



SWATON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY MAY 16th, 2017 AT 7.30PM IN THE COMMUNITY HUT.

PRESENT: Cllr A Deptford, (Chairman) and the Clerk, 12 members of the public, which included 4 parish councillors.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

1. **MINUTES OF MEETING, MAY 17th, 2016.** Accepting Clerk's Notes as Minutes. It was proposed by Cllr Richardson and seconded by Cllr Dunlop that the Clerk's Notes of May 17th, 2016 meeting, which had been circulated, be accepted as a true record. All who were present agreed, resolution passed, the chairman signed the Minutes.

2. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2016/17.**

The Chairman's report was as follows:

Your Councillors have remained the same this year with me as Chairman (because no one else wants the 'job'), Andy Dunlop as Vice-Chairman and Chris Richardson, Elaine Penketh and Alan Wilson. I have taken over the post of Responsible Financial Officer.

Even though Andy Dunlop has left the village, he is entitled to remain a Councillor until the next Elections in 2019 and has attended most meetings and plays an active part in the multitude of 'between meeting' discussions.

At last The Play Area has progressed and is now up and running with Swings, Seesaw and Zip Wire Ariel Runway. A Play Area Committee has been set up which is independent to the Council.

Phase 2 which is a wheelchair friendly Roundabout and a Basket Swing should be seen in the next few weeks. This will be followed shortly thereafter by a Metal and Timber 'Shelter'. This has been designed by Cllr. Wilson and he will build it with the help of John Wilkinson and others. Many hours of work have already gone into this project and lots more will be needed before it is up and running. All this time is given voluntarily. Thank you to all involved.

Phase 3, subject to further grants, is likely to be better goal posts and other pieces of Play equipment. Grants are becoming harder and harder to come by, so the tenacity of Cllr. Penketh must be applauded. Some of the Grant application forms which all seem to need to be filled in differently can stretch to 40 or 50 pages !

One of Elaine's greatest successes was to raise almost £5000 from the Co-op for Phase 3. As many of you know, this entailed about 40+ Swaton Residents turning out one evening to vote for their 'Community Winners'. I am very proud to say that tiny Swaton absolutely annihilated the competition (from places as big as Newark) due to our exceptional turn out. Thank you all !

We have received a couple of reports of Dog Poo within the Play Area and have decided Dogs (and other pets) should not be allowed in. Signs will soon appear.

On the same subject 4 new combined Rubbish and Dog Poo (in bags) Bins have been purchased and will soon be placed around the village. This entails a massive 'Red Tape' procedure in getting permissions to place them from Lincs County Council Roadways, Western Power, Anglian Water and BT. Each of the 4 bins requires its own 'permission' from all of these !

The lack of Superfast Broadband for the residents at the North End of the village is still a problem. BT are being particularly unhelpful and representations from several bodies including our new MP appear to make little difference to their attitude. Discussions continue.

Our Litter Supremo, Henk Buijs, has now left the village and John & June Lukjaniec have taken over. I have no doubt that they would appreciate any help you could offer.

There is a possibility that an extra 'Roadway light' could be available in the High Street. We are competing for a tiny part of NKDC's budget on this.

Last year AND the year before, I wrote : "The West End Flooding dialogues continue". Chris Richardson and Barry Jeffrey have been appointed as our representatives to follow this through with The Environment Agency, LCC and Black Sluice Drainage Board. The Environment Agency continues to 'employ' expensive Consultants to 'help' alleviate our problems. I despair !



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As you were all informed in last year's message from me and in several Newsletters articles, Grass Cutting in the village has come to an end. The Council decided that rather than raise your Council Tax, which partly covers this cost, we would ask residents to look after their own frontages and help out with their neighbours if necessary. Thank you again ! This appears to be working. To date, most of the roadsides are looking as good as, if not better, than they did last year. The exception, at the moment, is some of the South side of West End beside the Eau. This is being monitored. Some residents actually like the idea of a 'natural / conservation' area !

On the matter of grass cutting, we should give a big thanks to Charles Campion who has taken the Play Area under his wing. It looks great ! His vigilance with the mole hills and his regular flattening attempts has also to be commended.

Concerns have been raised about whether the bus services are continuing and whether the once a week bus to Boston is in jeopardy and that the Dial a Ride service is not as convenient as it has been. Cllr Dunlop continues to monitor the situation. "Transport Poverty" is a serious issue in villages such as ours. Traffic Calming along the High Street has also been discussed at length. Sadly lack of available funds has postponed any further action. New batteries have been sourced for our existing 'Speed Indicator Signs' and John Lukjaniec has graciously taken over the role of Signs Administrator.

Public Footpath signs have been reinstated and Footpaths have been made more visible – this is an endless task ! No reply has yet been received from LCC about 'siding back' the footpaths. We are expecting the normal 'Budget Cuts' comments.

