

SWALLOWFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 14th MARCH 2017 IN
THE ROSE ROOM, SWALLOWFIELD PARISH HALL,
SWALLOWFIELD STREET, SWALLOWFIELD AT 7.30PM

Present: Mr. P. Sampson (Chairman) Mr. J. Anderson Mrs. M. McDonald
 Mr. C. Morrissey Mr. R. Norris Mr. J. Sant

In attendance: Liz Halson, Clerk

Members of the public: 15

464 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr. G.E. Collender, Mr. W. Dance, Cllr. J. Wheelwright

465 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

465.1 Item 469.1.2 - Cllr. C. Morrissey declared an interest as owner of the property.

466 QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

NB: this is not a verbatim account of the questions and answers but information is provided to give a flavour of what was said.

466.1 Development off Odiham Road, Riseley

Resident - I would like to understand why the council is submitting a list of mitigation projects to Hart District council prior to a decision on the application, surely this weakens the case for objection to the development.

Cllr. PS –that is not the case, the parish council does not have any part in the decision making process so has to cover the parish for the effects should the development be approved. It is common in responding to planning applications and include this type of information.

Cllr. JA – money for mitigation is secured through s106 contributions. The planning authority has to negotiate and agree these with the developer as part of the decision process if the authority is minded to approve.

The authority has to make a decision based on planning policy and this development is contrary to its planning policy. There are some issues which can't be mitigated against e.g. development in the countryside and transport. We will make it clear that we still object.

I am disappointed with the consultee report on Highways published on the Hart website.

Resident – can we respond to this report even though the consultation has closed?

*Cllr. JA – I don't know, we can investigate. However, one can always lobby councillors who sit on the Planning Committee.*¹

Resident – is it likely to go to the planning committee in May.

Cllr. JA – the clerk and I met with the Hart Planning Officer, he was still fact finding so was not able to give an indication about whether the application would be recommended for

¹ Clerk to speak to Hart Planning Officer

approval. We represented arguments against the development and also discussed the issues should Hart be minded to approve the development. He suggested that we put together a list of costed mitigation projects.

Resident – would the s106 money go to Hart

Cllr. JA – yes, they would then distribute as appropriate

Cllr. PS – we have also been consulting with Heckfield as it is Heckfield PC who would be given time to speak at any planning meeting, not Swallowfield PC.

Resident – I have also spoken to David Bell so that we can coordinate the points we put across.

Resident – what is the council going to do? When are they going to employ a barrister?

Cllr. JA – we will respond to the situation as appropriate as it develops.

Resident – what are you going to do about comments?

Cllr. JA – Hart aren't obliged to accept any more comments but we will speak to the planning officer.

Resident – have Swallowfield PC taken as many steps as it would have done if the development had been within the parish

Cllr. PS – we have taken more steps in that we have had to speak with another Parish Council and have had to understand the planning process of an authority other than Wokingham. We have also met with the developer to register our objection and WBC to make sure that they were also aware of our objection. A meeting was also held with appropriate Hart planning officer. You will also, no doubt, have seen the comprehensive letter of objection that the PC put together and submitted.

Resident – some residents didn't even get notified because it was a cross border development.

Cllr. PS – that is not the reason, notification is based on distance from the development not borders.

Resident – can we schedule a meeting with members of the Parish Council to discuss the issues?

Cllr. JA – members of the council would be willing to meet with a group of residents.²

Resident – if we take this issue to the press would the PC be prepared to give its support?

Cllr. PS – the press won't generally engage on this type of issue as there are so many developments where local residents object but if you can get some interest in the story give it a go.

[6 members of the public left]

466.2 Flood Resilience Group

GS – this year is the 10th anniversary of the flash floods which resulted in the formation of the Flood Resilience Group. Excellent work has been carried out by volunteers and contractors to improve the drains and maintain the infrastructure. The Parish Council have agreed a new grounds maintenance contract which includes work on ditches and balancing ponds. This contract starts on 1st April so the next scheduled work on ditches and balancing ponds will be in late Autumn, however, there is work which needs to be done now as it is 2 years since the last full maintenance work. The Foxborough balancing pond only has half the capacity it should have. Thames Water have carried out significant work clearing the one it owns. I would like to request that the council approval the proposal on the agenda to carry out this maintenance work now.

