



SAWSTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20 MAY 2025 Held at Mill Lane Pavilion - Meeting commenced at 7.15 pm

PRESENT:

Clerk: Jo Keeler

Councillors

Kevin Cuffley (Chair)

David Bard

Neil Reid

Deborah Alderwick

Brian Milnes

Kieran Cooper

Paul Smith

Kevin Deeming

Colin Groves

+ 7 members of public

+ Will Cook – Head Grounds Keeper

+ County Councillor Peter Fane

25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Paul Allen – Personal

Patrick Thouroude – Work Commitments

Anand Pillai – Work Commitments

Ian Reeves - Personal

26 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME (15 Minutes allowed) *

Councillor Kevin Cuffley invited the members of public to speak.

A couple of residents were concerned with the use of weed killer (Round up) on Orchard Park. They wanted an explanation of why this was done, why Health & Safety was not observed and why Glyphosate was used as there has been many dogs that have been sick and one lady had chemical burns on her legs which they state is from this weed killer. The whole park should have been closed for at least 24 hours when sprayed and the edge of the play area should not have been sprayed, you should only spray at least 15 feet from a play area.

Councillor Kevin Cuffley invited the Head Grounds Keeper to speak explain the reason and process.

He explained that he sprays once a year and only around the trees, benches, and bins only. This enables them to then cut around these on the mowers instead of strimming as they do not have the manpower to trim on a regular basis where as they only need to spray once a year. He explained that there are only two grounds keepers to maintain the whole village and they cut the recreation areas regularly but weather permitting as to how quick the grass grows.

The chemicals used are purchased from a reputable company and the Parish Council would not be able to purchase it if it was not safe for humans and animals. Once the Glyphosate is sprayed and dried, which usually takes an hour weather permitting, it is safe.

Councillor Brian Milnes explained that the UK/EU allows the use of Glyphosate although it is contentious. This is something he has taken up with the County and District Councils and they only use it where necessary. He went on to explain that it is difficult to associate using this with dogs being sick. The application is also safer if used in narrow areas. The Head Grounds Keeper uses a knapsack and has a more accurate aim when spraying. There have been some areas in the village which have been sprayed by the District Council's

contractors who do not take as much care and the County Council spray kerbs etc on a quad bike which is also not very accurate.

Councillor Brian Milnes said although we have sympathy for what has happened it is not known for such effects.

The residents explained that there have been signs put up in the Millenium Copse stating that the grounds keepers are spraying/treating the Giant Hogweed so they avoided this area, why were signs not put up when they sprayed Orchard Park?

The Head Grounds Keeper explained they risk assess before spraying and that both ground staff have their spraying qualifications, only spray weather permitting, put out signs to say they are spraying and then wait around until they are confident it is dry and safe.

Councillor Brian Milnes suggested moving forward we stop using Glyphosate for weed killing except when necessary for example to kill off giant hogweed.

Councillor Kieran Cooper confirmed our ground staff have the relevant qualifications for spraying (PA1 & PA6 and the Head Grounds Keeper also has PA2) and this was not done maliciously. This is on the agenda to be discussed.

One resident asked how to make a FOI request and was told the FOI policy is on the Parish Council website.

Councillor Kevin Cuffley thanked all the residents for attending and explained they are all more than welcome to stay for the rest of the meeting.

The residents left the meeting.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR THIS MEETING

None

28 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13 MAY 2025

The minutes of the Full Parish Council meeting held on 13 May 2025 were read, confirmed, and signed.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Colin Groves and **seconded** by Councillor Kieran Cooper to accept the minutes.

VOTE: 8 FOR : 1 ABS

29 MATTERS ARISING – NEW INFORMATION ONLY

None

30 TO DISCUSS THE USE OF WEED KILLER IN THE VILLAGE

The Parish Council has received several complaints about the ground keepers spraying on Orchard Park, see item 26 – Public Participation. This was discussed at length.

The Head Grounds Keeper was asked how long it would take to strim all these areas regularly rather than spraying once a year. He explained that currently it takes him and the Grounds Keeper at least 1 ½ days just to strim the cemetery to gauge an idea of time. To keep on top of strimming the whole village would be a full-time job for one person.

Councillor Kevin Deeming said it makes sense to use Glyphosate in some areas.

The Head Grounds Keeper explained Glyphosate (Round Up) is the most common weedkiller and can be purchased off the shelf.

Councillor Kieran asked if he has investigated alternatives, he has looked at a vinegar solution but you would have to purchase so much of it to have any effect so at present there are no effective alternatives.

The Head Grounds Keeper went on to explain that he has not sprayed any other play areas (on all our sites) the reason the grass is yellow around the edge is because of the concrete border around the wetpour. He confirmed he has only sprayed around the bins, benches and trees on the recreation grounds.

Councillor Kieran Cooper summarised:

- There is no suitable alternative at present
- The option is to use weed killer or strim
- Signs are put out when spraying and only spray when safe to (dependant on weather conditions and how busy the areas are)
- Spray certain footpaths but continue to put signs out
- Spray the beginning of the season or not at all

It was **proposed** by Councillor Kieran Cooper and **seconded** by Councillor Brian Milnes to adopt a policy immediately where the Parish Council will spray around the benches and bins on recreation grounds the beginning of the season and do not spray around the trees or strim, just cut as close as possible with the ride-on mowers.

The Ground Staff will also have the authority to spray other areas when necessary for example to kill of giant hogweed and nettles under benches etc and down the public footpaths that the Parish council maintain. Signs will be put out before any spraying is carried out, during spraying and until safe. This will be reviewed in Autumn next year.

