

Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 20th January 2010

Present: Mr. Lightfoot (Chair), Mr. Rush, Mrs. Reynolds, Mr. Hindle, Mrs. Shaw, Mr. Nicol, Mr. Laughlin.

Also present: PC Debbie Howgego, County Councillor Peter Bellfield and District Councillor Steve Hudson.

1. **Apologies:** received from Mr. Noble, Mrs. Camp. Mr. Lightfoot reported that Mr. Coe had regrettably offered his resignation from the Parish Council due to pressure of work. Mr Lightfoot had written thanking him for all his work, particularly as Playing Field Manager
2. **Minutes of previous meeting** were approved.
3. **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.
4. **Declarations of interest:** Mr. Hindle and Mr. Laughlin in relation to Agenda Item 7d: Donations to Witnessham Churchyard.
5. **County Councillor Report:** Councillor Bellfield started his report by saying that SCC had performed well during the recent prolonged bad weather. The problem now was potholes on the road surfaces. Any potholes deeper than 5 cm. will be dealt with as priority. On the subject of Local Government Reorganisation Councillor Bellfield reported that the District Councils have lost their appeal and are now considering whether they should appeal to the Supreme Court. Councillor Bellfield also reported that he expects the increase in Council Tax to be less than 3% for the Year 2010/2011.

District Councillor Report: Councillor Hudson said that he had little to add to the County Councillor's report.

6. **Police Report:** PC Howgego's report is attached. There had been 7 recorded crimes in Witnessham and 0 in Swilland since Parish Council meeting held on 18th November 2009. There had been no speed checks carried out, mainly due to the adverse weather conditions.

Mr. Hindle asked about damage to Witnessham Church in October. PC Howgego said that the police had followed it up but no one had been charged as there is insufficient evidence. PC Howgego will look into it further. It was stressed that the co-operation of the community is really important but to obtain this co-operation the police need to follow up reports of minor crimes so that residents see that their co-operation is valued.

Mr. Lightfoot spoke about the increase in the number of meetings that Parish Council SNT reps were invited to attend. This has grown from one meeting every three months to two meeting per month. Discussions continue.

Mr. Lightfoot said that he had volunteered Witnesham Village Hall for the March Public Community Engagement Meeting on 17th March 6:30 – 7:15 p.m. Mr. Lightfoot invited SWgPC Councillors to attend this meeting.

7. **Finance:** The Clerk as Responsible Finance Officer reported on:

- a) **Barclay's Bank Cheque Mandate arrangements.** As was suggested by Mr. Cotton at the meeting on 17th March 2009 the cheque mandate arrangements have been changed to any two from the three named signatories. The named signatories are Mr. Hindle, Mr. Lightfoot and Mr. Stanley.
- b) **Current Account.** Opening balance on 1st April 2009 was £1969.13. The balance at the last statement to 18th December was £1870.18.
- c) **Ipswich Building Society.** The current balance is £16,056.92 which includes interest credited on 30th November of £185.68.
- d) **Witnesham Churchyard.** The Parish Council has been asked to make a donation of £300.00 towards the cost of maintaining the Churchyard. The donation was proposed by Mr. Rush and seconded by Mrs. Reynolds. Mr. Hindle and Mr. Laughlin declared an interest and did not vote.

Swiland Churchyard. The Parish Council has been asked to make a donation of £227.25 towards the cost of maintaining the Churchyard. The donation was proposed by Mr. Rush and seconded by Mrs. Reynolds.

The Clerk confirmed that both these donations would be made in April.

Witnesham Baptist Church. Mr. Lightfoot reminded Councillors that although Planning Meetings are held in the Baptist Church there is no formal charging arrangement. In the past donations had been made to cover the cost of electricity and heating. To cover the years 2008 and 2009 Mr. Lightfoot suggested a donation of £75.00 per financial year, i.e. £150.00. This was seconded by Mrs. Reynolds. The Clerk confirmed that this donation would be made at the end of January 2010.

Payments:

Clerk's salary	£	416.38	
Four Season's Tree Care – Tree by Village Sign	£	175.00	
Philip Keys - repairs to Playing Field fence	£	34.50	R
Witnesham Village Hall hire	£	120.00	R
W. Archer – Maintenance	£	60.00	
Mr. Lightfoot – Stationery and Flowers for Libby Cotton	£	63.20	R

These payments were proposed by Mrs. Reynolds, seconded Mr. Rush and approved unanimously.

