

# SWANTON NOVERS PARISH COUNCIL

**Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 24th September 2020 at 7:00pm by Zoom**

**Councillors Present:** Cllr. Chris Armstrong, Cllr. Gerard Eaton, Cllr. Hazel Mindham, Cllr. David Harman, Cllr. Steffan Aquarone

**Others Present:** Val Hart, Jeff Smallbones, May & Jeff Gold

## **2020/022**

To Consider Apologies for Absence

Cllr. Ross Keynejad,

Received From

Cllr. Viv Brittain

Cllr Jenny Anderson (Unable to connect via Zoom)

NNDC Cllr. Vincent Fitzpatrick (Unable to connect via Zoom)

## **2020/023**

To receive Declarations of Interest.

None received.

## **2020/24**

Cllr. Chris Armstrong welcomed everyone to the Zoom meeting.

## **2020/25**

To receive County Councillors Report.

## **Report from your County Councillor, Cllr Steffan Aquarone**

### **Devolution**

At the time of writing, rumours are circulating that the Government is planning on having another stab at unitary authorities - getting rid of District and County Councils and rolling their functions together into so-called Unitary Authorities (some of which already exist in other rural areas like Cornwall).

As a Liberal Democrat I have several concerns about these plans in practice, as well as some in principle. My main concern is to ensure that the people of Norfolk are well represented locally, and can access services wherever they live. There are some common sense benefits of unitaries, but the most concerning aspect is the extent to which they pave the way for elected mayors - in this case one for the whole of the East of England, and together take power away from local hands and towards Whitehall.

Any such change in Norfolk could have a profound impact on Parish Councils too.

Currently all the discussion is based on speculation - there are no firm plans, no authoritative maps of how Norfolk would be split up, and not (yet) any white paper going through Parliament. This could all change before Christmas but we have been in this position before.

I welcome your views on this.

### **Latest coronavirus information**

The latest information on the **government response** can be found [here](#) .

On July 24th it became mandatory to wear a mask in all shops, including takeaways and coffee shops, on public transport and relevant hubs such as train stations, in banks, building societies and post offices. [This link](#) provides information on the correct procedures for wearing a face covering, and who is exempt.

Norfolk's director of public health was also provided with the power to recommend governments to close premises, shut public outdoor spaces and cancel events locally if appropriate.

In addition the Local Government Secretary has confirmed how the [£500 million of additional support](#) to help with coronavirus-related spending pressures will be allocated to individual councils.

The extra £500 million has been allocated to councils based on population and levels of deprivation, and how the costs of delivery of services varies across the country. And Norfolk County Council has been awarded £1.015m from central government to support people in our county experiencing food hardship. Half the fund will be deployed through the Local Assistance Scheme, which can take referrals from NCC's front door, social care, district councils or a number of partners. NCC is in discussions with partners as to how the remaining funds can best support ongoing community efforts.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

### **Regular updates**

I am sending regular updates to my local mailing list - to join, visit this link:

<http://bit.ly/meltonconstable> Email: [steffan.aquarone.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:steffan.aquarone.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk) Tel: 01603 327827

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## **Report From Councillor Fitzpatrick**

**Devolution White Paper** – A White Paper on Devolution from central government to local authorities in England is expected to be published sometime this month (September). There is an expectation among some people that this could also lead to a degree of local government reorganisation. It is not known so far what impact, if any, the recent resignation of the Minister responsible at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government might have on the timetable.

**Local Plan** – Work is continuing with the Local Plan for the district which every Council has to have in place and will eventually supersede the current Local Plan which has now been in place for around ten years. Before being formally adopted the Local Plan will go out to public consultation and then be examined by the Independent Planning Inspectorate, giving an opportunity for residents to have their say.

**Planning White Papers** – As a Local Planning Authority, the District Council is considering and examining the potential impacts of the proposals in the recently released Planning White Papers which have a range of proposals ranging from making it easier to extend buildings upwards, build extensions and possibly introducing a presumption in favour of granting permission more easily.

