

SOUTHERY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Draft Minutes Subject to the Approval at the next Meeting
Thursday 6 May 2021 at 6.30 pm
Held virtually online via Zoom

Attendance:

Cllr Alison Youngs (Chair)
Cllr Annette Osler (Vice Chair)
Cllr Crispin Copsey
Cllr Christopher Edwards
Cllr Roger Whitehead
Helen Richardson, Parish Clerk

Also in attendance:

Public 0

1. Record attendance and receive apologies

Were accepted and noted from Cllr Javey Osler and Cllr Christine Feltwell (work commitments).

2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising - May 2019

There were accepted.

3. Parish Council Chairman's Report

The past year has seen unprecedented changes to the way we all live with the outbreak of the global Covid-19 pandemic and whilst the role of the parish council is largely unchanged, the way in which it operates has altered to keep everyone safe with Zoom meetings becoming the norm.

As we speak we look ahead to the lifting of many of the lockdown restrictions following a successful and effective start to the vaccination programme. The past year has seen many dark days with many heart-wrenching news stories but what we have seen locally is a real community spirit, which we hope continues beyond the pandemic. Last year we saw food shortages and yet we as a village were very fortunate to have our local shop and volunteers to get supplies to the most vulnerable. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in all projects no matter how small whether it be simply looking out for a neighbour, collecting food or prescriptions or larger more co-ordinated efforts such as the local volunteers involved in making and distributing free face masks. It is these efforts that make our small villages a community of which we can be proud. If everyone does a little, the results can be truly magnificent.

Now is, also a good point to remember and thank all those who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic; the NHS, carers, retail workers and all those who provide essential services to us whilst keeping our most vulnerable shielded from this terrible virus. We hope that the end is in sight however, we must recognise the need to remain cautious and follow government guidance at all times.

Given the times many council ideas and potential projects have sadly had to be shelved. It was a difficult and yet necessary decision that the council made to cancel the 2020 Christmas event which was well attended in 2019 due to the restrictions however a small team were able to comply with the rules and erect a Christmas tree on the Werehen to be enjoyed by the village over the festive season. We hope as life

returns to a more normal type that we will be able to pick up any projects that have been on hold.

In more positive news following the lifting of some restrictions over the summer months the council were able to complete scheduled works to the toilet block at the Playing field and we look forward to being able to formally open the refurbished toilet for the benefit of users of the field at events. Thanks go to the volunteers and all of those involved in completion of the project. The past year has seen more groups requesting to use the playing field for youth projects and sports which has been welcomed by the council as this is its intended use and benefits the community as a whole.

Mr Sparkle our handyman and CGM the grounds maintenance contractor have continued to tend the public areas around the village with good results. The children's play area annual inspection report gave rise to repairs to ensure continued safety of children using equipment. Safety ranks highly in the councillors minds at all times and should the public note anything which they feel is a concern we would appreciate them letting us know in order that it can be rectified promptly.

It is disappointing that once again as we review the year dog fouling continues to be a recurring problem within the village. The council has provided additional bins in recent years to the existing ones around the village, and we urge residents to be responsible and make use of them. We welcome ideas and comments from residents to take a collaborative approach to eliminate this problem.

The village has again benefited from maintenance such as the grass cutting around the Church Ruins provided by willing volunteers for which we are thankful. We received the news of the retirement of one of our volunteers this year, who, has put the bins out at the cemetery and filled the water container for a significant number of years; we thank him for his contribution and dedication to the village. The Rangers also regularly visit the village, undertaking minor clearing and cleaning tasks. If there is an area or concern which residents feel they may be able to assist with, please feel free to get in touch with our clerk, Helen who will be more than happy to assist.

Given the hardship suffered by many over the last year the council voted to maintain the precept at the same level as previous years. It was felt with good financial management services could be maintained at the current level and to impose any increase would be unfair at this time. It is worth reminding everyone that the public's thoughts are always a welcome addition to ensure that the council may focus on what the public needs and desires. In spite of the obvious challenges of the last 12 months the elected members continue to find their roles fulfilling taking inspiration from the public to make Southery a better environment for all to enjoy.

Yet again our clerk Helen has done a fantastic job at ensuring the council operates in the correct manner and I would like to thank her for all of her hard work particularly given the constraints under the pandemic. She is currently progressing, our move to a bespoke accounting software package which we hope will provide improved reporting and easier referencing to name a few of the benefits.

I would like to once again extend our thanks to the Rangers, Village Hall Committee, Swish, Speed watch and all the other groups within the village which work so conscientiously to enrich our community. My most sincere apologies if I have missed anyone.

Finally it is with deep sadness that we have also recently received the news of the death of the Duke of Edinburgh. On behalf of the council and our village I would like to extend our condolences to the Queen and the whole Royal Family on the loss of a man, who had a profound impact on the lives of so many.

As a mark of respect I would like to ask everyone to take part in a minutes silence to reflect on all the lost lives both those of national importance but also the thousands who have fallen victim to Coronavirus which has had such a significant influence on the world.

4. Reports from Community Organisations

There were none.

5. Public comments and discussion

Opportunity for parishioners to raise any issues of concern or future ideas/projects.

There were none.

Close 6.45 pm