



## **SWANTON MORLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

Parish Clerk: Mrs Kelly Pickard  
Swanton Morley Village Hall, Manns Lane,  
Swanton Morley, Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 4NP  
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# **Annual Report of Swanton Morley Parish Council 2022/23 & Invitation to the Annual Parish Meeting 22nd May 2023 Commencing at 7.30pm**

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023**

Dear Resident,

I am delighted to provide you with this year's Swanton Morley Parish Council annual report. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of the work the Parish Council has carried out on your behalf and our plans for the year ahead

### **YOUR PARISH COUNCIL TEAM**

Sadly, at the end of last year we said goodbye to our Assistant Clerk, Jane Fabisz who along with her family has moved away from Norfolk. Jane worked extremely hard during her time with us and in particular helping the village hall get back on its feet following the the Coronavirus restrictions. We thank her for her effort and wish her well for the future. We have since welcomed her successor, Rachel Scaife. Our Clerk, Kelly Pickard and Rachel work in our Parish office based at the village hall. The public opening hours are Monday–Friday 9-12. The Mardler newsletter has been further improved and the staff and I continue to communicate with residents using social media. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those councillors who have taken on responsibility for specific aspects of our work and have carried out practical work as well as providing regular reports for the Parish Council meetings. The proactive attitude of our Councillor and Staff team ensures that this is a vibrant and effective Parish Council.

For their own personal reasons, Geoffrey Curran and John Keen have left the Council. We thank them for their work on behalf of the village and wish them well for the future. Bob Almond and Alison Walker-Fraser have joined the Council and their skills and knowledge have been invaluable. We currently have vacancies to co-opt two new councillors. If you are interested in becoming a councillor, please contact Kelly on 01362 637166 or [parishcouncil@swantonmorley.org](mailto:parishcouncil@swantonmorley.org)

The Parish Council can have a maximum of nine Councillors. Regrettably, as there were insufficient nominations for these positions, there has not been a contested Parish Council election this year. Those people who submitted a nomination paper have been elected unopposed.

### **YOUR COUNCIL TAX BILL**

This year the Swanton Morley Parish Council element of your council tax bill has increased by 16% to £125.77 for a Band D property. This is an increase of £17.34 for the year. 71% of households in Swanton Morley are in bands A – C so pay a lower figure than this. Our precept has increased from £78,916.39 in 2022-23 to £90,564.76 in 2023-24.

The Parish Council is not immune to the current cost of living pressure being felt across the country with costs going up across the board. The largest contributing factor this year is a very significant increases in our grounds maintenance costs. Another factor has been a decrease in our village tax base (the number of households paying council tax).

We always endeavour to try and obtain grant funding and match funding where possible to assist with capital items such as play equipment. In addition, we also seek to receive commuted sums of money from qualifying housing developments to pay for the ongoing maintenance of new assets such as open space areas and these funds are kept in an interest bearing account. Swanton Morley has a significant amount of assets and facilities compared to most other villages, all of which require ongoing maintenance and improvement. Our budget provides the means to do this so that residents can

continue to take pride in our village.

### **CHURCHYARD & BURIAL GROUND**

We used a £10,000 grant from Breckland Council towards the construction of two additional footpaths in the Hoe Road East burial ground to ensure good accessibility to future graves. We have also budgeted to install a permanent water supply for use by relatives and to help us better maintain the memorial rose garden. This has not been expedited as quickly as we would like due to the requirement for a legal wayleave agreement across third party land to connect the water supply. We continue to push for a resolution as soon as possible. In the year to come we will also be having the main gates repainted. In the churchyard we have had the war memorial professionally cleaned and in the year ahead we will be having the West and South Gates repaired and repainted.

### **OPEN SPACES**

Over the past year there have been ongoing inspections carried out on the open spaces and any repair work deemed necessary has been carried out. We have successfully obtained grant funding for 100% of the money needed to have an ability swing and access surfacing installed in the Gooseberry Hill Playing Field. This will be available for use by wheelchair users and will be installed in the summer. In addition to this we are arranging to have three new seats installed there to replace the old wooden ones which after 15 years have deteriorated beyond economic repair. Last summer along with our Clerk, I officially opened the new trim trail at the school which the Parish Council provided funding for. It is very pleasing to see that this continues to be well used by the school children.

