

## SWANTON MORLEY PARISH COUNCIL

**THE SWANTON MORLEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** was held Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 7.30pm at Swanton Morley Village Hall and was attended by three parish councillors, and 16 members of the public. Also in attendance was Mrs K. Pickard (Clerk to the Council).

The meeting was chaired by Mr R Atterwill, Chairman of Swanton Morley Parish Council

### **1. Apologies for Absences**

Apologies were received from Mr Borrett, Mr Rodrigues, District Councillor Richard Duffield, Mrs L Syer, Little Swans and Rev. Rosie.

### **2. Chairman's Report – Mr Roger Atterwill, Chairman of Parish Council**

The Chairman's report had been distributed to the village. This report focussed on:

- The update of the Parish Team. Mr Atterwill reported that Mr Cawdron and Mr Lappin had resigned and thanked them for their time on the council.
- The finance element of the report and an explanation of the council tax costs along with the budget figure for the year and agreed budget figure for the forthcoming year.
- Mr Atterwill provided an update on the Churchyard, Burial Ground and Open spaces and which included thanks to Swanton Morley Gardening Club for the donation of £200 towards the planting surrounding the lectern.
- Mr Atterwill provided information from the Environment aspect and talked about the saplings that were planted by volunteers in 2021.
- Highway issues and how the Parish Council are managing them
- The Platinum Jubilee Festival

### **3. To Agree Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

Mrs O'Dowd proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record of the Annual Parish meeting seconded by Mr Venworth and carried.

### **4. Matters arising from the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2019.**

A member of the public asked if Norfolk County Council still has the intention of improving the broadband in the Village. Mr Atterwill responded that in his absence County Councillor Borrett has provided a report and this is included.

### **5. Reports from Village Organisations**

**The following reports were received.**

#### **a) Angel Bowls Club – Report received from Mr P Hendley and delivered by Mr Atterwill**

I normally interweave the annual report into the Christmas dinner speech as a bit of light entertainment for members, so I am pleased to report a cautious return to normal following the cancellation of the previous year. I look forward to the annual Christmas lunch which I'm pleased to say we are able to run again after a two year break.

It is with a measure of optimism that this season got underway with the Covid rules in place and we had to adapt to the changes imposed by the leagues on the three block format. To that end we also rearranged our layout on the green to give a wider area of play, but unfortunately the centre rink played on what was the uneven surface of the drainage we put in some years ago. However we persevered throughout the season with that rink. It made little difference to the roving cot game as freedom of the rink kept us off that area. We reintroduced membership and rink fees as playing got underway again, however with the reduction in blocks meant a loss of income to the club with the forecast of normal outgoings to cover. It was always the plan to replace the current lawn mower this last year and we had "ring fenced" money to cover this

item. This purchase was made and a reconditioned Dennis mower with cassette attachments was made early on in the season, and a marked improvement both in use and on the green was noted. The old mower has been retained as it has no resale potential, and can be used should it be required.

With the resumption of playing the loss of social interaction was also felt, and the lack of income generated by the raffle cards following the game and also the fewer members coming into the pub or staying for a drink drew us to the conclusion to abandon the raffle cards and the club would stand the cost of refreshments from funds. This was helped considerably with the award of a sports council grants through the Breckland D C. We have been fortunate with our Treasurer that our bank balance could cover any outstanding ongoing costs for the season without any increase subscription or rink fees. The healthy balance allowed us to contract out the end of season grounds maintenance, not only to save members the usual work out but to show a positive use of grant money. Further ground work and expenditure is now being undertaken to reinforce the green corner to counter subsidence experienced through rotting tree roots. The capital expenditure of bowls carriers has also been approved as the club moves forwards.

Our usual form of friendly's with like minded clubs both at the start and finish of the season have really been well received and have become firm favourites on the bowling calendar. Alas the planned Spring Cup event was a continued victim of the poor weather and kept having to be rearranged due to forecast, however it was finally achieved and Gerald Martin took the honours to add a new name on the trophy. It is also cheering to note that a new member David Stone won the President's Cup day so our congratulations to them both.

