

## **Swanton Novers Parish Council**

### **Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 7.00pm**

Councillors Present: Cllr. Chris Armstrong, Cllr. Jeff Smallbones Cllr. Jenny Anderson, Cllr. Gerard Eaton, Cllr. Shaun Doncaster,

#### **2021/169**

Apologies for absence – Cllr. Hazel Mindham, Cllr. David Harman and Norfolk County Cllr. Aquarone.

#### **2021/170**

To receive declarations of interest – None.

#### **2021/171**

Public Forum-

- Street Lighting. It was commented by a member of the public that it does not seem that the street lighting is sufficient to light the streets and it was not worth the investment.
- It was commented by the Parish Council that the lights have reduced costs and that the lights are purposely angled downwards to allow as much light as possible to light the streets without increasing the amount of light pollution.
- Flooding adjacent to The Old Rectory/ Church Lane. The Council have recently cleared the road gullies along Church Lane to remove the waste and debris which should improve the passage of the water overflow that had occurred recently with the storms. It was felt that under normal circumstances the clearing of the runoffs would be sufficient to cope with the expected amounts of water during a normal rainstorm but would need to be monitored if excessive laying water occurs again.
- The Old Rectory. Water flow opposite the entrance to The Old Rectory has continued to be a problem as the water will always run backwards down the road due to the angle of the roadway. Under normal circumstances the drainage is equipped to cope with normal rainfall, but the recent high volume has meant that there has been an increase of laying water adjacent to the entrance of The Old Rectory.
- Precept 2022/23. Members of the public commented on the amount that the Council Tax has increased for the coming year 2022/23. On the new Council Tax bill received by residents of the parish the increase for Swanton Novers Parish Council states an increase of 7.6% even though the percentage increase for the Precept for the following year was agreed at 5%.
- Cllr. J Smallbones commented that he had tried to find out the reason why there had been a percentage increase in the amount required by the Parish

Council on the Council Tax bill. The explanation given by NNDC was that due to a decrease in properties within the village that qualify to pay the Council Tax an increase was required by the remaining households. The reason for reduced households within the parish was due to property change of use from residential to business i.e., Airbnb. This would then mean the owner would pay business rates instead of Council Tax.

- Member of the public Sarah Mann apologised to Cllr. Smallbones regarding her unannounced visit to Cllr. Smallbones dwelling and comments made to him regarding the driveway at No4. The Close. Miss Mann commented that she endeavours to make progress to the alteration of the driveway and carry out the required repairs as set out in the planning permission for the driveway.

### **2021/172**

Reports from District Councillor – District Cllr. FitzPatrick presented his report

- District Councillor FitzPatrick spoke of the impending increase in charges in the districts Car Parks these increases are not uniform, and rises will depend on the location.
- New Toilet Blocks for Fakenham and Wells. The demolition of the existing block in Stearman’s Yard Car Park began in March and plans to begin a similar scheme in Fakenham at the Queens Road Car Park from 21<sup>st</sup> March marks the first step in a project representing a £568,000 investment by the local Council to bring new toilets to Fakenham and Wells.
- Long Term empty homes in Norfolk are less than 1% but still equate to 500 houses approximately, these homes can if not occupied for 2 years or more can be charged a premium extra amount on top of the normal Council Tax. This is to encourage the owners to keep these properties habitable. You can be charged up to 4 times the normal Council Tax bill if the property if your home has been unoccupied for 10 years or more.
- District Councillor Aquarone did not attend, and his report is attached to the minutes.

### **2021/173**

Matters arising from minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

- a. All matters are agenda items.

### **2021/174**

- To sign as correct - The minutes from the meeting Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were signed as correct.

## **2021/175**

Matters arising from correspondence.

- A letter was received from the Salvation Army Charity thanking the Swanton Novers Parish Council for their kind donation to Briston Food Bank and thanked the Parish for their kindness and how the donation would help people that are vulnerable in the community.
- A letter received from a local resident regarding the continued issue of 'Dog Poo' along The Street and the associated verges of the properties is becoming increasingly frustrating. The resident is aware that this topic has previously been an agenda item at a Parish Council meeting and wanted to know of any progress regarding the issue.
- The issue was discussed amongst the Parish Councillors and whether to purchase a bin to maybe help with the disposal of the animal excrement would improve the issue. Councillors discussed whether a local Dog Warden was available to visit the village to highlight to dog walkers that action was being taken to reduce to ongoing problem.
- A vote was taken by the Parish Council relating to the purchase of a Dog Bin as the issue was seen as a continued problem, and that it had been an agenda item on numerous Parish Council meetings. A vote of 4 in favour of a bin (Councillors Anderson, Doncaster, Eaton and Smallbones) and 1 against (Councillor Armstrong) was registered. The position of the Dog Bin was discussed and the position of this is still to be decided and could be included in the next Village Newsletter for suggestions from residents.
- All other correspondence has been passed on to Councillors.

## **2021/176**

### **Social Housing update.**

CLlr Mindham was absent to report the latest developments but sent her update.

