

Signature:
Date:



SOUTHWATER PARISH COUNCIL

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DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday, 30th May 2023 at 6:30pm at the Lardner Hall, The Ghyll, Pevensey Road, Southwater, West Sussex RH13 9XZ.

PRESENT

Parish Councillors: D Moore (Chairman), G Watkins (Vice Chairman), G Cole, C Pearce, E Haddon, C Vickers, I Slowly.

Community Representatives: Neighbourhood Wardens, Southwater Youth Project CIO, Southwater WI, Southwater Village Hall, Southwater Neighbour Network, Southwater Art Club, Southwater Community Partnership, U3A, Southwater Bowls Club, Supporters of Castlewood School, Holy Innocents Church

Public: 24 persons present in the Lardner Hall.

	Action
<p>1. Welcome from the Chairman and opening of the Meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and highlighted that this was not a Council meeting but a meeting for the community, groups, and organisations in Southwater. He noted that Item 7 would be taken prior to Item 4.</p>	
<p>2. Apologies of Absence</p> <p>Apologies received from Councillors S Lewis, L Everard, G Scoon, P Flores-Moore, J Villis, N Knott, N Brown, and G Turnwell.</p> <p>Apologies also received from D Smith (Chairman of Southwater Ghyll CIO).</p>	
<p>3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 22nd June 2022.</p> <p>The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd June 2022 were proposed for approval by Councillor Slowly, seconded by Councillor Watkins, and AGREED by those present at that meeting.</p>	

4. Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman noted his full written report was available on the Parish Council website providing updates on the following areas:

- Death of Her Majesty the Queen and the arrangements the Parish Council had in place.
- Southwater Neighbourhood Plan Review and how the SNP was pivotal in resisting speculative development including the planning application submitted by Berkeley Homes for a 1,500-dwelling proposal.
- Launch of the new Southwater Parish Council Website.
- Tree Surveys, Open Space and Woodland Management in particular Ash Dieback.
- Anti-Social Behaviour and the work towards tackling it by SPC, Neighbourhood Wardens, Police, Local Businesses and HDC.
- Neighbourhood Wardens and welcoming new member of the team, Bettina.
- Saturday Councillor Surgeries (first Saturday of the month at 10:00am except August)
- Freedom of the Parish Award being presented to previous Chairman of the Council, Cllr Watkins.
- Parish Council Staff and saying goodbye to one of the Executive Officers and Assistant Officer during the year, welcoming the new Assistant Executive Officer and Litter Warden.
- Parish Councillors reaching the full quota of fifteen in 2022-23, and thanks to former Parish Councillor Ian Stannard who stepped down during the year due to commitments at HDC.
- Southwater Ghyll CIO and the numerous improvements to the buildings and other facilities at The Ghyll, including management of Laurie Apted Building.
- Internal Audit and achieving a year-end report with no concerns or issues highlighting and demonstrating the progress and improvements made by the Council over the last few years.
- Skate & BMX Park, Ben's Field, Staker's Lane and the construction due to commence during the summer of 2023 after various delays.
- Play Areas and the continued operation, inspection, improvements, and maintenance.
- The Queen's Green Canopy and planting of two trees at two different locations in Southwater Parish (Christ's Hospital and College Road Open Space).
- Finger posts located at Two Mile Ash Road/Bax Castle, Two Mile Ash Road/Christ's Hospital School and Kerves Lane, Southwater were all refurbished and completed in August 2022
- Highways and Footpaths and submission by SPC of a Community Highways Application to WSCC to install a footpath along Blakes Farm Road (from the mini roundabout connecting Wilberforce Way and Blakes Farm Road to the Hangman Hill Roundabout).
- Youth Services from Southwater Youth Project CIO (SYP CIO), and return to operating from Beeson House.
- Grant awarded to Supporters of Castlewood School for Running Track at Castlewood School.
- Southwater Artifacts from Horsham Museum continuing to remain in storage with the plan to showcase these in Southwater's own museum.



- The Queen's Platinum Jubilee & Christmas Festivals events hosted by Southwater Community Partnership.
- Annual Budget 2023-24 and achieving a reduction in precept (council tax) for second year running whilst maintaining quality of service and necessary reserves.
- Improvements for the future being planned or undertaken at present including the rebuild of Southwater Skate Park, upgrading of street lighting, refurbishment and change to the internal structure to Beeson House to better accommodate Southwater Youth Project and a Southwater Museum.

5. Annual Reports from organisations who received grants from the Parish Council – to receive reports from:

i. Southwater Ghyll CIO

M Neale (Treasurer for Southwater Ghyll CIO) noted the report had been circulated and hard copies were available at the meeting. He highlighted the difficulties Southwater Ghyll CIO had experienced over maintenance issues with the building of The Ghyll, including various roof leaks and an issue with water leaks to the bowls club sprinkler system. He explained The Ghyll had five boilers of which two were the original ones installed when the building was originally built, and one had now ceased due to age. He explained they were progressing upgrades to the toilets including provision of additional accessible toilets. Upgrades to lighting throughout the centre to more energy efficient LED and installation of acoustic panels in the Lardner Hall to improve the acoustics. He further explained they had experienced various anti-social behaviour issues with damage to property on several occasions, but things had more recently improved with the assistance of the Neighbourhood Wardens.

