

Minutes of the SWINDON PARISH ANNUAL MEETING
held on 16th May 2019 at Swindon Village Hall

Present:

Councillor Peter Allen (Chairman of the Parish Council)
Shaun Cullimore (Clerk to the Parish Council)
7 members of the public

Apologies:

None.

Minutes of Previous Annual Parish Meeting:

The minutes of 18th April 2018 were accepted as a true record.

Presentation by Councillor Peter Allen (Chairman of Swindon Parish Council)

Peter's presentation is attachment 1.

Presentation by Shaun Cullimore (Clerk to Swindon Parish Council)

In his role as Parish Clerk Mr. Cullimore ran through the Parish Council finances for the year ended 31st March 2018. The Clerk's report appears as attachment 2.

Any Other Business

Parish Councillor Helen Wells gave a briefing on the state of play with the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and Local Green Space (LGS).

The JCS was adopted in December 2017 and covers the period 2011-2031. However, the transport strategy, a critical document, is not expected to appear before Spring 2020.

It is important that the JCS not only provides for future residents but also protects the interests of existing residents. As part of the JCS process, an area of Local Green Space (LGS) was negotiated. Following extensive public consultation and presentation of evidence the LGS was enshrined in the adopted JCS, and also in the draft Cheltenham Local Plan (which sits below, and must be compliant with, the JCS). The amount of green space agreed is less than 7% of the land area that had been designated for the "Elms Park" development.

The LGS area in the JCS is indicative; the precise definition is to be incorporated in the Cheltenham Local Plan.

A planning inspection is taking place looking into the soundness of the Cheltenham Local Plan prior to its adoption. This process is led by Planning Inspector Wendy Burden. To everyone's surprise, Inspector Burden has chosen to question the appropriateness of the area designated as LGS and is seeking to reduce it. Inspector Burden is ignoring the conclusion of Inspector Ord, who led the examination of the JCS and accepted the indicative LGS. Inspector Burden has not examined the evidence presented in support of the LGS.

The JCS was adopted following extensive public consultation and a rigorous examination process. For Inspector Burden to seek to modify its conclusions appears to be inappropriate and undemocratic.

Inspector Burden's conclusions are expected to be published in December 2019 and the Cheltenham Local Plan should be adopted in February 2020.

The Parish Council and Save The Countryside will continue to lobby for the LGS as agreed in the JCS.

The meeting closed at 8:25pm.

Shaun Cullimore
Clerk to Swindon Parish Council

Attachment 1 – Chairman’s Report

SWINDON VILLAGE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 16th May 2019 CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Welcome to the Annual Parish Assembly

As Chairman of the Swindon Parish Council I am pleased to welcome you to your Annual Parish Assembly.

I should like to commence my report by expressing my gratitude to all of the parish councillors and to Shaun our Clerk for their dedication and support during the year.

To achieve many things you need dedicated people.

I should like to thank Shaun Cullimore , our Parish Clerk, and all of the Parish Councillors for their continued help and support throughout this busy and challenging year and for helping keep our Parish in such good shape.

The role of a parish councillor is unpaid and can seem at times to be more than an uphill struggle to promote the views and the interests of the community that we represent. The brief descriptions contained in the published minutes do not reflect the time, effort and self-motivation required so I feel it would be very remiss of me not to recognise the work of all of the councillors over the last twelve months and the considerable contributions that they have made.

It is important that people understand that you undertake your roles because you care and continually want to support and improve the community that we live in, so for that I say thank you.

During the last twelve months, three of our parish councillors Glenn Simpson, Frances Hunter and Stuart Deakin relinquished their positions and I should like to thank them for their much valued services.

However, we have been extremely fortunate as Yvonne Pirso and James Cornish volunteered to become Parish Councillors. The Parish Council and the Parish immediately benefitted from the skills and input from Councillor Yvonne Pirso and Councillor James Cornish.

Village Hall

Twelve months ago the Village Hall management committee gave notice that they were all going to ‘step down’ in March 2019. It seemed that many people were aware of the situation but until September 2018 the Parish Council were concerned that no one had shown any interest in stepping forward to take over from the out-going committee. We therefore commenced discussions with Peter and Sally Piff and the various groups who use the Village Hall to put together an action plan to address what was slowly becoming a very real problem.

Councillor Yvonne Pirso and Councillor James Cornish joined with Councillor Helen Wells and Councillor John Conmee in writing reports and organising meetings and workshops to encourage people from the Parish to step forward to form a new Village Hall committee.

