

Swingfield Street Community Group
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Held at St. Peter's Church
28th May 2022 @ 10.30

1. Present: Heather Dive, Pat Mitchell, Jenny Brown, Anthony Rutter, Ufuk Özaktanlar, Leo Lyons, Marianne Ancel, Wendy Kelk, Martin Kelk, Monica Stevens, Nigel Stevens, Sylvia Poile, Anne Hutt, Tony Hutt, Rachel Poile, Trev Poile, Barbara Shaw, Chris Harling, Jan Cavanagh, Julie Scott, Steve Spitty, Jacqui Ransley, Tony Ransley
Guests: Trish Hail, Ian Fry

Apologies received from Ted Poile, Allan Dive

2. The minutes of the 2021 AGM minutes (previously circulated) were approved *nem com*.
Prop: Tony H, sec: Barbara.
3. Chair's Report: Review of year's action points and activities
 - i. Covid had meant our programme of events over the last year had been more limited, but nevertheless we had enjoyed an open-air performance of *Treasure Island* from This Is My Theatre at Broomwood. Thanks were expressed to Nigel and Monica for making their garden available.
 - ii. Following an earlier decision to dispose of the baby grand piano in the church, it had been dismantled and despatched by Ken and Steve.
 - iii. Footpaths – Julie had registered problems with local footpaths on the Kent County Council *Public Rights of Way* website, but so far there had been no progress on these, and some footpaths remain ploughed over or impassable.
 - iv. Broad Band – we had been part of the application with Wootton for a fibre optic network, but Open Reach changed its funding and criteria, and we missed out. As a next step, we should speak to Allyn Thomas about how they managed it in Denton.

Chair's report approved and adopted nem com
Prop Jacqui, sec Heather

4. Treasurer's report & presentation of accounts (previously circulated)
Marianne explained that we had £85 less in the account than we'd had this time last year because we hadn't been able to hold so many fundraising events. Donations were made to MacMillan, English Heritage, Royal British Legion, and CCT, and £88 came into our funds, raised largely from the takings from catering at coffee mornings and events, so Marianne expressed particular thanks to those people who kindly donate food. Income is slightly up for this year so far, as a result of money raised from the Celloop concert earlier this month. We have paid out for replacement defibrillator pads, which is a biennial expense, our membership of the Village Emergency Telephone Scheme costs us nothing, as Wendy and Martin kindly sponsor this through their company.

Treasurer's report approved and adopted nem com – Prop. Anne Hutt, Sec. Jan

5. Election of Officers; Chair, Secretary & Treasurer
In the absence of any nominations for Association posts, the meeting agreed *nem com* to confirm the current post holders in their positions for another year:
Steve (chair): *prop Rachel, sec Nigel*
Julie (secretary): *prop Barbara, sec Leo*
Marianne (treasurer): *prop Trevor, sec Jenny*

The meeting confirmed Steve Spitty, Marianne Ancel and Julie Scott as the three signatories for the Group's Metro bank account
Prop Pat, sec Tony R

6. Confirmation of Group's existing commitments

The meeting agreed *nem com* to maintain its ongoing commitment to keeping up the Defibrillator, Village Emergency Telephone Scheme (VETS), phone box, and public liability insurance.

Prop Wendy, sec Monica

We discussed the need to check that the VETS system is operating ok, and that everyone knows how to use it, including newcomers to the village. The system currently only rings landlines, but there is some uncertainty at the moment about BT's commitment to maintaining landlines in the future. However, Martin explained that he can programme the system to any numbers we want, should the landlines be phased out.

7. Swingfield Parish Council liaison report

Tony H thanked the Group and Steve for keeping things going through the pandemic. He reported that David Monk is the new chair of the PC. The Council has been busy, and that evening would be hosting an event bringing together 52 Ukrainian refugees living in the Parish. A new defibrillator has been installed on the wall of the Black Horse pub in Densole, and another one is planned for the Village Hall. The PC has taken over responsibility for the play area near the post office in Densole and will be undertaking its refurbishment. 800 trees have been planted on the old football site, with another 200 yet to go in. No progress to report with regards to St Peter's Church lychgate, which appears to have got mired in the lack of communication from and between the Diocese and the Benefice at Acrise. The meeting expressed thanks to Tony, who is our sole source of information and support on the PC, and discussed the problem of the more general lack of formal communication and support from the PC. The Council easily gets stuck in bureaucratic impasse, and prefers to pass on the responsibility for making decisions which are actually within its power to make – most recently regarding a request from Julie to site a couple of beehives in the churchyard. Tony H expressed his alarm at the number of serious accidents on the A260, with a young girl of 13 currently in hospital after suffering serious injury from a car, and a mounting catalogue of serious damage to properties bordering the road from speeding cars and lorries. There is a pressing need to express demand for urgent action.

Tony pointed out that there is currently a vacancy for a Councillor on the PC, and urged anyone interested to contact the Parish Clerk Tina Wiles (clerk@swingfieldpc.org.uk).

Membership of the PC involves the commitment of a monthly meeting (last Tuesday of the month, 7pm in Hawkinge Community Centre) + work in between to represent people. See <https://www.swingfieldpc.org.uk/>

Parish Council liaison report approved and adopted nem com
Prop Martin, sec Sylvie

8. Future events & dates

- i. The Celloop concert held on 16th May had been a great success, thanks to Nigel for setting this up.
- ii. Sadly, the Comedy of Errors (This Is My Theatre) had to be cancelled because we couldn't meet the contractual obligation to sell 30 tickets four and a half weeks before performance. However, TIML are due to perform *Pride and Prejudice* outdoors at Broomwood in August. The meeting agreed on Julie's suggestion to implement an early bird rate to encourage people to commit to ticket purchases before the TIMLT deadline. Leo suggested that we need more conspicuous publicity and promotion of

events like this, and Nigel raised the question of whether the Group should agree to underwrite a certain number of ticket sales, since in the past we have not had a problem in filling seats by the time of the performance.

Leo, Julie, Nigel to form a working group to develop some of these ideas.

Rachel suggested that there is a need for wider range of events, such as film nights. Leo and Marianne said they were happy to provide a screen, but people need to come forward with their ideas and suggestions.

- iii. Coming up: MacMillan Coffee Morning, Remembrance Day, possibly Christmas Carols

9. Any other business

- i. Steve mentioned that a number of new people had moved into the village, at Oak Lodge, Twin Eagles, No. 3, Old Forge – all had received a welcome letter with information about the Group.
- ii. Marianne has been involved in setting up village planters in Coldred, paid for by the Parish Council, and is happy to do this for Swingfield with help from others in the village. Planters could go on the Village Green either side of the path. The meeting agreed that Marianne should look into it and put a proposal to the PC. Tony H offered to speak in support at PC meeting.
- iii. Julie urged everyone to report any footpath problems on the Kent County Council site: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/public-rights-of-way/report-a-problem-on-a-right-of-way> - the more people who report a problem, the more likely it is there will be some action.
Steve will take the details of current and long-standing problems on Roger B's land to Roger, and reminded walkers and dog walkers to stick to footpaths.
- iv. There is a problem with some dog walkers not picking up after their best friends. After some discussion of possible approaches to dealing with this (a fineable offence), Tony H said that he will bring this up at the PC.

Meeting ended midday.