

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SAVERNAKE PARISH COUNCIL 10TH JANUARY 2024
MEETING HELD AT THE MARLBOROUGH COMMUNITY & YOUTH CENTRE, ST MARGARET’S MEAD**

PRESENT

Guy Singleton (Chairman) (GS)	Councillor
Martin Phipps (MP)	Councillor
Nigel Eayrs (NE)	Councillor
Nikki Boutal (NB)	Councillor
 Suzie Singleton (SS)	 Parishioner & Minute Taker

ITEM		ACTION
1	<p>APOLOGIES</p> <p>Andrew Smithson, Councillor (AS) Caroline Thomas, Wiltshire Councillor</p>	
2	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
3	<p>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on 11th October 2023 were approved. A copy will be uploaded to the SPC website.</p>	GS/SS
4	<p>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Parish Steward</u> GS reported that the Steward has been calling in when in the area to let him know what had been done. <p>The Steward noted that where the road floods at Clench, it will drain well if leaves etc are cleared off of the drain covers. SS had noticed during the flooding on 5th January a comment on Facebook that the road at Clench had been flooded, but someone mentioned seeing a man with a broom or similar by the drains and later comments said that the road was clear so this backed up the steward’s comments.</p> <p>NE noted that when there is heavy rain the A346 in Cadley gets very wet, partly when the gulleys are full, but also because, as the road has been resurfaced several times over the years, the low point is now at a different place to where the drainage gullies are, and the road floods before it reaches the gulleys.</p> <p>It was thought that Martin Cook could be asked about this and asked about a solution.</p>	

ITEM		ACTION
5	<p>CRIME UPDATE</p> <p>GS had forwarded the Crime Report covering the 4th quarter of 2023 provided by the police to the other councillors. It showed that there had been 3 crimes of malicious damage reported to the police within the Savernake area during that period but no other incidents. This is attached to these Minutes.</p> <p>The Police update also noted that the Neighbourhood Policing Team planned to hold consultations over the next few months at the Waitrose café in Marlborough on 12th January, 5th February and 7th March. Other events would be advertised on Facebook and via Wiltshire Community Messaging, which parishioners can sign up to at www.wiltsmessaging.co.uk.</p>	
5	<p>PLANNING UPDATE</p> <p>There were no planning matters to deal with.</p>	
7	<p>REVIEW OF POLICIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</p> <p>A small amendment was made to correctly allocate the Council Insurance under Infrastructure.</p> <p>MP asked about the Retention of documents Policy. After a brief discussion it was decided that as most relevant documents were emailed between councillors then it was in fact retained by several of them so should any need arise for them to be collated and produced it should prove a simple matter to do so, rather than each councillor needing to retain digital backups themselves.</p> <p>Some discussion was held as to whether SPC should also have complementary Hot Weather and Flooding plans. MP will look into what information is available and draft Plans for SPC to review.</p> <p>The councillors had all reviewed all the Policies except for AS. He would be contacted to ask whether he had reviewed them and once he had they could be updated on the website.</p> <p><i>Post meeting note: AS had also reviewed the policies and confirmed that no amendments were required, as had the other councillors at the meeting.</i></p>	<p>GS</p> <p>All</p> <p>MP</p> <p>AS/SS</p>
8	<p>FOREST LIAISON OFFICER REPORT</p> <p>An update is attached to these Minutes.</p>	

ITEM		ACTION
	MP said that he had noticed orange dots on some trees in the forest, and particularly around the White Road. It was thought that it was likely that it indicated trees to be taken down, likely the birch trees mentioned in the Forestry report.	
8	<p>FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT</p> <p>Banking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since the last meeting, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Payments made / received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23 Oct - £157.56 - TEEC - Website hosting and domain charges 20 Oct - £ 50.00 - SMH Singleton - Secretarial services b) Invoices received, in the process of payment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil - Total funds at date of meeting are £ 6,490 and are held as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payments a/c : £ 99.56 Interest a/c : £ 6,390.44 <p>Accounts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total funds at date of meeting are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precept a/c : £ 6,490.00 CIL a/c : £ 0.00 <p>Budgeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Precept account: Expenses this year (2023-24) to date are £721.41 (55% of Income) - CIL account: No additional funds have been received and no additional payments made, funds are currently zero. <p>Review: Responsibilities / Policies / Risk Register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Required as part of the annual audit process. - To be reviewed prior to the meeting by all Councillors and any potential amendments discussed / confirmed in the meeting. <p>Precept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NE circulated the current year forecast, next year's proposed budget and next year's proposed precept for review by all Councillors prior to the meeting. - Precept Requirement to be submitted to Wiltshire Council before 18th January 2024. 	

