

# SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 2ND SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 7.30PM IN SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE HALL

### **Councillors Present**

Nicola Borkmann (NB)  
Martin Collett (MC)  
Ken Hodkinson (KH)  
Ryan Smith (RS)  
Victoria Taylor (VT)  
Stephen Warrington (SW)

Christine Coles - Parish Clerk and three villagers

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Collett (Vice-Chair) in the absence of Cllr Gandy.

### **24/49. Apologies**

Cllr Gandy (personal) and District Cllr Brant (work).  
The Parish Clerk to formally invite District Councillor Brant to the October meeting.

### **24/50. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Collett declared an interest as Chair of the new Village Charity.

### **24/51a. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1st July 2024**

An amendment was made on page 2, item 24/41, line 5 to read 'A comment was passed to the Parish Council by a villager re a plastic protector around a tree **in front of the play area** which has been caught by a strimmer'. The minutes of the last meeting were then approved and signed.

### **24/51b. To note any matters arising from the minutes not included on this agenda**

Cllr Collett has shared the notes about the garage area with Cllr Warrington.

A second Super User to report Highway problems has not been appointed yet. To carry forward to the October meeting.

Thanks was given to Cllr Hodkinson and Cllr Warrington for helping to clean the village signs.

Betty Panks Garden – Some work has been done to clear the bind weed.

### **24/52. Public Participation Session**

Three villagers from the Play Park Committee were at the meeting to discuss the installation of new play signs. They are in favour of new signage. Highways have offered to supply and place the signs free of charge. There have been no accidents in the five years since the park was built but the risk is there. They felt that the signs would be a good traffic calming measure and promote the park. The usage is for children outside the village as it is a wider community asset. Parents often park and cross the road to use the Play Park and have expressed concerns. Existing poles can be used. There is a concern by others that there are a number of signs in the village but they do not all have highway approval.

Playground safety on the ROSPA website advises the placing of road warning signs for drivers.

**24/53. To discuss the proposed transfer of Village Hall to Swalcliffe Village Charity inc. new leasehold arrangements with the Parish Council**

The updated business case document for the transfer of the village hall to the new charity had been circulated. It is a continued progression of the transfer and will resolve historic governance arrangements. The existing trust will be wound up and advice has been taken from a supporting lawyer. Cllr Collett is the Chair of the new Charity and Cllr Gandy is also a trustee.

Cllr Hodkinson asked if the fund raising will be specific to the village hall. Cllr Collett confirmed that the fund raising will support the wellbeing of the local community, this will include the village hall but amongst many other projects and causes. Charity minutes will be published and there will be clear engagement with the community.

The proposed lease for the Village Hall was discussed. The hall sits on PC land and there is no current lease arrangement. The PC will retain the freehold interest of the land around on which the Village Hall is built with a long lease being in place for the Village Hall. The details of this will need to be agreed by the PC in due course.

Cllr Warrington noted the report looked good. He asked if there were any potential worries. Cllr Collett confirmed that currently it felt that risks were understood and planned for. Winding up the existing charitable trust as the Village Hall transfers into the new charity is unlikely to be a quick process. A lawyer will assist with this process and the community will be consulted before any final decisions are taken. This is all part of the due diligence process.

It was agreed by all Councillors to proceed with the continued progression.

**24/54. To receive the following Councillor updates**

**- Village Development Plan**

Cllr Warrington has had full and productive conversations with the current lessees of the garages behind the Village Hall. Options will be discussed by the Parish Council with garage users and the wider village. The length of the current garage lease is 7 years and it was understood that this was the maximum that could be offered before land registry complications arose. This is a question to query with a lawyer should new leases be offered on expiry. From the floor a villager spoke about the land called the Parish Pit situated to the side of the village hall. This area is not owned by the village. Further investigation is required.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to reply to circulate lease arrangements for the Parish Pit to Cllr Gandy and Cllr Collett.*

**- Speedwatch and related activity**

One Speedwatch session has been held and it was reported that 16 cars out of 433 were speeding. There were a couple of factors that could have affected the figures. The Sibford Road was closed and it was the start of the holiday period. More sessions are planned. Some potholes have been reported and a broken BT cover. The drains in Park Lane have been cleared. Excess water on Park Lane has been reported and Highways will send an engineer out.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to reply to the villager in Park Lane about the clearing of the drains.*

- Environmental and ground maintenance

The grass cutting continues. Grass is not collected as it would increase the annual cost. The verges in Park Lane and Green Lane have been strimmed. Last year this work was done by the School but as a one off. This cost should be included in next years budget. In the Autumn Cllr Borkmann will look at feedback and take this to the November meeting. Plans for next year can be discussed and agreed.

