

Southorpe Parish Council (SPC)

Minutes of meeting held at Ufford Village Hall 1900 hours Wednesday 5 January 2022

Councillors present: Simon Little (SL) (Chair)
Carl Brown (ACB)
Corinna Blackmore (CB)
Peter Corder (PC)
Victoria Haynes (VH)

Members of the public: Joan Riddel
Jake Riddel

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr David Over was invited to the meeting by email but was not in attendance.

2. Declaration of interests from members

Nil.

3. Acceptance of the Minutes of the last meeting held on 10/11/21

The minutes of the last meeting held on 10 November 2021 were approved as a true record without amendment and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the meeting on 10/11/21

Action points: Items 7.2, 7.5, 14, 17.1 and 17.2 were dealt with under the main agenda items.

5. Ward update

The minutes of the Barnack Ward meeting held on 17 November 2021 had previously been circulated to SPC members. There were no ward items to discuss.

6. Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022

1. The Queen's Green Canopy Project

ACB requested that SPC should identify a suitable location for the planting of a suitable tree under this scheme. Following some initial works undertaken at the village playing field it was anticipated that a suitable site could be identified there. Following discussion, it was agreed that once a suitable location has been identified a tree would be planted within the project timeframes (March 2022 or November 2022). **If possible the tree would be obtained from The Woodland Trust free of charge as part of the Project or SPC funded. Action: ACB to identify a suitable location and species of tree.**

2. Village Jubilee picnic celebration

ACB informed the meeting that the period from Thursday 2 June to Sunday 5 June will mark the jubilee celebrations. It would be appropriate to mark the occasion with a village picnic at the village field. Discussion followed and it was agreed that the annual village picnic should be held earlier this year to coincide with these celebrations. SPC agreed to contribute to the costs of the event. Possible events could include placing a plaque to celebrate the planting of a suitable tree under the Green Canopy Project and the burying of a time capsule, suggested by PC. **Action: CB to liaise with Edward Elwood/Pip Parker in the first instance.**

3. Memorabilia

ACB questioned whether SPC should purchase memorabilia to mark the celebrations which could be presented to each household or children within the parish. Following discussion all agreed that suitable items would be funded and presented to every child under the age of 18 residing within the parish.

7. Finance matters

1. SPC Finance update

VH presented the finance report (Appendix A). The total funds held in both the Reserve and Community accounts was circa £3500. The funds would be required to subsidise a number of capital expenses in 2022, including The Queen's Platinum Jubilee events. Revenue expenditure was predicted to be circa £3000. This included projected costs for the employment of a part-time clerk (£1740). Currently the revenue income for SPC is only £950. This item was discussed at length under item 8 below.

2. Adrian Patrick Fogarty Will Trust update

VH presented an initial list of requirements (Appendix A). Further discussion identified a number of items which were desired, including, 3 replacement picnic tables, 1 bench, 2 owl boxes and finances to refurbish the telephone box in Main Street. **Action: VH will complete the list and present to the Trustees.**

3. Defibrillator update

CB informed the meeting that circa 40 persons, including 5 attendees from Southorpe, attended the joint training at Barnack Village Hall on the 7 December. The event was very informative and appreciated by all who attended. There was no charge for the training event which was part of SPC's defibrillator support package. CB and John Shaw will undertake the routine checking of Southorpe's defibrillator. Item discharged.

8. Precept for 2022/2023

SL introduced this item and confirmed that following SPC's previous meeting of 10 November 2021 a letter (Appendix B) outlining the requirement for an increase in the precept and inviting all parishioners to attend this meeting to discuss the matter had been delivered to every house within the Parish. SL also prepared a further document in a Q and A format (Appendix C) which was provided to all attendees. SL presented the information set out in the documents cross referencing the 2022/2023 budget breakdown highlighted by VH in Appendix A (Finance report).

SL re-iterated that the precept is the only income SPC receives, and this has remained at an extremely low rate for a number of years. Figures presented in Appendix B shows that, apart from Wothorpe (non-precepting parish), Southorpe Parishioners currently pay the lowest precept in the Barnack Ward (Band D £9.68). All Ward precepts were substantially lower than the national average. A rise in the precept was essential to allow the Parish Council to employ a part-time Clerk (Proper Officer). SPC has operated without a clerk for a number of years but in accordance with legislation and good practice this situation cannot continue if SPC is to operate in a lawful and proper fashion. A Clerk would become an employee of SPC and would be paid in accordance with Government pay-scales relevant to legal qualifications held by the individual. There are only two exceptions to employing a Clerk both of which are only recommended as short-term alternatives: 1. An elected Councillor may perform the role in an un-paid capacity pending the employment of a Clerk (currently undertaken by ACB), or: 2. A Clerk can be hired via an official body under the same conditions as alternative 1 (the current hourly rate for this option is circa £50).