I would like to place on record my thanks to Councillor Jim Venworth and the Scarning Art Group who worked so hard to produce a brand new village map to replace the outdated millennium one on the village green. This is a beautiful piece of work. Well done to everyone concerned. We have also replaced a number of noticeboards around the village and on Greengate we have installed a new flower planter and a new memorial seat provided by the family of the late Margaret Smith who went missing in the summer of 2021.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

The Parish Council are responsible for maintaining Burgh common located on the bank of the River Wensum. During late summer last year a volunteer working party attended site to trim and clear all of the boardwalks for visitors to the area. We recently met with the Environment Agency to request that the weed in that section of the river is added to their cutting schedule. The Parish Council also maintains Mill Common. This is a site of special scientific interest and is subject to a Countryside Stewardship scheme for which the Parish Council receives an annual income. In the summer months, as part of this agreement we allow a local farmer to graze his cattle on there. The use of cattle is important to promote healthy growth of the scientifically important fauna which grows on the common. We have an ongoing agreement with a local landowner to keep open several footpaths in the village. These are all detailed on our website including location maps. We know that it is important to residents that these footpaths remain open for them to enjoy but the Parish Council does pay an annual fee for this access and this forms part of our precept. I would like to continue to ask that you treat the countryside with respect and pick up your litter and your dog's mess and place it in the bins provided by the Parish Council or

alternatively take your rubbish home. With the agreement of the relevant landowner, the Parish Council has installed an additional dog bin in the church car park at the entrance to the meadow which forms part of the Wensum Way. In order for us to plant and nurture tree saplings for future planting around the village, a tree nursery has been constructed on the allotment site. Grant funding for this was obtained from Norfolk County Council. I would like to place on record our thanks to Councillor Jim Venworth and Alistair Monteith for their hard work on this project.

### **HIGHWAYS**

It is fair to say that the most frequent complaints we receive are about speeding traffic and the poor state of the roads and footpaths in the village. Norfolk County Council (NCC) is responsible for highway maintenance. When defects are reported to the Parish Council our Clerk logs these on the NCC website and tracks progress. At that point we are completely in the hands of the NCC Highways Department as to if/when a defect is repaired. To help the Parish Council I would encourage residents to also log defects on the NCC website. This can be done anonymously if preferred and the weblink is:

<https://apps.norfolk.gov.uk/HighwaysDefect/>

I would also encourage you to contact our county councillor, Bill Borrett, with your concerns. His contact details are on the NCC website but for your ease of reference he can be contacted by telephone: **01362 860200** or by email: [bill.borrett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:bill.borrett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk)

Last year I reported that we had successfully applied for additional match funding from Norfolk County Council to construct a trod footpath on Woodgate Road. Unfortunately, we have decided not to proceed with this project at this time. I would like to place on record our thanks to the Harris family who own the adjacent land for their considerable time and support in trying to make this happen but unfortunately Norfolk County Council in the end, through their intransigence, made the project too complicated and costly for us to proceed.

Responding to resident's concerns about speeding traffic, the Parish Council has previously set up a community speed watch scheme in conjunction with Norfolk Constabulary. Initially we did have a number of volunteers willing to participate in the scheme and some sessions were run successfully with Norfolk Constabulary sending letters to a number of motorists. In recent months it has become more difficult to run these sessions because of a lack of volunteers. We have to have three trained volunteers present at each session. The training takes a short amount of time and Speedwatch sessions are 1 hour duration. If you think you could help us with this we would love to hear from you. If we do not have more volunteers come forward then the scheme will regrettably have to finish.

### **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

I have previously written in the Mardler about the changes to the Norfolk County Council grasscutting contract affecting many of our estate roads. These areas were previously cut under contract by Breckland Council using their contractor, Serco. Norfolk County Council decided to end this contract and we were faced with them only cutting these areas twice a year. Last year we entered into an agreement with Norfolk County Council whereby they provide us with a sum of money and we cut these areas instead. The Parish Council now have these areas cut by Breckland Council at the same time they cut

