

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SWEFLING PARISH COUNCIL
13 APRIL 2021
Virtual Meeting
7.30-8.55 pm

PRESENT: John Stanley in the Chair

COUNCILLORS: Jude Chin(JC), Julia Kinsey (JK), Erika Spall (ES).Prof. John Tesh (JT) and Martin Wyard(MW) and District Cllr Maurice Cook (MC)

IN ATTENDANCE: Michael Smithson ,Clerk to the Council, Nicola Jenner of East Suffolk Communities Office (NJ),

Members of the public, Jill Abbott (JA), and Robert Rusack (RR), were also in attendance.

APOLOGIES: An Apology was received from Audrey Lummis, who has no access to technology to allow participation. Cllr Stephen Burroughes is unable to attend as he is in "purdah" on account County elections.

1. **CHAIRPERSON:** John Stanley was appointed Chairperson and chaired the meeting throughout.
2. **NOTICES AND QUORUM:** The Chair confirmed that there was a quorum and that due notice of the meeting had been circulated.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/DISPENSATION:** No declarations of interest were declared.
4. **MINUTES:**
 - a. Minutes of the meeting of 09 March 2021 having been circulated prior to the meeting, it was **unanimously resolved** that the minutes represented a true record of that meeting and the Chair was given **authority to sign** the same as drawn.
 - b. Minutes of the meeting of 01 April 2021 having also been circulated prior to the meeting were with the exception of a typographical error at paragraph 5 h. approved, subject to deletion of the words " the Clock" and replacement by "the Clerk". The minutes were accordingly **unanimously approved as amended** and authorised for the signature by the Chair as a true record.
 - c. There were no matters arising.
5. **BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:**
 - a. **Public Forum**
 - i. The Chair introduced **Cllr Erika Spall** as a newly co-opted member of Council. Cllr Spall's term of office will be until 2023 when the next council elections take place. He wished Cllr Spall well and he and the other councillors looked forward to working with her in the future.
 - ii. There was no report from **Cllr Stephen Burroughes** for the reason mentioned above.
 - iii. Report from **Cllr Maurice Cook**.
 1. MC's Weekly Bulletins, having been circulated prior to the meeting were taken as read. MC took the opportunity of mentioning the availability and successful distribution of Restart Grants for businesses which needed start-up funding following shutdown, due to COVID-19 . Funds distributed to date amounted to £1.7 million . If this fund is exhausted then it is anticipated that further funds will become available.

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2. As far as food recycling is concerned, Waveney District will no longer be accepting recycled food in green bins and such waste will in future need to be disposed of in grey household waste bins. It was thought that this approach might be repeated elsewhere in the County, until the autumn when new more comprehensive arrangements including food waste, will hopefully be introduced. There should also be waste glass collection facilities at that time.
 3. **JC** thanked **MC** for continuing to distribute his very helpful reports and took the opportunity of questioning **MC** in relation to whether or not it might be possible to extend the current capability of virtual meetings as there was a definite benefit for councillors and residents alike. **MC** confirmed that approaches were already being made to the Central Government, but he did not currently hold out any hope. There was also mention of a court case involving Hertfordshire County Council and another party challenging H M Government over the termination of the remote meeting arrangements .
 4. Finally, as regards conducting meetings from the Village Hut he thought that a "gizmo: might be made available from his budget to allow the council meetings to be broadcast online without Wi-Fi. The Clerk confirmed that he would contact Cllr Cook in this respect.
- iv. **Report from N J, Communities Officer.**
1. **NJ** was briefly introduced by the Clerk and then gave the meeting a significant amount of information concerning the operations of Communities Team operating within East Suffolk. **NJ** explained that her office would assist in the provision of sourcing grants . At the present time much of the office's resources were being applied towards young people and the vulnerable and her office was assisting larger nearby councils e.g., with the provision of a shared wheelchair accessible vehicle and the future establishment of an electric taxi service. Resources were being concentrated on larger centres of population for the time being. **NJ** had a prepared, presentation which she delivered by taking the meeting through her slides (distributed beforehand) to expand upon the above. By way of other examples:
 - a. Resources were available to assist with village Hall refurbishment following Lockdown.
 - b. In the field of Health and Wellbeing access to transport and "Granpads" i.e., devices for over 65-year-olds isolated without any connection to the internet. **JT** wondered if Cllr Lummis might benefit from such an opportunity as because of Covid regulations she had been prevented from participating in council meetings. The Clerk it was confirmed would get in touch with Cllr Lummis to find out if she might wish to benefit.
 - c. The chair thanked **NJ** for her very comprehensive presentation. At this point **NJ** left the meeting.
- v. **Public Forum**
1. The chair asked if any members of the public had anything to say at this point. In the case of **JA**, she confirmed that she merely wished to observe . **RR** said that he wished to make a point about

a number of concerns relating to the mismanagement of the Council, which RR said he wished to be minuted. The Chair acknowledged this point and said that they would be dealt with later in the meeting under the heading "Correspondence".

