

SWANTON NOVERS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 23rd May 2018 at Swanton Novers Village Hall at 7.00pm.

Councillors present: *Cllr. Miss. F Jenkinson (Chair), Cllr. Mrs. C Armstrong (Vice Chair), Cllr. Mrs. V Hart, Cllr. Mr. R Hart, Cllr Mrs. R. Leeder*

Others present: – 3 Members of the public.

2018/018 **Apologies** received from, **County Councillor: Steffan Aquarone and Cllr. Rick Hadden.**

2018/019 **Resignation:** Cllr Frances Jenkinson informed the council that she has, with regret received a letter of resignation from Cllr. Richard Hart. On behalf of the Parish Council she thanked Richard for his hard work and many years of dedicated service

2018/020 **Election of the Officers of the Parish Council:**

The sitting councillors were asked if they were willing to stay in position for the forthcoming year. All confirmed that they were happy to do so.

The clerk asked if any councillor would like to stand for the offices of Chair and Vice Chair. Cllr Miss Frances Jenkinson (Chair) said that she was happy to stay in post for the forthcoming year. No councillors opposed, and she was duly elected. Cllr. Mrs Christine Armstrong said that she was willing to continue in the position of Vice Chair. No councillors opposed, and she was duly elected.

2018/021 **To receive Declarations of Interest:**

No declarations of interest were received.

2018/022 **Report from County Councillor: Steffan Aquarone. Presented in his absence by Cllr. Miss Frances Jenkinson.**

Report for the NCC (Astley Ward)

It has been an exciting year for Swanton Novers, with a number of key casework achievements as well as some countywide changes that are good news for the village. As ever, I am happy to take up issues on behalf of Swanton Novers residents who should feel free to contact me via the contact details at the end of this report.

Reversal of cuts to road gritting and bus services

The County Council reversed its planned cuts of £500,000 to bus subsidies and £400,000 to road gritting following pressure from the Lib Dem group. We created a petition that gained 6,000 signatures and lobbied both at County Hall and in the press to prevent the cuts from going ahead. I know that communities across Melton Constable division benefit enormously from public transport; many people I have met rely on the buses for access to work, family, healthcare, and social activities. Cutting subsidies to the service runs the risk of fueling a vicious cycle whereby passenger numbers decrease further (because of infrequent services and/or a decline in the quality of service), which in turn is used to justify further cuts in the future. To keep our public transport system alive we need to protect existing funding as well invest more - in the right places - so that the buses can be made as enjoyable and as accessible as possible, particularly for rural communities.

County Councillor allowances and my new community project seed fund

Before Christmas, whilst wielding an axe to public services, the County Council voted to increase Members' allowances. You couldn't make it up: politicians giving themselves a combined £142,000 a year extra, whilst planning on cutting more than twice that from each of the above services! Rather than refusing the increase (which means I would have no power to direct how it's spent) I instead decided to use the additional money I will be receiving, after

tax, to create a seed funding pot for community projects across the division. Anyone who lives or works in Melton Constable division can apply for funding, and I will consider all proposals. The total pot for this year came to just over £500. So far, the projects / initiatives I have funded include: mulled wine to encourage local people to come to a meeting at the Melton Constable Country Club to discuss its future, paint for a volunteer-led community project being organized by Thursford Parish Council to renovate the phone box (which these days houses the village defibrillator), and a contribution towards the cost of assessing options for reducing the speed limit along the B1110 to Briningham. You can keep up to date with projects I am funding on my website: steff.mycouncillor.org.uk. I invite Swanton Novers residents to get in touch with any ideas they have for projects that need seed funding and could benefit the local community!

The mobile phone project

My ongoing mission to help improve mobile phone signal in North Norfolk has taken an interesting step forward. The County Council has commissioned surveying of mobile signal on all networks across Norfolk but only on main/B roads and around tourist hot-spots. For us rural folk, of course, this is not especially helpful. However, I am pleased to say that the Council has agreed to pay whichever surveyor wins the contract an additional amount of money to supply do-it-yourself surveying kits to communities, to help fill in the gaps. Our volunteers for the phone project are poised to go, as soon as we receive information about the next steps from the Council. Once the surveying is done, we will be able to feed into the County Council's improvement plan - which is in fact very similar to the proposal I made when I first launched the project: to use publicly-owned buildings to add small cell transmitters, which will boost local signal. For any gaps that still remain (e.g. because of a lack of suitable publicly-owned building) we will explore a variety of options for alternative small-cell sites in each village.

Other updates from County Hall

Frustratingly, all the Lib Dem group amendments to the annual Council budget were voted down, despite being fully-costed, at the full council meeting in February. In particular, our amendments aimed to slow down cuts to Adult Day Care and the Building Resilient Lives housing support services. We had also hoped to prevent any cuts to Children's Services so that no Children's centers are forced to close this year. You can read more about the amendments at: bit.ly/2GabE50.

