

MINUTES OF THE SOULDERN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL

ON

23rd May 2019

Present:

Nick Oakhill (NO) CHAIR
Laura How (LH)
John Hoodless (JH)
Kirsty Allpress (KA)
Alan Smith (AS)
Cathy Fleet (CF) CLERK

Members of the Public:

David Carlisle
Diana Stevens
Barbara McGarry
Barbara McGarry
Norma Jones
Clive Smith

Apologies:

Lucy Cornish
Chris Rothero

1. Welcome and apologies

Nick Oakhill opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present and accepted apologies from Lucy Cornish

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th May 2018 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

Chairmans Annual Report for 2018/19

Firstly, I would like to thank all of the councillors for their efforts over the past year, also Cathy Fleet our Parish clerk and RFO. I would like at this point to make special mention of Chris Rothero, who tonight is standing down after thirty years of active service on the council. Chris will have witnessed many changes over that period, with the most dramatic being the advent of the M40 motorway. Chris, many thanks on behalf of all of the parishioners for your sterling efforts over the years.

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 24 assorted planning applications (17 2017/18), 8 of which, have been for the lopping of trees (9 2017/18). Susan Jones and Barbara McGarry have taken over the delivery of the welcome packs to new residents from Ann Prescott

Issues during the Year

Having struggled for some time with the cumbersome nature of the Barclays online banking system, we finally bit the bullet and switched to Unity bank last year. To date this has led to a much smoother, hassle free administrative burden for all. We trust that this can be maintained for the foreseeable future. The Barclays account remains open, but with nil balance, in case of any need for it in the future.

We were scratching our heads about the best use for the changing rooms at this time last year. However following an approach made by Brackley Town football club, a very satisfactory solution was agreed. The football club replaced the loo's and kitchen area, and maintain the pitch using their own mowing contractor. We have an initial two year contract with them, for the U15/ U16 teams to use the pitch during the season.

Maintaining the community grassed areas became an issue for us last season, and in truth was not satisfactory for the summer period. Remedial action has been taken early this year, and we aim to avoid any repeats. A new contractor has been retained.

Following the initial teething problems with the MacDonalds waste water system, for the vast majority of the year there have been no issues. We have experienced a recent relapse, which was dealt with swiftly once reported. Parishioners are asked to bring it to the Chairmans or Clerks attention asap if there are any further reoccurrences.

The village website continues to be maintained by David Carlisle. thankyou for your efforts in doing this David.

Especially this year with the GDPR issues, that needed to be dealt with. 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 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 the new fence was erected in the Autumn. Lucy has plans to renew much of the structure that lies outside of the fenced area, and is currently working on funding proposals. We thank her and her team for their efforts.

The Village defibrillator is in place, on the wall of the Fox Inn, and a training evening was held in the late autumn for those parishioners interested in learning how to use the machine and how to perform CPR.

The memorial plaques to commemorate those from the village that gave their lives during the two world wars were placed on their respective trees in the autumn. They will need to be maintained regularly to keep them in good condition. This it is hoped will be done through a process of children adopting a tree/s.

As our financial officers report will confirm, everything we have done has been managed to operate 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 2019/20 our priorities as Councillors are to make sure we are making an effective contribution to other village organisations. A more united approach is necessary to enable us all to be sustainable in the future.

The Parish Council has volunteered to take part in a pilot scheme in order to more effectively monitor and repair potholes in the village, we are waiting for further information on this scheme. Having conducted a survey of those trees for which the Parish council is responsible, our aim is to implement a plan for management of these, which will require some remedial work to be carried out in the Autumn. Also wooden bollards are to be placed around the tarmacked area of the village hall car park, in order to discourage any unauthorised persons from parking on the sports field.

Nick Oakhill
23/05/2019

5. Financial Report

The end of year accounts have been prepared and will shortly be audited by the Internal auditor and then sent to the External auditor. The accounts will be available for public viewing after 3rd June by contacting the clerk and once audited will be available on the website. The precept requested from CDC for 2018/19 was £5700 and this figure has been maintained for 2019/20.

Grasscutting continues to be a major outlay for the village, but the engagement of a different contractor and Brackley Town Football Club taking responsibility for cutting the playing field has reduced this.

Another major outlay was the repairs required to the stone wall for which the parish council has responsibility.

The end of year accounts show a closing balance of £10,163 which includes funds held on behalf of the Playground Committee and Nancy Bowles Wood Advisory Group.

6 Update from the Nancy Bowles Wood Advisory Group to the Souldern Parish Council AGM 23rd May 2019

In February 2019 we again had a work party up in the wood. Five volunteers from the Advisory Group coppiced three more hazel trees. All three are showing good signs of regrowth. This brings to about 20 the number of hazels coppiced over the past four years. All but two have regenerated very well and most of the deer guards have now been removed as the new shoots grow above grazing height.

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An additional tree in the glade was also coppiced this year. Although not a hazel this tree had a severe lean as a result of another larger tree falling on it during Storm Doris in 2017. It is hoped that by removing the heavy leaning stems, over which gravity would eventually have triumphed, the regrowth will be strong and vertical. This tree too is regenerating well.

Jane and Ken Clifford have planted a memorial tree near the glade in memory of their son Sam.

Over the winter period the picnic bench was removed, cleaned and repainted. This is now back in the wood.

The childrens woodcraft group has continued to meet up in the wood once every two weeks.

The wooded fence in the glade overlooking the valley was installed many years ago when the wood was first planted and has been patched and repaired many times since. It finally reached the point of no return and has now been replaced by a cleft-chestnut post-and-rail fence.

The grass in the glade will continue to be cut during the summer months as required to maintain the glade as an open area.

Tim Vincent (chair of Advisory Group)

6. Matters arising from the reports

There were no matters arising

Signed
Chair, Souldern Parish Council

Date