

Swanton Morley Parish Council

Annual Report

2007/2008

Your Parish Council Team

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Swanton Morley Parish Council Financial Summary

Income for year 2007/2008

Description	Amount
Precept	38,759.48
Interest	2276.62
Burial and Memorial Fees	750.00
Recycling	359.08
VAT	7,172.39
Grants (Playing Field)	27,927.00
Community Car	89.11
Rural Payments Agency	2232.00
Wargraves Commission	80.00
Reclaim Material	7,350.00
Sale of Land	136,761.50
Town Street Right of Way	1,000.00
Public Works Loan	56,975.00
Total	281,732.18

Expenditure for year 2007/2008

	Budget 07/08	Expenditure 07/08	Budget 08/09
Grass Cutting	6,000.00	5,150.00	6,000.00
Rates	90.00	88.20	90.00
Insurance	3,630.75	3,577.25	2,200.00
Street Lighting Maintenance	2,608.00	2,350.17	2,750.02
Electricity	1,432.00	1,194.25	1,483.00
Churchyard and Burial Ground Maintenance	8,800.00	1,803.86	2,250.00
Old Village Hall Legal Fees and Maintenance	1,000.00	786.50	0
Play Ground Maintenance & Improvements	2,555.00	3,328.78	2,000.00
General Parish	1,500.00	210.00	1,000.00
Admin - Clerk	4,576.59	4,412.43	6,540.62
Admin – Expenses	814.00	771.80	1,143.03
Training	300.00	95.50	300.00
Audit	700.00	650.00	650.00
Subscriptions	360.00	331.54	385.00
Donations	300.00	250.00	300.00
By Elections	800.00	0	800.00
Waste and Dog Bins	300.00	453.99	0
Community Car	1,000.00	178.42	500.00
Quality Council	710.00	547.89	350.00
Mill Common	1,500.00	2,919.00	0
Burgh Common	1,000.00	0	0
Public Works Loan Repayment	15,464.00	15,759.61	16,188.00
Contingency	5,000.00	0	5,000.00
Village Hall Grant	0	0	5,000.00
Village Hall Hire	0	0	334.86
Landscape Old Village Hall Car Park	0	0	1,000.00
Pest Control	0	0	700.00
Total	60,440.34	50,859.19	56,964.53

Note: These accounts have not been audited.

SWANTON MORLEY PARISH COUNCIL - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This year has once again been a very busy one for your Parish Council. We have faced many challenges regarding the old village hall site as well as managing some large capital projects. Perhaps the most contentious issue facing us in the year ahead is the Local Development Framework, which will shape the future development of our village in terms of additional housing. We have had preliminary discussions with Breckland Council on this issue and will keep you updated on this important matter when we know more. We have endeavoured to communicate more regularly with parishioners and as a result launched our 'Mardler' newsletter, as well as improving our website and installing an information point in the village hall. This year we hope to receive our "Quality Council" status in recognition of the improvements we have made in both communication and our management systems. In September I had the privilege of attending an awards ceremony at County Hall, at which Swanton Morley received the runner up award in the EDP Pride in Norfolk Awards. This was the first year that the village was entered in the competition and the judges were very impressed with our facilities and in particular our community spirit. The competition served as a reminder that we have much to be proud of in our village.

OLD VILLAGE HALL & CAR PARK

As you may have read in the press and in our Mardler newsletter, the Parish Council sold the former old village hall site with outline planning permission to build two dwellings. After payment of professional fees the Parish Council received a net sum of £136,761.50 from the sale. This money has been put into a separate high interest account and can only be used for capital projects in the village and not to reduce the Precept*. Some of this money will be used to pay for further streetlighting improvements, a new footpath in the burial ground and a new recycling area at the village hall. The remainder will be used to finance two new grant schemes whereby village organisations will be able to apply for funding for capital expenditure. Details of these schemes will be unveiled at the annual parish meeting.

Last year we successfully negotiated with the four adjacent cottage owners to establish a legal vehicular right of way to the rear of their properties. In exchange for a 99 year right of way, the Parish Council received £1000. This money has been earmarked to pay for improved landscaping of the old village hall car park once the two new houses are completed. Although the decision to demolish the old village hall has not been popular with some Parishioners, I know that many are glad that a decision was made and that we can now look to the future.

YOUTH & PLAYING FIELDS

Parents and children of the village now have the benefit of new, improved play equipment at the Gooseberry Hill playing field. The last piece of equipment has just been installed and a contractor has just been appointed to replace all the existing chainlink fencing. Additional fencing will also be installed at the far end of the field. The project has been the result of three years hard work by councillors and volunteers all of whom have given up a great deal of their time to ensure Swanton Morley has a playing field it can be proud of. This £65,000 project has been made possible by successfully applying for a wide range of grants as well as 20% funding from the Parish Council. The end result is a playing field that is safe and will provide a lot of fun for children for many years to come. We are having an official opening ceremony on 16th April at 10.30am. Invitations to this have been extended to the school, village playgroups and grant funding providers. Everyone is welcome to attend.