M Neale expressed his thanks to Amy Reed for her assistance on various projects and across the two buildings managed.

The Chairman (Cllr Moore) thanked M Neale, D Smith (Chairman of Southwater Ghyll CIO) and the rest of the trustees for their commitment and time as volunteers.

ii. Southwater Youth Project CIO

K Jones (Chair of Southwater Youth Project CIO) noted their report had been circulated and expressed her gratitude for being back in Beeson House after various delays and the pandemic. She confirmed Southwater Youth Project were now constituted as a charity (Charitable Incorporated Organisation). She explained that funding applications and funding available for equipment purchases was straight forward but grant funding for the core costs such as salary was difficult so was grateful for the grant funding and support Southwater Parish Council were able to provide to SYP CIO. She provided thanks to all the funders to SYP CIO.



She emphasised that SYP CIO was for all the youth in Southwater and available to all. She highlighted the excellent work carried out by Angie, the Youth Worker, and the one-to-one support to help youth struggling with their mental health, reading out some testimonials from youth who had attended SYP CIO. She was grateful for all the volunteers that provide their support as they make such a huge difference to the project.

iii. Supporters of Castlewood School (“SOCS”)

Hayley Timson (Chair of SOCS) provided an update in relation to the replaced running track at Castlewood School known as the “Daily Mile Track”. She explained that they were able to raise £15,000 with the support of the grant of £1,500 provided by Southwater Parish Council. Timson confirmed the track had now been upgraded and installed after it was out of use for 6-months. She thanked the Council and Chairman for the community grant which assisted in enabling the project.

6. Annual Report from Southwater Village Hall

James Tillier (Chairman of Southwater Village Hall) noted the full annual report was on the Parish Council website, circulated and hard copies available at the meeting. He provided updates on the major improvements to the Village Hall including the new car park, which had made a significant difference to the users of the hall and reduced on street parking on Church Lane; resurfacing of the old car park for additional accessible spaces; building of an outdoor classroom assisted by Southwater Parish Council community grant funding; internal improvements including general maintenance, air source heat pumps and a new sound system. He noted that the Village Hall had now achieved a level of bookings equal to pre-COVID usage.

7. Annual Report from Southwater Neighbourhood Wardens

Neighbourhood Wardens Bettina and Dom provided an overview of the Neighbourhood Warden scheme noting there were 7 schemes operating across the Horsham District. They noted that their monthly reports were posted to the Parish Council website and they had quarterly steering group meetings to review and discuss the KPIs. They highlighted that youth related anti-social behaviour incidents had decreased but advised residents should be mindful that there can be peaks and troughs as there were still issues in Horsham town centre. They noted that the anti-social behaviour incidents and various incidents relating to damage to property were caused by a small few. Dom noted the monthly reports had all the statistics but highlighted the notable increases in school engagement and outreach, support to vulnerable residents, youth engagement tripling on last year and community events attended doubling. The majority of the anti-social behaviour incidents reported were parking and driving incidents by adults. Bettina explained they had been educating children in schools with respect to road safety, litter picking, and keeping safe while walking including a road safety awareness poster competition with schools. They cited the drop-in session at Roundstone as very well attended with Age UK, West Sussex Fire Service, Neighbour Network,



and many members of the community attending. They reminded all that they could always be contacted if residents needed support with any issues.

The Chairman thanked the Neighbourhood Wardens for their efforts and contribution to Southwater.

8. Annual Reports and/or Updates from Parish Community Organisations:

i. Southwater Community Partnership

Hayley Timson (Chair of Southwater Community Partnership) highlighted that SCP wanted to bring more events to the community and to focus on improving community cohesion. She noted the previous events they had organised and upcoming events inclusive of the Christmas Event in Lintot Square, Jubilee Jamboree, Coronation for the King, Fireworks, Summer Event in collaboration with the Neighbourhood Wardens, The Ghyll and Southwater Youth Project CIO, and also a Skate Jam event for the new skate park (once built) in partnership with Southwater Parish Council and Southwater Youth Project CIO.

Timson thanked Southwater Parish Council for fully supporting SCP as an organisation and the residents/organisations that had got involved and support them at the various events.

ii. Southwater W.I.

Jackie Pearce (President of Southwater WI) and Karen James (Treasurer) explained the purpose of the WI to promote empowerment of women, creating friendships that last a lifetime. They highlighted some of the year's achievements including the "Queen of Stamps" framed piece of artwork situated in Beeson House lobby, support to Horsham Matters, Turning Tides Charity, outreach to other WI's in the Horsham District and the provision of women's sanitary products to Tanbridge School, the maintenance of the War Memorial Gardens for Remembrance Day, WI Rose and the King's Coronation expressing their thanks for all the support. They expressed their thanks to Southwater Village Hall and the Southwater Community Partnership.

