

SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 12TH MAY 2025 AT 7.30PM IN SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE HALL

Councillors Present

Steve Gandy (SG)
Martin Collett (MC)
Ryan Smith (RS)
Victoria Taylor (VT)
Stephen Warrington (SW)

Christine Coles - Parish Clerk, County and District Councillor Chris Brant and six villagers

25/23. Elections

Election of Chairperson and signing of Acceptance of Office form

It was proposed by Cllr Warrington and seconded by Cllr Taylor that Cllr Gandy be Chair. He signed the Acceptance of Office form.

Election of Vice-Chair

It was proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Smith that Cllr Collett be Vice Chair.

Cllr Warrington thanked Cllr Gandy for standing as Chair again.

25/24. Apologies

Cllr Borkmann (personal) and Cllr Hodkinson (personal)

25/25. Declarations of Interests

Cllr Gandy and Cllr Collett declared an interest as trustees of Swalcliffe Village Charity.

25/26. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th February 2025

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed.

25/27. Public Participation Session

No matters were raised.

25/28. To discuss Horse Rider safety

Anne Seagroatt has lived in the village for ten years and rides regularly. The B4035 is a busy road. Some drivers slow down but others speed and drive too close to horses and their riders. Horse riders and cyclists are allowed to ride side by side. The B4035 which is a main road has to be used to access main bridleways and fields. The Chair spoke about the recent speed survey which took place. 948 vehicles drove through the village and 43 vehicles were speeding (4½%).

National figures from the British Horse Society were quoted. In 2023 there were 3383 incidents with horse riders in the UK, 66 horses were killed, 88 injured, 3 riders killed and 94 riders injured. Councillors asked if riders wear the correct clothing? It was acknowledged that some could try harder and it is unregulated. A petition has been signed.

There may be a cost to a financial solution and a Councillor asked if the people who have signed the petition would help support that.

Highways have offered four free horse poster signs to be attached to existing poles. The Chair has carried out a full review of all the signs in the village. Some signs are old and are no longer needed. A more formal review will take place of existing signs and where they are positioned. There is no signage by one bridleway.

Traffic calming is the most effective way to reduce speeding but it is expensive. There are more options at 20mph as traffic calming is allowed without street lights. However the village would have to pay for any traffic calming measures. The speed limits outside of the village were discussed. One side from Tadmarton to Swalcliffe is 50mph and the other side Swalcliffe to Sibford is 60mph. The main road is dangerous for families crossing to use the play area if they park by the barn.

The Chair thanked Anne for speaking about the issue. Councillors then discussed traffic calming.

25/29. To discuss Traffic calming

The Chair noted current progress to date.

Speedwatch sessions are carried out regularly. A speed survey was carried out last year and it has been agreed to do this annually. The speeds are not high enough to warrant a visit from the TVP speeding van. An on site meeting took place with Highways last year. Cllr Brant replied that not everyone will slow down. The new 20mph has brought average speeds down to 26pmh. Thames Valley Police are starting to enforce 20mph and he believes fixed speed signs are effective. The 20mph scheme has been paused for now but may be restarted.

a. Replacement of current speed signs.

The current speed signs are old and require urgent replacement. This will be the next spend priority and new signs will collect data. They must have the ability to be set at either 20mph or 30mph.

Action: Cllr Hodkinson to continue to look at suppliers.

b. Public survey to consider changing current speed limit from 30mph to 20mph

This has been mentioned in the overall strategy. When the Parish Council discussed 20mph and voted between themselves, it was a split vote. It was agreed to consult the village.

Action: Cllr Hodkinson and Cllr Warrington to produce a survey.

c. Addition of extra warning signs.

Highways have offered four free horse signs. It was agreed to accept them and put on existing poles.

Action: The Parish Clerk to order the free signs.

The Chair summarized the actions from this discussion:-

1. Consult the village on 20mph.

Action: Cllr Warrington/Cllr Hodkinson to draft a survey.

2. Engage with highways to extend the speed limit up the hill towards Sibford.

Action: Cllr Hodkinson to speak to Highways. Cllr Chris Brant would like to attend.

3. Discuss with highways re position of signs and at the bridleway entrance.

Action: Cllr Hodkinson to speak to Highways.

4. Consult with Tadmarton to see if they are going to consider 20mph.

Action: The Chair to speak to Tadmarton Parish Council.

25/30. To receive the following updates

- *Flood Prevention measures.*

This is ongoing. There is an agenda item later on to approve £500.00 expenditure on flood prevention measures. An Expression of Interest form for funding has been submitted to OCC Highways.

- *Garage leases*

Refurbishment of the garage facades by a professional company is the next priority. The lease agreement will be updated. There will be a vacant garage at the end of the year and the allocation process will be agreed.

25/31. To receive Councillor Reports

The new play equipment has been added to the council's insurance policy.

Defibrillator training was discussed. To take place at the end of June/early July.

Action: The Parish Clerk to contact the trainer.

It was noted that the new lease for the village hall has been sent off to the Land Registry. They have acknowledged receipt but there will be no further update until September/October time.

Speedwatch sessions will take place again soon.

25/32. Financial Report

To note up to date bank balances

Current a/c £15,809.95

Business a/c £2735.46

Betty Panks a/c £394.39

To approve expenditure up to £500.00 for flood prevention measures.

It was agreed to approve this expenditure. Cllr Borkmann to provide receipts.

The following payments were approved under statutory powers:

- £130.00 to Mr D Cockle (replacing village front door)
- £130.00 to G Houghton (replacing village hall front door)
- £64.21 to S Gandy (paint for baton surrounds of new windows)
- £726.88 to CPA Horticulture (chippings for play area)
- £216.00 to OALC (membership)
- £49.00 to Parish Clerk (brown bin subscription for play park)
- £8682.00 to Pentagon Sport South Ltd (new play equipment)
- £267.70 to Cherwell District Council (dog bin emptying)
- £400.00 to SW Services (grass cutting in April)
- £49.00 to OPFA (membership)
- £35.00 to Community First (membership)

25/33. To receive an update on planning

Older

- 25/00715/TCA, T1 x Sycamore- Major decline. Fell bark disease. T2 x Oak- Deadwood selective reduction on uprights by 4m. T3 x Ash- Fell suffering die back. T4 x Beech- Remove poor punning cuts in crown reduce 2 extended laterals by 2m to balance crown. T5x Elm- Fell multi Stem tree severe decline. T6x Lime Crown reduction in height by 7m. T7x Oak Reduce crown by 8m approx. 50% of current height to retain as framework structure due to basil decay at Swalcliffe Park School. No comments or observations from PC.
- 25/00272/R56, Change of use of an existing agricultural building to Commercial use (Class E) at Benson Barn, Main Road. Prior approval is required and is granted subject to the conditions set out in the schedule.
- Case No 25/00098/ENF, Change of use of agricultural land to driveway at Swalcliffe House, Grange Lane.

25/34. To receive the following correspondence

The following correspondence was circulated.

- Highways, Road closure on Main Street, Sibford Ferris from 14th to 18th May.
Action: Cllr Smith to put the detail to be put on Facebook.
- Highways, Road closure on Shutford Road, Tadmarton from 15th to 19th May
Action: Cllr Smith to put the detail to be put on Facebook.
- Highways, Road closure on Banbury Road, Epwell from 15th to 18th May
Action: Cllr Smith to put the detail to be put on Facebook.

25/35. To note next meeting date and time

Monday 23rd June 2025 at 7.30pm. The Chair and Cllr Warrington both gave their apologies.

There being no other business the meeting finished at 8.40pm.