

Swefling Parish Council meeting and AGM
14th May 2024 8:00pm
Swefling Hut, The Street, Swefling

PART A – The AGM

1 Attendance and Apologies

1.1 Present: Cllr John Tesh (Chairperson), SPC Cllr Amanda Daniel (RFO to SPC), SPC Cllr Jillian Abbott, SPC Cllr Audrey Lummis, SPC Cllr Steve Ashhurst

1.2 Apologies: Cllr Jenny Tyson

2 Elections of Officers to the Council

2.1 Chairperson -The Chair (Cllr John Tesh) vacated the Chair and the Clerk Peter Grogan invited nominations to the post of Chairperson. Cllr John Tesh was nominated by Cllr Amanda Daniel and seconded by Cllr Jillian Abbott and elected unanimously

2.2 Deputy Chairperson – Cllr Daniel was nominated as Deputy Chair by Cllr Tesh and seconded by Cllr Lummis and elected unanimously.

2.3 Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) – Amanda Daniel stood down from the post of RFO and the Cllr Tesh invited nominations to the post. Cllr Amanda Daniel was nominated by Cllr John Tesh, seconded by Cllr Steve Ashurst and elected unanimously.

It was noted that from June (date to be confirmed) when the audit is completed Cllr Daniel will relinquish the post of RFO to be taken over by the Clerk Peter Grogan.

2.4 Cllr Tesh and Cllr Daniel signed forms declaring they would carry out their duties in accordance with the law and the Parish Council approved regulations

PART B – Parish Council Meeting

3 Attendance and Apologies

3.1 Present: Cllr John Tesh (Chairperson), SPC Cllr Amanda Daniel (RFO to SPC), SPC Cllr Jillian Abbott, SPC Cllr Audrey Lummis, SPC Cllr Steve Ashhurst.

3.2 Apologies: Cllr Jenny Tyson

4 Declaration of Interests

4.1 No interests were declared

5 Minutes

5.1 The minutes of the last meeting of the 9th April 2024 to be signed as a true record. The minutes had been circulated to Cllrs and no errors or omissions were raised. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Jill Abbott, seconded by Cllr Amanda Daniel and passed unanimously. They were duly signed by the Chairperson.

5.2 Matters Arising

5.2.1 The responsibility for placing notices on the Parish Notice Board had been assigned to Cllr Tyson but she does not have a printer. Cllr Abbott said she was happy to carry out the role.

5.2.2 The Notice Board needs to be looked at to determine if the locked section for Parish Council notices can be expanded. Cllr Ashurst said he would look into options regarding locking a larger part of the board.

6 Councillor Reports

All reports below will be published on the Parish website when they are available.

6.1 Suffolk County Councillor Stephen Borroughes, had already verbally presented a summary of his comprehensive report to the Annual Parish meeting. A copy will be available on the Parish Council web-site.

6.2 No reports were received from East Suffolk District Councillors at the meeting. The Clerk was asked to follow up and see if there were to be any reports.

Cllr Owen Grey has since sent apologies for missing the meeting and has sent a report. This report will be available on the Parish Council website in due course.

6.3 No report was received from The Suffolk Constabulary.

7 Flooding in the Parish:

7.1 Cllr Ashurst gave an update on the flooding. An ad-hoc group has been set up of interested parties to discuss best practice and share information. Whilst Highways have been active in trying to repair damaged roads there was still no meaningful engagement from the Environment Agency (EA). It was seen as imperative that the EA came to Sweffling to see the impact for themselves.

7.2 Whilst some work had been done on clearing ditches and water courses, investigation was required to get legal permissions and raise funds for further remedial projects.

7.3 It was noted that the flooding had caused further erosion of the roadside verges which was exacerbated by cars and other vehicles running over the grass. Cllr Ashurst agree to talk to Highways about ways of deterring vehicles from driving on the verges.

7.4 The meeting thanked Cllr Ashurst for his work to date.

7.5 It was agreed to keep Flooding update on the Agenda for the next meeting.

8 Village Matters:

8.1 Update to Jubilee Field

Cllr Ashurst confirmed that numerous trees and shrubs had been planted. He also reported that the water tank had been filled from a private water supply at a cost of £1.47 but that children had later turned the tap on and emptied it. The butt has since been refilled. The grass is being cut on a regular basis. There appear to be more people on the field enjoying it as an amenity so all the hard work is paying off. Some of the trees in and around the field are in need of trimming following the wet and stormy weather.

The picnic table was discussed and it was concluded that a new table should be purchased if funds could be obtained from the County Council amenities fund.