As part of our ongoing programme of maintenance and improvements we have again painted all the seats throughout the village and have installed picnic benches on the village green and Gooseberry Hill playing field along with additional litter bins.

Now we have successfully completed the Gooseberry Hill playing field project the team are now actively looking into the possibility of building a floodlit all weather sports pitch and a teenage meeting shelter at the village hall. Both of these items featured prominently in the responses received in the village appraisal.

STREETLIGHTING

The Parish Council has appointed a contractor to completely replace all the concrete lighting columns as well as replacing all lights currently mounted on wooden telegraph poles. This work is ongoing. An additional light has been installed on Mann's Lane and at the end of Middleton Avenue where it joins Hoe Road East. We have also installed two flashing speed signs on Rectory Road between Thompson Close and Robertson Barracks. All this work has been financed by a low interest loan provided by the public works loan board. This will be repaid by the end of this council's term of office in May 2011. We are currently obtaining prices to replace and reposition a further nine lights along Rectory Road, Gooseberry Hill, Manns Lane, Greengate and Ainsworth Close. This work will be financed from the proceeds of the sale of the old village hall.

CHURCHYARD & BURIAL GROUND

It has once again been a busy year for councillors and volunteers. Much work has been carried out at the churchyard to clear vegetation and "reclaim" land which has for many years been overgrown and inaccessible. This work will need to continue this year after which regular maintenance should keep the churchyard in good order. We also appointed a contractor to install a new post and rail fence along the

churchyard boundary with the B1147. In the Hoe Road burial ground, work has started on the construction of a rose memorial garden. Work should be completed in the spring after which relatives will be able to plant a rose in memory of their loved ones. A new notice board has been installed and we have recently appointed a contractor to construct an additional footpath to accommodate future graves.

HIGHWAYS

The Parish Council has again worked closely with the Highways Department at Norfolk County Council (NCC). At the Parish Council's request, NCC has drawn up plans to widen Mill Street on the church bends. The Parish Council has commented favourably on the proposed scheme and NCC will now consult local landowners before finalising their proposals. NCC recently confirmed that they will be extending the 30mph speed limit along Woodgate Lane. Also at our request, NCC has long term plans for the repairs and resurfacing of the footpaths along Gray Drive, Worthing Road, Manns Lane and Greengate. They are also drawing up a scheme to carry out much needed permanent improvements to the B1147 Tuddenham Road. Experience tells us that these issues can be very frustrating for everyone and that they take some years to come to fruition; nevertheless we continue to press for action.

The Parish Council worked closely with NCC for over three years in an effort to have the pedestrian crossing built on Greengate. The need for this was highlighted in the village appraisal and the village school's travel plan. Although controversial with some residents, the Parish Council felt that this would benefit those people walking from the Dereham end of the village to visit the school and village hall, in particular school children and their parents/carers.

COMMON LAND

The Parish Council has been granted Higher Level Stewardship over Mill Common. This area now generates a small income for the village in exchange for keeping it well maintained. The Parish Council is also working with Natural England to carry out a project of improvement work at Burgh Common. Work recently started with the installation of glides and riffles in the river, which will improve the habitat for juvenile fish and other river creatures. In the autumn once the new groundworks have settled, wheelchair/pushchair access to the river along with additional seating for anglers will be installed. For those of you who are wondering where these commons are located, they are both found along the road to Worthing. They are beautiful locations which can be better enjoyed by everyone thanks to the work of the Parish Council and volunteers.

FINANCE

Looking to the future, you will be aware that the Parish element of your council tax bill has reduced this year by 16.7%. A Band D house in Swanton Morley will pay only 94p a week for all the services that the Parish Council provides. 83% of homes in Swanton Morley are in Bands A, B or C and will therefore pay less for Parish Council services.

IN CONCLUSION, THERE ARE MANY CHALLENGES FACING THE PARISH COUNCIL IN THE FUTURE AND I DO HOPE THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ATTEND OUR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON THE 14TH APRIL AT 7.30PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL, WHERE YOU CAN OFFER YOUR OWN VIEWS AND SUGGESTIONS, OR JUST FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE WORK THAT WE DO ON YOUR BEHALF. A REPRESENTATIVE FROM BRECKLAND COUNCIL WILL ALSO BE IN ATTENDANCE TO TALK ABOUT THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK.



ROGER ATTERWILL - CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

*** PRECEPT - The amount of money the Parish Council requests from Breckland Council to cover its expenditure in the year ahead. This determines the "Swanton Morley" element of your Council tax bills**