- The Swanton Novers Community Land Trust secretary Ian Watson confirmed that an application has been submitted to the North Norfolk District Council's community housing fund for the small development on the old allotment site in the village.
- If successful, then a formal planning application may be submitted.
- A pre-planning consultation event will be held at Swanton Novers Village Hall on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April commencing at 7.30pm.
- Members of the public are encouraged to attend the meeting which will last about one hour during which the final proposal and design for the seven homes will be presented.

## 2021/177

### Planning.

- Breach of Planning permission at 4 The Close – Progress at the property has been seen and a hardcore base has been laid and the vehicle that was parked on the incomplete driveway has now been moved.
- The resident to spoke to Kevin Peacock at NNDC who has been dealing with the issue at No4 The Close, the Parish Council were told that they are awaiting a visit from the Highways Department to complete the road edging to the property.
- Dennisby House, The Street, Swanton Novers. This is just an alteration to an already approved application AP/21/0039 and AP/21/0041. Details are available to see on Norfolk Planning website to view.

## 2021/178

### Working groups.

- **Communications** – Cllr. Mindham was not present at meeting due to illness but sent her report. The Village Newsletter production to reduce costs is looking to encourage local businesses to pay to advertise in the newsletter to help promote local tradesmen and reduce costs to produce the Newsletter.
- **Neighbourhood Plan** - No further information available currently. An update will be planned in the new council year.
- **Governance structure – Policies**, Policies are currently being reviewed by the Parish Council for ratification, three policies are currently under review and are work in progress.

## 2021/179

### Financial report.

- Parish Clerk presented the finances.
- To have the address changed for correspondence for the Parish Council to the Village Hall which would result in an easier process and accessibility to all future mail has been completed and will be altered from April.
- A mobile phone for the parish clerk for public contact has now been purchased and the telephone number will be published on the May Village Newsletter. The Parish Clerk telephone number will be 07887980552
- The cash book is showing numerous unrepresented cheques currently due to cheques being issued but have currently not been banked by the payee.

## **2021/180**

### **H.M. The Queen's Platinum Jubilee planning,**

- Cllr Armstrong reported that Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June had been saved at the village hall and that the Village Hall Committee is planning a family fun day and a beacon lighting time on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June.
- Discussions continuing regards to celebrations for the Jubilee, it was suggested that the Parish Council could post updates through the village newsletter to encourage support for the celebrations and encourage attendance over the bank holiday weekend.
- Parish Councillor Eaton stated a grant possibility and requirements to receive this through National Lottery of which has been applied for.
- Lord Hastings from Astley Estate has been contacted for the Beacon Lighting on the Thursday and we are awaiting a reply whether he will be able to attend.
- A tree planting in celebration of the Queens Platinum Jubilee was suggested and can be applied for and the possibility of a plaque to inform people of the planting was discussed, Councillor Eaton will investigate the costs and planning around the tree planting and report later.

## **2021/181**

### **Litter Pick-**

- Dates for the pick had not been confirmed as the availability of the litter pick sticks and equipment required to complete this is currently limited. A date in May possibly 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> May is available depending on the availability of the Village Hall. Date TBC.

## **2021/182**

### **Items from Councillors and registered electors.**

- Councillor Jeff Smallbones commented on Ambulance waiting times. A local resident was taken ill recently and needed emergency assistance and a 999 call was needed. The local resident had to wait 1hour 40minutes before the vehicle arrived. It was commented that this was unacceptable.
- It was discussed that in agreement it was a extremely lengthy wait for assistance but the NHS is already under severe pressure from issues like Covid, reduced personnel etc. The possibility of contacting the local MP to highlight the villages concerns regarding the issue before a fatality may occur.
- Set date for APM/APCM.

- Boats positioned at boundary of Village Hall land possible safety hazard and whose responsibility, are they?
- The boats are not on Village Hall or Parish Council land, so responsibility lies with Astley estate. If either were to take any action in regard to the movement of the boats, then each could be liable if any issue were to occur.
- Action decided was to draft letter to Astley Est. regards to village concerns over eyesore and the risk of accident and danger associated with the vessels since they have been moved to the roadside.
- Chair of the Parish Council Councillor Chris Armstrong and Chair of the Village Hall Councillor Gerard Eaton agreed to draft a letter to Astley Est.
- Highlight the issue of the boats in the Village Newsletter to highlight the possible risks.
- Recent storms resulted in fallen trees on Holt Road. Although the debris of trees has been removed it has only been positioned to the edge the roadway resulting in a narrower passage for vehicles to pass through. The pull off area for vehicles to move to allow oncoming traffic to pass is no longer available as full of the fallen trees. Suggestions of contacting Astley Est. regards to an update whether these will remain or when the debris will be removed was put forward.
- Councillor Shaun Doncaster - Speed awareness sign. 2021/ 166. Norfolk Highways had been contacted regards to the sign but due to the low vehicle numbers using the road they were unlikely to allow the village to have a sign from the NNDC. A "Think" sign that could be positioned to warn drivers of their speed was a possible alternative. The Parish Clerk is to liaise further with NNDC to arrange possibility of sign being installed.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.35 pm

Chair .....

Date.....

Clerk.....