ACTION – The Clerk to write to Cllr Burroughes at the County Council to ask if funds could be made available

ACTION – Cllr Ashurst to send the Clerk details of the table we would like to purchase

8.2 East Suffolk Blooms

Following an e-mail from the County Council, there was a discussion concerning the yearly project to plant bulbs around the Suffolk villages. It was decided that this year the Council should make a bid with the aim of planting the bulbs in the Jubilee field so as not to disturb the natural flora and fauna in the open countryside.

9 Correspondence

9.1 VCSE funding

The Clerk bought an email to the Council's attention regarding the funding of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises from various grants.

ACTION – Clerk to look into the possibility of these grants being used by the Village Hut Committee.

10 Finance

10.1 Authorisation of Cheques for payment

Clerks Salary	£172.52
SALC Payroll services	£82.80
David Kindred (Grass cutting)	£100.00

The payments were authorised and the cheques were duly signed by the Chairperson.

10.2 To receive and approve payments since last meeting

The RFO stated that following the receipt of the precept of £5,000 the current account balance stood at £9,034.34 and the Premium account balance was unchanged at £4,938.44.

10.3 Barclays Mandate

Progress was being made with bank mandate to have Peter Grogan added as a signatory, however, previous efforts to have Mike Smithson, Julia Kinsey and Ann Dobson removed had failed but had now been successful subject to the uploading of the new mandate by all three parties. Forms were given to the Clerk Peter Grogan and Cllr John Tesh which need completing and uploading to Barclays.

Once this is complete it is hoped the banking mandate process will be complete with Cllr John Tesh, Cllr Amanda Daniel, Cllr Jillian Abbott and Clerk Peter Grogan as signatories. All payments by cheques or on-line will require a second authorisation and / or two signatories.

10.4 On-line banking

Cllr Tesh, Cllr Daniel, Cllr Abbott and the Clerk Peter Grogan will be set up with access to the on-line banking. Peter Grogan completed the relevant form and handed it to Cllr Daniel to be forwarded to Barclays. It is anticipated that in the normal course of events the Clerk will raise payments for authorisation by Cllr Daniel

11 Audit Preparation 2023 / 2024

11.1 Approval of documents

Cllr Daniel introduced the audit preparation which was going well. She was able to report the SALC had given Swefling an extra week to complete the audit preparation which was very welcome. Cllr Daniel was required to upload a series of documents which needed approval from the Parish Council.

Certificate of Exemption which proved that the Parish Council had an income of less than £25,000 in 2023 / 24. Proposed Cllr Abbott, Seconded Cllr Lummis, approved unanimously.

Annual Internal Audit Report which needed to be sent to SALC for sign off. This was signed by the Cllr Tesh. Proposed by Cllr Tesh, seconded by Cllr Abbott, approved unanimously.

Annual Governance Statement which states that the Parish Council adheres to good financial and governance policies and practices. This was signed by Cllr Tesh and the Clerk as complete and accurate. Proposed Cllr Ashurst, seconded Cllr Lummis, approved unanimously.

Accounting Statements 2023/24. These statements were reported identical figures to those presented to the last meeting as the closing balances on the accounts. This was signed by Cllr Tesh. Proposed Cllr Abbott, seconded Cllr Tesh, approved unanimously.

the Cllr Daniel said she was happy to continue the audit work including uploading forms to the internet for the 2023/24 audit assessment.

12 Planning

12.1 Planning decisions – There were no planning decisions to be made

12.2 Planning Applications – There were no planning applications to consider

12.3 Correspondence concerning Holden's Lane – an email had been received from a resident expressing concern at a building (possibly a WC) being erected in a field adjacent to Holden's lane.

ACTION - Cllr Ashurst agreed to look into the matter

13 Any other Business

13.1 Defibrillator – Cllr Daniel attended a First aider course recently run by the British Heart Foundation. The question of whether the benefits of having one close at hand and the difficulties in finding first responders and the lack of a mobile signal in parts of the village. It was noted that several other villages had one and that the equipment would be provided free by the British Heart Foundation or another charity.

It was agreed in principle that having a defibrillator at the Sweffling Hut would be a good idea.

In conclusion a motion for the Clerk to look into the matter further was proposed by Cllr Daniel, seconded by Cllr Tesh and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to ask other Parish Councils about their defibrillators.

ACTION – Cllr Daniel to consult further with Laura Parsons-Mann who had arranged the course and had details of available grants.

13.2 Circulation and signing of Standing Orders

As part of good governance the Standing Orders of the Parish Council were circulated for the Councillors asked to read and sign to show that they understood them fully.

ACTION – All Councillors and the Clerk to have read and signed the Standing Orders by the next meeting

14 Confirmation of next Parish Council Meeting

The next Parish Meeting will be on Tuesday 11th June at 7:00pm in the Sweffling Hut.

Peter Grogan
Parish Clerk
17/08/24