

**SOUTH WILLINGHAM
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday 10 May 2017 at 7.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Paul Elliott (Chair)
Councillor Shirley Asquith (Clerk)
Councillor Nigel Spencer

Marian Cooney
Steve Cooney
John Sturgeon
Sheila Lacey
Fran Kingsley
Chris Washer
Dennis Washer
June Sylvester
Susan Sauvey
Steve Sauvey
Dave Nutten
Chris Nutten
Sue Parker
Kev Parker
Allan Chesney
Christine Chesney

1. Report from Chair of South Willingham Parish Council

Cllr Elliott began by commenting on the good attendance and thanked everyone for coming. He reminded those attending that there was a session at the beginning of every parish council meeting for the public to attend and raise any issues.

He reported that it had been a fairly quiet year for the parish council as several plans had been explored but then abandoned owing to lack of interest from residents. These had included placing plant containers around the village, a children's play area and a village get-together.

He stated that the main issue over the last 18 months had been street lighting, and he assumed that the attendance at the meeting reflected concerns over this issue. He said there had been a lot of rumours circulating. The definitive decision of ELDC was now to keep all the existing lights in situ and to replace them with LED bulbs. This was the cheapest option. They would assess the state of the concrete lamp posts which would be kept if in good condition. He reported that the outcome of the survey was 65% of residents in favour of keeping all the lights, 30% in favour of removing them all, and the remainder favouring a reduction in number.

Discussion of street lighting continued in the open forum.

Cllr Elliott concluded his report by stating that the parish council was saddened by the passing of Margaret Charman, who had been an excellent parish clerk. He noted apologies from Barry Charman who had not been able to attend the meeting.

He welcomed Shirley Asquith into the role of clerk and councillor. He added that Cllr Harris had resigned following many years on the parish council and that Cllr Cutts would be resigning when he had sold his house. There were therefore two new vacancies on the council, along with a long-standing vacancy. He encouraged anyone who was interested to contact him.

Cllr Spencer added that he was hoping to resurrect the village newsletter.

Chris Washer asked everyone to note that the parish hall AGM was due to take place the following Tuesday at 6.30 in the parish hall.

2. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2016

These minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. OPEN FORUM – an opportunity for residents to raise any issues of concern about the village

Dave Nutten commented that the main reason for everyone's attendance was to find out about the decision on street lighting. He said that nothing had been in the previous parish council minutes. Cllr Elliott said that the decision had only recently been reached by ELDC and that the council only met every two months. Mr Nutten said that safety and security of residents was paramount. He referred to his time as chair of the parish council when the issue of the loss of street lighting arose and the village would have had to pay to keep it, but he said it was not a significant cost. He recalled ELDC suggesting the decision be delayed but the parish council seemed to have gone ahead and proposed a decision. Cllr Elliott said a proposed reduction in lights had been put forward. The issue of a survey had then come up in a later council meeting and he accepted the criticism that one could have been done earlier but explained that, in his experience, survey outcomes were usually indefinite so it had not been pursued.

Allan Chesney asked who had been surveyed. Cllr Elliott said that all streets had been covered and it would have depended on who was in at the time.

Cllr Elliott commented that there was no reason to rehash the arguments and that the decision had been made and was in favour of the majority. He said everyone had their own opinions based on safety, energy conservation, light pollution and many other things.

Cllr Spencer said he expected the issue to arise again when ELDC faced more government cuts and pushed more expenditure onto parish councils, which were

able to raise their precept without capping. It might be that residents would be asked to pay for street lighting in future, he said.

Allan Chesney commented that the method of canvassing the village perhaps needed to be more robust. On an earlier issue residents had received a note through the door. Cllr Elliott said this was a time-consuming method and pointed out that councillors were volunteers and often busy people.

Dave Nutten said he understood there was a diversity of views in the village which was probably healthy.

Chris Washer commented that the decision on *what* to canvass residents on seemed to be the issue. Things that affected everyone should be put to all residents.

Cllr Elliott said that the council took on board all the comments made. He said that unless people brought issues to the meetings the council would not know what was on people's minds.

4. Date of next meeting: to be arranged for May 2018