

# Swyncombe Parish Council

*Chairman: Timothy Elworthy  
Coates House, Coates Lane, Swyncombe, Oxon. RG9 6EG*

*Clerk to the Council: Steve Tasker  
Stockings farm Cottage, Cookley Green, Swyncombe, Oxon, RG9 6EW Tel. 01491 641270*

MINUTES of the **Parish Council Meeting** held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2003 at The Swyncombe Cricket Pavilion at 8 pm.

**Present:** Richard Slotover  
Tim Elworthy (Chairman and RFO)  
John Halls (Vice Chairman) Rodney Mann (County Councillor)  
Julia Wells  
Hugh Lake  
Steve Tasker (Clerk)

4 members of the Parish were present.

**1. Apologies**

Roger Belson (County Councillor) and David Sloan (District Councillor) apologised for being unable to attend. The minutes of the previous meeting were signed.

**2. Previous Actions**

All actions from the previous meeting have been completed or are in progress and reported upon under following agenda items.

**3. Reports from District/County Councillors**

The Chairman welcomed County Councillor Rodney Mann to the meeting and said that the greatest concern within the parish was the danger, pollution and disruption caused to residents by increased traffic and speeding on the roads in the parish. This made a significant and adverse impact on the life and well-being of parishioners. Speed limits were not at present much help as they were not enforced. Rodney Mann addressed the meeting. He offered to help the Parish Council with planning issues, agreed that the volume of paper and mail was a great difficulty for councillors, commended the South Oxfordshire Plan now in its second draft, urged comment on the consultation about green waste disposal and emphasised County concern on proposals to build houses in the green belt near Oxford, plans for gravel extraction at Benson and the pressure from Reading's wish to expand north into South Oxfordshire. The chairman thanked Mr Mann for attending and stated that the parish shared the concerns mentioned and would campaign against and land grab by Reading and investigate the gravel extraction issue.

#### 4. Financial Matters

Payments: C/A

£105.99 OALC membership

£12.00 Village Hall at Russells Water

£492.43 Allianz Cornhill Insurance

£252.20 SODC for pensioners travel tokens

Receipts: C/A

Nil

Payments M/A (cricket pavilion)

£5642.68 Cricket Pavilion building construction costs, insurance, electricity account

Receipts M/A (cricket pavilion)

£901.00 SODC grant aid, final payment

£2523.39 VAT refunds

Current Balances: C/A: £3335.99 M/A: £411.70 Inactive interest bearing A/C: £6.77

The Annual Return form for the 2002/03 audit was received in May. The completed annual return, bank reconciliation and associated documents and records were presented to the Internal Auditor for his report and dispatched, with explanation of significant variations, to the external auditor on 26 July to meet a deadline. The statutory notice of electors' rights to see the accounts were posted on parish notice boards.

The required Statement of Assurance contained in the accounts had to be sent to the auditors with the accounts but was returned to the parish council by the external auditors to be formally adopted by the Parish Council and recorded in the minutes of this meeting – thus obviating the need for an additional Parish Council meeting to do so. The Statement of Accounts and Statement of Assurance were duly put to the meeting and formally approved by the council **Action Point 1. TE to return the Annual Return to the External Auditors duly approved by the Parish Council.**

Following the changes in the Parish Council in the May elections Hugh Lake was added to the bank authorised signatories list and the appropriate forms obtained by the clerk. This cannot be done until Hugh Lake has formally provided identification at the Henley branch of the Natwest Bank. **Action Point 2. HL to take forms and documentation to the bank to permit addition of his name to the authorised signatories for cheques.**

#### 5. Swyncombe Cricket Pavilion update

JH briefed the meeting on the progress. A draft lease agreement of the Parish Council with Swyncombe Cricket Club was circulated for comment. It includes a copy of the lease agreement of the Trustees of the Swyncombe Estate with the Parish Council, all the clauses of which the Cricket Club must adhere to. **Action Point 3. All Parish Councillors to respond direct to JH by 11 Oct 03.**

In discussion it was agreed that the Cricket Club should meet all future pavilion running and maintenance costs by fund raising and that payments to cover this and other essential costs such as building insurance, payment for utilities and of rent to

the Swyncombe Estate would be made from time to time to the Parish Council Millennium Account for the Parish Council to make the payments from this account to providers, by cheque. **Action Point 4. JH to discuss the proposed lease and methods of fund raising, cash flow and account payments with the trustees of Swyncombe cricket Club to agree the procedures and report back to the PC.** It was further agreed that these arrangements would begin after practical completion and that in the meantime all pavilion expenses would continue to be met from the balance in the Millennium account. Official opening and arrangements for the provision of the projected childrens' playground would be planned for the spring of 2004. **Action Point 5. JH to progress.**

