**MINUTES OF SANTON DOWNHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON MONDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

Present: Mr Andrew Butcher (Presiding Chairman) Mrs Sylvia East (Parish Clerk)

Mr Adrian Baugh (Parish Councillor) Mrs Debbie Cock (Councillor)

Mr Paul Brown (Parish Councillor) Mrs Ann Landells(Parish Councillor)

Mr Kim Daplyn (Councillor)

In attendance: Cllrs Victor Lukannuik (County Councillor) Phil Wittam (District Councillor)

and Joules Savage (District Councillor)

Members of the public: Mr John Riding (Resident) Mr John MCcreath (Resident)

Mrs Mary Pritchard (Resident)

1. Chairmans Welcome
2. Apologies received from Mr Mackender(Chairman), and Mr Duncan Slade (Forestry England)
3. Declaration of Interest there were none

The Parish Clerk asked the Presiding Chairman if the meeting could begin with a commentary from Mary Pritchard and John MCcreath in relation to their ongoing project on the Village Green. The Chairman agreed so Mary Pritchard and John McCreath were given the floor. The dry summer had not resulted in all they had hoped to achieve but were heartened by the number of wild plants and indeed an increase in wildlife. They hoped to sow some more seed in the Autumn and will be asking our Chairman to give one final cut of the Village Green. Mention was made of bringing in 12 new native trees next year such as for example Hawthorn, Rowan, and asked our District and County Councillors if they would honour the promise made previously. The County and District Councillors were in agreement to the request for a sum of £300 and it was agreed Mary Pritchard would put together a written request which the Parish Clerk would submit in the normal manner. There was some talk about a community orchard project and agreed there was a need to raise the profile of this project and invite other communities to assist. Mary Pritchard agreed to take this onboard.

The meeting then proceeded in line with the Agenda:

4) Minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday, 27th June were signed as a true record

5) **Parish Clerk’s Report**

* A copy of the recent Bank Statement was given to all Councillors, there is currently £14,788.68 in the account.
* Norway Maple – having read out a recent email from the third Contractor asked to quote and given that he felt cutting the tree back would not in fact save the tree, it was agreed the Parish Clerk would ask West Suffolk to send out someone to inspect the tree and advise whether in their opinion the tree is worth saving. Mr Baugh asked about the responsibility for the tree and the Parish Clerk advised that yes it falls within the Parish Council’s remit but the reality of course is we are surrounded by trees.

Oak Tree encroaching No.1 off of the main road – having read the lease given to Ms Sayer the Parish Clerk advised it was Ms Sayer’s responsibility but she was bound by the lease to ask permission to undertake any work on the trees. Having read out the passages relating to this, It was agreed Ms Sayer had the approval of the Parish Council to trim back the offending branches and this will be relayed to her.

SADPC2/09/23(1)