To sum up this has been one of the most difficult years to face and yet we have managed probably to have the set of consistent best results the club has ever reached. Again it has not been an easy task to put out and select teams, but our block captaincy has worked efficiently and to our credit all fixtures have been honoured with a full team turn out. Alas one of the down sides to this season has been the fact that with a strong membership we have been getting fewer games on the whole and also the block system has meant restrictions on the social aspect of playing with other club members as we are confined to the blocks. We may be able to address this next year, but we have to wait to see how the league AGM's address the format for next season to be able to make constructive moves within the club. We have scope for possibly forming a second Age Concern team, but we need to ensure we can support this before making a commitment if the leagues retain the current three block system.

I would just like to say on behalf of all members "a thank you" to your Committee members who have managed to steer us through this difficult period, in looking after all the interests of the Club.

We have experienced the extra visit to rink one on the green with moles which has been dealt with by having Mike Balaam's expertise in mole catching.

Tomorrow we are supporting the village Fireworks so again thank you to all those involved, as it all helps with keeping us funded.

Thank you to the outgoing treasurer John Thomas for his many years service to the club and welcome in the new treasurer David.

We also look forward to seeing many of you again at the Christmas lunch at Wensum Valley at the end of the month.

Liz and I extend our good wishes to all club members, spouses, girlfriends and partners for a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful and safe New Year for all, as we look ahead to 2022.

#### **b) Little Swans pre-school – delivered by Mr Atterwill**

After a quiet first term of our school year, we are growing very busy with new and current children and their families; we also have several children due to start in this coming term.

After a period of not being able to interact with families to the full extent that we would like to, it has been wonderful to be able to organise our (what is becoming an annual) 26-mile sponsored bike ride and alongside this we are holding our first Teddy's Bear picnic with children and their extended families who

would like to attend. We will have some activities set around Little Swans so families can get a taste of their child's day at Little Swans, and we hope to have a Bear hiding so we can recreate our very own Bear hunt story! We were amazed at the number of families that replied to attend this event while our trusted 'Bikers' complete their bike ride! Our thanks go to all of the committee members for volunteering their time.

Funds raised during these two events will help us to continue to invest in new toys, resources and equipment to ensure that all of the children at Little Swans have access to a wide and varied range; enabling them to explore and helping them develop to their full potential emotionally, socially and intellectually.

For more information about the Pre-school or to see what the children get up to you can visit our website

<http://littleswansnorfolk.wix.com/little-swans> or find us on Facebook: Little Swans Pre-school

**c) Gardening Club – delivered by Mrs Pickard**

The gardening club, like many other organisations, had a lean year last year due to the pandemic, with meetings cancelled for the majority of the year.

We are back up and running this year with a full programme of talks and visits. We still have a healthy register of members but have room for a few more if anyone in the village has a keen interest in gardening and would like to join us.

**d) All Saints Church – Received from Rev. Rosie – delivered by Mr Palmer**

Like so many other venues the impact of Covid-19 and the closure of places of worship had a huge impact on the life of All Saints Church. We are now moving on from what has been a difficult place for many of us.

2021 saw a number of weddings which has offered an opportunity to reconnect with the local community. Our Christmas Eve Christingle service took place outdoors for safety and this was well attended.

The vicar is a regular presence in Swanton Morley Primary School and in Lincoln House care home, leading services and engaging with others.

During the early part of 2022, we held a vision day for the eight churches across the Dereham and District Team Ministry. One important point that has emerged from our shared discussions was a need for us to reimagine what it means to be a parish church which should be at the heart of the local community.

I hope that the celebrations for Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June will be a real opportunity for church and community to join together and connect.

I would like to see the parish church taking on more of a role within Swanton Morley. We have a large building which is home to a small congregation.

Guided by the Holy Spirit I am looking at ways in which we can connect with local families. We don't necessarily have to do 'church' inside a church building, but it is important that everyone in the parish knows that the local church is there for them: in the good times and in the not so good times.

With the appointment of a new Team Vicar in Shipdham our future as a team is looking positive. During March the church was lit in blue and yellow as we prayed for peace in Ukraine.

I look forward to a renewed sense of optimism in the local community and hope that further and deeper connections and relationships can be made.

**e) Barretts Charity – delivered by Mr Palmer**

This legacy provides funding to support the Church fabric and to make donations for emergencies as well as support to the older members of the community at Christmas.

In 2022, 34 people received donations and 4 organisations received donations towards running expenses and support.

Also, two persons received a donation towards medical care expenses.

The charity did not receive and emergency requests.

Funds received from the legacy £6590

Distributed £4705

Church fabric £2390

Balance in hand £2495 (to cover emergencies)

**f) Link Up – Delivered by Mrs Palmer**

The Link Up magazine predominantly serves the parishes of Swanton Morley, Hoe, Beetley and East Bilney but at the editor's discretion, includes copy from neighbouring villages.

