SWAYFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Mr D Metcalfe, Vice Chairman Mr K Holden

 Councillors: Mrs J Geeson, Mrs W Peat, Mr A Cusdin, Mr T Small

Administrator: Mrs A Reichelt. Email: swayfieldparish@gmail.com

**Draft Minutes of Swayfield PC Meeting 25h March 2025 7.00pm**

**1.0 Public Forum** A member of the public raised the question of verges being used as parking within the parish.

 **Cllrs response:** This is on the agenda to be discussed (8.2)

 A member of the public asked if there had been any more information/correspondence received with regard to speed restriction signs being moved prior to entering the village.

 **Cllrs response:** In light of this request, it was agreed that under Item 4.1 Matters Arising; we move all items from the agenda regarding Highways and LCC. This was approved unanimously.

**2.0 Apologies for Absence** Cllr Nick Robins

**3.0 To receive declarations of interest** in accordance with the 2011 Local Government Act. – *personal or prejudicial interest in any items for* discussion*.* Cllr A Cusdin – Hand Bells

**4.0 Draft Notes** of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday8th January 2024 to be approved as the Minutes. Proposed Cllr Holden seconded Cllr Geeson.

**4.1 Matters Arising** – At the January meeting, Cllr Metcalfe agreed to look through previous minutes to find correspondence with Highways regarding the repositioning of speed signs. The Clerk had received correspondence from Mr. Rowan Smith on 26th March 2019 informing the parish that all street signs were the responsibility of SKDC but speed signs were the responsibility of Highways. Mr. Smith informed S.P.C that there was no money for repairs, replacements or movement of any speed restriction signs. Cllr Cusdin wrote to LCC Highways post January meeting and was informed his letter would be forwarded to the appropriate department, he has subsequently not had a response since March 11th, he voluntarily offered to chase them. Cllr Metcalfe informed the meeting that previously, letters had been sent out to all parishioners asking for suggestions in reducing speeding in the village. Suggestions such as flashing speeding signs, white gates at the entrance to the village, were all discussed but are very costly. A proposed “Community Speed Watch Scheme”, where local volunteer residents are trained under Police guidance to perform speed checks, only received one volunteer. What has become apparent is that unless the Parish submit detailed surveys of Speeding within the village over a period of time, no department will look at moving any of the signs.

 Cllr Metcalfe concluded that although safety of the village should not be hindered by money, The Parish Council does have a limited budget so unless a grant can be obtained for the additional speed signs such as the new ones in Corby Glen at an expense of £3,500-4,000 each, the village will not be installing them.
Since the previous survey of the village in 2019, two additional houses have been built on Castle Bytham Road which has changed the whole dynamic to the entrance of the village, the subsequent accident may also argue our case. Cllr Cusdin is to write to Cllr Vernon and request a new survey.

\* moved items from the published agenda

**5.4 Highways** – speed restriction signs – placement of rocks along verges

The placement of temporary speed signs along Overgate Road, have been installed on Council land. These signs are enforcement signs and cannot be placed without permission. Any item placed on Council verges that have not received planning permission are classified as obstructions and are unauthorised and make the person or persons liable for any injury sustained to a person or damage to a vehicle. This includes, rocks, logs, fence posts, reflector entrance posts or containers with plants.

**8.2 Planning application** - Protection of grass verges from developers

 Parking on verges is not unlawful but accessing the verge by driving over a pavement is. Advice is to be sought.

**5.0 Councillors’ reports:**

**5.1** Cllr C. Vernon was not present at the meeting. Cllr Robbins report was circulated to all the councillors

**5.2 Recreation ground.** Cllr Holden has repaired the see-saw. Some additional repairs maybe required in the future to the play equipment. This could mean replacing the timber with steel. Cllr Holden is to research the cost of this undertaking. This was proposed by Cllr Geeson and seconded by Cllr Cusdin. Carried unanimously.

**5.3 Phone Kiosk.** Cllr Geeson reported unsolicited leaflets and pamphlets are still being left in the kiosk. Cllr Holden has written to the publishers and requested they stop. Corby Glen Parish Council are also receiving them. It was proposed that the kiosk be repainted. Research in to which red is used will be required and a Parish volunteer found.