² Clerk to organise

467 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 467.1 Parish Clean Up Day – it was **NOTED** that the Parish Clean Up Day would take place on Saturday 1st April. All residents are encouraged to participate; refreshments would be provided.
- 467.2 Annual Parish Meeting (APM) – it was **NOTED** that the Annual Parish Meeting would take place on Tuesday 18th April, 7:30pm Swallowfield Parish Hall. Refreshments would be provided. Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive, WBC and Graham Stanley, Swallowfield Show were confirmed as speakers.
- 467.3 Church Fete – it was **NOTED** that the fete would be held on Saturday 10th June, the council had been allocated a pitch for the gazebo as last year. Cllrs. Morrissey and Norris volunteered to man the gazebo, Cllrs. Collender and Wheelwright would also be asked. ³

468 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

- 468.1 It was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14th February 2017 be approved. All in favour.
- 468.2 Clerks report on matters arising from last meeting.
- 448.1 AWE Representative – it was **NOTED** that Mr. J. Moss had agreed to continue as the parish representative at this forum, a proposal would be brought to the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May. Mr. Moss would enquire about the vetting process to allow Cllr. Norris to act as a deputy at meetings.
- 433.1 Post Office / Shop – it was **NOTED** that a costed proposal for the refurbishment of the post office had been received from the Post Office and a first draft of the Community Branch Fund application had been completed. ⁴
- 453.2 Funding for Fieldfayre Project – it was **NOTED** that Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had given approval for the council to apply for a loan from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB).
- 455.3.1 Tennis Club – it was **NOTED** that there are a number of outstanding actions following from the agreement on the rent review. The process for non-members booking courts had not been published, no information had been received regarding access to the disabled toilet, and details of the hire charges for the clubhouse had not been received.
- 468.3 Other items
- 468.3.1 Vandalism / antisocial behaviour – it was **NOTED** that since publication of the agenda more vandalism had been reported in Riseley; smashed panes of glass in the telephone box (community library) and the swings had been wound around the top bar so tightly that the swing could not be reached. ⁵

³ JS

⁴ Clerk to follow up with Post Master

⁵ Clerk to arrange for repair

469 PLANNING

Chairman of Planning Committee: Cllr. J. Anderson

469.1 Current applications

- 469.1.1 170258 – Little Chesters, Sandpit Lane, Farley Hill RG7 1XJ
Application for a certificate of lawful existing use for the use of land as residential garden.

It was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the council comment as detailed in the draft circulated by Cllr. Anderson, see page 11. All in favour.

[Cllr. Morrissey left the room]

- 469.1.2 170597 – Onich, Basingstoke Road, Riseley, Wokingham, RG7 1QD
Householder application for the proposed erection of a part single and part two storey extension to dwelling (amendment to previous consent 160973 - 1/7/2016).

Cllr. Anderson explained that the neighbour had an extension currently being added and although this one was slightly larger it gave no grounds for concern.

It was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the council do not comment on this application. All in favour.

[Cllr. Morrissey returned to the meeting]

469.2 Results

- 469.2.1 163176 – Yaffles, Beech Hill Road, Spencers Wood, Wokingham, RG7 1HT
Full planning application for the proposed erection of a 2 storey cottage and driveway following demolition of existing ancillary storage barn. **Refused**

The Parish Council objected as the proposal involved the creation of a new and separate house within the curtilage of the main house which could be sold on the open market.

- 469.2.2 163423 – Ivy Cottage, Bunces Shaw Road, Farley Hill FG7 1UU
Householder application for the proposed erection of a two bay, two storey detached garage with a dormer window extension on the first floor. **Approved**

The council did not object.

- 469.2.3 163510 – The Marshes, School, Riseley RG7 1XT
Householder application for the proposed use of the land for the stationing of a temporary mobile home and storage container on the site during the period of construction of the replacement dwelling, to include an extension of the gravel drive and provision of a temporary gravel hardstanding area. **Approved**

The council did not object.

