

DRAFT MINUTES
SOUTH WILLINGAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
WEDNESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2017

Present:

Councillor M Edmundson

Councillor P Elliott (Chair)

Councillor P Cutts

Clerk: Councillor S Asquith

Residents' Forum

Attended by: County Cllr Patricia Bradwell, Ron Granger, Mark De Ath, Mary De Ath and Christopher Heneage who were all interested in the issue regarding the possible felling of trees along Donington Road. Cllr Elliott recapped on the situation as it had been covered in the previous meeting. Since that meeting the latest edition of the South Willingham Chronicle had appeared, produced by a former SWPC councillor, Nigel Spencer, which had covered the issue on the front page. The contents of the Chronicle had not been shared in advance with the parish council although the facts seemed to have been derived from the parish council minutes. The contents of the Chronicle had been brought to Mr Heneage's attention.

Cllr Elliott had contacted Richard Littlewood, ELDC tree officer, expressing his own concerns and had been informed that only around 20 trees "of sufficient quality" were to remain. Cllr Elliott thought that this would be detrimental to the appearance and environment of the area.

Mr Heneage explained that ELDC had planted the trees in the 1980s as a response to Dutch Elm Disease damage. His estate had complained at the time that they were too closely planted and would kill the estate hedge. He had expected only specimen trees to have been planted and that they would have been maintained. He had several issues with the existing growth:

- i) access to the drainage ditch was not possible with the necessary machinery
- ii) thinning was required to encourage the best trees
- iii) the hedge and verge habitat was being killed
- iv) turning machinery at the top of Donington Road was finding it difficult to see
- v) the verges were originally a sheep walk which should be preserved

Mr Heneage added that the Forestry Commission had found ash die-back in 90% of the ash trees in the road.

Cllr Elliott agreed that thinning was required but was reluctant that this should be done in one go. Ideally the scrub and self-seeded trees should be removed and then the situation reassessed. Mr Heneage said the proposal was for 27 to remain leaving 20m gaps for crown growth. He favoured felling all the trees, mulching the stumps and replanting with specimen trees, and had offered to do this at his own expense. This would get the job done in one go.

Mr De Ath said he understood Mr Heneage's points. However, he felt that a lot of wildlife would be lost and that the existing trees were attractive. He was also concerned for his own privacy and security if the tree screen to his house were cleared. He said he would be willing to maintain the trees in the area near his home. He was not against a certain amount of tree thinning. The previous owner's duck pond had been a result of a water leak and not a draining issue, he said.

Mr Granger said he walked Donington Road every day and considered it a wildlife corridor. He said that some trees seem to have been marked based on the value of their wood. Mr Heneage said that the arborist had marked them.

Cllr Elliott said there was clearly a difference of opinion and that a middle ground needed to be found.

Mr De Ath said that the issue originated from the flooding complaint due to the blocked culvert in Donington Road near the footbridge. Mr Granger said he had rodded it himself two years previously and Mr Heneage said he had cleared it that year. Cllr Elliott said that the trees further up Donington Road had nothing to do with the flooding. Cllr Bradwell explained that ELDC did have a problem with funding. The matter was with Richard Littlewood for a decision. Her opinion was that the area needed tidying up but that it should remain picturesque. The location of the various drains and grips was discussed.

It was agreed that Cllr Elliott, Cllr Bradwell, Mr Granger and Mr De Ath would look closely at the area concerned. SWPC would report the location of drainage channels and issues with them to the county council. Cllr Elliott would be the point of liaison with Cllr Bradwell. Cllr Elliott would then arrange a meeting with Richard Littlewood to reach a final decision. A representative from the Heneage Estate would be invited to discussions.

As it stood, Cllr Elliott said that SWPC would agree to fifty per cent of the thinning in the original proposal and that it fully supported clearing of the area of poor drainage.

Mr Heneage expected the council not to be able to fund further work in the future after this round of thinning and was therefore keen to have all the work done in one go.

Cllr Elliott suggested that SWPC could take on some responsibility for maintenance of the trees and, in return, Mr Heneage could plant some specimen trees. Mr Heneage said he had no problem with that approach.

