

SWANTON NOVERS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 19th September 2019 at 7:00pm

Councillors present: Cllr. Chris Armstrong, Cllr. Jenny Anderson, Cllr. Viv Brittain, Cllr Gerard Eaton, Cllr. Hazel Mindham & Cllr. David Harman.

Others present: - Rosemary Leeder, Val Hart & Sue Eaton

2019/037

Apologies.

Received from - County Councillor Steffan Aquarone and Parish Councillor Ross Keynejad.

2019/038

To receive reports from the County Councillor and District Councillor

Report from County Councillor Steffan Aquarone – presented by Chair Chris Armstrong

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Report from your County Councillor, Cllr Steffan Aquarone



More money for Councils?

During the Parliamentary pantomime last week you may have noticed Sajid Javid, the Chancellor, announcing that austerity is officially over!

This is of course good news – there is an extra £1.5bn for Social Care which, although this is a national figure, could mean an extra £18m for Norfolk based on previous allocations, plus the power to raise a further £8m if Norfolk County Council decides to increase council tax again using the extra powers they've been granted to do so.

There are other much needed real-terms increases in other departments too – but that's the main problem: in essence the increased income from this announcement will only be enough to clear historic overspends on Norfolk County Council - it won't end the pain of the cuts that are being made.

How should the Council's money be spent?

The Council will soon begin the process of getting its budget together for next year - and we in the Liberal Democrat group expect that our priorities will remain as: reversing the cuts to the Minimum Income Guarantee, restoring £1m to the budget for the Early Childhood and Families Service and putting money into public transport.

The chair of an important council committee was forced to resign recently after calling disability rights campaigners selfish. This is not an isolated opinion: Norfolk's ruling Conservatives regularly point out that 75% of the council's funds go on providing services to less than 5% of its population. It is my view that this is precisely the point of having public services: to support those in need. Healthcare (and even car insurance) operating models have not dissimilar patterns. If we all got back exactly what we put in in council tax, there'd be little point in having government, wouldn't there?

What do you think? How do you think the Council should balance its budget (which is had to do by law) whilst protecting the most vulnerable in our society? I'm keen to hear your views.

Parish Council Attendance until January

I'm happy to announce that my wife and I are expecting our second child later this year. As it stands, many of my 22 Parishes meet on the same day, so even being out every evening there is a meeting means I'm often unable to attend. However, until January I will be limiting my evening schedule further – but keeping myself just as available the rest of the time. If there are items of business that require my presence in person then I will, of course, prioritise my attendance.

Report from District Councillor Vincent Fitzpatrick.

This was NNDC Councillor Vincent Fitzpatrick's first attendance at a SNPC meeting.

He informed the PC about the various grants that can be applied for and went into great detail about the Big Society fund, Arts & Culture fund and Community Transport Fund. Cllr. Gerard Eaton asked if he could be of any help with the poor mobile telephone coverage in the village as a critical meeting was being held at NCC in the near future.

Cllr. Fitzpatrick promised to furnish the clerk with a copy of his presentation together with further information on the grant funds mentioned in his report.

2019/039

Public Forum:

The following matters were brought to the attention of the Council

No items were raised from members of the public present.

2019/040

Matters arising from previous meetings minutes:

No items were raised.

2019/041

To Sign the Minutes of the previous meeting as a true record:

No additions or alterations were raised and therefore the minutes were signed by the Chair of the Council and the clerk

2019/042

Correspondence Received:

The Clerk had previously distributed correspondence from The Police, NALC regarding training and other courses available – In addition the following email from Mr Ian Watson was received.

At the last SNPC meeting, 15 August 2019, you requested village investment ideas from councillors' present. As a local elector I would like to put forward three ideas. These may or may not be deemed suitable by the council, but I'd like them formally considered.

1. Introduce a monthly (at least) cinema night. This would require investment in screen and projection ability. My preference is to distinguish it by focusing on independent, classic and art productions, although, of course, it would need to cater for all tastes. I believe such an investment would be widely supported throughout the village, but it would attract wider interest. With a small charge this could be returned to cover costs and/ or contribute to charity or other village causes.

