

# SWANNINGTON WITH ALDERFORD AND LITTLE WITCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council held at St Margaret's Church,  
Swannington on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2016 at 7.36pm following the Annual Meeting for Parishioners

## Present:

Tim Praill (chairman)	Steve Williams
Trevor Nelson	Ed Jones
Helen Mutimer	
Malcolm Rust	Chris Liles (research on broadband)
Steve Griggs	PCSO Stephen Bridges
Hazel Nelson (minutes)	Angela Phipps (Swannington Charity for Relief of People In Need Hon. Treasurer)

1. **Apologies** None

2. **Declarations of Interest** None

3. **Election of Chairman.**

**It was resolved to elect Tim Praill as Chairman**

4a. **Police Report**

The parish of Swannington with Alderford and Little Witchingham has had **3** crimes for the 12 month period compared with **6** recorded crimes during the period of 01/04/2014 to 31/03/2015.

Reephams Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) latest priority for the next 3 months is:- Burglary Dwelling and Burglary Other Than Dwelling In The Reephams SNT Area

There have been a number of burglaries and thefts in Broadland area recently. Thieves have been targeting outbuildings/sheds and private farm land. Property taken includes trailers, ride-on-lawnmowers, strimmers and work tools.

PCSO Stephen Bridges was thanked and he left the meeting.

4b. **Election of officers to the Council.**

**It was resolved to elect the following:-**

Vice Chairman – EJ  
Planning Advisor – MR  
Finance Advisor – TN  
Commons Advisor - SW  
Highways Advisor – TP  
Footpath Warden – SG assisted by Pam Smith  
Play Area sub-committee – HM, Laura Marfell-Williams (chair), Jess Balado, Tessa Gregorie,  
Margaret Griggs, Sarah Mitchell, Kate Muir, Lesa Myhill, Christine Powles

5. **Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

**It was resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record**

6. **Matters Arising.**

- Play area lease – EJ has spoken to Mr Buxton who has expressed concern re: access to his potential building site if the play area belongs to the parish council. EJ plans to meet him July/August to discuss options. Council concerned about the delay in the promised “gift” – is compulsory purchase an option? **Action SG**
- “Hedge” – re-positioned **Action SG**
- Bus shelter – ongoing **Action SG**
- Value of assets – see item 9
- CIL – ongoing **Action MR**
- Letter re: urbanisation of commons delivered 13/4/16

- Boardwalk – quotes next agenda
- Village sign – ongoing
- Highways have completed work on Ketts Lane
- Drainage addressed but recent heavy rain may still have caused problems. Letter received from parishioner has been emailed to relevant Highways engineer.
- Broadband see item 8
- Certificate – see Annual Parishioner’s Meeting minutes

**Action SW**  
**Action SG**

**7. Swannington Charity for Relief of People In Need – accounts attached**

- Bank interest rate low
- Final payment for administration to Cassie Tillett
- People not applying; a regular piece in *Pilgrim* might encourage parishioners to consider who might benefit. We must all be aware of our neighbours. Angela Phipps was thanked and left the meeting.

**8. Better Broadband?**

Following report from Chris Liles:-

Marten Doran of BT specified there are potential users in Attlebridge and asked for the focus to be on potential provision/funding for Swannington, Alderford, Little Witchingham, Ugate & Hengrave. Already a fibre cabinet installed at Alderford so some properties have good Broadband already. Having this cabinet may eventually help technically. £25k is estimated to install for 5 villages/hamlets, but able to be more accurate once contacts for our Parish Council area have been submitted.

Benefits of going with BT Fibre Broadband:

1. Can then later use alternative suppliers.
2. Fibre is not weather dependent as are some other suppliers.
3. Line of sight not relevant as with some other suppliers.
4. We have then got fibre infrastructure for future BT services/upgrades.

Crowd funding is a possible route.

Currently worst performers are Hengrave, Ugate and Little Witchingham

However, Swannington village and Alderford already receive good speeds so that only leaves Ugate, Hengrave and Little Witchingham, areas with little population. What can be achieved? EJ and CL to engage with residents therein to determine enthusiasm for better broadband. Report at next meeting.

**Action EJ/Chris Liles**

Chris was thanked for this good research.

**9. Finance – Accounts attached**

- Audit submitted to external auditors and, as yet, no queries.

1) <b>It was resolved to agree the following payments:-</b>	<b>£</b>
• NWT (vet & farrier) -HLS (retrospective)	1,636.00
• Pest control for play area (retrospective)	120.00
• Norfolk Conservation Corps – HLS (retrospective)	33.75
• Stamps & envelopes	11.85
• CGM – grass cutting (May)	202.80
2) Received VAT payment	401.24
3) Received payment for grass-cutting churchyard	230.84
4) Received from Swannington Play Area for pest control	100.00
5) Received precept payment	4,250.00
6) Being helpful and interactive insurers, Came & Co. has been awarded the contract for another 3 years. They have advised to be covered for a) playground & b) all else as street furniture. Documentation providing a value would be required in the event of a claim. <b>It was resolved to insure everything for a total of £40,000.</b>	

7) **It was resolved to purchase a token of appreciation for the internal auditor.** **Action TN**

8) **It was resolved to make £120 donation to *Pilgrim*** **Action HN**

- Donations of £154.80 received for use of council equipment

## **10. Commons**

### **1. Volunteer Group Tasks**

14 volunteer days have been carried out at Alderford and Upgate Commons in the last year by Norfolk Conservation Corps (NCC) and Norwich Environmental Weekenders (NEWS).

