

Minutes of the Virtual Annual Parish Meeting held on 6th May 2021

The minutes of the Virtual Annual Parish Meeting held at 7.00pm on 6th May 2021.

APM/1/2021 Appointment of a Clerk to the meeting

G Soudah was appointed as Clerk to the meeting

APM/2/2021 Apologies received

A Flemming (2nd Swanwick St, Andrews Brownies), G Holmes (Methodist Church), Alex Wakefield (Swanwick Cricket Club), M Parkin (Pentrich & S. Wingfield Revolution Group), Cllrs Alan King & Barnett, Cllr D Wilson

APM/3/2019 Minutes

Minutes of Meeting held on 19th April 2018 were deemed to have been received. These are available in the Archived folders on the Parish Council website.

APM/4/2021 Chair's Report

The Chair presented his report. Copy is appended (1).

APM/5/2021 Matters for the attention of the Police

There was no Police representation at the meeting, but there have been some on-going communications with the Police over anti-social behaviour within the village open spaces.

APM/6/2021 Reports from the community

Reports on activities, achievements and aspirations from the Chair and community groups were read out at the meeting

A copy of each of the reports is appended:

1. Chair's Report (page 2)
2. St Andrew's Parish Church (page 4)
3. Amber Valley Voices (page 5)
4. Swanwick Residents Association (page 7)
5. Swanwick Methodist Church Luncheon Club (page 8)
6. Pentrich & S Wingfield Revolution Group (page 8)
7. Swanwick Cricket Club (page 8)

APM/7/2021 Open forum - question and answer session

Due to the late hour, discussion was brief as most issues were covered during representations.

Closure

Meeting closed at 7.20pm

1. Chair's Report – 6 May 2021

Chair's Report is to the Parish Meeting of the Swanwick Electorate held on 6th May 2021.

Just to remind ourselves, the Annual Parish Meeting is not a council meeting and tends to be more informal but we do have an Agenda to guide us through the meeting. It is a meeting of the parish electors and organisations and usually takes place between 1 March and 1 June but cannot be held before 6.00pm. Notice of the Statutory Annual Parish Council meeting was given by posting details on the Parish Council website, Facebook and the noticeboards in the village

Electors can contribute to the agenda. As we have not received any specific requests for items to be added to the agenda before publication, I am quite happy to receive any suggestions at this late stage.

It is a further opportunity for the electorate to bring issues to the attention of the Parish Council at the beginning of the year so that we can consider these matters in preparing our future plans.

In practice these meetings often

- Celebrate local activities and
- Debate current issues in the community.

The Chair's report is intended to review the past year, celebrate our achievements and thank those who actively contributed whether by giving their time or in other ways.

In preparing this report to the Annual Parish Meeting, I realise that the meeting in May 2020 was also cancelled; so there is a whole year missing and continuity has been broken. I have once again learned the importance of keeping a running, contemporaneous record in preference to relying on memory at the year end. So if I miss anything or miss thanking anyone, I am sure you will bring it to my attention.

Well Dressing

One of the first events in the Parish Calendar is the Well Dressing week which usually starts in second week in May. Unfortunately due to the pandemic and the restrictions we have missed two years of well dressing.

It is too late to organise this year's Well Dressing as the route out of the restrictions is rather organic. It takes a lot of work to organise and co-ordinating all the activities necessary to make the event another success. Subject to the relaxation of restrictions expected in late June, we will begin planning for 2022.

Armed Forces Week

2014 was the first time the Parish participated in celebrating Armed Forces Week that ran from 23rd to 29th June 2014. Again there has been little planning for any events for this year.

Village Hall Working Group

The group met virtually in November, December 2020 and January 2021. The focus has been mainly on the continuation of the development and the fund raising options. The work on ground stabilisation has now been completed and the planning condition has been discharged by Amber Valley Planning Development and the Coal Authority. The Parish Council has earmarked reserves for the development and future effort will be to concentrate on raising the remaining capital for the project.

Swanwick Recreation Grounds Trust

Swanwick Parish Council has taken over as the sole Trustee of the Charity during the last year. A new working group, Swanwick Recreation Grounds Working Group, has been set up to advise the Parish Council about ways to develop the facilities and make the Trust self-financing. The working group includes various users such as the football teams and will welcome others with an interest.

At present there are a number of teams interested in using the facilities as Home grounds including some new girls teams.

Queen Elizabeth II (Crays Hill) Park Community Group Meeting

During the last year there have not been any meetings of the Queen Elizabeth II (Crays Hill) Park Community Group. It is not clear whether this group will be re-instated in the near future.

Neighbouring Civic Services

Needless to say, I have not attended any Civic Services in neighbouring areas.

Civic Service

Swanwick Parish Civic and Carol Service was also cancelled due to the pandemic restrictions. It is still not clear if a service will be held in December 2021. We might suggest a joint virtual service instead. It was suggested that a provisional date be set for the Civic and Carol Service. This would be 13 December 2021.

