

SWALCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 5TH JANUARY 2026 AT 7.30PM IN SWALCLIFFE VILLAGE HALL

Councillors Present

Steve Gandy, Chair (SG)
Nicola Borkmann (NB)
Martin Collett (MC)
Ken Hodkinson (KH)
Ryan Smith (RS)
Stephen Warrington (SW)

Christine Coles - Parish Clerk

26/01. Apologies

Cllr Taylor (personal)

26/02. Declarations of Interests

The Chair and Cllr Collett both declared an interest as Trustees of the Village Charity.

26/03. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 24TH November 2025

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed.

26/04. Public Participation Session

No matters were raised.

26/05. Update on progress from the previous Minutes – The Chair/Parish Clerk will report on progress of outstanding items which do not require further decision

The village charity made a contribution of £250.00 towards the Christmas lights. The charity trustees also extended an offer of funding the Christmas tree in future years if that was felt to be helpful. The lights on the pub will need changing next year.

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on 11th May. A short Parish Council meeting will start at 6.45pm and the APM will start at 7.30pm.

26/11. To note the resignation of Cllr Smith

Ryan Smith has been on the Parish Council for eight years and been a valued Councillor. He was thanked for all his work during that time and he has been appreciated by all. His tasks included checking the defibrillator monthly, being a representative on the school committee, organising the spring clean, being on the Play Park Committee and updating the website/Link. These tasks will be reallocated.

Action: The Parish Clerk to notify CDC of the vacancy.

Action: Chair to consider reallocation of tasks to Councillors or local residents.

26/06. Village matters

- *To note the signing of the new garage leases and award of vacant garage.*

The new leases have all been signed and authority was delegated to Cllr Warrington. The vacant garage was awarded to Rikki Neil.

Action: The Parish Clerk to ask for rental and access payments.

26/07. To receive Councillor Reports

Overhanging vegetation along the Main Road was discussed. It was agreed the Parish Clerk write to Jesters and The Manor House to ask for their hedges to be cut back as best they can.

Action: The Parish Clerk to write to both households.

There has been no more Speedwatch activity due to the time of year and short daylight hours. A new rota will be drawn up and the kit will be available to use from the end of March. The battery has been recharged at the Tadmarton end and the Chair will gather the speed data from both signs for the Annual Parish Meeting in May. It was agreed to arrange another speed survey through OCC and position it further down the Main Road as there is a perception that cars speed down the hill.

Action: Cllr Hodkinson to arrange the survey with the OCC traffic team.

The Chair was able to gather more data from the speed signs for the period 23rd November to 5th January. East end – Average ingoing speed of 24.5mph and an outgoing speed of 28.52mph. The 85th centile figure was 28mph. West end - Average ingoing speed of 26.3mph and the 85th centile figure was 30mph. More information will be found to understand 85th centile figures in relation to average speeds.

Action: The Chair to get more information on 85th centile figures.

Cllr Borkmann gave an update on the grass cutting contract. She has been unable to get a third quote. Previous cuts were checked. Eight cuts were done in 2025 and ten cuts in 2024. No Mow May will continue into mid-June. It is a careful balance of tidiness, boosting biodiversity and delivering on OCC environmental expectations.. Both quotes are considerably higher than previous years prices. A decision on a new contractor will be made at the next meeting.

Cllr Collett gave an update on the village charity. A meeting will be held in the next two to three weeks and he will report back at the next PC meeting. The Charity sponsored the Christmas lights and have said they are happy to contribute on an ongoing basis.

The school have approached Cllr Smith and Cllr Collett about their students doing the Duke of Edinburgh award. Cllr Collett spoke to a staff member at the Christmas market.

Action: Cllr Collett to forward suitable ideas such as washing signs or litter picking.

The Councillor vacancy will be advertised soon. Councillor responsibility areas were confirmed. Cllr Warrington represents the PCC, Cllr Taylor is on the Village Hall, the Chair represents the PC on the Swalcliffe Society and The Chair and Cllr Collett both sit on the village charity. There is no PC representative for Swalcliffe Common but the Chair is a liaison person on an informal basis. Management of the checking of the defibrillator is to be allocated.

The minutes will be published on the website in the correct folder.

Action: The Parish Clerk to update the website.

25/08. Financial Report

To note up to date bank balances

Current a/c £14,958.59

Business a/c	£2,746.20
Betty Panks a/c	£395.95

Action: The Parish Clerk to contact Gay Harris on the PCC about the small amount left in the Betty Panks account which can be used to tidy her garden in the churchyard.

The following payments were approved under statutory powers:

£519.77 to Playdale Playgrounds (50% deposit)
£656.35 To Parish Clerk (hours) and £164.00 to HMRC (tax)
£39.60 to Parish Clerk (mileage)

To set the precept for 2026/27

A budget sheet had been circulated to show estimated income and expenditure. Costs will be incurred with the forthcoming election in May whether its contested or uncontested. It was agreed to increase the precept by 7.5% and set it £10,639.00. This equates to a net increase of £3.99 per household and a net percentage of 4.5%.

Action: The Parish Clerk to notify CDC.

To consider a donation request from Citizens Advice West Northants and Cherwell

Citizens Advice West Northants and Cherwell (CAWNAC) is an independent charity, one of 208 advice charities that comprise the national Citizens Advice network. In the last financial year they have supported local people with over 13,000 issues. It was agreed not to make a financial donation to them.

26/09. To receive an update on planning

Older

- 25/02751/TCA, T1- Acer -Reduce height and spread by up to 2 metres at the Loft, Forge House, 5 Old Forge Yard. No comments or objections by CDC
- 25/03008/TCA, T1 Walnut - overall crown reduction reducing the height and lateral branching by 2 metres. T2 Beech - crown lift to provide a 3 metre clearance above the roof line of outbuilding only, by removing/reducing secondary undulating branching only. T3 Cedar Deodar - remove to ground level. T4 Tulip - crown lift to provide a 4 metre ground clearance at Swalcliffe Cottage Main Road. No further comments or objections by CDC.

26/10. The following correspondence was circulated

- Highways, Road closure on Shutford Road 27th January to 29th January 2026. Noted.
- OCC, New booking system at Household Waste Recycling Centres. A new booking system is being introduced from 14th January. Residents can book 30 minutes before their time (subject to availability) or up to two weeks in advance and will need to show ID when they arrive. The detail is on the website.

26/12. To note next meeting date and time

16th February 2026 at 7.30pm (Cllr Hodkinson gave his apologies)

There being no other business the meeting finished at 9.00pm.