8. **To confirm the Precept for 2010/2011:** Following some discussion Mr. Rush proposed that the Precept for 2010/2011 remain at

£10,000.00. This was seconded by Mrs. Reynolds and carried unanimously.

9. **Highways: SORR:** Mr. Lightfoot stated that SORR had invested a staggering amount of effort into protecting our rural roads from overuse of HGVs but they now appear to be losing ground to more powerful bodies. Blatant transgressions of regulations had been carried out by Debach Enterprises and Gressingham Foods with very little reaction from SCDC. SORR are asking for our help and support. Mr. Hindle proposed that the Parish Council write to SCDC as soon as possible criticising their lack of enforcement and asking for greater stringency. This was seconded by Mrs. Reynolds and agreed unanimously.

Speedwatch: Other than that the 2010 rotas had been issued, there was nothing to report at the present time.

Rose Hill: Mr. Lightfoot reported that he had been informed that the Speed Limit Committee had now agreed to the reducing of the speed limit on Rose Hill from 60 mph to 40 mph. Mr. Lightfoot asked Councillor Bellfield if he would sponsor this proposal. Councillor Bellfield said he would look on any such proposal favourably but awaited the formal notification.

To consider the purchase and location of Grit/Salt Bins: Following much discussion it was decided to purchase two medium sized, dark green Grit/Salt Bins with immediate effect. One of these would be sited at the bottom of Hall Lane near the War Memorial, the other at the top of America Hill; these are in place of the previous bins that had rotted away. The total cost was expected to be £334.40 + VAT.

10. **Footpaths:** Mr. Hindle reported that the Boxing Day walk had been a great success. About 70 people took the opportunity to walk off their Christmas Lunch. The walk ended at the Barley Mow.
11. **Planning:** Mr. Lightfoot reported that we have received a Planning Application for two affordable dwellings on land to the rear of 29-39 Weyland Road. He also said that this application was not being well received by all residents because local children used this land as a safe play area.

With regard to the Half Moon affordable housing, there was serious interest in the three bed-roomed property from someone who currently lives on High Road, Swilland.

12. **Playing Field Management Committee:** It was reported that due to the resignation of Mr. Coe the PFMC currently did not have a manager. The PFMC was due to meet at Witnesham School on Tuesday 26th January. Mr. Lightfoot reported that the drive to the school from the road was severely rutted and pot-holed but he had been told that the School was soon to have a Library built and it was thought that it may be better to leave the drive until the builder's heavy traffic had finished.

Mr. Rush reported that the Changing Room doors needed urgent attention. Philip Keys had been asked to carry out the necessary work.

13. **SALC:** Mr. Lightfoot said SALC had been invaluable in helping to organise the Contract of Employment for the new Clerk. The Clerk

reported that the 'New Clerk's Day' course that he had attended recently was very informative.

14. **Village Hall Management Committee:** Mrs. Shaw reported that the Committee were due to meet on Tuesday 26th January 2010. Mr. Lightfoot raised the issue of fence which marks the boundary between the Village Hall and Manor Farm. He said that the owners of Manor Farm may be willing to part-fund replacement fencing of a good standard.

Mr. Hindle asked the VHMC to look at the drainage at the bottom line of the Village Hall Car Park. He said it was very boggy and difficult in wet weather.

Mr Lightfoot said that he was preparing costs for a sound re-enforcement system for the Hall for the VHMC. Mr. Rush suggested consideration of the installing a hearing loop for the partially deaf.

Mr Lightfoot thanked Mrs Reynolds for all her work in completing the Winesham Hedgerow Survey and for arranging for the Map to be framed. He would pass this on to the VHMC for it to be hung in the Hall.

15. **SCDC:** Mr. Lightfoot said there was nothing further to report other than what had already been reported by Councillors Bellfield and Hudson.

16. **Talitha Koum:** Mr. Lightfoot reported that there was nothing to report at the present time.

17. **Correspondence:**

The clerk said he had received a letter from Mr. Donaghy who rents an allotment. Mr. Donaghy stated that:

- some of the allotments were not being tended;
- allotment holders should be informed when rents were due to be discussed by the PC.

The clerk said he would talk to Mrs. Camp regarding both these matters.

Mr. Hindle asked if the Clerk had received a letter regarding the proposed overhead Electricity Transmission Lines in south Suffolk. The Clerk said he had not, but would look into it.

The meeting closed at 9:20 p.m.