- 469.2.4 163569 – Woodbury Cottage, Church Road, Farley Hill RG7 1UH
Householder application for the proposed single storey rear extension to dwelling plus single storey front extension to form porch. **Approved**

The council did not object.

469.2.5 163570 – Holly Lodge, Castle Hill, Farley Hill, RG7 1XA
Householder application for the proposed two storey front extension to existing dwelling.
Refused
The council had no comment on this application.

469.2.6 170188 - Loddon Court Farm Park, Beech Hill Road, Spencers Wood, RG7 1AN
Full planning application for the erection of 1no concrete garage with a metal tiled roof
(retrospective).
Approved
The parish council did not object.

469.3 Notifications

469.3.1 170672 – Apsley House & Stratfield House, Riseley Business Park, Basingstoke Road,
Riseley, Reading, RG7 1PZ
Application for Prior approval for the change of use of Office (B1) to Residential (C3) to
provide 8 residential units.

The council cannot comment on this type of application, however, this application only
differs from a previous application (161445), for which prior approval was granted, in the
number of units. The original application was for 11 residential units.

469.4 Development off Odiham Road, Riseley - Cllr. Anderson reiterated the following points:

- The Council is not setting out a negotiating position with the developer; it is making sure that the Planning Authority is aware of all the implications including financial. The Planning Authority is charged with reaching an objective decision and fully understands that the Parish Council fundamentally objects - a point that is to be reemphasised.

In contentious applications, the Parish Council has always made a point of covering both possible outcomes by suggesting conditions and requirements should the decision go against the Council's wishes. Since the Parish Council is not in control of the outcome, it would be neglecting its duty to uphold the interests of all parishioners in all scenarios if it did not do so. It is fair to say that this approach has been beneficial in all cases and has not weakened the Council's objections.

- The Council has been told that the financial implications would have to be addressed by including them in the S106 agreement between the developer and Hart which has to be concluded before any planning decision is reached. Likewise, any conditions have to be part of the decision notice. Going cap in hand to a hard-nosed developer after the event would not secure any concessions whatsoever.
- The financial impact would fall on all Swallowfield parishioners whereas the views expressed at the meeting are from people who have a more direct personal interest which for them might carry greater weight than the financial consequences. This is not representative of the parish as a whole. Council members should not feel intimidated or coerced and should reflect on whether they are taking a fair and balanced view.
- Council members are elected by and are here to represent the interests of the parish as a whole, not just a particular lobby group.
- The Council is not changing its stance and remains strongly opposed to the planning application.

It was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the council submits project funding requirements for Riseley, as detailed on page 11 and reiterates its objection to this development. All in favour.

470 FINANCE

(Budgets/investments/sinking fund/grants/risk assessments/insurance)

Lead Councillor: Cllr. P. Sampson

470.1 Accounts Update – it was **NOTED** that the accounts had been circulated.

470.2 Bank Reconciliation Statements – it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the bank reconciliation be signed. All in favour. ⁶

[4 members of the public left]

470.3 Investment Portfolio – it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that Swallowfield Parish Council consider engaging the services of a Financial Advisor to review and report on the services of a number of investment management companies. Cllr. Sant will investigate the costs and a recommendation would then be brought to council regarding the management of the investment portfolio. All in favour. ⁷

470.4 Street Lights – it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the five street lights owned by Swallowfield Parish Council are updated to LED lanterns under the program initiated by Wokingham Borough Council at a cost of £3,000 plus VAT. It had been calculated that this would save money in the long-term with a payback on the investment in under 6 years. All in favour. ⁸

471 BILLS FOR PAYMENT

471.1 Emergency repair – it was **NOTED** that the emergency work to repair the water leak in the old boiler room, dry out the water damage and repaint the kitchen wall was completed at a cost of £1,290 plus VAT.

471.2 Replacement windows and doors – it was **NOTED** that the final payment for the replacement windows and doors had been made as per the payment terms agreed, on-line payment was approved by Cllrs. Anderson and McDonald.

471.3 It was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the bills as listed below be **APPROVED** for payment. All in favour.