other pieces of land which they own in the village. Breckland Council will also cut the hedges for us once a year along the frontage of Thompson Close and Hannah Road. We have had to allow additional money in our precept to cover the cost of sufficient cuts and the hedge cutting needed to keep these areas tidy. We have also included money in our precept for a separate qualified contractor to carry out verge cutting which in our view is not done often enough along Rectory Road, Manns Lane and the Dereham Road bends. Many residents complained to us about the state of these verges so we have decided to take action ourselves. Late last year the Parish Council carried out a comprehensive review of the specification and tender process for the grasscutting needed on land it owns and maintains. In the last year we became concerned about the quality of work carried out by our existing contractor particularly in the churchyard and burial ground. Having received the tenders and references we now have a dedicated contractor who carries out the work to these two areas and another contractor who carries out the cutting to all other areas such as the village green, village hall, Davidson Park and playing fields. Both contractors are new to us but so far we are pleased with their work. In summary we now have four separate contractors carrying out grounds maintenance work for us in the village.

#### **In other news....**

In the last year the Parish Council team has worked hard firstly, to organise a village celebration for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and after her sad passing we made the necessary village arrangements as part of the nationwide Operation London Bridge. This year the team once again worked hard with volunteers to organise the village celebration for the Coronation of King Charles. I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed and helped with these events. Swanton Morley was the first village in Breckland to be awarded 'Mindful Village' status in recognition of the work the Parish Council had undertaken in arranging for some staff and councillors to attend a variety of different mental health and suicide awareness training which was provided free of charge by Breckland Council. This was undertaken to raise awareness of mental health and provide assistance to any resident in need.

We were once again able to hold our Christmas Carols event in the church. Our thanks are extended to Father Christmas, Rev. Paul Cubitt, Swanton Morley Butchers, Swanton Morley Stores and Squilla & Squidge for providing the food and refreshments and Dereham Town Band who provided the wonderful music. There was a fantastic turnout from the community and everyone had a good time. To try and give everyone a bit of cheer over the Christmas period the Parish Council once again arranged for the annual Christmas lights display. Thank you to Bernie Marsham for providing us with the Christmas trees, to Sean Atterwill for his help putting up all of the lights and to Mrs Horstead for the use of her electricity on the village green. I hope these provided some seasonal cheer.

AND FINALLY

The Annual Parish Meeting will this year be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May commencing at 7.30pm. For those residents who are unable to attend this meeting but would like to ask a question or raise a concern, I am happy for you to contact myself or our Clerk directly and we will do our best to help you.

**ROGER ATTERWILL BEM**  
**CHAIRMAN, SWANTON MORLEY PARISH COUNCIL**  
Email: [roger@swantonmorley.org](mailto:roger@swantonmorley.org) Tel. 07841 488860

15<sup>th</sup> May 2023



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## **INVITATION TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

### ***Notification of Annual Parish Meeting***

***Notice is hereby given that the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING will be held at Swanton Morley Village Hall on Monday 22<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 7.30pm***

***All whose names are on the Electoral Register have a statutory right to speak and vote at the meeting. The electors may give others who attend, the opportunity to speak. The meeting is open to everyone.***

## **AGENDA**

**To Receive Apologies for Absence**

**Chairman's Report – Mr Roger Atterwill, Chairman of Swanton Morley Parish Council**

**To Agree Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

**Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

**Reports from Village Organisations (Order to be Agreed by the Chairman)**

**Report on the Management of Swanton Morley Village Hall**

**Parishioners' Questions**

**Date and Time of Next Annual Parish Meeting**

***Roger Atterwill, Chairman, Swanton Morley Parish Council - 12th May 2023***

Swanton Morley Parish Council – Financial Summary

Income for year 2022/2023: £133,814.94

Precept	£78,916.38
Allotment Income	£2,879.80
Interest (General Funds)	£391.03
VAT Reclaim	£11,102.69
Burial and Memorial Fees	£1,370.00
Refund (training, legal fees)	£8,984.86
Ability Swing Grant	£20,000.00
Tree Nursery Grant	£621.00
Jubilee Grant	£4,509.00
Delegated Grass cutting	£3047.60
Donations	£150.00
Field Rent	£330.00
Countryside Stewardship	£1512.58

Expenditure for year 2022/23 (from precept and general income):

