

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SWAVESEY BYEWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(DRAFT) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE MEMORIAL HALL, SWAVESEY ON

THURSDAY 24 JANUARY 2019 AT 7.30 PM

Present:

Councillor Sue Ellington	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Councillor Tumi Hawkins	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Mr A Day	Charge-payers' Representative
Mr J Dodson	Charge-payers' Representative
Mr K Wilderspin	Charge-payers' Representative
Ms L Boyes	Parish Council Representative
Ms H Parish	Parish Council Representative
Ms S Rogers	Parish Representative
Additional attendees;	
Malcolm Parker	Landowner at Middle Fen
Andrea Hemington	Landowner at Cow Fen
Tim Fisher	RSPB
Adam Farthing	Cambridge Water
Andy Jones	Cambridge Water

In Attendance

Mike Hill, Director Housing, Health and Env Services; Michael Parsons, Waste Operations Manager; Patrick Matthews, Drainage Officer.

Apologies: Mr G Wedd, Mr J Johnson

1. Introduction and Election of Chairman

1.1. Mr Dodson proposed that P Matthews should act a chairman for the meeting – this was unanimously accepted by the committee.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

2.1. The minutes of the previous meeting of 5th February 2018 had already been circulated. It was unanimously accepted that the contents should be confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services

3.1. The meeting received the report of the SCDC Executive Director, Corporate Services, on expenditure for the year 2018/19 (to 24 January 2019). Section 1.1 of the report explained that the 1984 Act provides for an annual charge to be made to the charge payers, expressed as a rate per hectare within the Byeways rateable area. The charge for 2018/19 was set at £1.10 and a similar charge for 2019/20 would produce an amount of £1500.

- 3.2. The report showed there would be a balance of £394 in the charge payer's account at the end of 2018/19, which when added to the 2019/20 charge, will be reflected in the budget calculation for 2019/20.
- 3.3. There would be a balance of £7516 in the contingency account at the end of 2018/19 for any emergency or special works. The report suggested that £870 could be added to the contingency account for 2019/20 although other options were available.
- 3.4. The report recommended that £2,500 should be provided for maintenance in 2019/20 giving a breakdown of income and expenditure for the year as indicated in the report.

4. Report of the Director, Health & Environmental Services

- 4.1. This report presented a five-year expenditure summary covering the period 2014 – 2019 per Byeway.
- 4.2. Cllr Ellington explained that an inspection of the Byeways was undertaken on 11 January 2019 and that the surface of the most frequently used Byeways, particularly Middle Fen, Hale Road, Cow Fen, Mow Fen, Utton's Drove and Tipplers Drove had deteriorated over the autumn/winter period. However, due to the recent dry spell, the condition of most byeways is better than would normally be expected for the time of year. As a result, a residual amount of materials from the most recent allocations is still stored along certain sections of byeway.
- 4.3. Detailed discussions took place regarding the availability of locally sourced road planings. It was hoped that upgrading works along sections of the A14 would provide cheap materials for use on the byeways but the committee noted that all materials are being recycled for use within the works area itself.
- 4.4. The proposed budget of £2,500 for materials in 2019/20 is, therefore likely to provide only about six loads of materials at current prices. However, additional materials could be provided if contingency funds are used. It was agreed that the byeways condition will be monitored by the District Council in conjunction with Charge payer representatives throughout the year and materials allocated as necessary.
- 4.5. Due to the increasing cost of materials the meeting discussed the possibility of increasing the charge per hectare from £1.10 to £1.20. Following due consideration it was proposed by Mr Dodson and seconded by Mr Wilderspin that the rate for 2019/20 should be increased to £1.20 per hectare. This was unanimously approved by representatives.
- 4.6. A number of representatives expressed concern that details of land ownership within the Byeways rateable area are likely to have changed due to the acquisition of farmland for the A14 upgrade. Additionally, questions were raised regarding appropriate billing for the new allotments along Hale Road. Further queries were raised on the potential impact of sub-division of land (e.g. new housing along the byeways) on the total amount collected for maintenance. It was confirmed that Highways England are being billed for certain sections of land that now lies within the newly acquired A14 corridor. It was, however, agreed that the list of owners should again be checked by the District Council in conjunction with the Parish Council and the charge payers' representatives in order to ensure accuracy for future billing.

5. Voluntary Maintenance

- 5.1. Members again noted that the voluntary arrangement, whereby the District Council ordered and allocated materials and the charge payers provided labour and plant to spread materials, has been very successful in the past as a method of keeping costs to a minimum. However, members of the committee expressed concern that with a number of landowners approaching retirement, the voluntary maintenance would become unsustainable.

5.2. The committee agreed that the current voluntary arrangements should continue for the present but consideration should be given to the use of contractors. The related increase in the costs of using private contractors will be reviewed and discussed at subsequent meetings. It was proposed by Ms Rogers and seconded by Mr Dodson that the voluntary arrangements should continue for the 2019/20 period. This was unanimously accepted by the meeting.

6. **Any Other Business**

6.1 Two representatives from the Cambridge Water company attended the meeting in order to outline proposals for upgrading works to the potable water infrastructure. The advisory Committee members are agreed on the necessity for the upgrade but expressed the view that detailed consultation with local landowners will be necessary as the works progress in order to minimise disruption and possible access/egress problems or delays.

6.2 Works are proposed along Hale Road and Cow Fen using 'Directional Drilling' methods which avoid open trenching along the byeways or the associated green verges. However, the excavation of open pits will be necessary at approximately 100-metre centres to allow for access with drilling equipment. The Water company confirmed the location of these pits will be discussed in detail with the landowners when their final locations are decided so that disruption can be minimised

6.3 Adam Farthing, Capital works Manager (SSI Services on behalf of Cambridge Water) also confirmed he would get in touch with the District Council to confirm the final location of the excavations. Any inconsistencies or potential points of conflict could then be highlighted and discussed with the company.

The meeting closed at 21.30