On-line payments would be authorised Cllrs. McDonald and Norris. ⁹ Cheques would be signed by Cllrs. McDonald and Norris. ^{10 11}

1	Rub-a-dub-scrub - Hall cleaning for February	222.75
2	Moorepay - Payroll costs for February	26.72
3	The Play Inspection Company - Annual 3 x play area inspection	306.00
4	Stratfield Saye Estate - Annual rent for Riseley	900.00
5	PDH Construction - Final invoice for windows and doors	6,816.40

⁶ PS

⁷ JS

⁸ Clerk to instruct WBC

⁹ MM/RN

¹⁰ MM/RN

¹¹ RFO

6	PDH Construction - Repair water leak in boiler room & repaint walls in kitchen	1,548.00
7	Berks County Training - Planning Framework Course	48.00
8	GLS - A4 report files	4.79
9	GLS - Posit its, flip chart paper, bin bags, toilet roll, bleach	192.34
10	John Dollin - Printing of the Parish newsletter	909.00
11	Lucas Plumbing - Replace ball valve in cold water tank	72.00
12	Lucas Plumbing - Supply & install replacement drain valve on boiler	157.80
13	C Drew - Deposit refund	100.00
14	Swallowfield Velo club - Deposit refund	76.45
15	L Baron - Deposit refund	100.00
16	Shinfield Brownies - Deposit refund	100.00
17	Geoprobe - Completion of DCP testing	450.00
18	Grundon - Parish Hall bins February	94.32
19	Grundon - Riseley Hall bins February	94.32
20	Reading Borough Council - Annual 3 x play area inspections	171.58
21	SE - Electricity Flat 1 Filedfayre 10.12.16 - 03.03.17	23.01
22	Farley Farms - Recharge of deed of easement fee	125.00
23	Heartwood - Felling of dead willows at Riseley Common	714.00
24	TV Licensing - TV licence for Rose Room	145.50
25	BBOWT - Annual membership renewal	46.00
26	Payroll - February	3,356.29
27	Pension - February	984.10
28	Tax & Ni - February	618.29
29	BACS charge January	17.12
30	British Gas - Parish hall 01.12.16 - 28.02.17	1,402.16
31	SE - Electricity our offices at Fieldfayre 02.12.16 - 27.02.17	30.60
32	SE - Electricity AB offices at Fieldfayre 02.12.16 - 27.02.17	30.60

472 PROPERTY

(Fieldfayre)

Lead Councillor: Cllr. J. Anderson

472.1 Fieldfayre Redevelopment

472.2 Fieldfayre Redevelopment Funding – it was **NOTED** that the application for the loan had been submitted to DCLG and approval had been received on 13th March 2017.

472.3 Tender – it was **NOTED** that four companies had been invited to tender for the project. The tenders were due for return on Friday 24th March.

472.4 Communications Plan – it was **PROPOSED** that the communications plan as detailed on

page 8 be adopted. It was **AGREED** that the leaflet would be distributed more widely, e.g. placed in the pub, the shop, the tennis club, the Tea Room and the village hall. All in favour. ¹²

472.5 Fieldfayre Tenancy – it was **PROPOSED** that this item be discussed in PART II due to commercial sensitivities. All in favour.

473 HUMAN RESOURCES

(Appraisals/recruitment/staff training)

Lead Councillor: Cllr. G. Collender

473.1 Recruitment – it was **NOTED** that the new RFO would start on 18th April 2017. It was **NOTED** that she had been registered for ILCA at a cost of £99 plus VAT.

473.2 Councillor Training – it was **NOTED** that Cllr. Morrissey attended *The Planning Framework Course* run by CCB on 7th March 2017.