Despite the defeat, we were pleased that our campaign to reverse cuts to bus and road gritting subsidies had already been successful. Moreover, my personal motion on the Council's sexual harassment policy was passed unanimously. The motion stated: *this Council considers that that sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation are completely unacceptable and believes that they have no place in any workplace. Any Councillor or member of staff who feels they have been subjected to unwanted sexual advances should feel confident to raise their concerns without fear of intimidation or retaliation.*

The issue of mobile libraries has been kicked into the long grass: the cuts weren't planned until next financial year anyway, so I will continue to fight for this issue. It's particularly important, since the mobile library is one of very few services that people in rural areas actually receive from the County Council.

Resident surgeries

My next closest residents surgery to Swanton Novers will be in Briston on the 2nd July at 6pm in the Pavilion (small room). Swanton Novers residents are welcome to drop in to raise any issues or concerns affecting them or the local community.

Feel free to get in touch:

Steffan Aquarone, FREEPOST NORFOLK LIBDEMS (no stamp necessary) 01603 327827

steffan.aquarone.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk, @steffanaquarone (Twitter), or

<https://www.facebook.com/steffanaquaronemeltonconstable/>

18/023

Report from District Councillor: Pierre Butikofer.

The report from the District Councillor was received too late to be presented at the meeting. However, it is included, for information, at the end of these minutes.

2018/024

Public Forum:

Richard Hart raised the point that, should a mobile telephone booster aerial be required, that he felt sure that the village hall would be the most sensible site and that he didn't think that the VH Committee would have any objection in principle.

2018/025

Matters arising from previous meetings minutes:

The state of the overgrown hedges which obscure the road signs was raised by Cllr. Val Hart, also the state of damage to Little Wood Lane where some farm machinery has gouged the surface. The clerk said the general roadway situation had been notified to NCC but these additional points would also be reported.

It was noted that the PC meeting shown as Thursday 20th September was shown incorrectly and should have been Wednesday 19th September.

2018/026

To Sign as Correct the Minutes of the meeting held 23/05/2018:

The minutes had been previously circulated to councillors and were approved and signed.

2018/027

Correspondence Distributed:

Cllr Val Hart, referring to the information distributed from the Police regarding the withdrawal of PCSO's Said that she felt it a shame that we will not have a regular point of contact in the future and not every force has felt the need to do this and that as a rural community our support officer will be missed.

2018/028

Proposal to Increase the number of sitting Parish Councillors:

It was decided that due to the number of councillors absent from this meeting and that the motion's proposer Cllr. Rick Hadden being unwell, that this item be postponed and discussed at the July meeting.

2018/029

Planning Matters:

Number 8 The Croft have applied to erect a log cabin which can be used as accommodation (not residential). Cllr. Christine Armstrong reported that she has been in contact with one of the neighbours, who were unaware of the proposed development.

Following discussion, it was decided that Cllr. Miss Frances Jenkinson and the Clerk will visit the site and report back.

2018/030

Financial Report: The financial report had been distributed earlier to Councillors and presented by the clerk. No questions were raised and the accounts to date were passed.

2018/031

Any other Business:

No matters were raised.

There being no further business Cllr. Miss Frances Jenkinson closed the meeting at 20:14pm

Signed.......... Chairperson dated..........

Signed.......... Parish Clerk dated.....19/07/2018.....

Next meeting will be held on Thursday 19th July 2018 at 7:00pm in the Village Hall.

Report from District Councillor: Pierre Butikofer.

There will be a new head of planning. Nicola Baker is leaving - taking early retirement. Philip Rowson has accepted the position. He currently is leading the development management team at Waveney and Suffolk coastal district council

A nuisance neighbour was found guilty of breaching a noise abatement notice. NNDC successfully brought a prosecution against the neighbour. He was fined £750, costs of £3000 and compensation of £500. It was loud music with profane lyrics!!

Market town initiative - relating to four towns - Holt, Fakenham, North Walsham and Stalham - each will get ~~£100K~~ ^{£100,000}. Working groups have been setup and they will project manage it and monitor how the money will be distributed.

Community transport scheme mechanism has been launched. Grants are avail each to those who want to set one up

The lib dem group has set up a shadow cabinet to match that of the incumbent cabinet at council level.

Blue flags have been awarded. Ceremony was held on Cromer pier representing the U.K. Blue flag beaches. NNDC has the longest continuous stretch of blue flag beach in the country.

Antiques road show will be visiting Cromer tomorrow 24th may.

NNDC has banned the use of single use plastics. A policy has been put in place to help local businesses and to educate them about plastics.

Concessions - there was significant concerns regarding concession and their impact on local businesses. All the political parties got together to form a cross party working group. All the political leaders have worked together to modify the previous administration's proposals. This will now make it more beneficial and will also benefit all local businesses. The asset management plan has been approved and agreed

Hope this helps

Kindest regards

Pierre