**MINUTES OF SANTON DOWNHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON MONDAY, 20th FEBRUARY 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

Present: Mr Michael Mackender (Chairman) Mr Andrew Butcher (Vice Chairman)

Mrs Sylvia East (Parish Clerk) Mrs Debbie Cock (Parish Councillor)

Mr Paul Brown (Parish Councillor) Mrs Ann Landells[co-opted Parish Councillor]

Mr Kim Daplyn, [co-opted Parish Councillor] Mr Adrian Baugh (co-opted Parish Councillor)

In attendance: Mr Victor Lukanuik (County Councillor) Mr Phil Wittam (District Councillor)

Mrs Mary Pritchard, Mr John McCreath (Village Residents)

1. The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting
2. There were no apologies as all present
3. The Chairman asked if there were any comments on the Minutes of the previous meeting, there being none the Minutes were signed as a true record
4. **Parish Clerk’s Reports**

**Finances**

1. The current balance in the account is £10,342.71. During the course of this year £7,762 income will be received other than any Locality Budgets/other income that may apply.
2. £60 has been received via the clothing bank. It was agreed this could prove to be a worthwhile income generator over a period of time once more people recognise its use/potential.

**General**

1. The Parish Clerk apologised for the omission in the November meeting with regard to the Planning Application from Appleyards to convert an existing garage within their property curtilage to an Airbnb. This had been discussed and agreed there were no grounds on which to propose any objection since this was not a new build and it was agreed this holiday let would add no additional ‘wear and tear’ to the village private roads since access to and from would be on roads the Parish Council hold no responsibility towards.
2. The Parish Clerk passed on the matter of the hedge issue at Edgewater to the Chairman, who following on from a letter and visit by the Parish Clerk to Chilterns, attended an on-site meeting with Chilterns representatives. During the meeting in transpired Chilterns had communicated with Forestry England and been given an incorrect statement regarding ownership of the road, who they said was Highways! The Parish Clerk has since responded with details of the Title Deed thus clarifying the facts. Chilterns advised they had only just paid out £300 to have the hedge cut back. The Chairman reiterated the Parish Council wished this to align with the boundary. It was subsequently agreed the Parish Council would tidy up the edges of the road and then undertake a further cut of the hedge, free of charge on this one occasion. Following on it is possible the Parish Council may undertake the work annually at a cost to be negotiated with Chilterns. The Parish Clerk was asked to clarify this with Chilterns. Comment was made that the Parish Council should be wary of taking on too many of these issues given the work would need to be voluntary. However, it was agreed the work could be undertaken by outside Contractors on behalf of the Parish Council if necessary and then invoiced to Chilterns. The issue of what to charge would be discussed at a further meeting. Volunteers from the Parish Council would be contacted by the Chairman with regard to carrying out the cut for this year.
3. An update was given on the gritting of roads and signage problems. The Parish Clerk had again written a letter to Highways only to be advised of the decision already given, i.e. the road although their responsibility is not on the gritting route. With regard signage the Parish Clerk has been advised to communicate with another department, which she is attempting to do. The webpage

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1. directs reports to a map upon which you are asked to specify location which is rather difficult, the first and second attempts provided a message the road was not within the responsibility of
2. Highways! The Parish Clerk will continue her attempts to get someone to actually speak to her on this subject. The consensus of opinion was it is getting harder to actually speak to anyone in authority. This it seems is an issue with many areas today. The Parish Clerk will continue writing letters in the hope a helpful dialogue will eventually be achieved. We were reminded that

 Cllr Lukanuik did his best to get an answer.

1. Comments were received about the absence of Agenda’s and Minutes on the Notice Board. As long as the Agenda is on the Notice Board at least 3 days prior to the meeting this is sufficient and is adhered to. With regard to Minutes, these have not been placed on the Notice Board for several years as the website is used. However, a note has now been added to the Agenda advising that copies are obtainable, which we are sure most people would be fully aware of since the Parish Council has always operated on an open basis.
2. The Parish Clerk introduced Mary Pritchard and John McCreath to the meeting and asked them to put forward their continued ideas for the Village Green. It was agreed we had made a positive start to the re-wilding areas. Mary and John then showed the Parish Councillors a very well thought out and detailed map of the Village Green. They expressed gratitude to the late Bill Landells for his kind donation of wild flower seed which will be spread onto the Green. The plan showed the planting of at least 12 shrubs/small trees which would be ideal for the wild life. It was agreed the Village Green would be cut as last year but with a double cut around the edges to address the concerns about fire risk. There has been a report of owls being seen in this area which is a hopeful sign. Mary and John are hoping, with the help of volunteers, to plant the new shrubs/small trees in the Autumn but will require some financial assistance. Both Cllrs Lunkanuik and Wittam showed delight in the efforts being made and offered to cover the cost, around £300, assuming re-election. Mary asked the Chairman when the first cut would take place and he advised probably end of March. The issue of the wild flower seed spreading would be discussed before the work was undertaken. There were no objections and the project was therefore agreed. The Parish Clerk commented that this project worked in well with biodiversity issues.

