

SAMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk: Teresa Murphy

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 20th September 2021

Present:

Cllr Phil Jones	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Peter Taaffe	
Cllr David Shaw	
Cllr Adam Quinney	
Teresa Murphy	Clerk

There were approximately 70 persons present.

The Clerk introduced Mrs Pat Newbold, Reader for the Alcester Minster, who had been asked to say a few words at the beginning of the meeting.

Pat started by announcing the sad death of Willis Ward, who had served as a parish councillor for a number of years. A minute's silence was held to remember this well respected member of the community. Pat then said a few well-chosen words, which were much appreciated.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Neil Eden, Cllr Peter Hencher-Serafin, Cllr Justin Kerridge

2. **Changes to Disclosure of Interest** None

3. **Election of Chairman**

- Cllr Peter Taaffe proposed Cllr Adam Quinney as Chairman
- Cllr David Shaw seconded the proposal.

Cllr Quinney accepted the position and took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Cllr Quinney made the following statement:

The Parish Council are deeply sorry that internal emails referencing members of the parish in a negative way have caused hurt to members of the parish. Those affected and named in correspondence have been contacted directly by members of the parish council and been apologised to. It is very important that everyone is treated with respect and courtesy be it in private, in correspondence or face to face. The parish council is here to work for and with people in the parish of Sambourne, everyone's views are to be treated with equal respect and lessons have been learned from these last few months. We will be taking a much more open position with regard to parish affairs.

Changes we are going to make as a parish council are:

- Changing when we meet. In order to make meetings more accessible to people, we are going to move meetings to a Tuesday evening, starting at the earlier time of 7.00 pm. We may also have a meeting on a Saturday morning, which may be more convenient for families with young children.
- We are going to be more open about our budget and about how we spend your money. We will use the new website which Cllr Taaffe has designed and parishioners will be able to view our precept and budget plans.
- The make-up of the Parish Council hasn't changed for many years, with the councillors being male and of a certain age. This is not acceptable and we would like the council to become more diverse. We plan to form a working group of the next generation to ask 'what do they want from their parish council?' We will be looking for volunteers to get together and produce a two page document giving their views.
- The next round of elections for the whole council will be in 2023. It is important that by then people will know what the parish council does and may actually wish to be involved.
- We have an election for Sambourne North coming up in October. To make this more open, if there is more than one candidate the parish council will invite the nominees to the parish hall for a hustings. The candidate will have three minutes to state why he/she is standing and then the parishioners will have an opportunity to ask questions.

The Chairman concluded by asking for support for this positive and open way forward for the Parish Council.

The Chairman then called on Greg Duddy to read out a statement he had received from Philip Bond:

'The campaign that I have led, to throw light on unacceptable behaviour and attitudes within the Parish Council, has been successful. I believe it will lead to significant positive changes, bringing benefits to us all. It is clear to me that it has now gone beyond where it is serving the best interests of the Parish and its people, and having served its purpose, it is my expressed desire that it should come to an end.

Pursuing this campaign has had a severely detrimental effect on my health and that of my family, and I realise that it has also caused distress and suffering to some people. I wish to offer my sincere apologies, without reservation.

I hope there now can begin a process of healing and reconciliation and that we can all move on to more peaceful times in our beautiful village.

To that end I have decided not to attend this meeting as my presence may be a distraction from that process. I recognise that this will take time and goodwill on all sides. I hope everyone can come together in that spirit.'

4. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd August 2021

The minutes were approved and signed by the chairman.

5. Welcome and Introduction to Alcester North SNT

The Chairman introduced PC Steven Hope, Beat Manager, and his team – Avery Brooke, Aadila Hussain and Sanjay Singh.

Steve spoke about crime in the area, which in Sambourne is very low. He said there was an increase in vehicle crime, county wide, and some leaflets and a few deterrent devices would be available to take at the back of the hall.

Steve has spoken to Cllr Taaffe about Community Speed Watch, which has now started in Sambourne. Although the police cannot prosecute, the data that is provided from CSW is used to help the county with their decisions with regard to speeding restrictions.