474 RECREATION

(Play areas/skateboard park/recreation grounds/football pitches/mpg court)

Lead Councillor: Cllr. J. Sant

474.1 Riseley Sports Pavilion – it was **PROPOSED** that the revised lease for the Riseley Sports Pavilion between Swallowfield Parish Council and Riseley, Swallowfield and Farley Hill (RSF) Tennis Club be signed by the council once Cllr. Sant was satisfied that the actions agreed at the meeting had been carried out and the agreement had been signed by RSF Tennis Club. All in favour. ¹³

474.2 Quarterly Playground Inspections – it was **PROPOSED** that the Playground Technician from Reading Borough Council be engaged to carry out quarterly Playground inspections on the children's play equipment at Swallowfield, Riseley and Farley Hill for the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 at a cost of £145.84 plus VAT. ¹⁴

474.3 Annual Playground Inspection – it was **NOTED** the Annual Playground Inspection Reports had been received from The Play Inspection Company. Two items were highlighted as *Moderate Risk*; further work would be completed to identify how these items must be treated. Report circulated.¹⁵

474.4 Grounds Maintenance Contract – it was **NOTED** that the Grounds Maintenance Contract had been awarded to Nigel Jeffries Landscapes. It was **NOTED** that the hedge at the entrance to Riseley Memorial Hall needed to be lowered. ¹⁶

474.5 Vandalism – it was **NOTED** that there had been more vandalism at Swallowfield Recreation Ground. The switch to operate the floodlights had been ripped from its post. The incident had been reported to the police. ¹⁷

¹² JS/Clerk

¹³ Clerk

¹⁴ Clerk

¹⁵ Clerk

¹⁶ Clerk to inform Nigel Jefferies

¹⁷ Clerk

475 ENVIRONMENT & RURAL AFFAIRS

(The Marshes/Van Demans/Swallowfield Meadow/Community/Orchard/Biodiversity/
Footpaths/Waste/NAG/RCAG)

Lead Councillor: Cllr. P. Sampson

- 475.1 Trees Health and Safety Inspection – it was **PROPOSED** that the council engage Heartwood to carry out the 3 yearly health and safety inspection of all the trees on council owned property at a cost of £360. All in favour. ¹⁸
- 475.2 Tree on Swallowfield Meadow – it was **NOTED** that a tree had been cut down on Swallowfield Meadow. The resident was given permission to trim over hang but the work carried out appears to have gone much further than this. Swallowfield Meadow is a designated LNR so the action would be reported to the appropriate authorities and the resident would be informed. ¹⁹
- 475.3 NAG – it was **NOTED** that the last meeting was held on Wednesday 8th March 2017. Cllr. Norris attended and reported that the meeting was not well attended.

476 HALLS

(Maintenance/liaison with users and entertainment groups)

Lead Councillor: Cllr. M. McDonald

- 476.1 Rotary Buffing Machine – it was **PROPOSED** that council purchase a new buffing machine at a cost of £529.99 plus VAT. All in favour. ²⁰
- 476.2 Swallowfield Parish Hall, doors and windows – it was **NOTED** that the new fire doors and windows had been fitted.

477 RESILIENCE

(Flooding/ditches/rivers/Flood Resilience Group (FRG))

Lead Councillor: Cllr. M. McDonald

- 477.1 Herrington Report – it was **NOTED** that the final report from Herrington had been received and the findings would be used to inform decision making on future projects. The council would like to extend its gratitude to Mr. G. Stephens and Mr. A. Keith for all their work to ensure this report was extensive and complete.
- 477.2 Flood Resilience Group (FRG) – it was **NOTED** that the annual report from the FRG had been received outlining key points from the Herrington report and potential areas of focus. The co-chairs of the FRG would put together a project list and presented it to the council for consideration. It was **NOTED** that the last meeting was held on 28th February 2017 and the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 26th April in the Rose Room, 7:30pm.
- 477.3 Ditch Maintenance – Cllr. M. McDonald explained that an annual clearance of the ditches had been missed and there are some pieces of work which cannot wait until the autumn, these were highlighted by Mr. Stephens at the beginning of the meeting. We need to be prepared for flash floods which may occur in July and August. The work has not been budgeted so money will have to be found for approximately 2 man days work.

¹⁸ Clerk

¹⁹ Clerk

²⁰ Clerk

Cllrs. Sant and Morrissey suggested that a working party could complete much of the proposed work at the weekend. The group would meet 9am by the entrance to the Foxborough balancing pond. It was **AGREED** that Mr. Stephens would then report back to the Clerk with a list of the remaining work which the contractor would carry out.

