11th May 1964 and John Alistair died on 27th July 1969.

The conveyance was signed on 21st February 1973.

The document was signed off by Arthur James Linning Skelton of 14 Dominion Street, London EC2 as the representative of the Borrett estate and described as the Grantor. The Hut was granted into the trust of:

The Rev. Cyril David Richard Stevens
James Wilfred Bromley
Derek Anthony Cunliffe Wilkinson

A paragraph within the document suggests that the responsibility for the Hut is passed unto those people who take responsibility for the Hut ie the Hut Committees that have followed after these original trustees. That was the interpretation of James Robbins Solicitor and representative of Marshall Hatchick in 2019.

"The Trustees hereby declare that the Trustees for the time being of this Deed shall hold the property hereby conveyed upon such trusts for the purpose of the Sweffling Parish Village Hall and with and subject to such powers and provisions upon with and Subject to which the same might from time to time to be held."

The interpretation could be checked by another solicitor. If it was determined that the trust remained with those three original trustees the permission could be sought from the descendants of those three gentlemen.

The Rev. Stevens was Jonathan Stevens' father.
Derek Wilkinson was Anthony Wilkinson's father.
James Bromley was resident at Wheelwrights back in 1973. His descendants would have to be traced.

Finance.

During 2019 to 2020 the Hut had income from the Church Fete, a Curry Night, Hire, Bowls Club for water supply, Election, a grant from ACC, and one off Government Grant to offset COVID lockdown. In 2020 to 2021 there was very little income.

There are annual costs for maintenance of fire equipment, water, electricity, insurance and caretaking. Recent expenditure has included repair to the steps and a new shed for storage. Expected expenditure is for a new water heater to replace the old immersion style system and the roof will require maintenance soon.

At their annual meeting in November 2021 the reported accounts were Community Account in Barclays Bank at £9800.90p and the Savings Account at £1519.81p