The magazine contains reports from local groups and organisations, poems, puzzles and articles of interest. With the editor's encouragement these are now often submitted by readers. The Church services, Clergy letter and other notable dates are also published.

Advertisements from local businesses together with subscriptions from readers keep the magazine price reasonable. This further greatly helped by the loyal group of volunteers who distribute the magazine.

**g) County Councillor Borrett – Delivered by Mr Atterwill.**

This is a comprehensive seven page report that is available on the Parish Council website

[www.swantonmorleypc.info](http://www.swantonmorleypc.info)

**h) District Councillor Roger Atterwill**

Dear Resident,

I am the Leader of the Independent Group of Councillors and along with Labour and Green Councillors we form the opposition at Breckland Council. On behalf of residents, I do try to work collaboratively with much work done behind the scenes particularly with the Leader, Cabinet members, Chief Executive and Directors. I do not oppose for the sake of it. If I believe a proposal is a good idea and will benefit residents, it will have my support. Being an independent member means that I do not have to vote along any party lines. I see my role as that of a critical friend trying to suggest improvements to policies, procedures, spending priorities and improving transparency in all areas of the Council's work.

The last year has been a busy one for Breckland Council. In addition to its normal work it has helped communities get through the Covid 19 pandemic with additional staff resources and the distribution of Government grant funding to assist businesses and community groups. I believe that its communication and support for ward members and communities throughout this period has been very effective and I commend the Leader and senior management team for this. The council has achieved some notable work such as:

- The opening of the £1.8M Elm house project in Thetford to provide temporary accommodation to help people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. I fully support this scheme and it is my hope that we can soon identify a development opportunity for a similar project here in the north of the district.
- Provide £100K through its Community Green Grants Scheme to community projects aimed at promoting environmental sustainability. I know this funding has been well received by those communities applying for grants of which £500 was provided for our CASM group here in Swanton Morley. Another notable local recipient of a grant was Northgate High School for its outstanding work on recycling.
- Providing mental health training for 100 community mental health champions. Here in Swanton Morley myself and the Parish Clerk have undergone extensive mental health first aid training provided free of charge by this scheme to help us assist any residents in need.
- Work with partners such as the Daisy project to provide support for survivors of domestic abuse. This work is vitally important especially as incidents of domestic abuse increased during the period of the pandemic restrictions.
- Develop its 'Future Breckland' initiative to identify significant projects that can be delivered for our five market towns to help them thrive. I have actively engaged in the work relating to Dereham and made representations about the need for better and more public toilets and a new bus terminal to help devise a better public transport strategy for the town.
- Development of the Ellenor Fenn Garden in Dereham to transform old waste ground for public use. This is clearly a considerable improvement in this location which I welcome.

- Development of a new Food Bus service which will be visiting certain communities throughout the district. This service will commence in early May and will be a membership service offering discounted food products to help those people in most need. This will I feel be especially important as the cost of living crisis bites harder as we head into next winter.
- Introduction of a social prescribing service which has been commissioned by the Mid-Norfolk Primary Care Network to work with vulnerable residents providing holistic support to improve their health and wellbeing. I have worked with the Parish Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Breckland officers to provide this service here in Swanton Morley. This has been done in conjunction with the opening of the new Tuesday community cafe in the village hall and trained officers will be in attendance once a month but also available to residents for additional remote support as required.
- New household waste, street cleaning and grasscutting contract with Serco. Despite getting off to a difficult start I am now confident that the new service has bedded down and that the service is considerably better now in 2022. I suggested to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission that a Task and Finish Group of Councillors should be set up to oversee this contract and I am delighted that this was agreed and I am one of the group's members. Our discussions with Breckland Council officers and Serco have been very productive and this scrutiny will be ongoing over the coming months.

