

SWILLAND & WITNESHAM GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL
Clerk: Mrs.Libby Cotton, The Old Vicarage, Swilland, IP6 9 LP. 01473 785355
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Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 4th July 2007 at Witnesham Village Hall.

Present: Mr.Lightfoot, Mr.Cotton, Mr.Laughlin, Mr. Nicol, Mr.Lea, Mr.Coe, Mrs.Shaw, Mr.Butler, Mr.Hindle, Mr.Noble.
Also: Councillor Bellfield and Mr.Bob Farrow.

1. Apologies were received from Mr.Tyrrell, Mrs.Camp, Mrs.Reynolds, Mr.Rush, WPC.Gilmore and District Councillor Kate Waddell.
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 16th May were approved unanimously.
Matters arising: Bus shelter – this is on its way. A new notice board will be required . This is in hand.
Standing Orders:Mr.Lightfoot would check the Council meetings’ standing orders and **Mr.Cotton** would check the financial standing orders, liaise and recommend updates where necessary.
3. Declarations of interest: these were received from Mr.Cotton in respect of the clerk’s salary and Mr.Hindle for his P3 petrol costs.
Mr.Lightfoot then gave a synopsis of the new Code of Conduct which councils are, in effect, obliged to formally adopt – we have missed the publication of advertisements in the press but SALC have undertaken to place a further advert for those councils who missed the first, (with a September deadline.) On adopting the new code, all councillors must sign a new register of interests form and return it to the clerk within 28 days from the meeting adopting the Code. Mr.Lightfoot moved that council adopt the Code, proposed by Mr.Hindle, seconded Mr.Butler and carried unanimously.
4. Finance: Mr.Cotton reported that the recent meeting of the Finance Committee had approved the audited accounts. There was discussion about the value of our fixed assets which is currently £44,000. It may be necessary to raise the insurance on the new bus-shelter. The Council then approved adopting the audited accounts.

Approval of payments: the following were approved

a) Clerk’s salary	£385.25	
b) SCC – Witnesham school	£64.23	R
c) Witnesham School donation	£100.00	R (as agreed at previous meeting).
d) Wasps – worming costs etc	£489.42	R
e) Derek Austin – audit	£30.00	R
f) Elmy – grass Apr/May	£317.26	R
g) Suffolk Acre memb.renewal	£20.00	R
h) SCC – Playing field rent to May.07	£662.50	R
i) SBS repairs	£63.00	R

- j) J. Hindle mower petrol allowance (P3) £27.00
- k) D. Cotton “Bullgard” software £59.00

5. County Councillor’s report: Mr.Bellfield spoke about the County Council’s opposition to the proposed Unitary Status for Ipswich – SCDC are also against the proposal. It is felt that this would be bad for the rest of Suffolk since the money available from the government would remain the same but Ipswich would then try to get a larger share of it. All the CC’s saving plans have been put on hold for the time being. SORR: a PDP(Policy Development Panel) is being set up to look at problems caused by HGV’s on our roads – Mr.Bellfield will sit on this panel. The problems with Debach Enterprises continue, they have now applied to use the site for ‘car parking’ which is felt to be a backdoor way of getting ‘large truck parking’. SCDC appear not to be willing to challenge this. Mr.Noble asked whether we could ask Kate Waddell to try to attend the next SORR meeting on July 12th as well as the District Council planning meeting on July 25th. **The Clerk** would contact her with this request.
As she could not attend the meeting Kate Waddell had already sent a report to the parish council. (attached). There was some discussion about the proposed play area at Bealings about which there has been correspondence. Mr.Lightfoot pointed out that he had felt we had been notified out of courtesy and not really to give a view as a council. Mr.Hindle was anxious to find out what the funding hierarchy for parish councils is at the moment with particular reference to grants for projects such as this since we are also considering the play area issue currently. **The Clerk** would try to find out.
6. Police report: this had previously been circulated to members.
7. Affordable Housing : Mr.Lightfoot had sent his report to members. There was discussion about the pond which Hastoe have recently noticed at the site – they do not ‘do’ ponds. Mrs.Shaw reported that it is a natural feed pond – there was a suggestion that Mr.Jepson ,who lives in the adjacent cottage, might be interested in buying it. Mrs.Shaw would check her old maps to try to establish the owner of the relevant strip of land. Mr.Lightfoot will suggest to Hastoe that the pond is retained at the request of the council. Mr.Hindle brought up the carbon footprint issue – **Mr.Lightfoot** will follow this up.
8. Highways: SORR: Mr.Noble reiterated what Mr.Bellfield had said, and explained that the PDP mentioned by him was a cross party group, and he hoped there would be one non-councillor rep.on the panel, hopefully from SORR. There is a strong move from SORR to try to get Debach Enterprises application turned down.
Mr.Hindle reported flooding at the foot of Rose Hill in Witnesham, next to the bridge – also serious flooding in Sandy Lane through to Tuddenham caused largely by blocked drains and ditches in Bulls Hall Lane, causing flooding in both directions. There is also serious erosion being caused to the banks along the lane by the refuse and recycling lorries which use this route. While the refuse has to come once a week the other recycling lorries should not be using an access only route. Mr.Cotton also reported that there are

