

SWANTON NOVERS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 28th November 2019 at 7:00pm

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

Others present: - Rosemary Leeder & Rick Hadden

2019/049

Apologies.

Received from -County Councillor Steffan Aquarone.

2019/050

To receive reports from the County Councillor and District Councillor

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

Report from your County Councillor, Cllr Steffan Aquarone

County Council's Response to the Climate Emergency - promising progress

Full Council met on Monday 25th November, and the new environmental policy was voted through. This puts Norfolk at the forefront of County Councils by committing it to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 but also working with other partners to make Norfolk as a whole carbon neutral by 2030.

Here's the speech I gave in support of the policy, which I was involved in shaping through my participation in the Task and Finish group:

I welcome the striking presence this morning of The Red Brigade, Extinction Rebellion, school strikers and many other people, who have been bearing witness so powerfully with their silence to the burden of responsibility facing this council. We are surely the natural unit of leadership and accountability in Norfolk in tackling the climate emergency for us and for future generations. I believe that some people in our county - from across a range of partners - have waited their entire careers for the opportunity to work under the direction of a policy like this.

Others - like me - have seen the light more recently. In particular those of us who have a stake in what happens in the next fifty years, but are old and ugly enough to know that no one is going to come in and do it for us.

My question is: will Norfolk County Council really take the lead, as the committee report that recommended this policy set out - or will it look after its own and let others do the same. This would be a license for inaction and a prescription for inertia.

The statement "ensure that each project the Council undertakes is assessed for the contribution it will make towards meeting our environmental targets" - does this actually mean that in future, on balance, some projects will be deemed unviable under this revised focus on reducing Norfolk's carbon footprint to net zero by 2030?

If so, then I believe we are sufficiently prepared for the change that's needed in our county as well as our council.

I can hear myself asking these questions for some time to come as the real level of political will behind this policy is borne out.

But for the meantime, with these reservations, I welcome the arrival of this policy. It has been a privilege to have had the opportunity to serve on the task and finish committee, and I wish to thank the officers for the depth and detail of their work.

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Report from your County Councillor, Cllr Steffan Aquarone

WASPE women

Many of you will know that tens of thousands of women across Norfolk have been affected by changes to the state pension age. I support these women in their quest for fairness, which I think they have been denied. Although no one is arguing about the need for parity in state

pension age, the way a particular group of women born in the early 1950s have been treated seems very unfair - sudden ratcheting, with very little warning, meaning many face hardships of an unexpected need to work for up to six years longer before they can retire.

Council leader Andrew Proctor had previously been sympathetic and indicated that the County Council would try to help by providing free bus passes. But he has since reneged, citing lack of funding from Central Government. A debate held in Monday's meeting was cut short cynically and deliberately by two conservative members - many members of the public who had waited for hours to hear the debate were party to only ten minutes of discussion. The attitude of some members was an embarrassment. Many of those members of the public who attended were from across the political spectrum and were in tears afterwards because they felt let down and derided.

I remain supportive of the cause and welcome any feedback on other measures that could be taken at a local level to support the women affected.

Reminder about Parish Council Attendance until January

My wife and I are expecting our second child next month so 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 on the Parish Council agenda that require my presence in person then I will, of course, prioritise my attendance.

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Report presented by District Councillor Vincent Fitzpatrick.

Councillor Vincent FitzPatrick November 2019 Newsletter

This is my personal newsletter and is not an official statement from NNDC

North Norfolk Big Society Fund

Remember that grant awards of up to £15,000 are available for community projects. Since the Big Society Fund started in 2012, NNDC has awarded over £1.9m to 261 community projects.

If you have any ideas for community projects that would benefit from funding, please get in touch with the officers who will assist with your application Full information including contact details are given in the Fund's Page – <http://bit.ly/fitzpatrick-BSF> - on the District Council's website.

To give an idea the range of initiatives supported, some recent awards include:

Trimingham Village Hall Trust (£4,000) – for the purchase of a Nest Swing.

Fakenham Community Campus Trust (£10,000) – towards the purchase of kitchen equipment and appliances.

Walsingham Parish Amenity (£500) – contribution to one year's publishing costs of the News & Views bi-monthly free magazine.