We are grateful to everyone who has become involved in the management and maintenance of the Village Hall. It is a relief to many people in the Parish including the Parish Council that the Village Hall is assured a future under the management of the Chairman Ben Williams and his committee.

Allotments

I should like to thank our Allotment Manager Ian Brown for the time and the work that he puts in to maintaining the Allotments at a high standard.

Sundial

The mosaic sundial needs repair. We are intending to obtain quotations for carrying out the repair works. Most of the sundial is not mosaic and therefore it will necessitate involving a number of contractors.

Traffic From Developments

But concerns over wider issues have always been at the forefront of the Parish Council; such as the consequent impact of increased traffic from the proposed developments not only through the Village Centre but on all of the roads in and around the Parish which will not only increase traffic volume but also noise, air pollution, personal safety. We are already a Parish that is dissected by very busy roads but the likelihood is that we will become a much more divided community if the interests and needs of the residents of Swindon are not fully considered.

The Green Space

I have asked Helen to provide this meeting with an overview of the situation relating to the Green Space therefore I shall keep my own overview very short.

At the initial launch of the Governments Green Space promotion Parish Councillors Arran Stibbe and Helen Wells put time, effort and their own resources into carrying out a public consultation and then progressing and submitting a Green Space proposal for this Parish.

As a result of Helen and Arran's considerable efforts a full and robust proposal was available to be considered by the appointed JCS inspector during the JCS consultation. Borough Councillor Flo Clucas presented the proposal at the consultation because it was called in by the Inspector a day earlier than expected and Councillor Clucas happened to be in the Council Chamber at the time.

We have been very fortunate to receive much support, guidance and wisdom from Councillor Clucas for which we continue to be very grateful.

The Inspectors conclusion led to the Green Space proposal being referenced in the Joint Core Strategy and included within the Cheltenham's Local Plan. Whilst we understood that there was still a lot of work and negotiations ahead we were totally surprised when we were informed that the Green Space proposal would be undergoing further scrutiny.

Although he is no longer a Parish Councillor Arran Stibbe remains heavily involved with Parish Councillor Helen Wells and Borough Councillor Clucas in the on-going battle for the Green Space.

Social Media

Councillor James Cornish is in the process of providing us with a presence on social media. The date of its launch will be publicised on the Parish Council's web site and in the Village News.

Boy Racers

This has been a topic of discussion and debate for a number of years. The police had informed us that the problem had disappeared from our Parish boundary. Unfortunately it appears that the

racers have returned with the better weather.

To close I should like to say that we have a number of vacancies for Parish Councillors. To be truly representative of Swindon Parish it would be beneficial to have Councillors from all areas of the Parish.

Most of the Parish Councillors have a full time job and therefore we are fully aware and accept the difficulties that can result from this.

Most Councillors, when they start, have no idea on what their role will be but you do not have to be an expert in planning matters or great at writing reports, our Clerk Shaun Cullimore and any one of the councillors are always willing to provide advice, normally gentle nudging and a little advice is all that is normally necessary. Training is provided, although there may be a delay in arranging it to suit your availability.

Being a councillor can very rewarding. Of course it can, on occasion, be time consuming and occasionally it can be a very frustrating.

If you feel that you would like to be more engaged in local matters, to make a difference to your community, then please contact the Clerk to register your interest.

Attachment 2 – Clerk's Report

SWINDON VILLAGE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

16th May 2019

CLERK'S REPORT FOR 2018-2019

In the year the Council purchased a defibrillator for the Village Hall. Defibrillators in public areas have had a significant role in ensuring the survival of heart attack victims.

The Council also purchased a noticeboard to be sited outside the Cross Hands to serve the southern part of the parish. Installation requires Gloucestershire County Council to conduct a search for services in the grass verge. Sadly GCC have been uncommunicative for many months. I am hopeful that this will be resolved within the next few weeks. As an aside, it should be noted that the noticeboard at the entrance to the allotments has been refurbished at no cost to the Council by the allotment holders.

The Council was delighted to be approached by Spirax Sarco as part of a community engagement initiative. A joint team comprising Spirax Sarco employees and local residents have done some litter picking and another event will take place in June.

The growth in the hedge along Manor Road causes problems to pedestrians every year. A major part of the issue is that ownership of the hedge is disputed between Spirax Sarco and Gloucestershire County Council. I hope to get that resolved soon but, in the meantime, Spirax Sarco have promised to cut the vegetation back this week.