Mr De Ath suggested that better grassland management could follow the reduction in trees.

Cllr Elliott thanked Mr Granger, Mr & Mrs De Ath and Mr Heneage for their attendance.

Cllr Bradshaw informed the meeting that the footpath repair team would be in the ELDC area in April and that SWPC could put forward any seriously damaged footpaths for consideration.

Cllr Bradshaw supported SWPC's requirement for faster broadband and would contact Online Lincolnshire to highlight the inadequate quality in the village.

Cllr Elliott thanked Cllr Bradshaw for her support.

1 Apologies for absence:

Councillor D Challender owing to work issues.

2 Declarations of interest in any items on this Agenda:

There were no declarations of interest.

3 To agree the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th July 2017:

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Matters arising from the Minutes held on 19th July 2017:

Cllr Asquith had taken advice regarding the requirement for SWPC to have a vice-chair and had been informed by LALC that it was 'good practice'. **Action: Agenda item next meeting.**

The LIVES recruitment talk had been held in early September but attracted poor attendance. The area is well-covered by first responders and the main thrust of the evening was to encourage people to help fundraise. Cllr Elliott wished to record his thanks to Kevin Troop and his family for the discussion.

In the absence of Cllr Challender it was not known what Mr Charman would like to do with the expenses owed to Margaret as the previous Clerk. **Action: Cllr Elliott would contact Mr Charman.**

Cheques for churchyard maintenance and LIVES had both been delivered.

Nigel Spencer had published and circulated the latest village newsletter, the South Willingham Chronicle, himself. He had not approached SWPC for input or editorial approval. The information seemed to have been gathered from already published sources. The previous incarnation of the newsletter had been subject to approval from an editorial committee and the meeting felt that a review of accountability was required prior to agreeing any donation. **Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.**

5 Financial Matters. Presentation of financial report and bank statement:

Cllr Asquith had amended the budget on the previous report. The financial report and bank statement was circulated and approved.

Cllr Asquith had circulated the response from the accountants Grant Thornton to the SWPC annual return and had it published on the South Willingham website as required. Issues had been raised on which tick boxes to complete when an item was 'not applicable', how this should be checked in the meeting, and that more than 30 days had been given for the exercise of public rights. Their response was duly noted.

6. Payment of church clock donation:

The cheque was signed and passed to Cllr Edmundson to give to the church committee.

7. Tree felling in Donington Road:

Further to the discussion reported above in the public forum Cllr Elliott summarised the actions to be taken. **Action: It was agreed that Cllr Elliott, Cllr Bradwell, Mr Granger and Mr De Ath would look closely at the area concerned. SWPC would report the location of drainage channels and issues with them to the county council. Cllr Elliott would be the point of liaison with Cllr Bradwell. Cllr Elliott would then arrange a meeting with Richard Littlewood to reach a final decision on tree clearance. A representative from the Heneage Estate would be invited to discussions.**

8. Standing orders:

Cllr Elliott had obtained model standing orders from the county council and had adapted them to suit SWPC. These were circulated. It was agreed to review SWPC performance against the standing order obligations at each annual meeting. The standing orders were adopted.

9. Allocation of roles:

The meeting agreed the allocation of roles. Cllr Elliott had contacted Claire Harrison who was happy to continue as the rural watch co-ordinator although she would require an updated contact list of those wishing to be involved.

10. Planning Matters:

Paperwork had been received regarding Moors Lane becoming a footpath.

11. Correspondence:

SWPC did not wish to submit a response to the LALC broadband consultation.

Maureen Ferguson had expressed her disappointment about the quality of the paintwork on the telephone box but it was agreed that it was unlikely that anything could be done about it.

12. Items for next agenda:

Risk management (standing item)

Vice-chairmanship

Current vacancies

Tree-felling update

Village newsletter

13. Date of Next Meeting:

Owing to the resignation of the councillor who preferred a late start to SWPC meetings, it was agreed that all meetings from then on would start at 7 pm with the public forum at 6.50 pm. **Action: Cllr Asquith to liaise with parish hall committee.**

Wednesday 22 November 2017 at **7 pm.**

Meeting closed at 8.35 pm

Signed:

Date:

Chairman