- Swalcliffe Village Charity

The Board of Trustees have met and another meeting is planned on 5<sup>th</sup> September. This will be the first formal meeting. The Charity was also discussed earlier in the agenda where updates were considered. Cllr Warrington asked if the trustees can consider a bursary type fund to support those who may find the cost of paid for village events prohibitive.

- Village Hall refurbishment project

The VHC have received a National Lottery grant of £6K. A planning application has been submitted to replace the windows in the Village Hall.

**24/55. To discuss the placing of 'Children at Play' signs on the Main Road near to the play area**

Councillors considered the merits of placing these signs alongside the wider need to address the concerns with speeding generally and to take a more strategic approach to doing this, including the consideration of all options to determine those most practical and effective. Councillors were split in their views of whether the approach should be to install the signs now or whether a wider options appraisal should be completed before any decisions were taken. They all recognised that speeding continues to be a concern and that reasonable steps need to be taken to address this.

A majority decision was reached that before agreeing to install the signs wider traffic calming measures should be considered and that ideally an informed discussion on this should happen at the October meeting. A site meeting with a Highways representative has already been held so contact will be made to see if there is any progress. The Play Park Committee are to be kept informed.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to ask how long the offer of free signage is available and when the signs would be installed.*

**24/56. To discuss the arrangement of a defibrillator training session**

St John Ambulance (SJA) have agreed to carry out a training session. It was agreed to get two dates in November and circulate to the village. Two places will be offered to the school.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to contact SJA.*

**24/57. To discuss transitioning to a gov.uk domain**

The Parish Clerk attended a training course organised by a different County Association. There are many advantages to moving to a .gov.uk domain. The suffix is for government and local government organisations. It is a protected domain. It is not a legal requirement now but is a sign of good practice, trust and professionalism. It is expected to become mandatory in the near future. It is the separation of personal and professional communications. There is a grant of £100.00 available and online support. Many parishes have used the grant already and the online support will be not available after March 2025. It was agreed to change the website and the Clerks email address immediately to take advantage of the grant of £100.00.

*Action: The Parish Clerk to contact David McLindon.*

**24/58. Financial Report**

*To note up to date bank balances*

Current £14,467.01

Business £2825.98

Betty Panks Account £421.42

*The following payments were approved under statutory powers:*

£500.00 to support the new village charity

£400.00 to SW Services (grass cutting in June)

£500.00 to SW Services (grass cutting and strimming in July)

£311.94 to Fenton Timber (octagonal table for play area)

£40.00 to Parish Clerk (ICO)

*To review the budget forecast*

An updated budget sheet had been circulated. The Parish Council are working to budget.

**24/59. To receive an update on planning**

- 24/02099/TCA, Tree work at Swalcliffe Park School. Support by PC
- 24/01832/F, Variation of condition of 23/03165/F - Minor changes to the design of the dwelling house at The Old Grange, Grange Lane. No comment by PC.
- 24/01826/F and 24/01790/LB, Replacement of existing French windows and wood cladding to rear of house with frame-less sliding doors at Tithings House, 6 The Tithings. No comment by PC.
- 24/02128/F, Replace the existing windows in the Village Hall with a modern low maintenance alternative. The existing windows are old double glazed units that are past economic repair. Many are blown and do not fit properly, and compromise the heat insulation of the building in winter. The windows will be replaced like-for-like in terms of size, location and design at Swalcliffe Village Hall. Councillors agreed to support the application. The proposed design will match the existing UPVC doors. They would like to see trickle vents in the new windows to help with ventilation and this should be relayed before to the Village Hall Committee for consideration.  
*Action: The Parish Clerk to respond.*

23/00831/F, New Livery application in Upper Tadmarton. This application is being considered by the CDC Planning Committee on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 4pm. Councillors agreed to support Tadmarton Parish Council but would not attend in person.  
*Action: The Parish Clerk to circulate the link to the meeting.*

**24/60. To receive the following correspondence**

- OALC, To discuss the proposed Increase in subscriptions for 2025/26 and whether to support or not. OALC are proposing a 7% increase in subscription fees. The cost in 2024/25 was £140.00 & VAT and the proposed fee for 2025/26 is £180.00 & VAT. It was agreed to support this increase.  
*Action: The Parish Clerk to return the signed voting form.*
- Katharine House Hospice, Bereavement Volunteers. A poster is on the village notice-board.

**24/61. To receive Councillors Reports**

The fundraising event held at Colin Hills property was well attended and people were generous. Mr Hill appreciated the level of support. Councillors noted their appreciation of Mr Hill's work and the benefits secured for the community.

**24/62. To note next meeting date and time**

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 7.30pm

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

DRAFT