b. **Matters Arising from Previous Meetings:**

- i. JC reported that he had made some progress in identifying and recording on the local map supplied by the Clerk, both the landowners and contractors operating properties over which **Village footpaths/rights of way** passed. His initial contacts with individuals were favourable and the contractors/ landowners said that they appreciated the intended informal approach should any perceived infringement occur. He would continue with his work and report further in due course.
- ii. The Chair reported that work on the Village Emergency Plan was making progress and the council would be updated shortly.
- iii. The Chair reported that he had inspected the signpost at the South eastern end of the village opposite 'Alde House' and on closer inspection noted that it was seriously dilapidated, and work would be required to repair it. It was important that the village sign which was historic should be preserved. MC indicated that funds might be available from the Village Communities Budget and agreed to forward to the Clerk a revised grant application form. It was **Unanimously Resolved** that the Clerk should complete an application form once estimates were to hand.
- iv. As regards the **historic triangles** of land both he and the Clerk had walked Mill Rd yesterday and it was thought that a team should be got together in order to transfer earth from the triangle at the eastern end. RR suggested that an approach might be made to the contractor currently working at the development site in mill Rd. RR said he would make enquiries.
- v. As regards the actual development at **Mill House** the Clerk reported that his attempts to get answers to questions from the Planning Department had fallen on deaf ears. MC confirmed that if the planning reference number might be sent to him he would see if he could encourage a response. It reserved for unanimously resolved that the Clerk should provide this information to MC for that purpose.
- vi. In relation to **the Clerk's Contract of Employment and Standing Orders**, it was agreed that the Clerk would now circulate finalised versions of both documents to all Councillors. The documents (previously circulated) had been unanimously approved on 09 March 2021.
- vii. **AGM May and Annual Village Meeting 2021.** The chair reported that ordinarily the AGM would have been held on Tuesday 11 May 2021 but as COVID-19 restrictions are unlikely to be changed until 17 May 2021 it was proposed and **unanimously agreed** that the meeting should be deferred a week until **Tuesday 18 May** even then there may be difficulties. **The Annual Village Meeting**, usually held on the same day as the AGM, would need to be arranged with similar problems. The Clerk agreed to contact the Village Hut Committee, The Townland Trust, plus all of the local clubs and societies (Bowls and Tennis) and any others., as well as Suffolk Police, in order to invite written reports with a view to seeing how matters develop. If the worst came to the worst then the written reports would at least achieve something. Holding the meeting in St Mary's Parish Church might be an option? In either case MC indicated that there might be a "chat" option available to permit the involvement of greater numbers including members of the public.

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- viii. **Co-option of New Councillor.** RR made an observation to the effect that he thought that the election of Erica Spall to the Council had not followed proper procedure . The Clerk pointed out to him that the process did not involve an election but was a statutory co-option procedure to fill a casual vacancy and that due and proper procedure had been followed.
- ix. **Village Project.** No decision has yet been taken as to how, if at all, to further the circular bench installation at Jubilee Field. The Clerk commented that he had still not made any meaningful contact with White House farm he therefore recommended that matters be stood over to the next meeting and his suggestion was **Unanimously Approved**. ES mentioned that the large circular swing at the Field was squeaking and asked permission to lubricated it which was agreed.
- x. The Clerk having registered the Council with the Information Commissioner's office, suggested that he be appointed Data Controller, upon the basis that he would be at liberty to arrange training via SALC to fulfil the role properly and fully. The Clerks appointment and authority to undertake training was **unanimously agreed**.
- xi. **Barclays Bank Updated Mandates.** Documents relating to the updated bank account mandates having previously been circulated by the Clerk, it was **Unanimously Resolved** that the Clerk should be permitted to submit the forms signed by the Chair, countersigned as necessary to comply with the bank's requirements.
- xii. **Present Financial Position.** The Clerk having prior to the meeting circulated copy bank statements, cash book updated to 23rd of March 2021 and a bank reconciliation statement, the present financial position of the Council as evidenced by those documents, it was unanimously resolved that the Council's financial position be noted and approved.
- xiii. **Correspondence.**
1. **Background.** The Chair wished to address issues involving the Council and Robert Rusack, who had as a member of the public had attended the Council's virtual meeting on April 1st 2021 and who had subsequently been in touch with the Council complaining about alleged impropriety on the part of certain unnamed councillors and one or more of the two remaining applicants for the casual vacancy of councillor to be filled by co-option. Copy emails between the Clerk and RR had been circulated to the Councillors.
 2. The Chair referred to the meeting of 01 April 2021 and to an email received by him timed at 19:42 at which time the meeting which had been initially delayed for technical reasons was already underway and was actually being participated in by RR, insisting that the meeting be rescheduled owing to the fact that he, RR, had forwarded the Zoom invitation sent to him to third parties who he had not identified.
 3. During the course of the meeting RR had made verbal allegations that two of the Councillors had "relationships" with one or more of the applicants for co-option onto the Council and those Councillors should accordingly have declared interests in the proceedings at the outset.
 4. The Clerk was invited to comment and advise. The Clerk addressed RR, requesting that RR substantiate the allegations by identifying the individuals within the Council to whom he was referring and also to identify the candidate for co-option to whom he had intended to refer to. If RR failed or refused to provide the identities and evidence of

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wrongdoing then the Clerk advised that the allegations should be dismissed.

