

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18th April 2024 at 7pm

APM124 Appointment of a Clerk to the meeting

C Miles was appointed as Clerk to the meeting

APM224 Present

Cllrs Bates, Grant, Powis, Trenear Trewick & Clerk C Miles, E Martin, M Chippington, D McKenna, T McKenna, J Briggs, R Felix, K Barker, D Barker, D Smith, L Smith

APM324 Apologies received

Cllrs Beavan & Goodier, S Clarke (2nd Swanwick Scouts), G Holmes (Luncheon Club & WI), A Veale (St. Andrews)

APM424 Minutes

Minutes of Meeting held on 20th April 2023 were deemed to have been received. These are available in the Archived folders on the Parish Council website.

APM524 Chair's Report

The Chair presented her report. Copy is appended (page 1).

APM624 Matters for the attention of the Police

There was no Police representation at the meeting and no issues raised.

APM724 Reports from the community

Reports on activities, achievements and aspirations from the Chair and Community Groups were read out at the meeting and a copy of each of the reports is appended:

Amber Valley Voices (page 2)
Luncheon Club (page 2)
Scouts 2nd Swanwick (page 3)
St Andrew's Parish Church (page 3)
Swanwick Allotment Association (page 4)
Swanwick Baptist Church (page 4)
Swanwick Primary School (page 4)
Swanwick Residents Association (page 4)
Swanwick Wildlife Group (page 5)
Swanwick WI (page 5)

APM724 Open forum - question and answer session

No further questions.

Closure

Meeting closed at 7.30pm

Chair's Report – 18th April 2024

Following the local elections in 2023, a number of Councillors resigned and a new Chair and Vice Chair was elected. We are very grateful to the work of those who stepped back in May and all of their years in service. The Council now comprises of 7 councillors and 4 vacancies are available.

Village Working Group

One of the first decisions of the new Council was to undertake a survey to determine the appetite in the village for a new village hall. The prospect of a village hall has been in the pipeline for 8 years since the land was acquired, and had gained planning permission. However, numerous reasons had stalled the project going further, including funding streams, Covid and disbandment of the original working group.

The results of the survey revealed an almost exact 50/50 split between respondents. Therefore it has been decided within the Council that a separate working group will be created to determine the best course of action for the land. This will include conducting feasibility studies and business cases for the different options, whether that be a smaller sized community hall than the originally planned, or a community open space.

Swanwick Recreation Grounds Trust

The transfer of land from Amber Valley Borough Council to Swanwick Parish Council is still ongoing. Meetings have taken place about possible funding with the football association. However, Councillors are in agreement that the main priority for the grounds is to keep it as a functional open space for people to enjoy walking and children to play within, as this is what it is primarily used by the public for. During the meeting with the FA it was suggested that if it was to be enhanced for greater use as football pitches, then a business case needs to be provided first for the Council to review and debate. Issues with the site make it challenging for this use, such as drainage. The Council see there are further opportunities to enhance the area for biodiversity and mitigate against high ground water levels, which will likely become more of an issue with climate change. The Council are also in the process of investigating costs of demolition of the changing rooms, which are currently unused due to being in such a poor state of repair and unsafe for use.

The community garden area on the grounds was mown towards the end of winter this year. This will be monitored to review progress of wildflower establishment, and if changes of management or additional seeding/plug planting is needed next year.

Civic Service

The joint Swanwick Parish Civic and Carol Service was held in December followed by light refreshments at the Steam Packet. Thanks to all who organised the event.

Well Dressing

We are very pleased to hear that the Scout Groups will be including the well dressing with their 75th Anniversary Celebrations on July 6th and the council are very much looking forward to the event. The Well Dressing Fayre has traditionally been held by the Parish Council pre-Covid. However, the pandemic stopped this for a number of years, and, to hold an excellent event, it demands a lot of free time from Councillors. Our current Council mainly comprises of Councillors who also work full time, and so, it has not been practically possible to deliver the event ourselves this year. We look forward to the July event and it bringing new ideas on how to deliver for future well dressings fayres.

