

Report of Sweffling Parish Council 2021

2020 started as a pretty normal year with the Parish Council dealing with issues around flooding, concerns about bird scarers being close to footpaths, planning applications, litter bins (particularly dog waste bins) and issues with websites. In early 2020 we were able to replace the old dilapidated notice board with a new one thanks to a grant from our County Councillor. The litter pick was scheduled for 4th April.

Then on the 23rd March everything changed as the country went into the first lockdown.

The Parish Council continued to function through phone and email whilst we explored different formats or platforms to hold virtual meetings. It was never possible to get the full council together at this time. We were not the only ones facing this issue as District, County Councils and Central Government struggled to find a way to work. It was agreed that the officers of the Parish Council should remain in post for another year.

By June we had found a format that worked for most of our Councillors and were able to have our first virtual meeting. Even then not all councillors were able to partake but five were able to meet together with our Clerk. Sweffling Parish Council requires four councillors of the seven to be present to be quorate.

Following easing of the lockdown restrictions we were able to meet in the Village Hut for our July meeting.

Through the Autumn we met in the Village Hut under Covid safe conditions until restrictions forced us back to virtual meetings.

Maureen Philpot, our Clerk, decided to retire. We are very grateful to Maureen for her dedication to Sweffling during the years when she acted as Clerk to the Parish Council.

Two people showed an interest in filling the post and following a desktop exercise of both CVs and applications we were able to appoint Mike Smithson to the position.

We started 2021 with Zoom meetings. The Chairman and the Clerk had regular walk & talk meetings in order that the business of the Parish Council could be addressed.

Unfortunately early in the year Councillor Annie Rogers moved out of Sweffling to Framlingham and decided to stand down. After unprecedented interest in the vacancy, where we had no fewer than five people coming forward, we were able to appointment Erika Spall as a new Councillor.

Now after step 3 of the government roadmap to recovery we are again able to meet face to face in the Village Hut. Our next full business meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 8th June.

We hope that step 4 of the roadmap is not delayed and that no further restrictions are announced. If that is the case then we expect to meet on the second Tuesday of each month except August and December.