ITEM		ACTION
10	<p>2024/25 PRECEPT</p> <p>There was some discussion regarding the next year's precept, and it was agreed to leave it at the same figure as for the previous financial year - £1300.00. NE will send GS the relevant form to submit to WC.</p>	GS
11	<p>COUNCIL ELECTIONS - 27TH MAY 2024</p> <p>All councillors had said that they were happy to stand again.</p> <p><i>Post meeting note: After the meeting it was discovered that we had jumped the gun. Although some local elections would be held in May 2024, Wiltshire was not among those. They are due next year.</i></p>	
12	<p>WEBSITE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Website updates</u> NB had been in touch with My Parish Council who host the parish website. She had been told that there was no new legislation which we had to adhere to. • <u>Email</u> NB will raise a ticket with the company who host the website regarding the ongoing problem with emailing anyone with a Gmail email address. It is believed that this is due to Google's actions trying to reduce spam by requiring all emails to be authenticated. It is assumed that My Parish Council, who also host our emails, are bound to be looking into this but she will ask them when a solution is likely to be in place. 	NB
13	<p>LHFIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Forest Hill</u> Wiltshire Highways have now installed the new signs and road markings at Forest Hill. • <u>Clench Common - speed limit and traffic calming</u> NB had spoken to Ridgeway Sprayers who had confirmed that they would pay for the new signs and gates. The previous quotes MP had received were of some age now so he would check whether they needed to be updated then NB can pass them onto Ridgeway Sprayers who can liaise with the Ramsbury Estate. 	MP/NB

ITEM		ACTION
14	<p>TREE PLANTING AT SAVERNAKE PARK FARM</p> <p>GS updated the meeting on the plans that the new owners of Savernake Park Farm have. They contacted him to let SPC know that they intend to plant 1000s of trees on their land. If anyone would wish to assist them, whether with physically helping to plant the trees or in other ways they would appreciate it.</p>	
15	<p>DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS</p> <p>8th May 2024</p> <p>APM 22nd May 2024 at the Marlborough Community & Youth Centre</p> <p>10th July 2024</p> <p>9th October 2024</p>	ALL

Signed ... **Guy Singleton**

Date ... **8th May 2024**

Name ... **Guy Singleton**

Update from Forestry Commission - January 2024

A round up of the last few months

It has been a bit of a slog but the work along the A346 is about 99% completed. The contractor is finished and has left now. There were just a handful of trees that they weren't able to deal with (these were trees that weren't necessarily to be felled but that had been highlighted by the ecologist for some other kind of management). We will walk the site in the next few days and organise the last few trees to be made safe.

The volunteer group has been going really well and the numbers growing steadily. They have worked to clear a scheduled ancient monument and have spent time haloing around veteran trees.

Our last lot of harvesting that was due to start in September was postponed and then cancelled as we felt too much time had gone by and we didn't want to risk working in the wet and causing ground damage. Given the weather lately this was absolutely the right decision to take.

The annual flail work has been carried out across the forest. This involves cutting back rides to ensure that the characteristics of the landscape are maintained and to ensure that tracks are kept open for public enjoyment.

The annual Savernake road closure went well. Sadly this was followed almost immediately by a storm which saw several trees come down in the forest. We have been working to clear these and get tracks open again.

Next few months

We have completed all of the standard annual tree safety inspections throughout the forest and the work is planned in throughout January and February.

We are currently working to put together the next series of harvesting. Due to last year's plans not happening it is likely these will be combine and worked together in 2024. There will be work in the main block as well as around Chisbury.

We are currently planning and organising the annual programme for canopy haloing of veteran trees. We currently have three weeks of work booked throughout January and February to carry out work to protect the veteran trees and would like to book more depending on contractor availability.

The Savernake volunteer group have a busy few months- they will be planting Willow in the forest to support the Purple emperor butterfly, and are working on advice and guidance from our ecologist and butterfly conservation. They will also continue to clear unwanted regeneration on top of scheduled ancient monuments as well as to plan some work in the arboretum.

We are currently planning some work on some of the ponds throughout Savernake. The work includes clearing vegetation to ensure that open water is maintained for the benefit of Great crested newts. Part of this will also include adding some fencing to further protect them. This work is also likely to happen by mid-February.

It is our aim to also start to look at clearing some of the vast amounts of birch from specific areas of Savernake. The aim is to clear the Birch to provide more space for some of the veteran trees of the future to grow into and thrive. Clearing some of the birch also enables the cattle to gain access to more of the forest.