5. RR refused to withdraw the allegations,(thereby effectively repeating them) but responded by saying that he had asked the Clerk to circulate the Councillors requesting them to verify that they had no declarable interest. The Clerk neither accepted nor denied this conversation but repeated his request for the allegations either to be substantiated or withdrawn at which point RR responded by saying that he would be taking legal advice on the point given the background of what he considered to be Council's poor performance.
6. The Chair commented that without specific details of the relationships complained of or even indentifying the persons intended to be referred to, everyone on the Council as a whole as well as the candidates were effectively being made the subject of the RR allegations.

At this point the meeting which had been booked on Zoom for two consecutive periods of 40 minutes, terminated owing to the expiry of the booking. Unfinished business will therefore be concluded at next meeting of the Council in June. Viz.

- A.Planning update; and**
- B.Questions to the Chair**

6. ACTIONS:

Ref.	Action	Responsible person(s)	Timeline
5.a.iii.4.	Availability from Cllr MC of gizmo to allow the Council's meetings to be broadcast online without Wi-Fi.	The Clerk	Next meeting
5.a.iv.4.	The Clerk it was confirmed would get in touch with Cllr Lummis to find out if she might wish to benefit from the provision of a "Grandpad".	The Clerk	Next meeting
5.b.i	Village footpaths/rights of way update	JT	Next meeting
5.b.ii	Village Emergency Plan to be progressed	The Chair	Next meeting
5.b.iii	Village Signpost opposite Alde House repair and refurb..	The Chair	Next meeting
5.b.iv	Historic Triangles update	The Chair	Next meeting
5.b.v	Mill House development: Assistance in contact with Planners.	The Clerk and MC	Next meeting
5.b.vi	Clerk's Contact of Employment and Standing Order distribution	The Chair and The Clerk	ASAP
5.b.vii	Procurement of written reports from 3 rd parties for Annual Village Meeting and Notice of Meeting	The Clerk	ASAP
5.b.ix	Village Project. Decision deferred pending future discussions in relation to Jubilee Field	The Clerk	Next Meeting
5.b.x	Clerk to submit new mandate to Barclays after signatures added	The Clerk	Next Meeting

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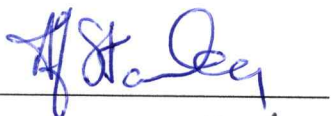
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7. **NEXT MEETING:**

The date and time for the next meeting (the AGM) is as mentioned on Tuesday 18 May 2021 at 7.30 pm.

The meeting closed by the Chair at 8.50 pm

Signed



John Stanley, Chair.

18th May 2021



Bank reconciliation – pro forma

This reconciliation should include all bank and building society accounts, including short term investment accounts. It must agree to Box 8 in the column headed "Year ending 31 March 20xx" in Section 2 of the AGAR – and will also agree to Box 7 where the accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis. Please complete the highlighted boxes, remembering that un-presented cheques should be entered as negative figures.

Name of smaller authority: Sweffing Parish Council

County area (local councils and parish meetings only): Suffolk

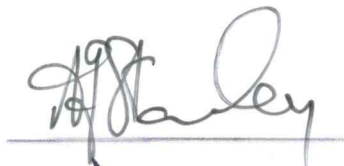
Financial year ending 31 March 2021

Prepared by (Name and Role): Mike Smithson Clerk/RFO

Date: 11/04/2021
2021-04-11 BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT 01 APRIL 2021

	£	£
Balance per bank statements as at 23.03.21		
Barclays Business Account	£863.97	
Barclays Premium Account		£4,451.98
		<hr/>
		£5,315.95
Petty cash float (if applicable)	Nil	£0.00
Less: any un-presented cheques as at 31/3/20 (enter these as negative numbers)		
[add more lines if necessary]		
		<hr/>
Add: any un-banked cash as at 31/3/20		£0.00
		<hr/>
		£0.00
Net balances as at 01/04/21 (Box 8)		<u>£5,315.95</u>

Signed Chairperson
John Stanley



Signed Clerk/RFO
Michael Smithson



Dated 13th April 2021

Sweffling Parish Council

Invoices for approval
Parish Council Meeting 13 April 2021
Agenda item 5b.

Date	Item	Payee	Amount £	Legal power	Invoice approved	Statement checked
31.03.21	Clerk's salary	M SMITHSON	*272.48	LGA 1972 s.112	13.04.21	} £346.16 MSS
16.03..21	Refund Clerk ICO fee	M SMITHSON	*40.00	LGA 1972 s.112	—	
19.03.21	Refund Clerk Website hosting	M SMITHSON	*16.84	LGA 1972 s.111	—	
01.04.21	SALC Annual Membership	SALC	143.08	LGA 1972 s.111	—	100660
10.04.21	Refund Clerk Website hosting	M SMITHSON	*16.84	LGA 1972 s.111	—	30/4
TOTAL			489.24			} see above
£346.16 total due to MSS, cheque no- £143.80 SALC — n 100659					100660	23/4

CHAIR
John Stanley 

CLERK
Mike Smithson 

Date of approval 13. April 2021