2. *I would commend the creation of a Swanton Novers Village Trail (The Swanton Novers Saunter). This would involve the positioning of a number of benches/ viewing points, with accompanying discrete and tasteful information boards. The precise route to be decided but it could start at the village hall (parking for visitors with installation of honesty box). I'd like to see it pass the old School Village Green (with bench and information point). Up the footpath (would be good to place a bench halfway up), to the church with options to return to the village via the edge of the reserve, or down the track and past the old pill-box (benches placed as appropriate) The discrete and tasteful information points could refer to history of Swanton Novers, particular location info, nature and wildlife notes, and biographies of the fallen from the village/ characters of the village. The benches could carry plates commemorating these fallen or indeed those that previously served the SNPC! This initiative would help showcase the village, attract others to visit, and promote the natural/ beautiful/ peaceful setting that the village is situated.*

3. *The Old School Registered Village Green. There are a number of options for this precious and protected open space. One could think about installing a picnic table and bench, turning it to part flower meadow, or even installing some form of village cross/ memorial (perhaps in partnership with the Briningham Benefice). Surrounded by glorious oaks and seclusion, this is an asset to the village which should be promoted as a quite/ natural/ serene place of reflection.*

For the consideration of the SNPC.

Ian

The suggestions from Mr Watson were discussed at length and would put on the agenda for further discussion at the next meeting.

Val Hart said that the village did at one time have a detailed village map that was kept in the old village hall and that this would be very useful in connection with the proposals received. The whereabouts of this map are unknown at present. If it can't be located, it was suggested by the clerk that maybe a map could be sourced from NNDC or the Astley Estate.

Parish Council Chair: Chris Armstrong asked for the PC's thanks to Ian Watson be recorded in the minutes.

2019/043

Street Lighting:

The lighting shields for properties affected by the intensity of light will be fitted during the week following this meeting.

The clerk went on to inform the meeting about the types of replacement lighting available that would be suitable in the village. A discussion followed and the clerk was asked to obtain further information and likely costs so that this can, if agreed, be factored into the precept requirement for the following year.

2019/044

Hi-Speed Broadband and Mobile Telephone Service Update

Cllr Gerard Eaton reported that a meeting is due to take place at NCC in October on the future of mobile telephone coverage in Norfolk. The aim is to establish the areas where coverage is either patchy or non-existent (Not-Spots) and how they can meet the present governments target coverage percentage. He went on to say that he has drafted a letter to Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick (Chair of this sub committee) setting out the problems experienced in the village and requesting to be able to attend to present our case. He will be forwarding a copy of this letter to our County Councillor, Steffan Aquarone. In response, Cllr. Chris Armstrong suggested that being mindful of the short time before the meeting that it would be prudent for Cllr Gerard Eaton to telephone or visit his contact at NCC and request a meeting in advance of the debate.

2019/045

Update on possible provision of Social Housing

The clerk reported that a Village Meeting on the Social Housing will be held the following week attended by NNDC Housing Enablers and a representative from Homes for Wells, who will be giving a presentation and answering questions.

At this point there is not anything to add but the outcome of the meeting and its proposals will be discussed at the next PC meeting.

2019/046

Financial Report.

The year to date accounts were presented together with accounts for payment. No questions or further information was requested by the Council.

2019/047

To Consider Planning Applications received.

A re-submission of the planning application for the conversion of the barn at the rear of Dennisby House had been previously circulated to councillors and their opinions collated and sent on to NNDC. This was not officially debated as the closing date for submissions in response to the application was prior to this meeting.

2019/048

Items for inclusion for discussion at the next meeting

No items, other than ones previously discussed for inclusion were put forward.

There being no further business, Chair Cllr. Chris Armstrong closed the meeting at 20:43pm

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

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

Next meeting will be held on Thursday 28th November 2019 at 7:00 pm in the Village Hall.