A parishioner asked the best way to contact SNT. Cllr Taaffe directed her to the new website, where the names and email addresses of the team are listed under Local Contacts/Useful Numbers. Please ensure the new website address is used: sambourneparish.org.uk.

Cllr Taaffe reported that the first Community Speed Watch was carried out on Friday 17th September on Oak Tree Lane. Of the 27 vehicles recorded, 2 were found to be speeding and this data has been forwarded to Warwickshire Police.

The Chairman thanked Steve and his team and said that we will be making enquiries with Studley PC concerning a joint purchase of a speed gun, which would give us more flexibility regarding regularity and timings. The police carry out risk assessments and have identified three areas in Sambourne.

6. Matters arising from the minutes of 2nd August 2021

Plaque in memory of Cllr Geoff Smith: The Chairman reported that the plaque was installed on 18th September.

7. Donation to the upkeep of Coughton Cemetery

Coughton Parish Council has been advised by the Auditor that payments by a parish council are not permitted to be made to a church. Under an Act passed in 1894 and amendments made in 1972, the payments could be considered illegal by the Audit Office. The Chairman will research whether it may be possible to pay the contractors direct.

Action: Chairman

8. Accounts

In-House financial review:

All areas of inspection were approved and Cllr Jones, as councillor with responsibility for finance, signed the In-House Financial Checks report for September 2021.

Direct debit agreement

It was agreed that a direct debit would be set up to Hugo Fox Ltd for administration of the website. The monthly fee will be £23.99. VAT of £4.00 per month will be reclaimed.

The following payments agreed:

Clerk	Salary 5 th July – 6 th September 2021	713.40
HMRC	Clerk's Tax	178.20
Clerk	Home working allowance – July/August plus expenses	109.56
Cllr Taaffe	Initial payment to Hugo Fox Ltd for website	23.99
Mrs C Jackson	Donation to bench in Middletown	55.00

9. Planning

Planning since 1st May 2021

20/03487/FUL	Chata, Middleton Lane	Construction of new single storey garage extension	Permission with conditions
21/01894/COUQ	Sambourne Hall Farm	Conversion of agricultural barn to single dwelling	Prior approval refused 3/08/2021
21/01954/FUL	Rough Hill Farm Shop	Widening of existing dropped kerb	Pending
21/02036/FUL	Cornflower Barn, Jill Lane	Replace one downstairs window (fire regs)	Pending
21/01418/FUL	Rough Hill Wood	Construction of track for forestry purposes	Pending
21/02358/LBC	Cornflower Barn, Jill Lane	Siting of above ground lpg tank in rear garden	Pending
21/02524/FUL	The Old Barn, Middletown	Proposed single storey extension	Pending
21/02562/FUL	Trotters End, Four Elms Farm, The Slough	Replacement of rear conservatory	Pending
21/02377/FUL	Warren Farmhouse, Sambourne Lane	Single storey extension to rear and side	Pending
21/02504/OUT	65 Green Lane	Replacement dwelling	Pending

21/02754/FUL	Westleigh, Middletown	New detached garage, including gym space	Pending
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Councillor Taaffe reminded everyone that there is a Planning Tracker on the new website, where planning applications can be viewed.

10. Correspondence

On 14th September 2021 the clerk received a letter from SDC giving details of the upcoming election in Sambourne North. The Election Notice was duly advertised on Thursday 16th September 2021.

11. Public Participation

The following questions were brought forward from the previous meeting:

Wayne Bates: I would like to propose that the council actively ascertains whether or not the opinion of the parish is indeed against street lighting if it was to allow speed calming measures to be installed, and whether opinions vary by location in the parish. Certainly, when I have discussed this with neighbours in Middletown, there appears to be little opposition to this if it would permit calming measures to be installed. It may well be that opinions differ across the parish depending on the levels of speeding.

Cllr Taaffe responded to the question. He has been in communication with the WCC's Principal Engineer for Street Lighting and asked the question whether street lighting is a viable proposition for a village location. Following this communication Cllr Taaffe produced a lengthy and detailed report on the impact of street lighting on Sambourne.

