**MINUTES OF SWEFFLING PARISH COUNCIL AGM**

Held at Sweffling Village Hut on Tuesday 9th May at 7.30 pm (started at 8.15 pm)

**1 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

It was explained that the first items on the Agenda would be the election of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and the other councillors. It was proposed by Councillor Amanda Daniel (AD) that Councillor John Tesh (JT) should stand as Chairperson for the ensuing year. Councillor Tesh confirmed that he was willing to stand, and this was seconded by Councillor Jill Abbott (JA). It was unanimously resolved by the meeting that such appointment be approved.

**2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON AND DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

It was proposed by Councillor Jill Abbott (JA), that Councillor Amanda Daniel (AD) should stand as Vice-Chairperson for the ensuing year. Councillor Amanda Daniel confirmed that she was willing to stand, and this was seconded by Councillor John Tesh (JT), the Chairperson. It was unanimously resolved by the meeting that such appointment be approved.

**3 CO-OPTION AND WELCOME OF NEW COUNCILLORS**

The Chairperson explained that only himself, Councillor Amanda Daniel and Councillor Jill Abbott were standing for re-election as Councillors which left four vacancies. Had an election been held this would have cost between £800 and £2,000, but a special dispensation had been arranged as long as the new Councillors were co-opted on to the Council straight away and four people had stepped forward as a result. The four potential Councillors were introduced as follows:

Steve Ashurst (SA)

Jenny Tyson (JennyT)

Lindsey Jennings (LJ)

Audrey Lummis (AL). The Chairperson thanked Audrey for agreeing to come back on to the Parish Council as she had previously resigned.

The formal acceptance papers were handed out and signed, and it was unanimously resolved by the meeting that the appointments be approved.

**4 TO APPOINT AND WELCOME NEW CLERK**

The Chairperson explained that there had not been a Clerk for a very long time and that they had received an application from Mrs Ann Dobson which they had pursued, references had been obtained and they proposed to the meeting that the Clerk be appointed. The formal acceptance paper was handed out and signed and it was unanimously resolved by the meeting that the appointment be approved.

**5 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Present:

Councillor John Tesh (JT) in the Chair

Councillor Amanda Daniel (AD) as Vice-Chairperson

Councillor Jill Abbott (JA)

Councillor Steve Ashurst (SA)

Councillor Jenny Tyson (JennyT)

Councillor Lindsey Jennings (LJ)

Councillor Audrey Lummis (AL)

In Attendance:

Ann Dobson (ACD) – Clerk to the Council

4 members of the public

There were no Apologies for Absence.

**6 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation for this meeting.  Pecuniary interests were individually voiced and will need to be posted on the District Council website when requested.

**7 MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON TUESDAY 10TH MAY 2022**

a) The Minutes of the 2022 AGM, having been read, were signed by JT as a true record and were unanimously agreed.

b) There were no outstanding matters arising.

**8 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 11TH APRIL 2023**

a) The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th April 2023, having been read, were signed by JT as a true record and were unanimously agreed.

b) Matters Arising:

JT said that he was very disappointed at the lack of interest and information from the Police regarding safety and security in the village. It was generally felt that it would be good if a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme could be reintroduced especially as there had been some recent thefts. Jenny T said that they had tried to reinstate it previously, but the matter had been dropped when the Police failed to take any interest. However, it was reported that there was a Neighbourhood Watch Association and a man in Saxmundham was currently looking into it all along with a trustee of the Alde Community Council. SA said that some of the houses had cameras installed and personally he would always inform anyone he knew of anything suspicious recorded on his camera. A WhatsApp group was suggested for anyone who agreed to be on it, and it was noted that there was already a MailChimp list that could be used to see who wanted to join the WhatsApp group.

ACTION: To be discussed further at next meeting.

It was discussed again that the Bank Mandates still need changing and various other financial matters still need to be obtained from the previous Chairperson and handed over to the new Clerk.

ACTION: AD and JA are going to arrange a meeting with the previous Chairperson.

AD reported that she had a good number of archive files at her house which she offered to keep there if everyone was in agreement. This was unanimously agreed. She also said she had a number of documents to pass across to the new Clerk.

ACTION: AD and ACD to liaise over the various files and their contents.

AD reported that she had been on a course regarding VAT which had proved very useful. The Parish Council was not registered for VAT but could claim back VAT on anything that was not a business expense. An example used was if an event organised by the Parish Council took place and villagers attended free of charge then the VAT could be claimed back on anything vatable that was purchased for the event. However, if the villagers paid to attend then no VAT could be claimed. SA said it would need to be decided each time which was the more beneficial route to take to secure maximum revenue for the Parish.

ACTION: AD AND ACD to liaise over VAT going forwards.

