

MINUTES OF THE SOULDERN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL

ON

24th May 2018

Present:

Nick Oakhill (NO) CHAIR
Katy Draper (KD)
Bruce May (BM)
Kirsty Allpress (KA)
Alan Smith (AS)
Cathy Fleet (CF) CLERK

Members of the Public:

David Carlisle
Mary May
Carol Gray
Barbara McGarry
Ann Prescott
Norma Jones
Carol Couzens
Diana Stephens

Apologies:

Chris Rothero
Joanna Carlisle

1. Welcome and apologies

Nick Oakhill opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present and accepted apologies from Chris Rothero and Joanna Carlisle

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 18th May 2017 had been circulated and were agreed as a true record of the meeting and duly signed by the chairman.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

4. Chairman's report

Firstly, I would like to thank all of the councillors for their efforts over the past year, also Cathy Fleet our new Parish clerk and RFO who took over from Barbara at the end of last May. Having switched to Internet banking we appear to be getting on top of the cumbersome Barclays system, which hopefully will make Cathy's task as RFO much less onerous. We are currently in the process of exploring the possibility of switching banks due to the unwieldy nature of the online system with Barclays.

The council has, as in previous year's met its legal obligation to represent the residents of Souldern without favour or otherwise and is keen to hear from any residents who would like to suggest any improvements that could be made to ensure its obligations to the community continue to be met.

There have been 17 assorted planning applications (32 2016/17), 9 of which, have been for the lopping of trees (9 2016/17). Anne Prescott and Barbara McGarry have delivered 10 welcome packs to new residents, up from 6 the previous year.

Issues during the Year

Having assured us that we stood little chance of seeing any road resurfacing within 10 years in the village, OCC promptly resurfaced the hill and some of the High street in early October. We are assured that the Micro asphalt resurfacing should last for 10-12 years!! Whilst some potholes still remain in the village, the situation is considerably improved.

After a fiasco with our grass cutting contractor, a new one has been employed. Hopefully, they will get on top of the unsatisfactory situation shortly and get our verges back to their normal presentable standards. The verge on the Hill will get mown twice this year.

At the beginning of this year the waste system from the new MacDonalds at Baynards Green was connected to our village system. The transition has not been a smooth one, and issues still remain. Currently, some of the parishioners on the Hill and I are in dialogue with Thames Water and CDC about this. Residents are being encouraged to keep an odour diary so that this can be presented to Thames water who are dealing with the problem.

Having made comments on the conservation area to CDC, these were largely ignored and the revised area was published in August of last year.

We are no further forward with creating a solution for the changing rooms. Some draft proposals have been put forward, resulting in comments from the Village Hall committee/ SUC and four individuals. Views are mixed, and so it is intended that representatives from VH and SUC plus the four are invited to a meeting to discuss further and create a plan. This will happen shortly.

The village website continues to be maintained by David Carlisle. Thankyou for your efforts in doing this David. Legally the Parish Council is required to place certain information on it for the benefit of the community, but other sections are to be used by the parishioners for the sharing of information, and we encourage you to submit anything you want to see on the site to David or one of the parish councillors.

Many thanks also to Tim Vincent and his team for their work in NBW, a further report of their activity will follow in the Ordinary meeting later. Lucy Matthews continues with the management of the playground, and three new fence lines in the changing rooms waiting to be erected. Various other improvements are in the process of being made. We thank her and her team for their efforts.

For those that stay for the ordinary meeting will hear, we now have in place the necessary funds to purchase and maintain a defibrillator for the village. Special thanks should go to Norma Jones and Lynn Palmer for holding a bring and buy sale which raised in excess of £500, and also to SUC who have pledged £750 towards it.

The memorial plaques to commemorate those from the village that gave their lives during the two world wars have been purchased and are now being mounted in readiness for being placed back onto the relevant trees in the village. Some of the trees are no longer in situ, so the plaques will go onto the trees alongside the playing fields.

As our Financial officers report will confirm, everything we have done has been managed to stay within our financial constraints, and I would like to thank Cathy Fleet for her efforts in maintaining our accounts accurately and in timely fashion.

For 2018/19 one of our priorities is to find a solution that utilises the space in the changing rooms for the benefit of the community. We will also continue to address the issues raised at the beginning of my report, particularly

those that continue to be in the pending category (Banking/ Smells on the Hill). We look forward to the continued support of the community in making these happen.

Nick Oakhill

5. Financial Report

Cathy Fleet, Responsible Financial Officer, confirmed that the End of Year Accounts for 2017/18 had been audited and that they, along with the Statement of Governance will now be sent to Moore Stephens, the external auditor. The Accounts were available at the meeting for examination and will be on the website in due course. There had been a discrepancy of £136.45 in the accounts which was found to be the result of a cheque not having been presented by the recipient. Fundraising had recently taken place for the purchase of a defibrillator for the village with the PC pledging up to £500, and this will be purchased in the near future. OCC had paid a grant of £440 in 2017/18 towards grass cutting and this was offset against the £2630 paid for grass cutting around the village and playing field.

6. Matters arising from the reports

There were no matters arising

7. Questions from Residents

Diana commented that the daffodils in the village looked lovely in the spring and suggested that more could be planted for next year. She also added that she had a number of primroses that she intends to plant on the banks.

Comments were made regarding the smell of sewage which is a result of the newly build McDonalds at Baynards Green. The volume of sewage from McDonalds coming through Souldern is causing a back up in the drains thus causing the smell. Nick Oakhill is communicating with Anglian Water in an attempt to resolve this and will try to obtain a copy of the original planning permission approval detailing the drainage.

Expressions of thanks were made regarding the newsletter and a request was made for it to be published more frequently. The new committee will be taking over after the September issue.

Signed
Chair, Souldern Parish Council

Date