The main conclusions were:

- The street lighting columns and light source would be funded from the Parish Council's precept; therefore all cost is added to each household's council tax. The cost is not dependant on where the lighting is installed – the cost would still fall on every household.
- If a street light were damaged, the cost of repair would also be met by the parish.
- Cllr Taaffe produced an Excel file detailing the costs for installing the equipment, maintenance and yearly energy costs. If anyone wishes to see this, please email the clerk.

Sample of cost is illustrated below:

No Columns	Lantern cost Kw/h per yr	Kw/h cost	Running Cost per yr per column £	Total cost equipment £	Average Cable costs	Yearly Maintenance £	Total running costs per yr £
1	114	£0.2141	£24.41	£1,200.00	£700.00	£2.00	£24.41

Charles Farran: Observations following on from his involvement with the gateway scheme, concerning the roundels and ATC data.

Mr Farran reported the following:

- With regard to the new road side roundel repeaters, in several locations the signs are obscured by overgrowth and require clearing. A detailed description of these areas will be kept with these minutes.
- Laura Loy volunteered that she and her husband would be willing to take on the task of clearing the undergrowth. This offer was gratefully received. The clerk asked that they carried out a risk assessment and observed health and safety requirements whilst working next to the highway.
- With regard to ATC data Mr Farran considered it would be helpful if the next set of traffic speed data was recorded at the same points as last time, after the overgrown hedgerows have been dealt with.

Diane Lodge:

1. Reading the minutes previously in the year it is clear there has been running a lengthy and presumably detailed investigation into our Council.

Surely under the Transparency Code we the residents are entitled to know what has been going on and any outcome?

2. The Gates ref speeding reduction have been in place a while now; do we have actual results which justify the expenditure?

3. How can the council expect to earn back the Trust in order to move forward?

Is this not a time for change? Let's have a fresh new team who can better represent our community voted in by us. A step change needed.

The Chairman responded:

1. The publication of the Report is the responsibility of Stratford District Council and not the Parish Council. The Report will not be made public as it is Private and Confidential but we understand they will publish the conclusions of the investigation. He stressed that this was not an investigation into the parish council but into two individual councillors and the conclusions were reported at the meeting on 2nd August 2021.

2. We have been informed data pipes will be installed in the same locations and results will then become available.

3. From what the chairman said at the beginning of the meeting, he is determined to have that step change and to foster positive mutual engagement between the parish council and the parishioners.

Luke Egan: Following the Code of Conduct Complaints, under the Freedom of Information Act, I understand that there has been an official enquiry and an independent report has been issued, however it would appear that this report has not been available to the public” Such a report is neither private nor confidential and would the Chairman explain why this document has not been made available to the public?

The Chairman asked Mr Egan if he would accept the statement made in the previous answer (3) to Diane Lodge. Mr Egan agreed that the Chairman’s statement was a positive way forward.

Caroline Jackson: Other than Mr Quinney who has recently joined the Parish Council. Can you tell me parish council members individually, your thoughts regards the complaints that were made that led to the investigation that has been undergoing for the last seven months and thereafter individual thoughts as to whether they think that Dr Chris Clews position is tenable to remain in the chair of Sambourne Parish Council?

The Chairman responded that he hoped she has seen a change of direction for the Parish Council and that she would accept that a line has been drawn in the sand we would move on.

Greg Duddy: Does the council believe it has the support and confidence of the parishioners it is there to serve and how is it making that judgement?

Mr Duddy stated that this question has been answered in the statement made by the chairman and he was confident that the council would move forward in a positive manner.

Lucy Wharrad (not present):

This question is for the members of the spc which have been on the council for a number of years not to Mr Quinney, I would like to ask how they think it is possible to continue to hold their position on the council with all that had happened in the last few months and how they think this tenable?

The Chairman responded by reiterating what he said in his opening statement and he hoped that Lucy would be happy with his response and reassured her that we will be working openly with all people in the parish.

12. Chairman’s business

None

13. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 9th November 2021 at 19:00 in the parish room.

The meeting closed at 21:15.