**9 FINANCES**

a) Income and Expenditure:

The annual finances had already been given at the earlier Annual Parish Meeting, so these were not repeated. However, it was noted that the Precept would need to increase to take into account new expenditure.

Two cheques had been received to go towards the Coronation Event:

Alde Community Council - £50

Townlands Trust - £150

ACTION: AD agreed to bank these cheques until all the finances are handed over to the new Clerk.

There were invoices to be paid:

VIP Machinery - £339.07 for repairs to mower.

Debbie Smith - £300.00 for Coronation mugs.

Jill Abbott – £21.00 for Temporary Event Notice for music and alcohol at Coronation Event.

SALC – £35.25 VAT course for AD.

Sovereign Design and Play Systems - £215.88 for maintenance on play equipment.

b) To authorise payment of the invoices:

It was noted that a form was needed to accompany each invoice, and these were all approved and cheques written.

**10 VILLAGE MATTERS**

a) Coronation Celebration Review

JA said that the unexpected, glorious weather had given the day a huge boost. 85 residents and their friends had attended out of just 160 on the electoral role.

Attractions included a scavenger hunt, tennis rounders, best crown etc and everything ran very smoothly.

There were various teams involved in organising each aspect of the event and JA said this had worked well.

Total costs for the event came to £471.00 broken down as follows:

Mugs - £300

Licence - £21

Beer - £120

Donation towards Marquee - £30

20 mugs were given out to local children and most of the rest were being delivered out over the next few days.

However, only half the beer was drunk and there would still be 14 remaining mugs to be sold at £10 each.

JA proposed that the Village Fete Organisation purchased the rest of the beer so only £60 would be charged instead of the £120. This was unanimously agreed.

It was noted that the Parish Council would not be out of pocket for the Coronation Celebration Event.

JT thanked JA and all the Village Fete Organisation team for their very hard work on this event.

JA said that she had personally thanked the Alde Community Council and the Townlands Trust for their kind donations.

ACTION: JA said she would give a full rundown of the final accounts for this event next month.

b) Grass Cutting at the Jubilee Field

JT reported that, contrary to the belief that the lawnmower was only 50% owned by the Parish Council, it was in fact 100% owned by the Council.

JT also reported that it had been arranged for Nick Radford to drive the lawnmower when it was returned. Nick would have to be paid of course but volunteers would not work as there was the question of insurance for them.

It was agreed that the lawnmower should be returned to ADs house and then it would be picked up by JT.

The bigger question was raised by JT as to whether some or all the field should be left as a wildflower meadow.

LJ said she was very much in favour of this, as there was a national campaign called ‘No Mow May’ to give the bees and insects a chance to thrive. She would produce ‘No Mow May’ posters.

JennyT said that there was a conflict of interests as children playing would not want the long grass.

It was eventually agreed unanimously that the football pitch and the play area should be mowed as soon as practical to do so, but that the rest of the field would be left as a wildflower meadow.

ACTION: JT to liaise with AD to get the lawnmower picked up and then to arrange the first cut and subsequent cuts on the areas that were being mown.

JT mentioned that there were still a lot of brambles to clear and he proposed these were burned. This was unanimously agreed.

JT further mentioned a big bag of concrete posts, metal, etc that needed to be shifted but it was very heavy. Volunteers were needed to dispose of the contents.

It was agreed that the concrete posts would be taken out and offered as hardcore (AD suggested Lee Samuels) and then several Councillors agreed to take smaller bags to the Leiston tip where they could be disposed of free of charge.

ACTION: JT to organise and keep everyone informed.

LJ, whose garden goes on to the Jubilee Field, said she had noticed several people allowing their dogs to foul in the longer grass. It was unanimously agreed that this was totally unacceptable.

ACTION: LJ said she would prepare some laminated signs to warn people re dog fouling.

c) Footpaths in the village

It was also noted that a lot of the footpath signs were rotting or had come down altogether, especially in Rectory Road, opposite Church Path and by Bridge Farm. It was agreed that all these needed to be checked and replaced where necessary.

ACTION: The Clerk (ACD) would contact Suffolk County Council and ask them to inspect and remedy this.

**11 PLANNING**

No planning applications had been received.

**12 CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence at the meeting to discuss.

ACTION: JA and AD to liaise with previous Chairperson to make sure that there was nothing in his possession and report to the next meeting.

**13 PUBLIC FORUM**

Julia Kinsey, one of the retiring Councillors raised the question of finding a new safeguarding officer as this was a role she held.

ACTION: It was agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting when more information had been obtained on the training etc.

At the end of the Public Forum JT offered a vote of thanks to the retiring Councillors and thanked them for all their hard work.

**14 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 13th June in the Village Hut.

The meeting concluded at 9.45 pm.