Anti-Social Behaviour on Play Area Chapel Street

Recent incidents have been reported to the Parish Council. The advice continues to please report these to the Police on the non-emergency number 101. This will bring hot-spots to the attention of the Police who are responsible for enforcing the newly revised Public Spaces Prohibition Orders (PSPOs) that now cover the whole of the Recreation Grounds.

The development at Swanwick Fields (corner Derby Road - Sleetmoor Lane) and the development at Lily Street Farm

These continue to raise issues of traffic management, which should be directed to DCC Highways, and planning conditions which should be directed to Amber Valley Borough Council Planning Development.

Public Participation

I have been encouraged by the level of public participation when big issues are being discussed. We must still strive to encourage a wider level of participation.

George Soudah, Cllr
Swanwick Parish Council

2. St Andrew's Parish Church

Well who would have thought that 2020 would turn into the year that it did? After the difficulties of 2019, we had entered the new year full of hope and positivity. We had had some lovely services over the Christmas period including the village carol service which was led by Brian.

However, like everyone else, soon into February we began to realise that a serious situation was arising and sadly we were forced into lockdown in March with the whole country. We had to immediately close for services but after a good clean and rearranging following all the C/E guidelines we were able to open for short periods of private prayer, and I have to say that these times were well used.

Newsletter

We were not allowed to send out the magazine to our many readers which we found strange as postal deliveries were continuing, so started an on-line newsletter which continues to this day. It now goes out to 82 addresses reaching approximately 106 people plus it is then printed out to at least another 8 homes that I know about who do not have internet connections. Through this we have managed to keep our fellowship active and it has been a good route through which to pass on messages, jokes, news and warnings of scams that have been circulating. We send out birthday greetings and sadly news of those who are ill or have died, asking for prayer. Not everyone receiving the newsletter is a member of our church but anyone who asks for it is simply added to the address list. That does include the new Bishop of Repton.

We have learned many new skills during the past year!

On-line Services

Brian has done some on-line services that have been really well received and not only by local people. The numbers have gone into 3 figures at times. We think that the simplicity of them has been very appealing to many.

Mothering Sunday

For Mothering Sunday last year we managed to deliver over 50 small bunches of daffodils to many ladies which was very well received as many of our older members are on their own.

Then as lockdown eased we restarted occasional services. They were well attended even though we have many who are totally shielding because of health issues. We continued with these for as long as we could until again having to close.

Cancelled Services

Our deep sadness comes with the numbers of events we had to cancel: the band and organ concerts, harvest festival and the infamous parachuting teddies, several weddings and at times we could not even conduct a funeral. One of my greatest regrets was not holding a Remembrance service. We tried to think of all ways of getting around it but none would have proved safe. However we did put up the big boards over the church door and had a good response from the village with lots of names added, and from personal comments made we know that people were very appreciative of the effort. I would like to express my personal thanks to the parish council for financially supporting this. We did open for private prayer on the 11th and several people stood in the churchyard for the minute's silence at 11am.

Christmas Celebrations

Sadly again we could not hold any large public event over Christmas but we delivered around a 100 small card angels to let people know that they were 'loved and not forgotten'. Again a positive response.

Weddings

Happily we did have a wedding in September, that after first being cancelled was hastily rearranged due to family illness. It was a time of great joy.

So now we have entered 2021 and there seem to be positive times ahead. We have come through it battered and bruised but with our fellowship intact. We have lost several members along the way, some to Covid. It has broken our hearts not to be able to be there with services and loving support. Many members are now no longer able to do what they once did so we have got to find a new way of moving ahead. We now have services planned for the next 3 months at Swanwick and Pentrich although reduced in number.

Presented by Anne Veale

3. Amber Valley Voices

Amber Valley Voices was started in 2014 by a group of local friends who wanted to form a community choir, with the emphasis on community – giving people who had a common interest in music an opportunity to meet new people, make new friends and have a sense of belonging to a group.

Membership

In March 2020 – just prior to the lockdown the membership stood at approximately 110 members – men and women ranging from 30 to 85, meeting in Swanwick Sports College on Monday evenings.

Moving on-line

On March 16th they had to close the door to live in person rehearsals – hoping at the time it would be for 12 weeks. Obviously this was not to be. Some other way had to be found to keep the choir singing and the community together. Our on-line Zoom rehearsals have been held weekly 7 -8.30pm and have been attended by around 50-60 people. These have developed from just singing to pre-recorded tracks, to breaking into sections and learning new music. They have also held on-line concerts for themselves. Although we have lost some members, we have welcomed new ones from as far away as Germany and Shropshire while being in lockdown.

In addition the choir have written and recorded a song “The Little Things” about lockdown experiences and this is available on YouTube and was used in the BBC East Midlands Today program item ‘Make a Difference’ when the Music Director was interviewed and the choir highlighted as making a difference during the last year.