#### ***Tasks Completed (since last report)***

*10/04/16 Alderford NCC Maintenance of car park, paths and steps*

#### ***Tasks Planned***

*19/06/16 Alderford NEWS tbc*

*17/07/16 Alderford NCC tbc (possibly removal of Himalayan Balsam/Bracken)*

*31/07/16 Upgate NCC tbc (possibly removal of Himalayan Balsam)*

*##/08/16 Upgate/Alderford NEWS tbc*

*##/09/16 Upgate/Alderford NEWS tbc*

### **2. Management Plans - No further action**

### **3. HLS Agreement**

Annual claim forms completed and returned by email on 05/05/16

Annual invoice from Norfolk Wildlife Trust to cover cost of vet/farrier visits to check treat the ponies received on 13/04/16 (cost £1,636). Other costs include NCC volunteer costs of £33.75.

### **4. Upgate Common**

Ponies – no problems. Pony checking volunteers are doing an excellent job – a couple more volunteers would be ideal (SW to place request for volunteers in the Pilgrim).

Boardwalk – a number of boards are still broken and the boardwalk is approaching the end of its useful life.

Two contractors have been approached so far to provide quotations for replacement.

As an alternative, the possibility of utilising volunteers/ Community Payback is being explored. We would need to supply materials (The boardwalk is in 7 sections measuring some 143m in total length with 999 tread boards supported on wooden piles and support rails. Estimated cost of materials for like for like replacement is in the region of £5,000 (although discount may be available for bulk buying). A meeting was held on 17/04/16 with Stephen Taylor (Project Coordinator with the Norfolk & Suffolk Community Rehabilitation Company) + SW, MR and SG. The boardwalk replacement is a project that they would be interested in doing. There is a small charge and we would need to supply a portable toilet in the vicinity. A decision on the best way forward can be made when we have contractor quotes.

Contractor, George Taylor will be returning soon for half a day to treat re-growth on the area of scrub cleared earlier in the year. (Estimated cost £65-£130).

Regarding invasive non-native plants, the Himalayan Balsam at Upgate has been kept under control over the last few years by the volunteer groups and any scattered re-growth will hopefully be dealt with during further tasks starting in July. The Crassula (New Zealand Pygmyweed) in the Hoss Pond remains a problem with no obvious means of eradication currently available.

Letter received from Hewins Ecology on behalf of Natural England requesting permission to include Upgate Common in national heathland survey to assess the effect of HLS heathland management options. Replied granting permission and awaiting confirmation of survey date.

### **5. Alderford Common**

The fenced grassed area has had a lot of clearance work done over the last year, but could still benefit from some temporary grazing. NWT have provided some contacts that they work with who may be interested in grazing. SW still to contact them to see if something can be arranged for 2016.

The area of the highly invasive Japanese Knotweed has returned following treatment and will require continued treatment over a number of years to totally eradicate. Contractor George Taylor will return as part of further work at Upgate. The Himalayan Balsam found late last year around the pond near the road bridge will be dealt with in the summer by a volunteer group. The Crassula in this pond remains a problem but does not appear to have spread to other ponds so far.

The pot holes in the car park have been filled and the area tidied up during a volunteer task in April.

Meeting held at Alderford on 17/04/16 with SW/SG and Ian Jolly to agree footpath maintenance priorities for the common this year.

We have been contacted by the Freshwater Habitats Trust hoping to include Alderford Common in a national pond survey using eDNA techniques to study Great Crested Newts. Permission granted on 13/05/16 – a member of NWT will collect the samples required.

### **6. Boardwalk**

**It was agreed by a majority to maintain a prepared walkway.**

Quotes are being sought for a) like for like and b) other options e.g. plastic replacement (as used at RSPB reserves). One contractor has already expressed an interest and another, who does some work for NWT, will meet on site next week.

**Action SW**

Volunteers could make temporary repairs. (Estimated cost £100-£200)

#### **7. Strimmer**

Parish strimmer needs replacing.

**Action SG**

#### **11. Highways**

- Highway rangers will be visiting Swannington and Alderford week of 6<sup>th</sup> June.
- Grass triangle in centre of Swannington village is being damaged by large vehicles and a site visit by Highways recommended kerbing and improved drainage. A concerned parishioner would prefer a small island but, as the cost of re-siting a telegraph pole and the village sign is prohibitive

**It was resolved to take the advice from Highways and kerb the existing triangle to prevent erosion of ground.**

Respond to parishioner

**Action TP**

#### **12. Planning**

- Deighton Hills has withdrawn application
- “Cherry Tree Farm” application for holiday lets
- Atlas works, Lenwade have resubmitted their application for household waste and light industrial waste to be shipped in

#### **13. Correspondence**

- There will be reduced verge cutting this season
- The Barn Reepham Road, Alderford is now “Bluebell Barn”
- Request to rename playing fields to commemorate WWI – Play Area committee to consider
- Letter from parishioner re: flood risk to his property

#### **14. AOB**

- Possible leaflet identifying historical sites
- Next meeting July 21<sup>st</sup> 2016

Meeting closed 9.16 pm

**Action SG**