In an attempt to address the issue of the speed and volume of traffic going through Swindon Village some of our councillors met with Gloucestershire Highways. Certain measures were agreed at that meeting but this initiative has also been stalled due to the lack of action from GCC. The Council recognises that it may need to invest money to address these problems (e.g. electronic speed signs).

In August new play equipment was installed in the park. The Council had budgeted to spend money on this project. In the end it was financed by Cheltenham Borough Council, and we are grateful to them for that.

There were fears for the future of the Village Hall following the resignation of the Village Hall Management Committee after many years of service to the parish. The Parish Council sought support from the community for this important asset and a new Committee has been formed to take the hall forward.

We welcomed two new councillors during the year. Yvonne joined in June 2018 and James in July 2018. Like buses, you wait a long time then two come along at once. They are busy people but have brought their energy and enthusiasm to the Council. However, we still have four vacancies.

In the park the sundial mosaic, owned by the Parish Council, has deteriorated badly. The Council is seeking professional advice to not only restore it but to make it more resilient. This is likely to involve significant expenditure.

The chestnut trees in the Amenity Area also represent another large potential cost. The trees are dying. Work was undertaken to remove some larger boughs but there remains much to be done. Having invested in the defibrillator and the noticeboard our reserves now stand at £20,761.72. This is a healthy figure but, as I have highlighted, we may have to finance some major works in the future.

	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
INCOME					
Precept	£11,516.90	£11,181.46	£10,962.22	£10,694.85	£10,185.57
Other income					
Allotment rents	£1,166.00	£884.00	£903.00	£865.00	£607.00
Village News adverts	£444.50	£586.50	£412.50	£317.50	£580.00
Misc	£20.23	£179.74	£20.23	£20.23	£19.65
Interest	£1.94	£1.92	£1.92	£1.93	£1.92
Support grant	£340.00	£618.18	£618.18	£618.18	£618.18
Transparency grant	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£343.80	£0.00
Total income	<u>£13,489.57</u>	<u>£13,451.80</u>	<u>£12,918.05</u>	<u>£12,861.49</u>	<u>£12,012.32</u>
EXPENDITURE					
Staff costs	£5,247.13	£5,192.08	£5,109.66	£4,819.30	£4,619.11
Loan repayments (note 1)	£0.00	£1,843.41	£1,843.42	£1,843.42	£1,843.42
Other costs					
Administration	£1,601.40	£1,651.18	£1,197.31	£1,607.14	£1,180.18
Communications (note 2)	£1,754.50	£1,964.33	£2,018.07	£1,716.37	£2,135.94
Ground works (note 3)	£555.00	£0.00	£0.00	£413.74	£14.95
Allotments (note 4)	£0.00	£16.88	£330.87	£587.49	£406.93
Meeting room costs	£240.00	£240.00	£240.00	£295.50	£280.00
Misc	£188.84	£80.00	£80.00	£60.00	£50.00
Special projects	£1,356.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total expenditure	<u>£10,942.87</u>	<u>£10,987.88</u>	<u>£10,819.33</u>	<u>£11,342.96</u>	<u>£10,530.53</u>
Surplus (deficit) for year	£2,546.70	£2,463.92	£2,098.72	£1,518.53	£1,481.79
Retained surplus b/f	<u>£18,215.02</u>	<u>£15,751.10</u>	<u>£13,652.38</u>	<u>£12,133.85</u>	<u>£10,652.06</u>
General fund c/f	<u>£20,761.72</u>	<u>£18,215.02</u>	<u>£15,751.10</u>	<u>£13,652.38</u>	<u>£12,133.85</u>
Represented by					
Cash at bank	£21,383.45	£19,432.80	£16,882.63	£14,090.67	£12,439.68
Debtors including reclaimable VAT	£450.58	£2.40	£107.74	£510.68	£762.49
Creditors	-£928.31	-£1,053.68	-£1,059.27	-£738.97	-£893.32
Pre-paid income	-£144.00	-£166.50	-£180.00	-£210.00	-£175.00
	<u>£20,761.72</u>	<u>£18,215.02</u>	<u>£15,751.10</u>	<u>£13,652.38</u>	<u>£12,133.85</u>

Note 1 – Interest and capital payments. Loan paid off in January 2018.

Note 2 – Cost of Village News and web site.

Note 3 – Includes major tree works in 2013-2014, and the repair of a bus shelter and repainting of bus shelters in 2015-2016.

Note 4 – Supply of water, repairs and improvements.

Shaun Cullimore
Clerk to Swindon Parish Council