Christmas Tree

To be more financially sufficient and environmentally sustainable, the council are aiming to plant a Christmas tree on the green between High Street and Derby Road.

Amy Trewick, Chair Swanwick Parish Council

Amber Valley Voices Report

Amber Valley Voices are delighted to be celebrating our 10th anniversary this year. From our tentative beginnings in 2014 with a small group of 20 something meeting at The Old School House, we are now a performance choir of 100 members strong, rehearsing each week at Swanwick School and Sports College. Amber Valley Voices is now a registered charity, administered by a body of trustees and committee members. We hold two formal concerts a year at Davis Nieper Academy, often singing alongside guest performers and orchestras. Our June concert this year will reflect our favourite songs from our 10 years of summer performances.

We also have a thriving quartet who eagerly meet for extra practices and who go out to entertain in venues such as care homes and friendship groups. Additionally, the choir supports events such as Riddings Flower Festival and at the Civic Service, for example. Around Christmas time, we sing by invitation at a variety of events across the local area.

Above all, we are an inclusive community choir. A number of social events are regularly run by the committee which foster friendship and fun and we support two specific charities every year, chosen at each AGM by our members. We have superb teams of volunteers who help each week with essential tasks such as setting up and closing, plus keeping our music organised, as well as willing individuals who fulfil several other important roles. We are pleased to say that we are currently up to our full capacity but we do run 'taster' opportunities and we welcome anyone to contact us to arrange a visit, we do not hold auditions but do sing in 4 part harmony. However, there is no requirement to be able to read music. We have an Amber Valley Voices Facebook page and are currently working on improving our website platform.

At the heart of our choir and its continued success is the leadership of our dedicated, ever enthusiastic and patient music director Angie Cope, who has inspired and encouraged us all to achieve more and more each year. Equally, we are so very fortunate and ever grateful to have such an immensely talented and accomplished pianist in Chris Lowry, who accompanies and guides us each week and whose expertise and contribution to our choir are beyond measure. Presented by A Trenear

Luncheon Club Report

Once again Swanwick Luncheon Club has had a very successful year.

The Luncheon Club was established in October 2008, so last autumn we celebrated our 15th birthday. The aims and purposes of The Luncheon Club are to provide a meal and fellowship to senior citizens who have attained the age of seventy years.

We aim to provide friendship, fellowship and support to people from the village, and also bring in people from the surrounding villages. We have members from Swanwick, Somercotes, Riddings, Leabrooks, and Alfreton. Members who need transport are brought in by volunteer drivers,

The Club meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month, between 11am and 2pm. It provides morning coffee, a social time for members and a two-course hot homecooked midday meal. It also has an annual outing. Presently the Club caters for forty members. It is run by volunteers from The Methodist Church. All of our members are 70+ years, and we have some members who are ninety years or more! For many of our members The Luncheon Club is the highlight of their social calendar. We have an annual outing in the summer and a Christmas Dinner and festive celebrations in December.

We accept anyone who wishes to join the Luncheon Club. Currently we have a full membership but are happy to put names down on our waiting list

We are a flourishing, friendly group, which continues to provide a much-needed service within the community.

Prepared by Gill Holmes

Scouts 2nd Swanwick Report

This report covers the period 1/1/23 to 31/12/23

We have had another successful year at 2nd Swanwick, thanks again to the hard work of our volunteers.

At last year's AGM I expressed a hope that we would be able to open a Squirrel Drey at the Group. That night a few volunteers step forward to express an interest in helping out, and after a few month's work in the background we were able to start the Drey in October. We started out by inviting anyone on our waiting list who was in the right age range and we had an immediate enthusiastic uptake. The meetings we held at the end of last year were a bit of an experiment with how we could run things for both the young people and the leaders, and we invested our first Squirrels in early January. We now have 14 Squirrels and 1 Young Leader- and a large number of membership enquiries. Huge thanks to Tara, Faith, Jodie and Kevin for the work they've put in to launch the section.