**5.4 Highways – speed restriction signs MOVED**

 **-** gritting of Corby Road -Cllr Peat has not received a response to the road being gritted.

 - Refurbishment of Street name plates – they have been logged and we are awaiting a response from the street name plate team.

 - It is likely that the solution to prevent re-occurrence of the flooding episode on the corner of Corby Road at the beginning of the year lays between LCC Highways team and Anglian Water. A Fix My Street report has been raised for LCC, while Mr Jenkins from 5 Corby Road is engaged directly with Anglian Water, who are currently doing more exploratory work on the drains in that vicinity.

**5.5 Defibrillator** Working and all in order.

**6.0 Financial Matters**

**6.1** Financial report: position at bank – Councillor’s were all circulated with a draft end of year income and expenditure account noting that there may be an outstanding cheque to be presented

**6.2** Draft end of year account – Proposed as an accurate record by Cllr Peat and seconded by Cllr Small, agreed unanimously

**6.3** Grass Cutting Agreement 2025-26 – Raise a purchase order with Highways for the maintenance of grass verges. Cllr Holden proposed the signing by Cllr Metcalfe and it was seconded by Cllr Cusdin.

**6.4** Renewal of Grass Cutting Contract - The Cllrs agreed unanimously to renew the contract of grass cutting with Giles Percival for an additional year.

**6.5** Debit card application – Cllr Metcalfe proposed that the Parish Council apply for a debit card. The use of cheques inhibits our ability to pay for purchase and prevents us from having business accounts with companies such as Amazon.

 He proposed an account where a two-person authorisation to clear payments. Our current bank account has this facility but will require an upgrade. The requirement of a two person authorisation is similar to the requirement of two signatures on a cheque.

**6.6 Approval of Debit Card usage policy** – discussion on the proposed policy took place and minor amendments were proposed. These amendments would be researched by the RFO and an amended policy would be circularised to all Cllrs for their approval.

 Cllr Small suggested that we consider BACS for online payments, this however could not be used for all organisations such as Amazon. Cllr Metcalfe proposed that although the policy was not agreed the application should be sent to the bank. This was agreed unanimously.

**6.7** **Approval of purchase of new laptop to allow Windows 11 upgrade and Microsoft Office**

 Cllr Metcalfe proposed the replacement of the administrator’s laptop. The laptop crashed earlier in the month and was fortunately rebuilt without the loss of any data, the current laptop cannot be upgraded to Windows 11. At present we cannot replace the laptop because organisations such as Curry’s will not accept a cheque, hence why the Cllrs need the usage of a debit card. Cllr Peat proposed that the Cllrs approve the expenditure of between £300- £400 for the replacement of the laptop. This was seconded by Cllr Small and carried unanimously

**6.8** Cheques to be signed:

 Administrator wages. A Reichelt £253.44

**6.9 Internal Audit** – An internal audit needs to be arranged before the May meeting because the annual AGAR by the government has to be agreed at the Annual Meeting. Cllr Metcalfe asked for the approval of the Cllrs to employ Fiona Hatchman, an independent accountant who has audited our books for the last two years. This was unanimously agreed by all Cllrs.

**7.0 VE Day –** It was proposed by Cllr Geeson that we light the Beacon to commemorate VE Day on May 8th. Cllr Peat offered to apply for a grant for the refurbishment of the Beacon post firing. This was seconded by Cllr Holden.

**8.0 Planning applications**

**8.1 Protection of grass verges.** Previously discussed under Highways

**9.0 Correspondence –**

**9.1 Request for support on Road Safety.** Previously discussed under Highways

**9.2 Hand Bells grant application** – Cllr Metcalfe reminded the Cllrs that we are not in a position to accept any Grants, we have already refused previous applications on the grounds that we have not budgeted for them. No money has been allocated from the budget.

**10.0 Items of urgency for discussion**

**11.0 Date of next meeting –** Wednesday21st May.