

SWANTON NOVERS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 19th July 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 Mrs. R. Leeder, Cllr Mr R. Hadden & Cllr Mrs V. Brittain*

Others present: – 3 Members of the public. – *Mr Wilson, Mr Eaton and Mrs Harman.*

2018/032

Apologies.

None were received

2018/033

To receive Declarations of Interest:


No declarations of interest were received.

2018/034

Report from County Councillor: *Steffan Aquarone.*

July Report to Swanton Novers Parish Council

I am sad to report, to those that don't already know, the death of Norfolk County Council leader Cliff Jordan in May. Despite disagreeing with a great many of Cliff's views, I found him to be a highly committed and authentic person who was prepared to speak out for what he believed was in the interests of Norfolk. He was a true Norfolk character and will be missed by all of us.

As a result of Cliff's resignation just a fortnight before he passed away, Andrew Proctor - until then the leader of Broadland as well as county councillor for Blofield and Brundall - has been elected as leader. 

DIY waste charges are under increasing scrutiny as we unearth more county councils elsewhere in the country who have changed their minds having introduced the policy of charging at tips. We're putting additional pressure on the County Council in the run up to our next full council meeting and welcome any pictures of DIY waste fly tipping to add to our case.

The County Council appears to be trying to reduce the funding for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Transport. This seems like a low blow: children with special needs will no longer be collected from home and taken to school or college, and will instead have to congregate at bus stops or equivalent. Whilst there will certainly be circumstances where this is totally fine, there will be many young people and their carers for whom this is a cause of great distress. We are campaigning as a group to try and reverse this particularly pernicious cut.

The Better Broadband for Norfolk Programme (BBFN) has drastically improved broadband speeds across the county. However, by April 2020 (when the programme ends), it is estimated that 5% of properties in Norfolk will still be without access - several of them, I know, are in some of the outlying reaches of the division. This is due to gaps in the Openreach's current infrastructure, mostly caused by the financial burden of running fibre cables to very remote rural properties. However, there is now a plan for how to offer cost-effective solutions to linking up remote properties to super-fast coverage. For instance, some of these ISPs operate as community not-for-profit groups, creating their own small network infrastructure (rather than paying to use Openreach's) and offering connection packages at very low cost. The Committee report suggested that County Council investment in and collaboration with these 'alternative network providers' could a) help bring their speeds up to 'superfast' levels and b) help them to reach the aforementioned 5% of properties which are unlikely to benefit from the BBFN programme. The report makes a number of recommendations for action by the Council, including that the Council allow these alternative service providers to use Council-owned buildings for hosting booster masts (a similar solution to that which I have been exploring, in collaboration with the Council, to help improve mobile signal coverage in our area) and that the Council offer these providers information on internet-speed and usage in Norfolk which would help them to target the customers who would benefit most.

Initial meetings with a sample group of 8 alternative service providers took place in the last few weeks and the Council is now considering possible ways forward. I will update people as I hear more - but please do get in touch with me on steffan.aquarone.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk if you think you might be in the unlucky 5% (a blue dot on Better Broadband for Norfolk's website address search feature <https://www.betterbroadbandnorfolk.co.uk>).

2018/035

Report from District Councillor: *Pierre Butikofer*.

A debate was held at NNDC regarding the future of the two “Travellers” sites at Sheringham and Cromer. These sites were set up under a government scheme which is now coming to an end. The council decided that to continue funding of these sites. Cllr. F Jenkinson asked about the future of the Fakenham site. PB said that he was not aware that the site was in the NNDC area but would report back at the next meeting.

NNDC debated the increased level of “Fly Tipping” in the district. It was proposed that NNDC send a letter to NCC about the increase since the introduction of charges for certain categories of waste. The vote was tied with the chair of the committee having the casting vote. He decided not to proceed with the letter.

The NNDC Goats are doing a very good job of clearing the bracken from the hillside in Cromer. A company is getting involved with merchandising goat related products that will be available soon.

Gas-Gun nuisance – PB reported that he has been in contact with the Astley Estate, Melton Park and Dick Seaman who have all confirmed that they are not using gas-guns. However, Sam Seaman of Raw Hall farm has been using one close to Swanton Woods. Cllr. R Leeder stated that of late the nuisance has decreased however, it does still start at around 5:30am on some days. PB offered to contact Sam Seaman to report the problem.

2018/036

Public Forum:

Mr David Wilson said that he and his neighbour were concerned about the condition of some Ash trees (3 trunks) within the grounds of Swanton Cottage. These trees are clearly suffering from “Ash Die-back” disease and the weakened trees could fall and damage his property, in fact they already shed branches during high winds. It was also mentioned that if the trees did fall it would most likely damage the electricity and telephone lines to St Giles Road. The clerk said that he would contact NCC and inform them of the situation also, that he would try to establish if any of the trees had TPO’s. After a discussion it was agreed that this matter would be followed up at the next PC meeting.

Mr Gerrard Eaton asked who was responsible for the surface water drains in St Giles Road as he has been having a lot of problems with water ingress into his septic tanks from the surrounding land. He was informed that NCC Highways would be responsible for the drains in the highway but Astley Estate, as landowners were the contact for problems with water coming off the fields. Discussion followed on this where it was stated that maintenance of the watercourses and ditches has not been carried out by landowner for a considerable time. Mr Eaton went on to say that he had been in contact with the Astley Estate office and had been told that they no longer maintain the drains. In conclusion, the clerk would be contacting NCC highways to establish who is responsible for cleaning the roadway drains and establish when they were last cleared.

