

SWANTON MORLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk: Mrs Kelly Pickard
Swanton Morley Village Hall, Manns Lane,
Swanton Morley, Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 4NP
Email: parishcouncil@swantonmorley.org

Annual Report of Swanton Morley Parish Council 2020/21 & Invitation to the Annual Parish Meeting

Monday 26th April 2021

Via Microsoft Teams

**Commencing at
7.30pm**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2021

Dear Resident,

It has now been two years since my last report and in that time much has happened. On advice from the Government, last year we did not hold an annual parish meeting due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

During this unprecedented period of restrictions caused by the pandemic I have been immensely proud of the village. The resilience demonstrated by our community has been deeply gratifying and I would like to place on record my thanks to our businesses and volunteers who have risen to the challenge and made sure our vulnerable residents have been supported. I would also like to thank all of the staff and volunteers at Swanton Morley Surgery for their hard work and dedication in ensuring a smooth roll out of the vaccine programme. I am confident that our village has all of the ingredients in place to bounce back stronger than before.

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:-

YOUR PARISH COUNCIL TEAM

Throughout the pandemic our Parish Clerk, Kelly Pickard and Administrative Assistant, Maddi Heinrich have been working remotely from their homes. We successfully applied for a grant to pay for additional IT equipment to do this. They have worked extremely hard to adapt their work and ensure that the Council has been flexible to the needs of constantly changing Covid 19 restrictions. In addition to their normal duties, during this time they produced two new websites to improve our communication with the village and keep residents up to date with our work. These websites can be found at:-

www.swantonmorleypc.info

www.swantonmorleyvillagehall.co.uk

In addition to this, the Mardler newsletter has been improved and the staff continue to communicate with residents using social media. We have also used this period to improve some of our existing policies and introduce some new ones. 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 full Parish Council. The proactive attitude of our team ensures that this is a vibrant Parish Council.

YOUR COUNCIL TAX BILL

This year the Swanton Morley Parish Council element of your council tax bill has decreased by 4.51%. to £104.50 for a Band D property. The Parish Council recognised that many residents have felt a squeeze on their household finances as a direct result of the covid 19 restrictions. Regrettably, we do not have any control over the increases imposed by other authorities but nevertheless we wanted to try and do our bit to help. The Swanton Morley Parish Council element of your council tax bill is now at its lowest level for six years.

71% of households in Swanton Morley are in bands A – C so pay a lower figure than this.

Our budget for this year stands at £92,867.09. We always endeavour to try and obtain grant funding and match funding where possible to assist with capital items such as play equipment and small highway improvements and we have been successful in achieving this since my last report in 2019. In addition to this, 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. We manage a wide variety of village assets and I believe that the Parish Council provides good value for money for all of the work it does on your behalf.

VILLAGE HALL

It is now 10 years since the Parish Council became the sole managing trustee of the Swanton Morley Village Hall Trust. I am pleased to report that despite being closed for most of the last year, the Village Hall Trust finances remain in very good shape thanks to financial assistance provided by the Government. Kelly and Maddi carry out all of the financial, administration and marketing duties for the hall and have provided a separate report - see page 11. The Trust also employs a caretaker, a cleaner and a bar manager. Since my last report to you we have successfully applied for an Awards for All grant of £9,470.00 and have installed a bicycle shelter at the village hall in an effort to try and encourage more people to cycle to the venue. As it is a separate charity the Village Hall's own funds and accounts are managed separately from the Parish Council's finances.



ALLOTMENTS

The Allotments continue to be very popular. The introduction of some half-sized plots to make it easier for those people who want to grow their own produce but can't commit to maintaining a full plot has also proven to be successful. The Parish Council have introduced new policies for the site and issued revised tenancy agreements. Recently a group of volunteers spent some time carrying out maintenance on the site and it looks well cared for. All in all this popular community asset provides a range of positive health and environmental benefits.

PLAYING FIELDS



In the last year we have laid new turf around some play equipment to freshen up the Gooseberry Hill Playing Field. In addition, we successfully applied for £3,520.00 of grant funding to install a new play boat. Thanks to some design work by our staff we complemented this with a bespoke designed sail to say thank you to

our NHS staff and key workers for all they have done for us during this pandemic. At the village green we employed the services of a tree surgeon to carry out much needed maintenance work to the trees.