Beavers have kept an active programme going throughout the year, with activities including star gazing, Easter egg hunts, climbing, a sleepover at the hall, first aid, an escape room, fire station visit, animal visit, cooking on fires, the annual water fight in the summer, disability awareness, pottery visit, and bowling. They have maintained numbers at 24 throughout the year which is the maximum size a Colony can be. Thanks to Kate, Lynda, Lucy, Ellie H, Ellie B, Fergus and Catherine for their help and support throughout the year.

Cubs have carried on providing for young people aged 8-10 ½. Their programme has included Australia night, first aid and navigator's badges, roller skating, athletes and gardener's badges, a District hike round Carsington, summer camp at Spitewinter, Skills challenge, an autumn sleepover, Christmas crafts and baking and making. Cubs currently have 27 members and 3 Young Leaders. Thanks to Katherine, Chris, Ellie H, Olly, Harry, Rebecca, Sandra, Pete and John for their continuing hard work on the programme. A special thanks to Pete who is quite seriously ill at the moment. I wish him all the best with his ongoing treatment and thanks for his tireless support at 2nd Swanwick for the past 40 years.

Scouts have been busy too this year. Skills challenge award, Altar Rock climbing, pioneering, War hammer crafts, Young Peoples Forest activities at Shipley Park, Geocaching, Tennis at Ripley Tennis Club, Expedition challenge, fire lighting, cooking, Christmas crafts and adventure golf have all been on the programme this year. Camps have included the Chilly Challenge, Patrol Camp at Spitewinter, a very wet Summer Camp at Beadesert and the Border Hike at Gradbach. We've got 27 members and 2 Young Leaders- Max and Gracie who have recently completed their Young Leader training. Thanks to all our leadership team- Kev, Martyn, David, Mick, Julian, Jack, James, Fergus, Abi, Sarah and Claire.

We've had support from various organisations throughout the year, including grant money from Swanwick Parish Council for which we are grateful. This has been used to help start the Squirrel Section, run the Beavers sleepover, cooking equipment for Cubs and the hire of tracking equipment for Scouts expeditions.

The Trustee Board have kept busy this year, maintaining the Centenary Centre and providing funds and support for Scouting. Behind the scenes, they are the backbone of the Group. The Trustees have helped plan and run community events such as Remembrance Day and Santa's Sleigh. Thanks for the help and support from Ady, Greg, Jayne, Kevin, James, Joe, Sue, Nigel, Katherine, Zoe, Rebecca and Deb.

To round up this year's report, I'm really grateful for the adults who give up their time week after week to provide safe, enjoyable Scouting for the young people to develop their life skills. I'm grateful for the new volunteers we have- who have never been involved with Scouting before, the Young Leaders coming through the Sections who go on to become adult volunteers, and those who have 'always been there'. For 75 years, 2nd Swanwick has been an integral part of our community. We'd like to invite the community to join us to celebrate this on the 6th July on the playing fields behind the Scout Hall from 12-5 PM. We're looking forward to the next 25 years to take us to our centenary and beyond. Prepared by Steve Clarke

St Andrew's Parish Church Report

2023 was a year of consolidation for us as we got accustomed to working with a new vicar and as a member of a larger group consisting of ourselves, St Matthews at Pentrich and All Saints in Ripley. We join together for several events but mainly keep our own identity. This we feel is essential and gives newcomers a choice of approaches to suit them. Our joint ventures include the twice yearly Service of Light for those who have lost loved ones, the newly bereaved being personally invited. It is a quiet time that people report back as being very beneficial in their grief and each person is specifically mentioned if wished. We are at last able to return to the tea and cake afterwards which really rounds off the occasion. Also the 3 churches join together for services at Easter and Christmas. But St Andrews also works well with our Baptist and Methodist friends here in Swanwick and we have a Churches Together in Swanwick (CTS) group. Sadly manpower, or lack of it, means that we cannot do all that we would like within the village but we use the meetings to let each other know what is coming up and open it to everyone. As a result there have been some lovely joint services, well attended and well liked. The church building itself is in very good condition. We are concentrating on the grounds at present, trying to promote a wilded area. Initially we had wanted a much larger area but realised that it made parts around some graves look

unkempt and disrespectful. Therefore we have reassessed and reduced the area a little. The area is thriving and we have been amazed by the diversity of plants growing there. During the second half of 2023 we became aware that John Wigram was struggling despite the arrival of a wonderful curate. John's wife, Rachel is housebound, and at times bed bound, and John is her carer. In December he announced that, sadly, he would be finishing as vicar at Ripley, Swanwick and Pentrich at the end of April 2024. We were devastated but not surprised. He has been with us for such a short time but has made a big impact, coming to a church fighting to remain afloat despite going through a very tough time. His was a healing presence. We will miss John enormously but send him and Rachel all our love and blessings for their future. Prepared by Anne Veale and Tim Denning Church Wardens