WhatsApp group

The choir set up a WhatsApp group straight away for people to keep in touch and help each other through their isolation by sharing experiences and funny stories, checking in on each other and asking for help etc, and sharing photographs with each other. As the choir couldn't raise money for charity through their concerts they decided to use these photographs to create a calendar and sell it at Christmas – which raised over £300 for their chosen charity for 2020.

To keep in touch with those who couldn't attend the zoom rehearsals or use WhatsApp – a newsletter with articles, quizzes, photographs etc was produced weekly at first and monthly since August and emailed or posted out to all members.

Social Events

The choir always held social events throughout the year and so continued to do this through a monthly Zoom quiz night which brought together around 60 members and family or friends in breakout teams – reaching other members who may not attend the rehearsals too.

There have been walking groups when permitted, and a Book Club group grew out of the choir. So many people have been able to support each other in many different ways – baking, shopping, gardening advice and plant sharing, diy help, dog sharing... and many more.

Resources

All this has been offered free of charge to members but many have generously given donations over the months and so we were able to continue to employ a professional accompanist who also helped with arranging and recording and much needed technical advice. We were also able to buy a wide range of music written for community choirs– often not available to hire or borrow from the library. This has helped to keep refreshing the repertoire available.

Although there is so much to be thankful for especially the way the community element of AVV has really shone, the choir is desperate to get back to singing together as soon as allowed.

Prepared by Angela Cope
Presented by A Trenear

4. Swanwick Residents' Association Report

At the last Annual Parish Meeting held in 2019, I presented a comprehensive report of the involvement of the Residents' Association in upholding the four main objectives of its Constitution.

The two main issues covered was the ongoing formulation of a Local Plan for Amber Valley and another related matter, that of the Green Belt. These very much remain at the top of the agenda still.

Local Plan

However, the second attempt at forming a Local Plan which was in a state of pause at the time of the last Annual Parish meeting to facilitate a Green Belt Review, was eventually also withdrawn due to a change in administration at the Council, since when a third attempt has commenced, which is already 8 months behind the timetable set.

Costs

The previous two attempts at formulating a Local Plan cost the taxpayer over £2 million and the third attempt has been calculated to cost a further £1.4 million. Over 3 years ago, I reported my view to the Parish Council that Amber Valley Borough Council were experiencing financial difficulties and that since has proved to be the case in recent months, with the added problems of senior officers leaving their positions and the two most senior executives retiring, or resigning, depending on which press reports you read.

Development in the Area

In recent months you will have not failed to see the start of the development of Lily Street Farm, something the Association and Parish Council fought long and hard to prevent. The development will continue for a long time to come, but even now with green open spaces, fields and hedgerows having been destroyed, together with the dispersal of wildlife, it is not difficult to imagine the urban sprawl this is going to bring to the north of the village.

How quickly we seem to have forgotten that these basic ingredients in our life have proved to be a 'life-saver' for so many during the past darkest of years.

Urban Sprawl

This will also ultimately mean that the only physical break between Swanwick merging with Alfreton will be the A38 trunk road. There will be no definitive and natural break on both the eastern and northern boundaries of our village from other neighbouring villages and the town of Alfreton, therefore in time diminishing our identity as a separate village.

Planning Reform & Democracy

During the past year, during a global pandemic, central government saw fit to launch a consultation on planning reform, which included councils identifying land for development which would receive automatic planning approval and imposing nationally determined and binding housing requirements together with removing the automatic right to appear in person at hearings discussing local plans. This would also unfairly exclude local people from having influence over what happens in their area. This can only be interpreted as the beginning of slow, but sure erosion in local democracy.

John G. Briggs.
Vice-Chairman

5. Swanwick Luncheon Club

Normally the Luncheon Club meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month at Swanwick Methodist Church. However due to the pandemic we have been unable to meet since February 2020. Since then we have continued to provide friendship and support throughout lockdown with a regular newsletter for our members. We hope to re start our lunches later in the year, as soon as we are given the go ahead to do so.

Gill Holmes
Luncheon Club - Swanwick Methodist Church

6. Pentrich & S Wingfield Revolution Group

History Group

Thank you for your information. However, it seems likely that the Historical Society and the Pentrich and South Wingfield Revolution Group will not exist, at least in their previous format.

The PSWRG will be in a different format and this is yet to be decided. It is our declared intention to provide some form of enduring recognition but this is to be subject of discussion before the AGM in July.

The History Group is somewhat easier. I have decided to `retire` from my role as chairman. At the moment no one seems to want to take over the role. The age of members and the nature of the meetings is a potential problem in the current climate. I will keep you up to date throughout the summer when decisions are to be made finally.

Prepared by Michael Parkin

7. Swanwick Cricket Club

Email received expressing concern about anti-social behaviour on Crays Hill over a period of time. This was reported to the Police. The club had to clear a lot of broken glass and litter before the cricket field could be maintained.

The club is grateful for the installation of the defibrillator on the Pavilion and wanted some assurance that it was checked and maintained regularly by the Parish Council.