**6. Common land and access**

JW briefed the meeting of progress to give easements for access of householders over common land at Cookley Green. Such easements to be granted at no charge to householders but that they, and not the council, should meet all parties' legal costs. Further responses were awaited from our solicitors on progress with agreement on this matter for houses owned by the Swyncombe Estate. **Action Point 6. JW to report on progress and on attendance at the Commons Network Society meeting.**

**7. Planning Matters**

RS briefed the meeting on planning applications. Where Swyncombe had been asked for comment, no strong views had been recorded. Councillors expressed interest in three applications: Staddlestone House where comment was made to SODC that access to outbuildings should be made via the main access to the house rather than by the track adjacent to the next door property, Park Corner Farm, as agreed in a previous planning application, so that there was no restriction of quiet enjoyment by Park Corner Farmhouse caused by access, occupation as a separate dwelling or overlooking windows. Council members had heard of comment on the proposed development of one of the Swedish Houses in Park Corner. Finally RS commented that, through an oversight, the PC had not been asked to comment on the change of use, which had been granted with restrictions, at barns at Woods Farm on the parish boundary. **Action Point 7. RS to discuss these last two applications with SODC planning officers to determine the status if the applications and in particular the restrictions put on development granted at Woods Farm and report back to the PC.**

**8. Parish Tidiness and Best kept Village Competition.**

JW briefed the meeting on the encouraging comment in the competition judges' remarks on Cookley Green. An SODC questionnaire on community waste collection was discussed. **Action Point 8. JW to circulate SODC questionnaire.**

**9. Countryside and Rights of Way Act**

Parish comment was required by The Countryside Agency on the draft map of Registered Common Land and Open Country within the parish. After discussion and comment from the landowner, the PC agreed that a small parcel of land between Stockings Lane footpath and Little Cookley Hill on Westwood Manor Farm shown on the map as Open Country was not, by definition, open country. **Action Point 9. TE to respond to the Countryside Agency, on the comment form, to this effect.**

**10. Public Transport**

RS reported on minutes of a meeting held at 7 August at the Village Hall at Russells Water chaired by Pishill PC to discuss the lack of bus services at Russells Water. Pishill PC had contacted parishes concerned, to participate in a transport survey whose findings would be compiled by Katherine Mey at ORCC to establish a proven need. After discussion it was agreed that Swyncombe should participate. **Action Point 10. RS to arrange distribution of the Local Transport Survey, under a brief explanatory covering letter, in mid September. JH offered to print the survey and covering letter and all parish Councillors would help distribute the survey and receive completed questionnaires from parishioners by 30 September.**

**11. Roads and Speedwatch**

HL reported that Road Safety Week was aimed at schools and saw no benefit in PC participation in helping to alleviate or draw attention to parish concern on the increasing danger and noise of traffic on parish roads. All PC members agreed.

**12. Area Forums.**

TE reported on attendance at the Henley Area Forums commenting that they were not very helpful in addressing specific concerns of rural parishes.

**13. Consultation Paper on indemnities for members of local authorities.**

TE recorded receipt of a consultation paper on the nature of the power to be conferred to relevant authorities by the Local Government Act 2000. It was agreed that the PC would not respond. In the context of libel indemnities it was agreed that the PC members would themselves pay the £16 annual premium for insurance against libel and slander in the parish insurance policy. **Action Point 11. TE to forward cheque for £16 to the clerk to cover this item of insurance.**

**14. Russells Water Duckpond.**

In response to a request from the Russells Water Conservation group the PC agreed to contribute £125 to the restoration of the duckpond in Russells Water.

**15. AOB.**

HL and JW reported in their investigation into the utility of The Local Channel network of community websites. **Action Point 12. HL to report further on the need and requirement for a parish website.**

TE drew attention to the importance and value of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan in planning matters. This document is an essential reference in comment on planning applications and is now in its second draft. The draft plan was circulated first to RS for information.

**16. Comments from parishioners.**

Zoe Stow drew attention to the work of prison visitors and the need for volunteers, After discussion she undertook to provide further information to those interested.

**17. Date /Venue of next meeting.**

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December at 8pm in the Swyncombe cricket Pavilion.

Circulation: Parish Councillors, Minute Book, Rodney Mann, David Sloan, Roger Belson,  
PC Andy Thompson, Christopher Evans, Noticeboards (x4)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman's approval.