	Budget 22/23	Expenditure 22/23	Budget 2023/24
Grass Cutting	£9806.80	£8427.59	£18,078.92
Insurance	£3093.00	£3283.98	£3500.00
Street Lighting Main & Electricity	£1800.00	£2062.12	£2180.00
Churchyard and Burial Ground	£14472.28	£15177.19	£7021.48
Open Spaces	£8965.48	£4525.95	£41643.76
Staff Remuneration	£46,176.15	£52087.06	£50,883.56
Telephone and Broadband	£1,300	£1521.90	£1500.00
Stationery and Postage	£1,200.00	£587.31	£750.00
Members			

<b>Expenses &amp; Allowances</b>	<b>£846.55</b>	<b>£627.19</b>	<b>£861.46</b>
<b>Elections</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£571.43</b>
<b>Training</b>	<b>£510.00</b>	<b>£388.00</b>	<b>£738.00</b>
<b>Audit/ICO</b>	<b>£730.00</b>	<b>£815.00</b>	<b>£790.00</b>
<b>Subscriptions</b>	<b>£2981.11</b>	<b>£3120.28</b>	<b>£3503.52</b>
<b>Donations</b>	<b>£1100.00</b>	<b>£600.00</b>	<b>£700.00</b>
<b>Permissive Paths</b>	<b>£2,500.00</b>	<b>£2,500.00</b>	<b>£2500.00</b>
<b>Communications</b>	<b>£600.00</b>	<b>£855.01</b>	<b>£1000.00</b>
<b>Common Lands &amp; Environment</b>	<b>£1800.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£1000.00</b>
<b>Lease of Manns Lane Land</b>	<b>£1348.00</b>	<b>£1348.00</b>	<b>£1348.00</b>
<b>Allotments</b>	<b>£1000.00</b>	<b>£2111.20</b>	<b>£1000.00</b>
<b>Loan Repayment</b>	<b>£8397.30</b>	<b>£8397.30</b>	<b>£8397.30</b>
<b>Legal/Consultant Fees</b>	<b>£2000.00</b>	<b>£3514.40</b>	<b>£2000.00</b>
<b>Covid Response</b>	<b>£473.00</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£0.00</b>
<b>Link Up</b>	<b>£5.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£5.00</b>
<b>Woodgate Trod</b>	<b>£20,000</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>
<b>PWL (Trod)</b>	<b>£2107.86</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>
<b>Community Christmas Event</b>	<b>£500.00</b>	<b>£479.23</b>	<b>£500.00</b>
<b>Contingency</b>	<b>£5,000.00</b>	<b>£710.17</b>	<b>£5000.00</b>
<b>Swanton Morley Festival</b>	<b>£2000.00</b>	<b>£4414.46</b>	<b>£500.00</b>
<b>Defibrillators</b>	<b>£100.00</b>	<b>£84.00</b>	<b>£100.00</b>
<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>£1,000.00</b>	<b>£30.65</b>	<b>£500.00</b>
<b>Section 137</b>	<b>£1,000.00</b>	<b>£3685.50</b>	<b>£0.00</b>
<b>Section 137</b>			
<b>Hardship fund</b>	<b>£1000.00</b>	<b>300.00</b>	<b>£500.00</b>



School Travel Plan	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00
Community travel	£500.00	£264.00	£236.00
Flag Pole	£0	£77.94	£0.00
Information boards	£0	£1451.52	£0
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>£144,812.53</b>	<b>£121,995.47</b>	<b>£157,808.43</b>

**Notes:** All figures exclude VAT (and VAT recovered) and are from unaudited accounts

**The Precept for 2023/2024 has been set at £90,564.76**

## Swanton Morley Village Hall Report 2022/23

Swanton Morley Village Hall has been thriving with community activities and groups every day with plenty to offer the residents of the Village.

This year we have hosted the Jubilee Festival, Tractor Rally, Fireworks night and established links with Breckland District Council mindful team.

In December 2022 we were awarded funding to run a warm hub over the colder months to open the doors to anyone who needed a warm and safe space to enjoy.

We have been lucky to establish new hirers in the building including a farmers market and stay and play group. We also continue to support our regular hirers.

The Village Hall held its first wedding fayre in November which everyone enjoyed and we are looking to hold another one in the springtime.

The Community Café still runs every Tuesday from 10am to 1pm and provides opportunities for people of all ages to get together and chat whilst enjoying a coffee and piece of cake.

We are also lucky to have the food bus every Tuesday morning for the residents to come and visit.

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.

**Kelly Pickard**  
Clerk