

**Sweffling Parish Council meeting
11th June 2024 7:30pm
Sweffling Hut, The Street, Sweffling**

MINUTES

1 Attendance and Apologies

1.1 Present: Cllr John Tesh (Chairperson), SPC Cllr Amanda Danitel (RFO to SPC), SPC Cllr Jillian Abbott, SPC Cllr Jenny Tyson, SPC Cllr Steve Ashhurst

1.2 Apologies: Cllr Audrey Lummis – **Approved** - absence due to being unwell

No attendance by District or County Councillors, this was due to them being omitted from the invitation list by the Clerk

ACTION – Clerk to write to Cllrs Burroughes, Owen and Langdon Morris to apologise for the lack of an invitation and ensure they are included on all other meeting invitations.

2 Declaration of Interests

2.1 Cllr Daniel declared an interest in the planning application DC/24/1541/ARM as she is an adjacent neighbour to the property.

3 Minutes

3.1 The minutes of the last Parish Council meeting of the 14th May 2024 were agreed and 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.

3.2 The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting were noted and no errors or omissions were raised. They will be formally signed off at the next Annual Parish meeting.

3.3 Matters Arising:

3.3.1 The matter of Cllr particular responsibilities (6) would be deferred until the July meeting for a fuller discussion.

3.3.2 **ACTION:** Clerk to add to the July 2024 agenda

3.3.3 Cllr Ashurst is making progress with making changes to the Notice Board to enhance the area available for Council business.

- 3.3.4** It was noted that the Standing Orders file had been circulated, read and signed by all Cllrs and the Clerk

4 County and District Councillor Reports

- 4.1** 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.

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

5 Flooding in the Parish:

- 5.1** Cllr Ashurst gave an update on the flooding. Discussions continue with the various agencies but no major work is expected in the Sweffling Parish for at least a year. Cllr Ashurst stated that the local community would work together with farmers and landowners to mitigate risks where they could using volunteers and hand tools. It was noted that Cllr Grey was keeping up pressure on the public bodies concerned.

- 5.2** It was stated that there was a meeting in Bruisyard Village Hall to look at flooding across the catchments of the Alde and Ore on Monday 17th June.

ACTION: Cllrs to look at their diaries and see if SPC could send a representative

- 5.3** It was agreed to keep Flooding update on the Agenda for the next meeting.

6 Village Matters:

6.1 Update to Jubilee Field

Cllr Ashurst updated the meeting that the grass was being cut to keep the space open whilst preserving the areas for biodiversity. The hedges are thriving.

The Clerk had written to Cllr Burroughes at the County Council to ask if funds could be made available for the picnic table but had received no reply to date.

6.2 East Suffolk Blooms

The Clerk had written to the County and had made a bid for an allocation of bulbs but had received no reply to date.

6.3 Sweffling Hut – possible grant funding

The Clerk had written to the County and received a listing of all possible funding opportunities available to the Parish Council and associated organisations. The Clerk had identified a particular grant that might be pertinent to the Hut.

ACTION – The Clerk to write to Mike Smithson, Laura Parsons-Mann and Cllr Tyson with the information.

6.4 Defibrillator – follow up

1) Cllr Daniel had followed up and found sources of grant funding from the British Heart Foundation and other organisations.

The Clerk reported that from three Councils who he had contacted who had defibrillators none had, as yet, been used.

It was proposed that the Parish go ahead and source a Defibrillator

Proposed Cllr Ashurst, **Seconded** Cllr Tesh, **Approved** Unanimously

ACTION – Cllr Daniel will look at the options and make a grant application With regard to positioning the Defibrillator.

2) Cllr Daniel said she would be attending the maintenance and fabric sub-committee in the next few days to address concerns about asbestos and if the defibrillator could be placed on the wall of the Hut.

ACTION- Cllr Daniel to propose unit be placed on Hut wall at Hut maintenance and fabric sub-cttee.

6.5 Traffic Calming

Following a discussion concerning speeding through the village the Council considered it appropriate to ask for traffic calming measures in the form of two “green smiley face indicators” to be sourced from the County Highways.

Proposed Cllr Tyson, **Seconded** Cllr Daniel, **Approved** Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to write to Cllr Burroughes asking for these to be supplied and fitted in the village and on the B119

7 Correspondence

7.1 General Election Notification

The notices for the election were printed and have been duly posted on the notice board

7.2 Gov.uk domain and MS 365

The Clerk brought to Notice of the Council that the current situation regarding the software platforms which were being used were unsatisfactory and inefficient. He asked that the Council consider migration to the Government secure standard

of **.gov.uk** in line with most other public bodies. In addition the Clerk also requested that the Council re-register for a **Microsoft 365** licence and use the benefits of Word and Excel etc rather than LibreOffice.

The Council agreed in principle and asked the Clerk to come to the next meeting with a fully costed proposal supported by the County

Proposed Cllr Daniel, **Seconded** Cllr Tyson, **Approved** Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to prepare a costed proposal for the next meeting

8 Finance

8.1 Authorisation of Cheques for payment

Cllr Daniel (RFO) expenses - postage	£13.50
Cllr Daniel (RFO) Expenses – printer ink	£70.05
Cllr Daniel (RFO) Expenses - ICO Registration	£40.00
David Kindred mowing Jubilee field	£100.00

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

Proposed Cllr Tyson, **Seconded** Cllr Abbott, **Approved** Unanimously

A second payment for mowing of the field came in after the Agenda was posted

David Kindred mowing Jubilee field	£100.00
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Proposed Cllr Daniel, **Seconded** Cllr Tesh, **Approved** Unanimously

8.2 Barclays Mandate and on-line banking

Progress was still being made with bank mandate, the Clerk now needs to contact the mandate team at Barclays- **ACTION** – Clerk to call Barclays Mandate Team

9 Audit Review 2023 / 2024

Cllr Daniel who carried out a great deal of the audit work informed the Council that we had passed the audit but that there were some recommendations which the Council would need to implement over the coming year.