CHURCHYARD & BURIAL GROUND

The churchyard continues to be well maintained by the Parish Council. In the Burial ground we have employed the services of a tree surgeon to carry out much needed maintenance work to several of the trees. We have also received a £10,000 grant which we will be using to construct additional footpaths to ensure good accessibility to future graves.

ENVIRONMENT



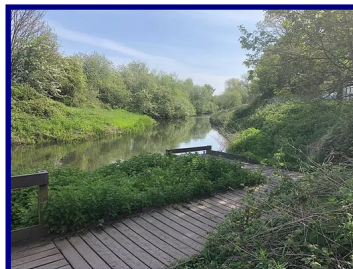
Since my last report in 2019 the Parish Council has declared a climate emergency and has set up a steering group called Climate Action for Swanton Morley (CASM). This group is made up of some councillors and a number of residents. Since the pandemic began, the group has been unable to meet. However, there has been some practical work carried out around the village by observing social distancing. Firstly, we successfully applied to the Woodland Trust for 210 tree saplings





which councillors and volunteers have planted in various locations around the village. Volunteers have provided new bird boxes for the burial ground and churchyard and the children of Little Swans Preschool planted wildflower seeds at the village hall. The Parish Council is also actively looking at energy efficiency measures for the village hall and what grants might be available to help pay for this work. We achieved another milestone this year when the last of our ninety five streetlights were replaced with energy efficient LED

fittings. The Parish Council is also responsible for the upkeep of Burgh Common which runs along the River Wensum on the Worthing Road. In the last eighteen months we installed a wooden picnic table there which we repurposed from elsewhere in the village. Unfortunately, despite being fixed to the boardwalk this was stolen. We have since replaced this with a new recycled plastic picnic table to help people enjoy this beautiful area. We have successfully applied for grant funding from the Rural Payments Agency for the upkeep of Mill Common



which can also be found along the Worthing Road. This is a site of special scientific interest. We will receive £805.45 each year for ten years and with the help of volunteers we will ensure it is kept in good order for future generations to enjoy. We have also reached an ongoing agreement with a local landowner to keep open several footpaths which were classed as 'permissive' and due to close when government funding ceased. In exchange for a small amount of

money each year he has agreed to keep them open and maintain them for residents to enjoy. He has also agreed to provide an additional footpath leading from Rectory Road around the back of Primrose Square and linking up with the footpath at Primrose Hill. I think it is important that residents can access our beautiful countryside but in exchange I would make a plea to you all that you treat the countryside with respect and pick up your litter and your dog's poo and place it in the bins provided by the Parish Council or alternatively take your rubbish home. We currently seem to have a small minority of people spoiling the countryside for everyone else and this must stop. Our staff are currently working on an initiative to raise awareness about this problem. Look out for notices to be placed in some areas of the village and on our Facebook pages. We are also in discussion with Breckland Council and Norfolk County Council about the possibility of siting additional dog bins in the village which we hope might also help to tackle the problem.

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)

It is not an exaggeration to say that the maintenance of our village roads and footpaths and the response times to attend to repairs has not been good enough for a while. A case in point was the flooding on the Dereham Road over Christmas and New Year which was simply the result of a lack of maintenance to ensure drainage gullies are cleaned out regularly. Your help to escalate defects would be very much appreciated by the Parish Council.

Shortly before Christmas some properties in Woodgate experienced flooding. The Parish Council has liaised with affected residents and produced a short report and action plan in an effort to try and prevent this happening again. NCC have been requested to install additional kerbing at the junction of Frogs Hall Lane and we are trying to set up a site meeting with NCC Highways and Anglian Water working towards a longer term solution. In the short term the Parish Council and Breckland Council have provided affected residents with some sandbags in case of another period of persistent heavy rainfall. We are also working with a local landowner to try and alleviate the considerable surface water which emanates from Woodgate Park.