**Parish Councillors Reports**

 5) The Chairman invited Parish Councillors to report on any issues:

* Mrs Cock put forward the possibility of the Parish Council looking into an electric charging point, as a source of income,somewhere in the village. This would need more detailed discussion since the logical place would be the village hall and this may not prove to be sensible for a number of reasons. This suggestion would need discussions with the Village Hall and The Breckland Club.
* Mrs Cock also advised the current vicar would be retiring beginning of May this year so our village would be without a vicar. Cover should however be available in the interim.
* Mrs Landells raised concern over the Norway Maple on the triangle at the top of the road leading to the paddocks. This is looking none too well and it was wondered if the fact cars often are parked on this small piece of ground was in any way causing an issue with compaction.

Mrs Landells advised in the past there used to be dragons teeth on this small area to discourage parking. Mr Baugh said he would take a look at the situation.

* Mr Brown advised of some potholes at the top of his back lane (Club end) and stated he would fill these in himself

**6) County and District Councillors Reports**

 The Chairman invited our County Councillor and District Councillor to report on any issues.

* Cllr Lukanuik advised Brandon has been chosen to represent the Anglian Region at the Britain in Bloom final.

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* He also commented on the fact the railway barriers were dysfunctional again on the 31st January which no doubt led to an influx of extra traffic in Santon Downham. It would appear Network Rail do not take this matter seriously so we are unlikely to see any change in the future.
* Cllr Lukanuik advised he would be writing an article in the Brandon Life on the Santon Downham Village sign.
* Both Councillors stated they were impressed with the enthusiasm for getting things done by Santon Downham Parish Council and the personal input was gratifying for such a small village.
* Cllr Wittam advised he had been approached regarding the planning consent at Appleyards and mirrored the comments of the Parish Council
* Cll Wittam advised the Bingo Hall site has now received approval for 8 houses which will be rental. Both Councillors commented this would be good for Brandon.
* The Councillors were asked why funding has been stopped for the Remembrance playing fields. Cllr Wittam advised he has written a letter to say the matter needed to be looked at again and stated his hope is this will be resolved. Cllr Lukanuik advised this was basically a reversal of a bad decision and it was a disgrace to stop the last payment.

7) **Chairmans Report**

* The Chairman requested a further plaque to commemorate the King’s coronation for the village sign so we would have one from each side of the sign. There was no objection raised to this request.
* The Chairman raised the issue of King Charles III’s Coronation. A group of village ladies have put forward a proposition to hold a ‘Tea Party’ for the village. The Parish Clerk asked Ann Landells and Debbie Cock to put forward the ideas being discussed by a group of village ladies. Ann Landells advised the idea is to hold a ‘Tea Party’ which, given the inconsistency of our British weather would be best provided in the Village Hall. The date in mind would be the Sunday, 7th May as it is considered most people would prefer to sit and watch the Coronation event on their TV’s. The event would take place between 2pm and 5pm and would consist of a regular cream tea, i.e. sandwiches, cakes, scones, tea and coffee and if funds allowed perhaps a bottle of fizz on each table. The Parish Council would be the natural selection as host with the Village Hall making substantial subsidies by way of facilities and general services. The Village Hall also has Union Jack bunting available and will have a look to see what other provisions could be offered. There is already a long list of volunteers, some will bake cakes and others to help set up, serve and then clear up after the event. Ideas have been put forward to generate funding such as a Raffle and Tombola and other ideas are welcome. A letter will go out to all residents of the village who will be offered a free tea. If residents have visiting guests they too would be welcome but there would be a small contribution asked for. Past village residents will also be welcome, again with a small contribution. The contribution element has yet to be decided but is likely to be in the region of £5 per person. There will be a necessity to ask villagers to book for obvious planning reasons. The initial funding of this event will be covered by the Parish Council but will not be coming out of the precept portion of the funds. A ball park figure of £500 was put forward by the Parish Clerk but it was envisaged with the input of volunteers with cakes this could be less and with a Raffle and Tombola ultimately funding will be generated and replaced. A show of hands was asked and the large majority of those present were in favour, the project therefore was passed.
1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
* Mrs Cock raised the issue of dog fouling. This is a problem throughout the village and even on the Village Green. Mrs Cock asked why the purchased signs had not been erected. The Parish Clerk agreed several signs relating to dog fouling and issues of access down the lane behind the Club had been purchased and given to Mr Brown. Mr Brown concurred and said he would look these out and apologised for overlooking this matter.

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* The Chairman stated ‘Tommy’ has been very slightly damaged. This has therefore been removed for repair.

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was agreed for Monday, 3rd April 2023. The Parish Clerk advised the AGM must be held within 14 days of the Election date so the AGM has been proposed for Monday, 15th May 2023. This may need to be changed but the AGM would be held during that week.

**MEETING CLOSED**

10) The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

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