Swanwick Allotment Association Report

There are 64 plots with possibly 2 full or 4 half plots being available following boundary resolutions, this is a combination of 112 plot holders/co-workers, with no vacant plots at the moment. This is all overseen by a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee, plus the Facebook admin.

Plots range from very small to large and cost between £25 to £65 dependant on size and new charges will be discussed at the AGM on 24th April 2024 6pm at The Old School House. Presented by D McKenna

Swanwick Baptist Church Report

The church has had a roof leak, which has been repaired and internally is now being plastered, it will eventually need a new roof. The grave area is over grown and needs some attention and any help would be grateful. The Council discussed maybe asking local scouts group if they could assist. Presented by M Chippington

Swanwick Pre School

There are currently 70 children enrolled and more enquiries for September, plus there is funding for 2 year olds available from September and we had a 'Good' result from Ofsted.

We have fund raised £2410 this year and we had a new kitchen with the help from local community groups and we are now raising funds to improve our outdoor area. Presented by Rachel Felix

Swanwick Residents Association Report

The Residents Association continues to strive in pursuit of upholding the four main aims and objectives of its Constitution, together with finally seeing the completion and adoption of the Amber Valley Local Plan, something that may be the case in the next 12 months.

During last year, soon after this meeting, the Borough Council had a visit from a Planning Inspectorate official, the purpose of such a visit was to provide local planning authorities with advice on their emerging plans and its evidence base and to help them prepare effectively for the public examination of the plan.

The advising Inspector made a number of key recommendations which impacted on the process of taking the new Local Plan forward on the basis of the position agreed by the Full Council on 1st March, 2023. In total there were 7 recommendations, which had to be met before the Plan could be taken to the publication of the Pre-Submission stage, which of course only served to further delay.

Interestingly, one of the recommendations, "The Borough Council should establish a clear justification for the continued protection of land between Alfreton, Somercotes and Swanwick through an appropriate policy in the new Local Plan and why other national and local policies restricting development in this location would not be sufficient."

Within the former Local Plan there was a separate policy which sought to protect the three fields between Sleetmoor lane and the Travelodge. However, when the former plan expired, developers saw the opportunity to "test the water" by submitting planning applications on two of the fields, firstly for a crematorium on the middle field and when that succeeded it was only a matter of course that a further application was submitted for 45 houses on the field adjacent to Sleetmoor Lane. This was only possible because any policy on an expired plan does not have the same weight in planning law as one contained in an up to date plan. The third field I believe to be owned by Derbyshire County Council, who later did submit an application for a solar panel farm, which was later withdrawn.

For the record, both Amber Valley Borough Council and the Residents Association fought the decision to uphold the Planning Board decision to refuse the building of a crematorium and took the case to a Planning Inspectorate Tribunal which was held at Ripley Town Hall over several days and which I was part of, together with legal teams representing both the Council and Residents Association.

Moving on and not dwelling too much on history, but that experience taught me many things, together with the two experiences of Public Examinations of the previously failed attempts at Local Plans undertaken by the Borough Council.

In December 2023, I reported to this Parish Council that the Housing Secretary, Michael Gove, named and shamed seven Councils who have failed to deliver a plan for homebuilding for 19 years. In fairness, Amber Valley were close, albeit their third attempt to publish a Pre-Submission Local Plan when this happened.

In mid-February this year, the Borough Council published its Pre-Submission Local Plan 2022-2040 which had to be consulted upon for 6 weeks between 16th February until 3rd April on three aspects:-

Legal Compliance - does the plan meet the Legal requirements made under the various statutes.