I am a member of the Planning Committee which continues to meet monthly to deliberate on the larger and more contentious development proposals as opposed to the majority of applications which are determined by planning officers under delegated powers. There continues to be a great deal of uncertainty around at the moment because the Government has for some time now been promising significant changes to the planning system. The indications coming from Whitehall is that they wish to reform the system to make it easier for developers to get planning permission and remove the requirement for developers to provide a percentage of new build homes as 'affordable' type homes. Instead, developers would be required to pay a levy to Breckland Council and it would be for the Council to build the affordable homes. I have serious misgivings about these proposals and I believe it would result in less local accountability and fewer affordable homes being built. Over the last ten years Breckland residents like the rest of the country have been subjected to what feels like constant top down planning policy changes designed to try and achieve arbitrary housing number targets. The term 'affordable homes' means different things to different people. It covers social rented, shared ownership and first homes. In reality our young people earning wages in Norfolk's rural economy are finding it increasingly difficult to become homeowners as the gap widens between house prices and mortgage affordability.

In the last month there has been a stop placed on all planning permissions containing overnight accommodation in Breckland because Natural England provided advice to around 40 Local Authorities on 16th March 2022 that high levels of nutrients (mainly phosphorus and nitrogen) in protected water bodies were resulting in poor water quality. The sources of nutrients generally include sewage treatment works, septic tanks, livestock, arable farming and industrial processes. Where sites are already in unfavourable (poor) condition, extra wastewater from new housing developments can make matters worse. This affects the Broads and River Wensum tributary areas. Work is underway to more accurately define and map the areas affecting the River Wensum. Breckland Council is also working with other Norfolk councils to come up with suitable mitigation requirements to allow new developments to proceed. I am advised by Breckland Council's Planning Director that this could take a couple of years to properly resolve although it is hoped that areas outside the defined tributary maps could commence much sooner. Swanton Morley with its close proximity to the river is very much affected by this.

Work has commenced on the review of the Local Development Plan. I am pleased this work is underway but I continue to have misgivings about the approach being taken and the timetable proposed. At the present time the Council has not produced a draft development strategy. Instead, it has decided to first carry out a public call for more development sites and once the outcome of this is known it will produce a development strategy designed around these sites. In my view this is just an easy exercise in development by numbers, making policy fit the available land. I believe that a well considered strategy should be making clear where is the best place to build new homes in the district taking account of

current infrastructure, utilities and services and identifying what improvements to these would be needed to accommodate the new homes. Once the strategy is devised, landowners in key identified development areas should then be approached. I am appalled at the timetable given to complete this Local Plan review with a proposed adoption date of 2027. It was clear from the Cabinet meetings I attended that this was done primarily for financial and resource reasons. My concern is that if the Local Plan is not reviewed and updated in a more timely manner a number of existing key planning policies will start to carry less 'weight' in the determination of planning applications and developers will find it much easier to obtain planning permission, sometimes to the detriment of local communities. I believe that this work can and should be carried out faster.

Looking to the future the closure of Robertson Barracks has been brought forward to 2029. This will have huge repercussions for Swanton Morley and the neighbouring parish of Hoe & Worthing. MOD analysis has identified that the land including the airfield has potential for thousands of new homes to be built on the site. Such a large development would in my view require very significant improvements to our infrastructure and local services such as the school and doctors. To this end I have already had discussions with the Leader of the Council and Planning Director with my suggestions for better road connectivity to the site. It is my opinion that the future of all of the MOD owned property at Robertson Barracks will be the defining issue for our community over the next twenty years as plans are developed and construction work is completed. The site does also offer an attractive proposition for the development of new and existing businesses utilising existing buildings and the construction of new ones. The Defence Infrastructure Organisation is already engaging with Breckland Council and the site may very well be put forward as part of the current local plan call for development sites.

Breckland Council owns much of the grassed areas and some footpaths and a car park in what is known locally as 'middle camp'. This comprises Thompson Close, Gray Drive, Middleton Avenue, Ward Crescent and Hannah Road. I have for some time now been in discussion with the appropriate cabinet members and officers to consider ways of improving these areas in terms of play areas and additional car parking. This would likely involve a proposal for the parish council to take over the ownership of these areas. We are currently looking to see if there is any way that funding could be provided by Breckland Council along with the transfer of the title to the land. These discussions are ongoing and any proposal would have to be carefully considered by the Parish Council and agreed before any final decision is made.

As always, I am available to help residents where I can and would encourage anyone who needs assistance with a Breckland Council related matter to either call or email me.

**i) Climate Action for Swanton Morley – delivered by Mr Curran**

Mr Curran reported that in January the Climate Action for Swanton Morley working group had relaunched following the Covid-19 pandemic.

This is made up for councillors and community members who have an active interest in the environment and who would like to make a difference.