All Saints Community Rooms (Mundesley) (£1,000) – for an Asbestos Survey prior to replacing the heating system.

The Preston Rooms (Ashmanhaugh) (£1,052) – the purchase of an external fire door in the kitchen.

West Norwich Credit Union (£2,828) – towards the purchase of equipment to set up 3 mobile online banking points in North Norfolk.

Hanworth Memorial Hall (£10,000) – towards the replacement/repair of existing hard wood windows and outside doors

The Big Society Fund Grant Panel meets four times per year. The Panel will meet on 2 December 2019 to consider current applications. Applications to go to the 2 March 2020 Big Society Fund Grant Panel need to be submitted by Monday 3 February 2020.

I have had a brief discussion with a Swanton Novers resident about the fund and I confirmed the purchase and installation of a new projector in the village hall is the type of project that the fund aims to support. I look forward to hearing that the application has been submitted.

Mobile Phone Coverage in Swanton Novers

Following the previous meeting of SNPC, I met with SNPC's Chris Armstrong and Gerrard Eaton. We had a wide-ranging discussion about the issues with the very poor state of mobile phone coverage in Swanton Novers and potential solutions including the use of "small cell" technology. I drew attention to NCC's independent survey of mobile phone coverage (<http://bit.ly/cllr-vfitzpatrick-coverage>) and the NCC's interactive mobile coverage maps (<http://bit.ly/cllr-vfitzpatrick-interactive-map>)

Following the meeting, I raised the issue of Swanton Novers being a "not spot" with NCC's Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance. A remedy to the plight of Swanton Novers has been initiated.

2019/051

Public Forum

Rick Hadden raised the matter of the intensity of the streetlights at the end of St Giles Road (To be discussed under Agenda item 10)

2019/052

Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held 19/09/2019

No items were raised.

2019/053

To sign the Minutes of the meeting held 19/09/2019 as a true representation.

No amendments or changes were received or required, and the Minutes were signed by the Chair and Clerk.

2019/054

Matters arising from correspondence received.

Cllr. Gerard Eaton, referring to the recent newsletter received from NALC asked if the PC website will meet the new accessibility regulations. The Clerk confirmed that all NALC administered websites will be compliant by the end of 2019.

The tree planting initiative proposed by NNDC NCC was discussed and not thought possible within the parish as the parish council own very little suitable land. Cllr. Ross Keynejad said that the local estates and landowners would be already involved and aware.

2019/055

To discuss the suggestions listed below for the Village as proposed by Mr Ian Watson.

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.

This was discussed and not thought to be a viable activity due to the cost of putting the films on (hire of film and cost of hire or purchase of suitable equipment) Cllr. Gerard Eaton thought that each performance would need a minimum of 30 people to cover just the film hire cost. He went on to say that it would certainly be great to have this facility but that it would need to be considered further once possible grants and villagers support have been evaluated.

2. I would commend the creation of a Swanton Novers Village Trail (The Swanton Novers Saunter). This would involve the positioning of several 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.

This was discussed and although it was thought that it was a nice idea, but would it benefit the village, or would it attract more non residents to the village. The matter of “who would produce the trail and wildlife notes and maintain the benches, notice boards was considered and the question “would it get used” was also asked. This proposal will need further evaluation before any decision is taken.

3. The Old School Registered Village Green. There are several 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.

This was discussed and uses for the land considered, from siting of benches, opening up the green by removal of or reducing the height of the hedge bordering St Giles Road, to make the green more accessible and safer with the additional advantage of saving the cost of the annual hedge cutting . It was also proposed that it be used as overflow car parking for the Village Hall, as it had been in the past.

Cllr Jenny Anderson suggested that a simpler trail was mapped out without the notice boards and benches and that the “Nature Notes” could be posted on the website.

Chair Chris Armstrong said that in conclusion, we should minute our thanks to Ian Watson for his proposals and thoughts and invite him to the next meeting to discuss his proposals further.

2019/056

Street Lighting

The Clerk reported that the requested light shields had been fitted to the streetlights adjacent to the Vicarage and near Waterlog Spa in St Giles road. Rick Hadden said that although some benefit had been obtained from fitting the shield, it was not entirely satisfactory and did not cut out all the light that he had hoped.