It was **PROPOSED** that Nigel Jefferies be commissioned to carry out remaining works on the ditches and balances ponds at a cost of up to £500 plus VAT. The work would comply with environmental legislation. All in favour.

- 477.4 Pitt Bridge – it was **NOTED** that Cllr. McDonald and Mr Stephens (Chair, FRG) attended a meeting between Farley Estate, Wokingham Borough Council and the Environment Agency to discuss maintenance of the Pitt Bridge and work on ditches which would prevent further damage to the bridge. Farley Estate would like the Parish Council to support its application to English Heritage for a grant towards the work required. It was **NOTED** that Mr. Stephens would meet on-site on Thursday 16th March 2017 and Cllr. McDonald and Mr. Stephens would meet with the WBC on Friday 17th March. WBC were holding £80,000 to spend on the Church Road project, however, indications were that this may not improve the situation, therefore, they were asking whether there are other projects where the money could be better spent e.g. attenuating run off from the A33.

478 BOROUGH/PARISH MEETINGS

- 478.1 Wokingham Borough Clerks Forum – it was **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 15th March, the Clerk would attend.
- 478.2 Borough Parish Liaison Group – it was **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Monday 3rd April. Cllr. Sampson would attend.

479 OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- 479.1 Arborfield Community Forum – it was **NOTED** that the next meeting would be held on 20th March 2017, 6pm-8pm at Henry Street Garden Centre. Cllr. Wheelwright would not be able to attend.
- 479.2 Blackwater Valley Countryside Strategy – it was **NOTED** that a draft report, Blackwater Valley Countryside Strategy 2017-22 had been received.
- 479.3 Shinfield Parish Council – it was **NOTED** that a copy of a letter sent by Shinfield Parish Council to the Minister of State for Housing and Planning at DCLG regarding the proposal for a garden settlement within Grazeley had been received.
- 479.4 Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association (WDVTA) – it was **NOTED** that a letter had been received asking for a donation of £50 and a volunteer to represent Swallowfield in work carried out by the association. The council **AGREED** the organisation did not meet the criteria laid out in its Grants Policy. The council agreed that it would offer the organisation the opportunity to write an article for the next Newsletter. ²¹
- 479.5 Loddon Fisheries and Conservation Consultative (LFCC) – it was **NOTED** that the minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday 19th January had been received. It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 20th April 2017.

²¹ Clerk/GC

480 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

481 Tuesday 11th April 2017 at 7.30 p.m. in the Rose Room, Swallowfield Parish Hall, Swallowfield Street, Swallowfield.

[Members of the public left the meeting]

482 FIELDFAYRE

482.1 Tenancy – it was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the tenancy end date would be as notified to the tenant following the previous meeting.

[The meeting closed at 21:35]

NOTES

- 469.1.1 170258 – Little Chesters, Sandpit Lane, Farley Hill RG7 1XJ
Application for a certificate of lawful existing use for the use of land as residential garden.

Swallowfield Parish Council questions whether there is adequate or indeed any evidence of a change of use over the entire field area described in this application. Local residents have described the area as a field and having every appearance of countryside with evidence of equestrian use persisting subsequent to 2006 which demonstrates that the land has not been in continuous use as residential curtilage for a full 10 years as required.

The Council is very concerned that accepting such flimsy evidence of the land being treated as part of the residential curtilage when bound by a planning restriction to prevent this when the stables were replaced by the existing dwelling would set an extremely dangerous precedent.

In addition, the application mentions an affidavit sworn by the previous owner but this has not been put in the public domain and is therefore not open to challenge. The Council believes that this should not therefore be relied upon as evidence and clearly the evidence from other local residents seems to contradict what is being claimed.

- 469.4 Proposed Development off Odiham Road, Riseley

Project Funding Requirements to mitigate development

- Play Equipment * 2 @ 10K each = £20K
- Soffits = £17K
- Refurb of 2 tennis courts = £16K
- Tennis Club Fencing = 8K
- Bus Shelters * 2 = 8K
- Gateways/traffic calming * 2 = 5K