Mr Curran reported that an event was held in April to coincide with 'earth day' and everyone was welcome. There were informative talks, a bus in the carpark and wildflower seeds being given away. Representatives from Northgate High School were in attendance to inform the local community what they have been doing and what achievements they have made.

**j) Swanton Morley Jubilee Festival – delivered by Mrs O'Dowd**

Mrs O'Dowd reported that there is going to be a four day celebration planned for the Queens Platinum Jubilee from Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June until Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June.

There will be two events being held at Swanton Morley Village Hall, one unconfirmed event at All Saints church and Darbys will be running a music festival.

The Festival will then close with Dereham Band, Brass on the Grass.

This is being funded by grant funding that the Clerk had successfully applied for.

The programme of events and booklet for the festival will be distributed to all household in the village.

## **6) Report on the Management of Swanton Morley Village Hall**

A short report had been published in the APM report distributed to all of the village.

Swanton Morley Village Hall has bounced back this year and is fully reopened following the pandemic. It is, once again thriving with community activities and groups every day with plenty to offer the residents of the Village.

This year we have established links with Community Connectors from Breckland Council who regularly visit the Community Café to provide advice and support to local residents. Community Connectors engaged by the council to connect with local people and provide practical and emotional support where needed.

The Community Café meets every Tuesday from 9am to 2pm and provides opportunities for people of all ages to get together and chat whilst Natterjack Caterers offer breakfast and lunches at very reasonable prices.

This year has also seen the installation of a food and consumables bank sited in the car park in a secure wooden box kindly donated by local carpenters Callum and Mark. It is hoped that this will provide support for anyone who might be struggling to buy essentials. Items are donated by the kind residents of Swanton Morley and the facility is managed by Village Hall Trust representatives.

In addition, a grant secured by Tesco Bags for Life has helped towards purchasing our own soft play equipment which will be available at the Community Café and to hire for events and children's parties soon.

Looking ahead the Village Hall intends make improvements to the grounds of the Village Hall with some new plants and trees with a view to supporting the environment as well as enhancing the overall look of the venue.

You can still find out lots of up to date information by visiting the Village Hall website on: [www.swantonmorleyvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.swantonmorleyvillagehall.co.uk)

Thank you to everyone who has continued to support the village hall over the past year – we hope to see you again very soon.

## **Village Hall Finance**

The Village Hall suffered a loss of income from regular and private hirers through at the start of 21/22. Income resumed again with the full reopening of the Village Hall in September 2021.

The total income from regular hirers was £16,241.17 and Private hire income was £7625.60

Village Hall Trust was also extremely fortunate to receive further grant funding from Breckland Council totalling £16,000 in order to keep the Village Hall going.

The Village Hall trust also applied for grant funding through Tesco Bags for life and received £500 towards purchasing soft play equipment to use with the community café and private hire events if required.

There has also been small figure of interest/lottery funding and recycling received which totalled £6298.

Overall, the income figure for Swanton Morley Village Hall Trust as at 31/03/2022 was £57,411.47

The payments figure for 21/22 totalled £40,439 this is made up of the running costs of the building as well as essential plumbing and maintenance work to comply with health and safety legislation, work carried out on the outdoor cabin and CCTV maintenance. Four new picnic benches were also purchased and installed on the playing field.

The electricity contract was renewed with a new supplier which resulted in a refund figure of £4620.16.

Finally, the Clerk is working on the draft Village Hall budget for 2022/2023. This will be discussed at the June meeting. We are hoping to make further improvements in the building to ensure that Swanton Morley Village Hall, thrives once again.

## **7) Parishioners' Questions**

A member of the public thanked Mr Borrett for the report from Norfolk County Council however would like to know what is specifically being done from County level for Swanton Morley.

Another member of the public raised concerns with Primrose Square in particularly the car parking and antisocial behaviour. Mr Atterwill responded that he is aware of the issues with one or two household and is having a meeting with the safer neighbourhood team and Victory Housing.  
Mrs Pickard offered the residents to attend the community café to gain further support.

Another member of the public wanted to raise the issue of parking on Cullum Close. Mr Atterwill responded that he is also aware of the issues on the road and that he has opened dialogue with Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk County Council highways.

A representative from Robertson Barracks was also in attendance and offered support for any community schemes with volunteers. The Clerk thanked him and will forward information regarding the community Speedwatch and any organised litter picks.

**8). Date of Next Meeting**

The next Annual Parish meeting will be held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 8.29pm

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

DRAFT