Soundness - has the plan been positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with National policy?

Meeting the duty to co-operate - has the council engaged and worked effectively with neighbouring authorities and statutory bodies?

However, in mid-March, the Borough Council had identified some cartographic errors in the plans published which required updating, as a result the consultations period deadline for making representations was extended to 1st May, 2024.

I did attend a drop-in exhibition on the Local Plan held on 28th February at the Town Hall, Ripley which I took the opportunity to confirm that the Green Belt in both Swanwick and Amber Valley continues to be protected as National Policy dictates, however, the Council will not be including a policy in the new Local Plan to protect the last remaining field between the crematorium and the Travelodge on the basis of previous planning decisions. In conclusion, 2025 may well see the final chapter in a process that has consumed many hours, days, weeks and years of time, effort, written representations, verbal contributions at Council meetings and attendance at Planning Inspectorate tribunals over the past 14 years.

We have seen both the heavy price paid by NOT having an up to date Local Plan in place by the loss of supposed Protected Land and similarly the enormous cost to the tax-payer of three attempts at formulating a new Plan of at least £3.4 million pounds - both UNFORGIVEABLE.

If you truly and honestly believe in something then you should always pursue, through whatever means are available to you, until there are no more options left. It is better to have tried and failed than never tried at all.

Presented by John Briggs Vice-Chairman & Hon. Treasurer

Swanwick Wildlife Group

Things seem to have snowballed at SWG! We now have 5 trustees and have had a busy year.

Firstly thank you to SPC for the donation to our wildlife gardening scheme. We bought 6 plaques, one of which we have gifted to St Andrew's church for their meadow area, and one to Shirley Road allotments for their wildlife area and pond. We have had residents express an interest in partaking in the scheme and we will be judging these gardens in the next couple of months. Gardens are judged using a scoring system, which has been posted on our social media.

Our annual woodland walk was well attended during early May bank holiday weekend, and we undertook a bio blitz last May which included moth trapping, bat watching and a series of walks.

Our year has then been wrapped up fundraising and campaigning for the area of woodland at the bottom of Derby Road which was originally up for auction. We wrote a business case to DCC who agreed to sell it to us for a fixed price. The deeds were officially transferred a few weeks ago, and now our next process will be to get arboricultural surveys undertaken, speak with our neighbours and start our fund raising bids. Our vision is for it to be a nature reserve but we also want an area for forest schools and community engagement. Ideally, we would also like to undertake natural flood management to alleviate the problems on Hickton Road and Derby Road.

We had our wildlife exhibition in February which was very well attended, with fabulous artists and photographers. We were successful in fundraising towards running costs and insurances for the upcoming year.

We have also been working alongside Hallam Homes who gave us a donation to plant and spruce up the area on Minster Way. We had a volunteer party in autumn plant bulbs and wildflower seeds. These are starting to show well with tulips and cornflowers just about to blossom! We also had a local artist paint the two larger troughs with hedgehogs. Our next goals are to create a "bug hotel", and there is talk of painting the other troughs, although this is divided between trustees (community engagement and opinion on this would be useful). We have unfortunately been having a battle against dog poo on this area of land.

Finally, last week we held a workshop with other wildlife groups and councillors on how we can work collaboratively, and setting up a network to share resources and knowledge. This was very well received and we are looking to set up an online network resource, with the potential for other opportunities for groups to meet and work together to help improve local biodiversity. Presented by Amy Trewick

Swanwick WI

Swanwick WI was founded in 2009. It caters for women of all ages, sharing experiences, and working together. Our membership offers women the opportunity to meet others in the Swanwick area, to make friends and make a difference in the community.

The WI in Swanwick meets monthly at the Methodist Church in the village. It has a wide range of activities and educational speakers, providing opportunities for education, the arts, fitness and cookery plus many more. There are opportunities for outings, visits and holidays. Friendships are formed over a cup of tea or coffee, and of course a good chat!

We have opportunities to support the WI at county and national levels. Opportunities are many and varied.

We look forward to supporting more village activities in the future, and would welcome the return of the village gala. Prepared by Gill Holmes.