The Parish Council have been tasked by Central Government to review and reduce their carbon footprint. This is being encouraged throughout the country to assist with reducing the UK’s overall carbon emissions and assist the UK meeting its reduction target.

The only assistance with this reduction that can be implemented by the parish council is by reducing the amount of electricity used in providing the village street lighting. This can easily be achieved by replacing the existing streetlights with low energy programmable LED lighting units. These fittings consume around 15% of the power of the existing units to produce the same level of light. In addition, they can be programmed to come on at dusk, go off at a pre-determined time, say midnight and then back on at around 6 am and then off at dawn. The very approximate cost of the upgrade will be in the region of £3300 this would equate to just under 5 years electricity cost savings at current prices.

Chair. Chris Armstrong commented that replacement with LED lights could have several benefits for the village and that the possibility of changing the lights over should be investigated further. The next stage will be to get several quotations and timescale for the upgrade.

2019/057**Mobile Telephone Coverage - Update**

Nothing further to report currently. Please refer to District Councillors report.

2019/058**Social Housing**

Chair Chris Armstrong reported that the village meeting held generated a mainly positive response to the provision of some social housing on the old allotment site.

A meeting of the people who signed up as interested in the project will be held at 6pm on December 5th in the village hall. A report from this meeting will be given at the next meeting.

2019/059**To Consider Planning Applications.**

Dennisby House.

A revised application has been submitted to enable the buildings on the right-hand side of the entrance to be demolished. Last year planning permission had been granted to re-develop this site into a studio apartment and store. This application withdraws the previous granted application.

Earlier this year an application to convert the barn at the rear of the plot was submitted. This had been previously discussed by the PC and no objection raised. However, this application was rejected by NNDC.

It is surmised that the application being considered is to enable the Dennisby House plot to be split into two parts enabling a separate access to the barn at the rear of the site. This scenario was discussed at length however in conclusion a vote was taken and passed that the Parish Council had no objection to the application but would make a recommendation that as a condition of granting permission that a suitable fence or wall be provided to maintain the privacy of the adjoining property.

2019/060**Financial Report.**

The clerk presented the financial report. The only item needing comment was the bill from NNDC for the costs of staging the Parish Council Elections back in May. This was for £375.85.

No questions were asked, and the report was passed.

Charitable Donations

Chair Chris Armstrong invited suggestions for recipients of this year's donations. After discussion it was decided by the PC to make the following grants.

East Anglian Air Ambulance £100. Holt Communities First Response £100. Norfolk (Cromer) Food Bank £100. Norfolk Citizens Advice Bureau £100.

2019/061**To Set the 2020 / 2021 Precept and Budget**

The Budget was presented and discussed (attached at the end of the minutes) and passed.

The precept requirement was debated at length and in conclusion it was decided to increase the precept by 2% to £8325 This was proposed by Chair Chris Armstrong. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

2019/62

Items from Councillors and Registered Electors to be considered for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting.

Cllr. Gerard Eaton said that he has been contacted by a parishioner about the state of the roadways and ditches in and around the village.

This prompted a lively discussion around responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the drainage and state of the roads. In conclusion it was decided to contact NCC and inform the Highways Department of the problems additionally, it was suggested that the Astley Estate be invited to attend a meeting when problems relating to tracks on Estate Land could be discussed.

Chair Chris Armstrong said that she had been contacted by the owner of Rusty Ridge in The Street about the problem of branches falling from trees on to the roadway. The Clerk was asked to mention this to the Astley Estate.

Mr Rick Hadden asked if the council were aware of the state of the Barney Lane and that the surface had been damaged badly by tractors and other Estate vehicles driving down the lane. In the past there was a verbal agreement between the Estate and the Parish Council that the Estate would cease to use the lane as they could access the fields from the Barney End. It was agreed that the Parish Council would investigate the matter and report back at the next meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting at 21:20

Jeff Smallbones Clerk
23/12/2019

Next meeting will be held on Thursday January 16th, 2020 7:30pm Village Hall