

## SWANTON MORLEY PARISH COUNCIL

A Meeting of Swanton Morley Parish Council was held in Swanton Morley Village Hall on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019. The meeting commenced at 8.00pm.

**Present:** Mr R. Atterwill (Chairman), Mrs B. O'Dowd, Mr S. Westbury, Mr G. Curran, Mr J. Keen and Mr J. Rodrigues. Also in attendance was Mrs K Pickard (Clerk).

### Matters Raised Under Time Allocated to the Public.

None were raised.

### *The Meeting Went Into Session*

#### **1. To Accept Apologies for Absence**

None were received. All Councillors were present

#### **2. To Receive Declarations of Interest**

None were received.

#### **3. To Consider the principle of purchasing land for amenity woodland and public access**

Mr Westbury addressed the room with the concept of purchasing amenity land in Swanton Morley. Although the previous council had agreed the concept it was felt that it was appropriate to get this council's view.

Mr Westbury referred to the Village's Neighbourhood Plan and its vision.

**"Swanton Morley is, and will continue to be, a great place for our children to grow up and make their homes, with a real sense of community.**

**To preserve and enhance the history, rural aspect, natural environment, attractive outlook, Village atmosphere and unique natural beauty, for all of the community to enjoy, whilst embracing a prosperous and sustainable future as a place where people choose to live, work and visit."**

Mr Westbury then discussed the relevant objectives listed in the Swanton Morley Neighbourhood Plan. These include:-

**"To protect the countryside and farmland surrounding our village; promoting green space, woodland and support nature conservation.**

**To develop and improve local community facilities and services (such as education, medical and recreation) for all age groups."**

Following the extensive consultation events with the Village on the Neighbourhood plan, Mr Westbury also referred to the most highly supported proposals. These include:-

**"Open green spaces should be protected and biodiversity encouraged."**

**"More green open space, footpaths & cycleways, which are easily accessed & safe to travel."**

Both of these proposals received 100% public support.

Taking into consideration the above information and the loss of permissive pathways in the Summer of this year, Mr Westbury asked the Councillors if they were still in support of the 'Concept' of purchasing amenity land.

Mr Westbury proposed the agreement of the concept seconded by Mr Curran and carried.

Full Council was in attendance and the decision in favour was unanimous.

**4. To receive proposal to Close the Meeting to the Press and Public for Item 5 as Permitted under s2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as Publicity would be Prejudicial to the Public Interest**

Mr Atterwill proposed the meeting close to the Press and Public seconded by Mr Curran and carried.

**5. To consider the purchase of land for amenity use**

Mr Atterwill took to the floor and delivered a report on an opportunity that has come up in the Village and the background of the suggested land which is currently pasture land.

The land-owners have now decided to sell the land at Auction on 11<sup>th</sup> June at Barnham Broom.

A site visit has been undertaken and it is felt that this is a good opportunity with a view to creating 'Swanton Morley Woods'. This would be a perfect location to grow trees, build a picnic area, and walking site for the whole community to enjoy. If this land is acquired it will provide additional accessible pathways.

Mr Westbury provided some figures to Councillors in order to fund the purchase from the Public Works Loan Board over the period of 50 years. This was a comparison of two loan figures.

Mr Keen had a concern over the figure that there may be a shortfall so he suggested that the Parish Council should increase the requested amount.

With this in mind Mrs O'Dowd raised concerns over the outgoing costs. Mrs O'Dowd explained that in addition to the Public Works Loan there would also be the legal fees, the initial set up and the insurance. Mrs O'Dowd would like this to be taken into consideration when making a decision. Mr Atterwill advised councillors that it is unlikely that there would be an insurance increase as it is already covered in the existing policy. He went on to advise that the Parish Council has sufficient reserves to cover set up costs. The Clerk is to contact Came & Company Insurers to enquire if there is an increase in the policy to include the potential ownership of the land. Mr Atterwill went on to say that Swanton Morley is earmarked for considerable growth in terms of new housing development over the next few years and that these new householders will also contribute to the precept. The existing PWLB loans which the council has will be paid off in 2028.

It was discussed that this would be a wonderful opportunity for Village Involvement in designing the layout of the proposed woodland which will be of great benefit for future generations.

Mr Westbury proposed that The Parish Council apply for a Public Works Loan to the value of £150,000 over the period of 50 years seconded by Mr Keen and carried.

Full Council was in attendance and the decision in favour was unanimous.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

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(Chairman) \_\_\_\_\_ Date