Cllr Daniel went through the recommendations from the auditors to inform Cllrs where the Council had only partially met requirements

9.1 Audit Notes and RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1.1 **Update of Public Contracts figure in Standing Orders:** at the next review Clerk is to update the public contracts figure from £25,000 to £30,000.
- 9.1.2 **Adoption of NALC model Financial Regulations:** at the next review of Financial Regulations Clerk to recommend adoption of NALC model regulations.
- 9.1.3 **Dual authorisation of payments:** Clerk to ensure evidence is retained of all internet payments when on-line banking is adopted.
- 9.1.4 **SALC internet payments policy:** Clerk to recommend Internet Banking Policy based on SALC template when appropriate.
- 9.1.5 **Section 137 payments:** Clerk to add to Parish Council agenda to consider if Section 137 payments are relevant / useful
- 9.1.6 **Insurance Recommendation:** The Council must carry out an annual Insurance Review.
- 9.1.7 **Budget preparation Recommendation:** The Clerk must circulate a budget consultation paper and ensure a minute records this.
- 9.1.8 **The Precept figure:** the Clerk to ensure the Precept figure is included in the Budget consultation paper.
- 9.1.9 **Report quarterly on budget variances:** Clerk to ensure there is a quarterly review of expenditure and budget variance as per Financial Regulations.
- 9.1.10 **Recording of Ear Marked Reserves:** The Clerk to ensure reserves and ear marked reserves are appropriately allocated and recorded.
- 9.1.11 **Receipts and emails:** Clerk to ensure all receipts and relevant emails are retained for inspection by audit.
- 9.1.12 **Elector's Public Rights Recommendation:** The Clerk must ensure dates are correct and deadlines are met for accounts and audit including posting and uploading to the web-site.
- 9.1.13 **Compliance with Accounts and Audit regulations Recommendation:** Accounts and audit information must be posted to the smaller authorities web-site before the 1st of July
- 9.1.14 **Recording Cllrs absence at meetings:** Clerk to ensure a record is made of the reason for absence and if the reason is approved.
- 9.1.15 **Data Retention Policy Recommendation:** Clerk to prepare a Data Retention Policy for Council approval
- 9.1.16 **Use of .gov.uk domain:** Clerk to prepare a costed proposal for the move to a gov.uk domain for Council consideration.

9.2 Impact of audit hours:

The total number of hours spent on the Audit has been estimated by Cllr Daniel to be 33. This needs to be factored into the overall year as it is anticipated that document preparation and uploading etc will be month by month by the Clerk and not in one piece of work as Cllr Daniel had to do.

9.3 Review of Clerks Hours and monthly meetings

Given the report above it seemed practical and financially prudent to ensure the Clerk's hours were available for this work by reducing the workload over the year. This could be done by reverting to bi-monthly meetings. It was acknowledged that there may need to be exceptional planning meetings in the cycle and that the cycle must accommodate AGM, Budget setting and Audit requirements.

It was proposed that the meeting cycle for 2024 - 2025 be amended as follows.

Meetings in 2024 July, September and November.

Meetings in 2025 January, March and May

Proposed Cllr Tesh, **Seconded** Cllr Ashurst, **Approved** Unanimous

ACTION – Clerk to ensure new meeting schedule is adopted in the administration of the Council

Note: all the audit documents need to be moved to the previous year on the website, Matt at One-Suffolk should be able to assist the Clerk

ACTION – Clerk to contact Matt at One Suffolk to move the Audit material.

Cllr Tesh Recorded the thanks from the Council for all the work done by Cllr Daniel in completing the Audit

10 Planning

10.1 Planning decisions

There were no planning decisions to be noted

10.2 Planning Applications

10.2.1 DC/24/1740/FUL – There were no objections and no comments concerning this application.

10.2.2 DC/24/1541/ARM – Cllr Daniel having declared an interest took no part in the discussion. There was considerable concern over this application regarding the traffic and the potential for exacerbating flooding in the three adjoining houses and the one opposite the development.

It was proposed the Council make a comment to planning expressing these concerns.

ACTION – Clerk to raise a comment on the planning application expressing concerns over exacerbating the flooding risk.

- 10.3 Holdans Lane activity:** - The Council noted further activity at Holdans Lane with the erection of a toilet building, timber and a transport container.

The Council would pursue contacts in the enforcement at District and County level to see if any action had been taken following correspondence from concerned residents.

11 Any other Business

- 11.1 Recording Meetings & respect for Cllrs:** The Clerk asked that in line with other Councils the Parish Council include a permission to record paragraph in meetings going forward and that the Notice asking members of the public to be respectful in Council meetings be visible at the start of all meetings.

12 Confirmation of next Parish Council Meeting

The next Parish Meeting will be on Tuesday 9th July at 7:30pm in the Sweffling Hut.

Peter Grogan
Parish Clerk
17/08/24