In addition to employment of a Clerk other expected expenditure by SPC will rise considerably in the next financial year. The estimate within Appendix A shows that a rise in the Precept of 272% is required to finance all estimated SPC revenue spend. During the discussion both Joan and Jake Riddel believed it was essential for Southorpe to have its own Council to represent the Parish. Jake pointed out that a rise of this size would take Southorpe's precept above that of Helpston and alongside Barnack, although a rise of this size would probably be supported as a one-off increase. SL re-assured all present that any future rise would by and large be in line with inflation. All agreed that an increase in the precept was essential to allow for SPC to operate in a lawful and representative manner.

SL proposed a rise to the precept of 200%, taking the Band D figure to £29.04 per annum. This was seconded by PC. Furthermore, a vote on this proposal was undertaken and all present at the meeting agreed to the proposal. The motion was therefore carried.

It was agreed that all documentation relevant to this discussion will be posted on the Parish noticeboards and SPC's website.

9. Parish Planning matters – ACB

1. **21/01490/HHFUL and 21/01491/LBC – Two Hoots.** Applications were refused by PCC on 29 November 2021 and 14 December 2021 respectively.
2. **18/00962/FUL – Southorpe Quarry.** Retention of mobile home. Permission was granted for three years which expired on 12 December 2021. The mobile home is still in location. **Action: ACB was requested to contact PCC planning.**
3. **21/01944/HHFUL – Willowgate.** Demolition of conservatory and build extension. Following circulation support for this application was submitted by SPC on 30/12/21.

10. Environmental issues

1. Southorpe Nature Recovery Plans

PC and ACB have undertaken two days nature recovery work at the village playing field since the last meeting, in line with the report prepared by Langdyke Trust. Work undertaken includes removal of lower tree branches, saplings, and scrub in the lower section of the field. One further day is required prior to an invitation to parishioners to assist with further work.

2. Re-instatement of footpaths

At the last meeting CB commented that a number of cross field public rights of way (footpaths) in the parish and /or in neighbouring parishes have not been reinstated after the field has been cultivated making it difficult for walkers. CB has contacted PCC for advice. **Action: Ongoing.**

11. Traffic matters update

1. PC updated the meeting regarding a Site visit on 24/11/21 by Peter Tebb (PT), Highways Manager PCC, with PC and ACB. Following discussions PT inspected the areas we have raised with him:
 - Bridge into the village from A47
 - Speed restrictions on Walcot Road up to Ufford
 - Viability of village entrance 'gates'
 - Alternative speed restriction options

PT will explore alternative warning signage for the blind summit bridge and report back.

PT also needs to explore further the speed restrictions and what was agreed and why on Walcot Road and will report back.

PT stated if we are keen to have 'village gates' it would be a possibility, but the process is quite costly. This is entirely dependent on our desire to fund the project. Given SPC has no funds, this action cannot proceed and may be revisited again in the future.

PT dismissed alternative speed restriction options (white lines etc) as being largely ineffective. His view is that those people who speed excessively through the village will continue to do so whatever restrictions we attempt to impose.

Action: PC to contact PT for an update on the items discussed.

2. Verge repairs

Southorpe was promised this work would be carried out before Christmas weather permitting. Work has yet to be done. PC has chased and is awaiting a revised schedule date from Asset and Performance Manager Kevin Ekins. VH raised the issue of recent damage to verges by speeding tractors, particularly in the vicinity of the entrance to the field opposite Holly Tree House. **Action: PC to contact Kevin Ekins, PCC regarding above.**

3. SL commented that a planning application had been submitted by Burghley House for an adventure playground and that this would undoubtedly impact further on traffic issues in Southorpe. Following discussion, it was agreed that ACB would research the application and contact PCC regarding the deadline for comments. SPC would comment as appropriate. **Action: ACB.**

12. Any Other Business

There were no further items to be discussed.

13. Date of next meeting

1900 hours Wednesday 9 March 2022 at Ufford Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 2059 hours.