They encouraged all women in Southwater to come along to their meetings to learn more.

iii. Southwater Neighbour Network



Nick Longdon (Chairman of the Southwater Neighbour Network) noted his report had been circulated, was available in hard copy to those in attendance and also on the SPC website.

He explained SNN was a volunteer-driven good neighbour scheme since 2014, supporting Southwater residents with mobility issues and social isolation. Services include local transportation, shopping assistance, and prescription collection. During the pandemic, SNN prioritised regular contact, highlighting the significance of social connections.

As a not-for-profit with a small committee of five volunteers, SNN, though ineligible for charitable status due to limited finances, operates with 19 local volunteers. Each volunteer undergoes a rigorous recruitment process, including DBS checks and personal references. The organisation, serving approximately 45 individuals, provides about 100 hours of direct service monthly, excluding coordination efforts.

SNN remains dedicated to fostering community connections, emphasising the value of befriending, outings, and contributing to the Games Afternoon. The organisation, while not charging for services, welcomes donations, striving to be a vital support system for those in need within the Southwater community. They welcomed additional volunteers.

The Chairman thanked SNN for their excellent work.

iv. Southwater Bowls Club

Martin Hargrave (Treasurer for Southwater Bowls Club) read out the report circulated and posted to the SPC website. He explained the difficulties of the increased rental amount for the Bowls Annex and Bowls Green at The Ghyll, where it had been historically lower where the Parish Council had subsidised the club with a much lower rental figure. He noted the club was founded in 1982, had 85 members playing both green bowls and indoor short mat bowl, membership subscription was £90 per year, and highlighted the benefits of the sport particularly for older people as an important way of maintaining fitness, contact with others and improving wellbeing. He requested the Parish Council consider providing subsidies and financial assistance to the club to assist them in maintaining the club and enabling their members to play at a reasonable cost.

The Chairman noted SPC had a Grant Policy which Southwater Bowls Club could make an application via and to contact the Executive Officer should they need assistance.

v. Southwater Art Club



John O'Grady (Chairperson of Southwater Art Club) provided a comprehensive report on the club's activities. Formed over two decades ago in 2,000 by three local residents, the club operates on a non-profit basis, with its members managing its affairs. The primary objective is to facilitate art activities in a relaxed, socially engaging environment at a reasonable cost.

The club currently organises twice-weekly painting-for-pleasure sessions at the Laurie Apted and village hall facilities. Additionally, an annual Arts and Craft exhibition is held in the village, with the Ghyll, Lardner Room serving as the current venue with the next planned for 29 September to 1st October. Funding for the club was derived from an annual membership fee and session fees, while the exhibition receives support from the club, grants, and local business sponsorships.

With a current membership of approximately 33 individuals, the majority being from an older demographic, the club ensures inclusivity by hosting evening sessions twice a month to accommodate those still working. He noted that their aim was to grow membership to 45 members.

vi. Older Peoples Forum

Derek Moore (Representative) explained that it was a forum providing a voice for older people within the Horsham District, with a wide range of guest speakers and providing advice on services available within Horsham. They worked in partnership with Age UK.

vii. U3A

Bren Cook (Chairperson) highlighted Southwater U3A's commitment to informal learning and community engagement for members aged 55 and above. Acknowledging the impact of COVID, which temporarily reduced numbers, Cook emphasised the organisation's role in combating loneliness, particularly for those living alone. Despite challenges in securing suitable meeting spaces within the village, the group, consisting of 72 members, continued to provide crucial services through alternatives like Dial Post Village Hall and the Parish Church Room. Financial constraints and travel difficulties for some members were noted, prompting a discussion on potential solutions to maintain community connections within Southwater noting it was disappointing they could no longer hold their meetings in the Parish Chamber of Beeson House.

He expressed the group's dedication to overcoming challenges and fostering a sense of belonging within Southwater noting future efforts would focus on exploring affordable meeting options and ensuring the organisation's continued contribution to the mental well-being of its members.



9. Public Forum – to hear from residents booked into speak at the meeting.

Ann Smith and Glen Slowly provided a verbal report on behalf of the Guides and Scouts for Southwater. They noted that between the Sea Scouts, Scouts and Guides they covered 300 children. They explained they provide various practical life skills that need to be taught. They acknowledged they were always in need of more volunteers to assist and encouraged residents to come forward to assist. The Chairman thanked Ann and Glen for the beneficial work they provided the community in their capacity as volunteers to the Scouts and Guides.

A resident raised their view that there was a need for more additional community spaces across Southwater with more focus on the elderly as they felt there were sufficient facilities for children and youth. The Chairman noted the Parish Council could consider reviewing and assessing the need for additional community facilities and highlighted this had been covered in the public consultation for the Southwater Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

A resident commented how it seemed many groups within Southwater acted in isolation and groups for the more elderly population should be collaborating and supporting each other more. The Chairman acknowledged this view.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday, 28th May 2024

It was noted this date could be subject to change based on venue availability and other factors.

MEETING ENDED 8:29pm