We have successfully applied for match funding from NCC this year to construct a trod footpath between the Surgery and the junction of Norwich Road as well as improved speed limit road painting outside Gooseberry Hill Playing Field. Our County Councillor has also informed us that our bid for an additional SAM2 speed sign has also been successful. In addition, the Parish Council is currently setting up a community speed watch initiative in conjunction with Norfolk Constabulary. I would like to place on record my thanks to all of the volunteers for this who will soon

receive their training. I look forward to seeing them in action around the village and I hope this will help raise awareness of the 30mph speed limit.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

In 2019 the Neighbourhood Plan passed its final independent examination and was subsequently ratified in a village referendum later that year where all registered electors in Swanton Morley were given the opportunity to cast a vote on the plan. Breckland Council has since adopted the Neighbourhood Plan which now forms part of the Local Development Plan. This project took nearly five years to complete. I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to all of the councillors and volunteers who worked on the steering group and to those residents who engaged with the process. The Neighbourhood Plan is now actively referenced by Breckland Council planning officers when making their recommendations on planning applications.

In other news....

You may have noticed that we have installed a village flagpole near the church. We chose this location because of its proximity to the church and our memorial lectern located on Davidson Park. Given the village's military connections we think this is a fitting way to help us mark significant national events, as well as Pride and Norfolk Day.

Sadly because of the Covid19 restrictions we were unable to hold our Carols on the Green event last Christmas. To try and give everyone a bit of cheer through the gloom the Parish Council purchased considerably more Christmas lights to brighten up the village. 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. I hope these provided some seasonal cheer. We will see if we can expand on the display a little bit next Christmas and hopefully we will be able to meet up and sing Christmas carols once again.



Finally, the Annual Parish Meeting will this year be held virtually and to participate you will need to contact the Parish Clerk for the meeting link. For those residents who are unable to attend a virtual meeting but would like to ask a question or raise a concern, I am happy for you to contact me directly and I will do my best to help you. Looking to the future our first intended date for the resumption of in person meetings at the village hall is on 21st June at 7.30pm subject to further loosening of the covid 19 restrictions. I am sure we are all looking forward to some semblance of normality.

14th April 2021

ROGER ATTERWILL

CHAIRMAN, SWANTON MORLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Email: roger@swantonmorley.org

Tel. 01362 637383

Swanton Morley Parish Council – Financial Summary

Income for year 2020/2021:

Precept	£78,865.04
Allotment Income	£2806.73
Interest (General Funds)	£24.26
VAT Reclaim	£1411.57
Burial and Memorial Fees	£1700.00
Refund (training, legal fees)	£458.00
Youth Football Pitches	£330.00
Covid Support Grant	£1,000.00
Burial Ground Grant	£10,000.00

Total Income 2020/21: £96,595.60

Expenditure for year 2020/21 (from precept and general income):

	Budget 1920/21	Expenditure 1920/21	Budget 2021/22
Grass Cutting	£6,279.70	£5818.91	£6879.60
Insurance	£2,619.00	£2,860.91	£2,900.00
Street Lighting Maintenance	£600.00	£2,425.00	£600.00
Street Light Electricity	£900.00	£799.30	£900.00
Churchyard and Burial Ground Maintenance	£4,418.00	£3,222.60	£13,418.00
Open Spaces	£13,939.51	£7,598.85	£10,286.61
Flag Pole	£2,847.15	£1,598.53	£0.00

	Budget 1920/21	Expenditure 1920/21	Budget 2021/22
Covid19 Response Team	£0.00	£217.23	£473.00
Staff Remuneration	£40,516.14	£39,801.54	£46,924.68
Telephone and Broadband	£1,200.00	£1,127.80	£1,200.00
Stationery and Postage	£1,200.00	£735.89	£1,200.00
Members Expenses & Allowances	£818.00	£568.00	£832.00
Training	£1,334.00	£855.50	£710.00
Audit/ICO	£700.00	£700.00	£740.00
Subscriptions	£2,650.96	£3,008.66	£3,307.56
Donations	£250.00	£300.00	£1,000.00
By Elections	£2,500.00	£0.00	£2,500.00
Church Clock Maintenance	£262.00	£0.00	£262.00
Permissive Paths	£3,000.00	£2,500.00	£3,000.00
Communications	£700.00	£272.88	£750.00
Common Lands & Environment	£500.00	£494.00	£500.00
Lease of Manns Lane Land	£1348.00	£1348.00	£1348.00
Allotments	£702.00	£1095.74	£702.00
Loan Repayment	£8397.30	£8397.30	£8397.30
Legal/Consultant Fees	£2,500.00	£1847.67	£2500.00