Our excellent Village Newsletter continues thanks to the efforts of Cllr Elaine Penketh. It's production is a thankless task it will never satisfy everyone. If you have anything relevant to go in, please contact Elaine.

The Village Emergency Plan mentioned last year was completed as far as possible before Lincs County Councils unworkable requirements scotched the idea of having it formally adopted. These requirements were MUCH too onerous for such a small village as ours. 40 or 50 regular 'volunteers' would have been required with such ridiculous requirements as always having a pillowcase available in case someone brought a snake to the Hut – and it escaped !

However – The Plan exists – If we have an Emergency, the village WILL spring into action ! But don't bring your snake to the Hut – without a pillowcase !

AND FINALLY..... Yes – I've written the same again, but I'd never hear the last of it if it were missing..... Many thanks must also go to our long-suffering, highly over-qualified Clerk, Shelagh, for doing her best to keep us on the straight and narrow during the year ! She steers us through the minefield of Governmental Bureaucracy - whilst hanging on to a (necessary) sense of humour.

In all, a busy and reasonably successful year for the Council.

Please contact any Councillor if you have concerns or feel that something needs to change. We will do our best to help (subject to many, many constraints).

3. FINANCIAL REPORT. Financial Year 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017

This year, £5172.21 which was held 'On Trust' on behalf of 'The Swaton Village Fund' has been donated to the Council for use in populating the Play Area. Thank you to the Trustees Chris Richardson and Barry Jeffrey for their generosity.

Thus, the Council started the year with £4418.11 in the Bank (which included £850.00 previously 'Ring Fenced' for the Play Area).

The Village Fund transfer made this £9590.32

This is £3568.11 of Council Funds and £6022.21 of Play Area Funds.

It should be noted that ALL Play Area Income & Expenditure MUST go through the Council's coffers to enable the reclamation of VAT.

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During the year we received an income of £24780.81. £6032.81 of this came from NKDC for the Precept and Litter Picking and LCC for Grasscutting, Bank Interest, Donations from other Parish Councils towards the cost of replacement SID batteries and VAT reclaimed. £18748.00 was Play Area Grants.

Our expenditure for the year was £19359.36 . £5794.36 of this was spent on running the Council and maintaining the village, this included paying our Clerk, Stationary, Postage, Insurance, Training, Subscriptions, Hut Rental, Grasscutting, Litter Picking and VAT on purchases. £13565.50 was spent on Play Area equipment and maintenance.

Please note the Council's full Income and Expenditure accounts (unaudited at date of writing) can be viewed on the Council's website : <http://www.swaton.org.uk/>

We finished the year with £15011.77 in the Bank. This is £3707.06 of Council Funds and £11304.71 Ring Fenced for the Play Area.

The £15011.77 is carried forward into the 2017/2018 year.

4. **REPORTS FROM VISITING REPRESENTATIVES** – Police/County/District Council No County, or Police representative was present. C/Cllr B Young apologised for not being able to attend. Asked to be involved in any LCC problems. He submitted a brief report outlining his hopes for the coming term – this follows at the end of this report.
Report from District Councillor Kate Cook: She thanked the Council for supporting the Cluster meetings. She and Cllr Richardson gave an update on agencies concerned with preventing future flooding. Her full report follows at the end of this report.
5. **PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONING.** Members of the public may comment on any Parish issues and direct their comments to the Parish Council or any of the visiting representatives.
 - **Play park** – Report of dogs going in. Confirmed that signs have now gone up and an extra spring on the gate to ensure it closes. Also concern about possible misuse of some of the equipment – reassured that the equipment was designed to take various degrees of use.
 - **Malicious post** – reported to police who are making enquiries – no feedback from them to date.
 - **Litter Picking** – John Lukjaniec thanked Henk Bjuis for all his litter picking duties over the past years. He asked if he could be supplied with some litter picking and safety equipment. The Clerk will contact NKDC.
 - **'Buses** – Mr Lukjaniec was also concerned that from May 26th, losing a Sleaford to Billingborough 'bus – concern there may be more to come. Cllr Dunlop spoke to company – this had not been funded by LCC and was making a loss. One affected resident is using a 'bus and also Call Connect. School time 'buses are safe, but those outside these times may be at risk.
 - **Speeding** – Mr Lukjaniec said he had taken over the management and loaning out of the SID signs. He had been approached by some parishioners about a permanent speeding sign. He asked that a request should be made for funding for a sign to the Swaton Vintage Day committee through the July PC agenda.
 - **Car parked opposite the Church** – There was concern that this permanently parked car made it difficult for disabled people to park close to the Church and Hut entrance. Cllr Dunlop will speak to the owner.
 - **Hedges/Trees** – some in the village are encroaching onto footpath users and need trimming. Enquiries will be made and informal approaches will be made initially.
6. **CLOSE THE MEETING** – all relevant issues will be taken forward to a future Parish Council Meeting. The chairman thanked everyone for their input and closed the meeting at 8.05pm.