**Electoral Roll**– The canvass for the Electoral Roll is now underway and has changed this year to make it simpler and also ensure that more people are included on the Electoral Roll. Being included on the Roll is important for a variety of reasons. The first is to ensure that everyone who is entitled to vote in any election, whether local or national, is given the opportunity to exercise their democratic right to help choose their representatives. Where people do not appear on the Electoral Roll their ability to open accounts and establish proper credit ratings can be adversely affected, possibly increasing the chances of social exclusion.

**North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund** – The Big Society Fund has been retired. Its replacement – the North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund – has been launched. The aim of the new North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund is to help build strong and sustainable communities and ensure the long-term future and wellbeing of our communities here in North Norfolk. Parish Clerks have been sent the Prospectus which provides details on what to consider when developing projects and the activities or initiatives it is likely to support. The Fund is provided by North Norfolk District Council and is available to support community projects throughout the District. The total funding available yearly will be £225,000 with the Grants Panel, a politically balanced group made up of 7 elected members, meeting four times a year to award grants of between £1,000 and £15,000. The Fund has also established a process for grants of under £1,000 where a monthly decision panel will meet, enabling these smaller grants to be turned around much more quickly and will have a simpler application form, but the criteria will remain the same. Councillor Vincent FitzPatrick, Stibbard Ward <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk>

### **2020/026**

#### **Public Forum**

The matter of the Astley Estate Sawmill was raised and the Notice of Decision from the Planning Department for North Norfolk District Council was mentioned as having several concerns by a member of the public.

1. No secure gate has been erected. Chris Armstrong believed this was a suggestion not an enforcement.
2. Copy of the Fire Risk Assessment has yet to be seen.
4. Who is going to monitor the use of the Sawmill and ensure the Astley Estate abides by the Decision Notice.

A discussion then ensued and it was agreed to discuss further later in the meeting during Section 11-Planning.

A member of the public raised the matter of the Glamping Site. She had been in contact with Steve White at Highways but felt there was still no satisfactory answer regarding the restricted byway question, 'can a restricted byway be used to access a camping site?' It was agreed to discuss this further under section 10 of the Agenda.

The subject of dog mess not being picked up was also mentioned and noted that there was particular trouble at the moment in Church Lane.

#### **2020/027**

Matters Arising from the minutes of the meeting held on the 6th August 2020

The Agenda had incorrectly stated that the meeting held on the 6th August was a Zoom meeting. In fact it was a Live meeting.

Chris Armstrong noted that all matters arising from the minutes are indeed on the current Agenda. Hazel Mindham agreed with this.

#### **2020/028**

To sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 6th August 2020

No amendments or changes were received or required, and the Minutes were signed by the Chair. Clerk unable to sign due to it being a Zoom meeting.

#### **2020/029**

Matters Arising from Correspondence received and distributed.

No points raised.

#### **2020/030**

Social Housing - Update

Cllr. Hazel Mindham updated the Councillors on the last committee meeting for the Social Housing project. It was a productive meeting with guest John Seymour from the Blakeney Housing Association attending. The Blakeney Housing Association purchase and maintain their properties, which is different to the proposal being put forward in Swanton Novers. He was extremely positive about Broadland Housing, confirming they were, helpful, friendly and approachable. The Allocation Policy is currently in discussion, with the link between Swanton Novers and NNDC being used to ensure people on the housing list would be able to view our properties and to make sure people in the village, or previously from the village, are in a position to benefit first. Discussion followed this update. Cllr Hazel Mindham confirmed further discussion of this policy will take place at the next meeting of the committee which is being held next Tuesday.

#### **2020/031**

Discussion of Temporary Campsite off Plantation Lane

Cllr Chris Armstrong also confirmed that further to her email to the councillors, she had been in touch with Lord Hastings and he had declared that Swallowtails had abused the terms of their agreement and would not be returning next year.

Cllr Hazel Mindham requested that the Chair write to Lord Hastings to confirm they will not be returning next year. Cllr Chris Armstrong agreed.