problems with visibility at various junctions e.g. Saffles Corner, Bonds Corner and the cross roads at the water tower and Gibraltar Road. **The Clerk** would notify the Highways department.

9. Youth Group: Mr. Lea reported that there are problems with the volunteers who have been running the group – Angela Street can no longer continue and it was felt that some professional help is needed. Mr. Lea suggested that some liaison with Mr. Coe and the play area scheme would be helpful. He felt that the Village Hall is not really a suitable place to hold their meetings in as there is no facility for outside activities which the children need. There will be no meetings after July for the holidays and it is hoped to restart in September.
10. Kick-about/play area: Mr. Coe felt that a committee should be formed to try to get something underway. We still do not have a clear idea of suitable location, what the young people actually want, and how feasible this would be. It was suggested contact with other villages who have similar schemes up and running would be beneficial. Various names were suggested including Mr. Rush, Alex Farmer, the new head of Witnesham School when she arrives, Angela Street etc. Regarding the playing field, Elmy Landscapes will cut back the brambles at the end of the field and keep this area under control. He also reported a request from a BT football team to use the field every Sunday morning. He had contacted Colin Richards who spoke about the previous overuse of the pitches when the Seniors were also playing and it was felt that with the current WASPS use it was not a good idea to let another team have it on a regular basis. There was some discussion about Wasps long term aim to buy another site and it was felt that every effort should be made to retain their link with Witnesham.
11. Footpaths: Mr. Hindle reported some correspondence with the CC about putting down a hard core surface on the Strawberry Hill footpath. It was reported that Strugglers lane was becoming overgrown. Mr. Laughlin also mentioned that some residents' hedges were becoming an obstruction to the path along the road particularly round Acre Close and towards the pub. It was suggested that Colin Webb be contacted to see if he could cut the hedge back near the school.
12. Planning: there have been no meetings since the last parish council meeting.
13. SALC: nothing to report.
14. VHMC: nothing to report.
15. Correspondence: a list had been circulated. It was agreed to send a donation of £50 to the East Anglian Air Ambulance.
16. AOB: Mr. Lightfoot had circulated a letter from Rev. Muggleston asking for financial help with his well-restoration and also for a reference for gaining grants for the project. It was not felt appropriate to support either and **Mr. Lightfoot** will write accordingly.
Mr. Laughlin said that he had moved the website host and this was up and running again. The web address is www.witnesham.org. Mr. Lightfoot reminded the meeting that Mr. Laughlin had e mailed councillors on April 18th with details and would welcome comments, ideas and contributions.

Tree-felling in Weyland Road – Mr.Lightfoot reported to the council about the felling of a 300 year old oak, cherry and ash in Weyland Road which has caused great concern to the residents. There has been much correspondence about this and Mrs.Reynolds has been collecting information. Mr.Lightfoot will write to the resident who caused the trees to be cut down to express the council's concern at these events.

Mr.Lightfoot reported that Mrs.Reynolds has agreed to take charge of the hedgerow survey, and is also considering the undertaking of a mature tree survey.

Mr.Lightfoot told the council that he would write a letter to Mrs.Gough officially thanking her for all her work at Witnessham School.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 19th September.