VOTE: 8 FOR : 1 AGAINST

Councillor Kevin Cuffley thanked the Head Grounds Keeper for attending and he left the meeting.

31 TO DISCUSS SPORTS CLUB MATTERS

None

32 TO DISCUSS BOILER AT LYNTON WAY PAVILION

The Facilities Administrator obtained a quote to make repairs to the boiler at Lynton Way Pavilion. There is a blockage and the hot water is not getting through.

The plumber that came to look said he was not sure how long it would take to find the blockage but would not envisage it taking longer than 4 hours and would charge £85 per hour. At this time no other plumbers could come to quote.

Councillor Brian Milnes has some contact numbers for other plumbers and requested these to be contacted before the Parish Council make a decision.

33 TO DISCUSS CONDITIONS OF HIRE FOR CIRCUS AND FUNFAIR

The Facilities Administrator has produced a policy specifically for the Circus and Fun fair when they hire Lynton Way recreation ground. This was discussed.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Kevin Cuffley and **seconded** by Councillor David Bard to adopt this policy.

VOTE: 9 FOR : 0 UNANIMOUS

34 TO DISCUSS MEMORIAL RISK ASSESSMENT QUOTE FOR ST MARYS CLOSED CHURCHYARD

The Clerk explained that the memorial testing should be done every three years and the Parish Council had the testing at St Marys closed churchyard done in June 2022.

The same company has held the price at £655.70 + vat.
The Clerk explained that another company that has quoted in the past for this no longer provide the service.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Kevin Cuffley and **seconded** by Councillor Kieran Cooper to go ahead and get the testing done.

VOTE: 9 FOR : 0 UNANIMOUS

35 TO DISCUSS REQUEST TO INSTALL SPEED SIGN DOWN MILL LANE

The Parish Council received a request from a resident who would like to see a speed radar sign installed on Mill Lane to address the issue of speeding vehicles. Such a warning would serve as a constant reminder to drivers of the speed limit. This was discussed.

Councillor Colin Groves explained that Mill Lane is not suitable for a speed sign because ideally the location needs to be free from parked cars, set back from the road facing the traffic and needs a clear line of sight 100m no trees etc.

Councillor Brian Milnes believes the current speed bumps on Mill Lane are doing what their intended to and there are very few vehicles that speed now.

Councillor Kevin Cuffley explained we can discuss this when we discuss the proposed 20mph blanket speed limit in the village which Councillor Paul Allen is investigating. The resident's request was noted and the Clerk to respond to explain we are looking into this.

36 TO REVIEW ILLEGAL ENCAMPMENT POLICY

The Clerk asked the Parish Council to review the current policy. This can be found on the Parish Council website or from the Parish Council office.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Kevin Cuffley and **seconded** by Councillor Kieran Cooper to adopt the revised policy.

VOTE: 9 FOR : 0 UNANIMOUS

37 TO DISCUSS ZERO CARBON COMMUNITIES GRANT SCHEME

Zero Carbon Communities Grant

SCDC are pleased to announce that our Zero Carbon Communities Grant scheme is now open for applications. Parish councils and voluntary/community organisations are invited to apply.

- Grants of between £2,000 and £15,000 available, with a total pot of £125,000.
- Projects must **reduce carbon emissions** e.g. from a community building or foster greater **community engagement on climate issues** and encourage sustainable behavior change.

This was discussed. It was agreed to revisit the possibility of having EV charging at Mill Lane recreation ground. Councillor Deborah Alderwick will investigate further and bring back to the next full parish meeting.

38 TO DISCUSS CITYFEST PLACING A BANNER IN VILLAGE

Cambridge City are having an event lasting a couple of days at the new football stadium and have asked if they can put up a banner near the traffic lights on Cambridge Road. The Clerk confirmed they will put the banner up two weeks before the event and remove immediately after.

39 TO REVIEW RISK ASSESSMENTS

The Parish Council reviewed the Parish Council's Risk Management Policy.

Councillor Kieran Cooper explained that this has come up on a previous audit and they are looking to ensure the Parish Council processes are correct, making sure the Parish Council have decision mechanisms in place etc. This was discussed at length.

Councillor Kevin Cuffley noted the section that states where the Parish Council meetings are held should include all the pavilions.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Kieran Cooper and **seconded** by Councillor Kevin Deeming to adopt the reviewed policy.

VOTE: 9 FOR : 0 UNANIMOUS

40 CORRESPONDENCE
None

41 COUNCILLORS ISSUES AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Councillor Brian Milnes explained he is in discussions with County with regards to addressing the parking issues on the corner by the Post Office. He went on to explain that the parking enforcement officer has had a positive impact but only has funding for five years. He is investigating the possibility of having double red lines and ANPR cameras in this area and it will be an agenda item once more information has been received.

Councillor David Bard reported some trees in Church Lane by the vicarage are covering the street light. The Clerk will write to the resident.

Councillor Kieran Cooper explained that he is now back on the board of Trustees for JHC for the next five years. He asked that the JHC Update is now back on the agenda.

Councillor Brian Milnes explained there is a Rural Prosperity Fund available and we could maybe apply to help tidy up the public footpath on Mill Lane along the Baulks. This County Council owned footpath is unpassable and the parish council could see if it is possible to get this hedge laid so it becomes a living fence. Councillor Brian Milnes and the Clerk will investigate this.

Councillor Kevin Cuffley thanked Councillor Peter Fane for attending.

Meeting Closed 8.54 PM