#### **2020/032**

To Consider Planning Applications Received

The concerns about the Sawmill as previously discussed in section 5 were brought up again now for further discussion. It was noted that 1 delivery has already taken place. This leaves 4 more allowed this year. Cllr Chris Armstrong said the Parish Council need to confirm what constitutes a working day, in regards to this situation. She also asked if Covid-19 could potentially slow down the ability of having a Fire Risk Assessment put in place. Cllr Chris Armstrong brought back the concern of monitoring the use. Cllr Hazel Mindham suggested CCTV. Cllr Chris Armstrong asked Cllr Gerard Eaton's opinion. He believed the Village would be unable to monitor the use accurately. Suggested a notice in the Village Newsletter, outlining the planning notice and asking villagers to see how it affects them and how often. Cllr Chris Armstrong agreed with the Newsletter suggestion and believed it would also show the Sawmill that the

villagers are aware of the Planning Decision and its limitations. Cllr David Harman asked about the Insurance on the Sawmill and the public Liability. No one had this information. Further discussion about the Fire Risk Assessment ended with Cllr Chris Armstrong noting that all concerns will need to be addressed.

### **2020/033**

#### **Delegating Responsibilities**

Cllr Chris Armstrong and Cllr. Gerard Eaton discussed delegating the councils work more evenly around the councillors. Cllr Gerard Eaton had suggested that the councillors aren't always used to their full capacity and it might be sensible to have different councillors responsible for different areas. This would help the workload of the Chair and allow the councillors to develop their knowledge. Cllr Gerard Eaton said it had been discussed in the past and he would like to discuss it further, and would like the views of all the Councillors in regards to this. He would like to improve his contribution to the Council and is happy to attend courses to learn more about the different areas of responsibility and suggested a rotational basis so each member of the council has a chance to learn all the different skills over time. Cllr David Harman doesn't disagree with this suggestion. Cllr Hazel Mindham agrees. Cllr Chris Armstrong suggests the councillors all think about what area they may be interested in taking on and email either herself or the Clerk with their ideas.

### **2020/034**

#### **Local Plan**

Cllr Gerard Eaton would like the Council to investigate the idea of a Local Plan. He believes it's important in order to safeguard the community in the village. He said there has been a lot of changes in the last four years since he arrived. How can we protect the next, 5, 10 and even 20 years. We needed to encourage people to come into the village to live permanently, rather than second homes and holiday cottages. How can we encourage that? To help the village grow and thrive we may need to look at what will bring professional, working people back into the village. He raised concerns about the White Paper Planning papers that are threatening to remove planning responsibility away from local councils, and how this may affect Swanton Novers in the future. He commented that he would like to have been able to discuss it with all the Councillors.. Cllr Hazel Mindham has the contact details of the Chair of Wood Norton (Jenny Merchant), who have a plan in place and will forward this to the Clerk for us to contact them. Cllr Chris Armstrong has seen a Zoom course held by NALC on the 8th October on Neighbourhood Planning. Clerk to find and distribute the details of the course to the Councillors.

### **2020/035**

#### **Village Newsletter**

The Parish Council have now taken over publication of the Village Newsletter and from now on will take more editorial control as it is a reflection on the Council. Cllr Chris Armstrong said unfortunately due to the nature of the article , the last instalment of the story written by a member of the public could not be run. In future we must be very careful about the content and ensure there is no racism, politics or homophobia alluded to in the newsletter. Cllr Chris Armstrong encourages anyone who may have contributions or ideas to come forward.

### **2020/036**

#### **Financial Report**

The financial report was submitted to the councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Gerard Eaton asked when the Council would see a reduction in the electricity bill due to the new streetlights. Jeff Smallbones answered this as the outgoing Clerk. There is currently a refund due on our electricity account, and once the new bill arrives in October it will show a greatly reduced rate. Then there was a discussion on how the lights were metered. Cllr Chris Armstrong explained about the purchase of the new laptop for the new Clerk as discussed in previous meeting and reminded councillors that going forward, there will be more expenditure each month due to Clerks wage and expenses. Clerk requested to attend a Clerks Introduction course on Zoom, held by NALC. She will forward the details to the councillors.

### **2020/037**

Items from Councillors and registered electors to be considered for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting.

Update of Sawmill, Social Housing, feedback of campsite, delegating responsibilities, local plan, newsletter and draft budget.

Emma Russell Parish Clerk  
25/09/2020

There being no further business, Chair Cllr. Chris Armstrong closed the meeting at 20:54pm

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

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

Next meeting will be held on the 12th November 2020. Location to be confirmed.