

SWANTON MORLEY PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY 19th JANUARY 2026 AT 7PM

SWANTON MORLEY VILLAGE HALL

Councillors Present: Mr R. Atterwill (Chairman), Mrs B. O'Dowd, Mr J Phillips, Mr S. Gauntlett and Mr B Powter

Also in attendance: Mrs K. Pickard

Matters Raised Under Time Allocated to the Public

No members of the public were in attendance.

The Meeting Went into Session

1. To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Turner, Councillor Rodrigues, Councillor Walker-Fraser and Councillor Venworth accepted by the Council.

2. To Receive Declarations of Interest

Councillor Powter declared an interest in allotments

3. To Consider the tender for the Main Areas Grass Cutting Contract for 2026

The Clerk had produced a schedule of contractors following the tender process.

This was sent to five different contractors.

Two tenders were received out of five so the schedule was based on the two received.

The Clerk then talked through the schedule and evaluation criteria.

Councillor O'Dowd proposed that Walpole Mowing is appointed in line with the terms of the grass cutting tender seconded by Councillor Powter and carried

4. To consider the tender for the Churchyard and Burial Ground Grass Cutting Contract for 2026

The Clerk reported that five tenders had been circulated for the burial ground and churchyard, only one had been received from the existing contractor.

It was discussed that over the last three years, the quality of work has been very good, communication and sensitivity of the locations.

Councillor Gauntlett proposed that Garden Guardian continue with the grass cutting contract in line with the terms of the tender, seconded by Councillor Powter and carried

5. To Agree the 2026/2027 Parish Council Budget

The draft budget had been sent to Councillors for consideration prior to the meeting.

This consisted of a breakdown of items that form the budget.

Staff costs were agreed to include the increase a potential government increase. The rate for the pension fund has been reduced by 0.05%

The Training budget was agreed to remain £488 specifically for additional clerk training, Autumn seminar and potential new councillor training.

The general expenditure was discussed.

The budget for stationery has been reduced as most of the communications is now paper-less.

This heading also includes telephone and broadband, Insurance and a one off set up fee for Councillors to have .org email addresses in line with new assertion 10 legislation.

Legal and Contingency

This item includes an amount for Parish Council contingency and a small reserve fund.

There has also been an amount allocated for a grant to the Village Hall for architect report costs for refurbishment work.

Councillor Atterwill reported that he has now had a meeting with Breckland Council to discuss the Breckland owned land on Middle Camp and a proposal to transfer this to the Parish Council, following this meeting it was suggested that this would be transferred for £0 however the Parish Council would need to cover the legal fees.

Councillor Atterwill also raised that Breckland Council would like to see a copy of the independent district valuers report for the parcels of land. Councillor O'Dowd confirmed that this is in line with transparency.

Councillor Atterwill proposed that the District Valuers Report is shared with Breckland Council seconded by Councillor O'Dowd and carried

There is also a sum for the finalised Neighbourhood Plan review and the Public Works Loan repayment figure.

There is a cost included for an internal audit as well as the external audit, subscriptions to public bodies and the technical support fees. The annual list of donations were kept the same.

Democratic – this covers the Councillor expenses and the Chairman's allowance.

Communications and Community were discussed.

The budget was agreed to include 3 copies of the Mardler publication and the Annual Parish report. Copies have been increased to include additional households in the village and on Robertson Barracks.

The Parish Hardship fund was removed as from April there will be a Crisis and resilience fund available through the District council.

A sum of £3588 has been included in the community budget for Street Wardens to visit the village twice a month. This is to try and help with ongoing issues of antisocial behaviour in some locations in the village. The Wardens will work with Swanton Morley Parish Council, residents and outside agencies to try and improve a situation which we know blights the lives of some residents.

The budget for Christmas was discussed. Correspondence had been received from a parishioner regarding the Christmas display in 2025 and the number of trees being reduced.

The Parishioner had requested that a contingency is put in the budget for future installation of the Christmas trees and lights.

The Clerk had contacted a contractor for a quote and this was received for £2,000.

Full Council agreed that this would not be included but there is a sum in the budget to purchase a large tree to be installed by the flag pole and to cover any expenses for the Carols in the Church event.

It was noted that the installation of Christmas trees and lights in the village is not a statutory requirement. This is usually carried out from donations and by volunteers.

If there are any additional volunteers that would like to assist in decorating the trees in the future, they are welcome to contact the Clerk.

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The rest of the community budget includes a sum for the Manns Lane rental, defibrillators and the Permissive footpath contract. This is reduced for the next financial year as it is felt walk 10 will be removed.

Highways – this heading has been included with the 50% contribution for the Parish Partnership scheme to assist the school with highway safety.

Grounds maintenance and assets costs have been increased for 2026/2027 due to the increase in cost from the contractors.

The burial ground and churchyard budget include a figure for general maintenance, the annual service of the church clock, and a donation to the Swanton Morley Shed project for the restoration of the noticeboard.

The open spaces budget is allocated for seat and bench maintenance, RoSPA inspection of all equipment, replacement litter bins and noticeboards.

The budget for Allotments has stayed the same for this financial year for any maintenance costs.

The budget for common lands is earmarked for the pressure washing of the boardwalks and picnic bench on Burgh Common and fence work to be carried out on Mill Common.

Councillors agreed the maintenance budget for streetlights and included an increase to the electricity. This figure also includes the proposal to install an additional streetlight on Greengate.

The income and expenditure for the remainder of 2025/2026 was then discussed.

The bank balances as at 08/01/2026 were confirmed.

Expenditure that was due to be paid out between 01/01/2026 and 31/03/2026 was detailed as a breakdown, as was the expected income figure to include the expected VAT reclaim.

The proposed budget sheet was then presented to reflect the discussions and agreements by councillors. The figures confirmed included the staff costs, grounds and assets, communications, and community costs, and legal and contingency.

Councillor Atterwill then talked through the projected income figure.

This includes allotment fees, football pitch income, the nominal sum from Norfolk County Council for the cutting element and the Higher Level Stewardship.

The Nationwide savings account breakdown was shared with Councillors. This details a breakdown of how the s106 money from a developer is being used. This account also generates annual interest. Money from this account will be used to pay for some expenditure items shown in the budget.

Following this discussion, the budget figure that was arrived at was £118,202.

Councillor Atterwill proposed that the budget figure of £118,202 is approved seconded by Councillor O'Dowd and carried

6. To Agree the 2026/2027 Parish Council Precept

The tax base for the village has decreased for 2026/2027 to 810.50.

The precept figure that was arrived at for 2026/2027 was £113,012.

Councillor Atterwill proposed that the precept figure of £113,012 is approved seconded by Councillor Gauntlett and carried

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The Meeting Was Suspended for Further Comment from the Public

No public were present

The meeting closed at 8.36pm

_____ (Chairman) _____ Date