	Budget 1920/21	Expenditure 1920/21	Budget 2021/22
Community Christmas Event	£500.00	£400.00	£500.00
WWII Commemorations	£500.00	£0.00	£0.00
Contingency	£5,000.00	£5,458.68	£5000.00
Information Boards	£496.00	£0.00	£0.00
Parish Partnership Highways Project	£6,250.00	£6,250.00	£5,899.50
Swanton Morley Festival	£1,000.00	£102.00	£0.00
Climate Change	£2,000.00	£0.00	£1,000.00
Section 137	£2,000.00	£0.00	£1,000.00
School Travel Plan	£0.00	£0.00	£500.00
Totals:	£117,927.76	£99,804.99	£125,230.25

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

The Precept for 2021/2022 has been set at £78,365.20





Swanton Morley Village Hall Report 2020/21

This will be a very different report from those of the past as the village hall has been closed now for more than a year, with very few exceptions, due to the Coronavirus, Covid-19. We have had to learn to adapt to ensure that we are offering a Covid secure environment as our groups and users gradually return over the coming months. We had a short 'practise run' last October when we were allowed to reopen for a 5-week period. Understandably, only a few groups felt confident enough to meet at that time and we were therefore, able to space them well to adhere to social distancing requirements.

During the closure, our caretaker, cleaner and bar manager were furloughed but office staff continued to work from home. Close attention has been paid to each new Government announcement followed by dissection of what it actually means for the village hall and its users. Risk assessments have been performed and adapted/updated regularly, temporary timetables have been implemented, signs, sanitising stations and floor stickers have been purchased and the hall has been deep cleaned more than a few times! We are ready to go again.

The announcement of a roadmap for the country to see us all out of the pandemic was welcome news as it gives us something firm to work towards in 2021/22 and we are feeling positive that we will soon be rebooking all of the postponed weddings and events of the past 12 months as well as welcoming back our regular hirers and taking new bookings for private hire.

Sadly, the events of the past year mean that we have lost some of our regular groups including Mini Monkeys, Buggy Bootcamp, Multiple Mayhem and Badminton but are pleased to be welcoming some new additions already including Move It or Lose It and Baby Massage – watch out for adverts soon.

Time away from the bustling hall has been put to good use with the production of a new website:

www.swantonmorleyvillagehall.co.uk

We hope that it provides everything you need to know about the hall and its facilities as well as providing information about how to hire the various rooms and spaces.

We have been lucky to take advantage of financial support offered by the Government which means that we have been able to maintain the hall during the closure despite our income having been severely reduced. It will be a trying period, financially, going forward but we are confident that we will soon hear squeals from a children's party, the beat from a wedding disco, the cheer from the football crowd (not forgetting the smell of the bacon butties!) and will soon become the thriving hub that the village hall has always been, once more.

Of course, one of the cancelled events was the 25th birthday of the village hall celebrations – we will need to make up for that....watch this space!

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

Maddi Heinrich
Bookings Secretary

INVITATION TO ATTEND THE VIRTUAL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING will be held via Microsoft Teams on Monday 26th April 2021 at 7.30pm

Under the Coronavirus Act, the Secretary of State has published meeting regulations which allow virtual meetings up to 7 May 2021. These are contained in The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Accordingly, this meeting will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams and if any members of the public or press wish to attend, please contact the Clerk no later than 12 noon on Friday 23rd April 2021 and an invitation to join the Teams meeting will be sent to you.

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

- 1. To Receive Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Chairman's Report – Mr Roger Atterwill, Chairman of Swanton Morley Parish Council**
- 3. To Agree Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 15th April 2019**
- 4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15th April 2019**
- 5. Reports from Village Organisations (Order to be Agreed by the Chairman)**
- 6. Report on the Management of Swanton Morley Village Hall**
- 7. Parishioners' Questions**
- 8. Date and Time of Next Annual Parish Meeting**

Roger Atterwill, Chairman, Swanton Morley Parish Council - 16th April 2021