2018/037

Matters arising from previous meetings minutes:

Cllr. Mrs Val Hart, referring to the minutes of the APM and specifically to the Chairman’s Report queried that dog fouling would no longer be discussed. She said that the problem was ongoing and that it should be discussed if needed. A lively discussion followed, and it was agreed that no subject should be excluded from discussion, and that in future, if needed, the dog fouling problem would again be discussed at PC meetings.

Cllr. Mrs Val Hart, referring to the minutes of the last meeting and specifically to NNDC Cllr. P. Butikofer’s report. Queried the level of additional financial support to be given to 4 towns in North Norfolk at £400K per town. He responded that the figure quoted was incorrect and should have been £100K for each of the 4 towns. He apologised for the error.

Cllr. Mrs Chris Armstrong reported that she has emailed NCC Cllr. S Aquarone on the matter of the mobile telephone signal in the village and that she has received a response saying that the campaign is continuing and thanking her for her support.

Cllr Mr Rick Hadden raised the point that the draft minutes are not put on the website within the 4-week timeframe required. And that additionally a copy of the signed minutes was not always available on the website.

2018/038

Planning Matters:

Chair. Miss Frances Jenkinson reported on her visit with the clerk to No.8 The Croft to inspect the site of the proposed studio. She reported that upon seeing the building to be demolished to enable the replacement building to be built would be an enhancement and that she would recommend no objection. This was agreed in the discussion that followed and NNDC Cllr. PB said he would inform NNDC planning accordingly.

2018/039

Report from Chair. Cllr. Miss Frances Jenkinson

When one reads of all the horrors in the world today I realise how lucky we all are to live here, in what is, despite police reports, a very peaceful part of the world. I do know that last night the pea harvesters were in the fields, and that some people had a very disturbed night

Many of you are aware that some steers have escaped and are living wild in the woods. Every effort is being made by the estate to capture them, so far without success. I would like to make two points on this. 1/ It is in the interests of the estate to capture them as soon as possible for financial reasons, and more importantly for the safety of people living around here. Currently, they have become so wild that hedges, fences and gates do not stop them. The estate will be taking further measures to recapture them and contain them in a barricade made of the large "Heston" bales which should contain them. The public are being advised to stick to the public footpaths, bridle ways and so forth and permit-holders have been informed that they go into the woods at their own risk, and in all cases, it is important to keep dogs on leads as dogs can easily spook the cattle. The parish council is co-operating very closely with the estate and this morning I walked around with two estate employees suggesting where it would be most useful to put signs at entrances that are most used to go into the woods, where in the past a sign has not been needed and again placement of different notices for permit holders and footpath users. As soon as there is any more news we will be informed. 2/ In the meantime, I have suggested that notices informing users that the woodlands are private and that permits are required will hopefully, be put up at all access points in the future.

2018/040

Correspondence Received.

Correspondence received has been distributed to councillors and has included newsletters from NALC, training opportunities, information from the Police and Crime Commissioner and the latest crime statistics for the Fakenham area. This prompted a discussion on the local crime issue which was the theft of coping bricks from Melton Constable Estate wall, although technically this did not occur within the parish boundary. Councillors also mentioned that the police website was not very "user friendly" to navigate.

2018/041

Financial Report.

The clerk presented the accounts up to date together with payments awaiting approval for lawn mowing, hedge cutting, street lighting maintenance and village hall hire.

It was also reported that the internal auditor, Mr Martin Walsh was happy to pass the accounts for the period April 2017 – March 2018 as a true record. These accounts were countersigned by Cllr. Miss Frances Jenkinson and will be posted to the website in due course.

It should be noted that, to date, no requests have been received from parishioners to examine the accounting records during the Public Consultation Period. This period ends on Friday 3rd August 2018.

2018/042

Proposal to Increase the Number of Parish Councillors

This Item has been carried over from the previous meeting as Cllr. Rick Hadden (Proposer) was unfortunately unable to attend.

Cllr. Rick Hadden proposed that the council considered increasing the number of councillors to 9 from the current 6.

He raised the following points:

- 1/ Will increasing the number of councillors increase costs (No)
- 2/ Will increasing the number of councillors improve representation (Yes)
- 3/ Increasing numbers will reduce the requirement of councillors to attend every meeting to ensure a quorum is present. (Yes)

He went on to say that recently, a number of new residents have come into the village and that some of them may wish to stand for co-option to the Parish Council.

A vote was taken on the motion to increase the number of councillors to 9 – The result was 6 votes in favour 0 against.

Any other Business:

Dennisby House dog nuisance.

The Clerk has been contacted by Mrs Gill Harman regarding the matter of dogs barking during the night. The problem stems from the 11 dogs that are kept in a pen in the yard of the property. A robust discussion followed. In conclusion it was agreed that Cllr. Mrs Chris Armstrong together with the clerk will visit the property and bring the complaint to the owner's attention. The outcome will be reported at the next meeting.

Dennisby House Planning Application

The parish council have received from NNDC. A request for comment upon the plans for a rear extension and the replacement of a workshop to the right-hand side of the driveway with a studio bedroom and bathroom. Copies of plans have previously been circulated to councillors for comment. Cllr. Miss Frances Jenkinson questioned the use of wood cladding on the proposed extension as the building is listed and currently does not have this feature.

A vote was taken on approving the plans without comment and passed unanimously 6 votes to 0 The clerk will inform NNDC of the parish council's decision.

Notification of Meeting Dates

Mr David Wilson requested that future meeting dates be put on to the website as well as on the parish notice board. This was noted and will be rectified by the clerk.

There being no further business Cllr. Miss Frances Jenkinson closed the meeting at 20:50pm

Signed..... Chairman dated.....

Signed..... Parish Clerk dated.....

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