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STATEMENT FROM C/CLLR B YOUNG:

My priorities for my "patch" are:

- to pursue, with our Lincolnshire MPs, lobbying for a fairer funding deal for Lincolnshire which acknowledges the special problems of a large and thinly populated rural area such as we live in. Road maintenance and public transport are of particular concern to me.
- to work closely with the Chief Constable and his team and through other agencies with which I am involved on keeping this part of Lincolnshire safe and the low crime area which it is. I had a very productive meeting with the Chief last week centred on rural crime and in particular on new measures for dealing with illegal hare coursing.
- to preserve and develop strong local NHS services and continue working for closer integration of health and social care. Dr Caroline Johnson's experience in the NHS will be of great assistance to me in this.

NKDC REPORT FROM D/CLLR MRS K COOK.

Our Economy

Key achievements during the year so far:

- We have built and let 19 business units at Blackwood Court, Teal Park, within eight months of the site opening. This follows the success of Churchill Business Park, Bracebridge Heath, which was fully let and occupied within six months of opening
- The average occupancy of our workshop portfolio is 95.93% against a target of 80%
- Proactively engaged partners moving forward investment opportunities in Sleaford and North Hykeham
- Helped to progress tourism growth in the District, including a £200,000 grant to fulfil the International Bomber Command Memorial
- Above target for the number of businesses broadly compliant with food hygiene legislation
- Grew the economic benefit of tourism to £120 million from 2.3 million visitors
- Enjoyed another successful Made in Sleaford event, with more children engaged in STEM – science, technology, engineering and mathematics – than the previous year
- Opened Grantham Road car park, Sleaford, where commuters can park for just £2 per day
- Supported, with Partnership NK, the Pop Up shop initiative in Sleaford which has now welcomed its third store
- Successfully bid for Heritage Lottery Funding to bring Mrs Smith's Cottage in Navenby back into use

Our Homes

Key achievements during the year so far:

- 373 new homes have been constructed against a target of 245
- 89 affordable homes have been delivered against a target of 45
- 14 empty properties have been brought back into use against a target of 13
- Delivered our 175th new Council house and the county's first super energy efficient social housing, the Passivhaus, as part of a development of 22 new homes in Heckington.
- Helped tenants to save more than £26,000 combined on their fuel and water bills in the last year thanks to our Affordable Warmth Service
- Started work on the regeneration of Newfield Road, Sleaford; at £8.9 million it's the Council's largest ever capital investment
- Transformed two former garage sites in Sleaford into five, two-bedroom affordable homes

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- Turned a former land-locked site in North Hykeham into 12 new bungalows for the over 60s next to Kesteven Court. The new area is called Holland Court

Our Communities

Key achievements in the year so far:

- Delivered the ONE NK refurbishment project, including the country's first interactive selfie flume
- Built use of NKDC's indoor sports and leisure facilities to 517,553 against a target of 490,000
- Invested £250,000 into the Natural World Centre and Little Darters at Whisby Nature Park. The Natural World Centre now benefits from a new exhibition and conference space as well as the Otters' Reach play area which has proved popular with toddlers. Little Darters has been moved and extended with a new octagonal tower, look out and mini assault course
- Engaged with 298,578 visitors through our cultural venues and ArtsNK programmes against a target of 290,000
- Maintained for the third year running the District's status as the safest place in the country
- Pioneered the county's strongest response against fly-tipping, including Fixed Penalty Notices, CCTV on vans and signs in places where people have been successfully prosecuted for the offence
- Recognised as having England's highest levels of life satisfaction
- Invested in Sleaford's CCTV system, bring it up to date with state-of-the-art technology
- Approved a Public Space Protection Order for Metheringham Airfield to prevent cars congregating, practising dangerous stunts and causing a nuisance
- Continued with the Winter Wellbeing Scheme to make sure older and vulnerable people don't go without food when the temperature drops

Our Council

Key achievements in the year so far:

- Maintained one of the lowest Council Tax rates
- Set up the Council-owned housing company Lafford Homes to meet the needs of affordable housing in the District
- Cut our carbon footprint by 40% four years ahead of target
- Chosen to pilot national obesity programme – one of only four District Council's hand picked by Public Health England to take part
- Approved a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy that has the vision 'Inspiring everyone to be more active, more often'
- Signed up to a Hate and Hate Crime charter to help protect residents from these type of offences
- Adopted the Community Plan 2016-2021, which considers how to promote and improve the economic, social, environmental health and wellbeing of the area