* **Grit Bins** – The Parish Clerk stated nothing has yet been done but felt it was time the Parish Council did move on the subject. The Parish Council were reminded of the fact West Suffolk will supply the grit as in the past years but would only deposit it into a grit bin standing on the area they historically used to leave the piles of grit. It was agreed the Council would purchase three grit bins and then request West Suffolk to continue with the supply.
* **Village Hall -**The Parish Clerk advised the Management Lease was now relinquished by the remaining three Lease Trustees and a Sub Committee acting on behalf of the Parish Council would like to take over the day to day management of the village hall. The Parish Council were wholeheartedly in favour of this transition. The Parish Clerk advised this Sub Committee would comprise of Adrian Baugh (Chairman), Jayne Harper (Treasurer) and Leanne Holden (Secretary). Other roles would of course come onboard. It was then discussed that the Village Hall account which stands currently at £24,502.30 would be ringfenced by the Parish Council for the payment of at least one year’s overheads such as Insurance, oil, electricity, water etc., and the balance would be held back for emergencies. The Parish Clerk emphasised this money was for the Village Hall alone. It was agreed £2,000 would be transferred into a separate bank account opened by the Sub Committee who would have responsibility for this money. Once set up all bookings monies would go into this new account. The Sub Committee would operate under the same Constitution and rules as the Parish Council and would report back to the Parish Council as and when required. It should be made very clear the ringfenced monies will remain in use only for the requirements of the Village Hall and would be an emergency fund for any repairs required in the future.
* **Visitors camping on the Village Green** – The Parish Clerk reported on the fact the Chairman had spoken to the visitors and that they had not intended camping on the green but at St Helen’s. On finding St Helens to be in a ‘disgusting’ state they moved on but the horses were tired and they needed to rest, hence landing on the Village Green. The visitors were there and were causing no issues so were left to their devices but advised not to return in future. The Parish Clerk also had a pleasant conversation with the visitors and concurred they were causing no major disturbance but camping on the Green is illegal and although these visitors were pleasant and cleared everything out of the way on leaving, the fear by many villagers was in offering an open door to others. Although the village really does not need any more signs it was agreed maybe two wooden signs saying ‘No overnight Camping’ should be erected, one at each end of the Village Green.
* It was agreed that a Forestry England representation would have been good for this meeting given the number of complaints being received about the state of St Helens and more relevantly to the state of the toilets down by the Forestry. The visitors had stated the toilets were so disgraceful they cleaned them themselves! This led to complaints of the stinging nettles around the outside of the toilets, nothing has been done and the area frankly looks incredibly untidy to say the least.

6**) Parish Councillors Reports**

* Paul Brown commented on the damage to Village sign and the presiding Chairman advised Mr Mackender was dealing with the matter.

7) **County and District Councillors Reports**

* Cllr Lukannuik advised on the water leak that was the cause of all the problems in Brandon High Street. He is in contact with Anglian Water and UK Networks.
* Cllr Savage reported on the matter of the campers in the forest. This problem had been reported to Forestry England and since the person involved seems to have now vacated, hopefully this matter has been resolved.

SDPC2.09.23(2)

* Cllr Savage asked again about the untidy state of the Bridle path from our bridge down to Brandon and remarked how sad it was to see such a mess when there had been an article in Horse and Hounds regaling on the Bridle path access for horse and walkers. This of course is a matter that falls well outside of Santon Downham Parish Council’s remit and again a pity there was no representation available from Forestry England. However, the actual bridle path does fall into Norfolk County Council’s remit. Mention was made of a horse or horses that recently went into the water an incident that could have been pretty serious given the weed situation.
* Cllr Wittam reported on the West Suffolk Grass Cutting schedule which is under review.The Presiding Chairman asked if there was any chance of grabbing some funds.

8) **Chairmans Report**

* The Presiding Chairman reported on the fact the Edgewater hedge situation has now been resolved and gave thanks to our Chairman, Mick Mackender, Michael Finch who along with himself, put in several hours of hard work. The road area is now increased which should assist us with the pothole situation. It was agreed this was a ‘one off’ and in future Chilterns would be advised to keep the hedge cut back every year

 **9) Any other issues**

* Mr Riding asked if he could make a statement about his involvement in the issue of No 7

 Marks Lane and apologise for his comments made about the Parish Council. He had since found

 out the Parish Council had not received any further plans in relation to this work and so were as

 much in the dark as was he. Mr Riding was advised the Planners rarely kept the Parish uptodate

 because many of the amendments were likely deemed as minor amendments. However, a letter

 would be sent to the Planners stating it was important for the Parish Council to be kept advised of

 amendments which may cause issues with neighbours or indeed the Parish Council.

10) **Next Meeting**

* The Parish Clerk advised the next meeting should be 6th November but given the number of issues in hand it seemed wise to have a meeting in October. 2nd October was then agreed.
* As a matter of some interest, the Parish Clerk also advised the Council of works Open Reach had carried out down by the Paddocks. This has resulted in the road being closed and a trench being dug, all of which was without any consultation with either the Parish Council or any of the neighbouring houses. On learning of this issue the Parish Clerk advised the Chairman who popped down to speak to the Construction Company, apparently one of the workers was extremely rude and the Chairman remarked on the difference between this experience and the courtesy he had received from the visitors on the Green.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

SDPC/2.8.23(3)