

Minutes of Swillington Annual Village Meeting held on Tuesday 21st April 2026 at 7pm



1. Welcome address to the Annual Village Meeting by Swillington Village Council Chair, Cllr Pete Young.

Cllr Young thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He noted it had been a busy twelve months for the council with changes and a number of new councillors, and highlighted the two current vacancies on the council and encouraged those present to apply.

Cllr Young highlighted some of the council's achievements over the last year, including:

- new solar panels fitted to the Village Hall, keeping its energy costs down and hire charges down
- Vice-Chair Cllr Cummings' management of the defibrillators to ensure all are ready for use and the installation of a new defibrillator at Swillington Common, noting that a plaque will be placed in memory of late former councillor Phil Dunkerley who campaigned for it
- grants given to various local groups
- the expansion of the free Cosy Cafe warm hub to two well-attended sessions a week
- undertaking costly work at the allotment sites and progressing work to manage the flooding and resurfacing of the access track at one of the sites
- an inspection of all council-owned trees to ensure public safety, with recommended work due to take place next month
- a footpath inspection project undertaken
- various costly repairs undertaken at the playground and all the preparatory work for the improvements and new equipment going ahead soon, highlighting the Council's importance on investing in children and providing a safe place to play

Cllr Young then looked ahead to the forthcoming year, stating the Council welcomed all ideas from residents regarding the village and that it would be a council priority to remain in budget by making the best of the money that the Council has to use. He also highlighted the issue raised by residents of parking on Astley Lane, stating that there may soon be a resolution to this issue in the form of parking provided within the industrial estate.

Cllr Young thanked all of the village councillors who give up a lot of their time for the village that isn't often seen, and encouraged residents to volunteer to help the Council's projects and those of other groups. He also encouraged resident attendance at the monthly council meetings and the public sessions which are held immediately prior.

2. To agree the minutes of the Annual Village Meeting 2025 held 15th April 2025. These were approved.

3. Addresses by various village groups and persons, including:

3.1 Sarah Harrison, St Mary's Church

Noted that the Church's priority in the preceding year had been to maintain its support and delivery of its services especially in the context of clergy team illness and recovery. Rev Jo was ordained priest in June and Rev'd Bob and Rev'd Gordon continue to support in all aspects of church and community. The Church has held many community activities this year, as well as special services such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals, and maintaining general pastoral support in the village. The Clergy team is extremely grateful to the Friends of Swillington Church

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group for their support. The Church's biggest challenge remains finance, especially maintaining the building, and its key focus will remain to grow faith, friendship and community.

3.2 Swillington in Bloom

Margaret Best spoke on behalf of Swillington in Bloom and started by thanking the Village Council and their other generous financial supporters, along with a note of thanks to Stuart Williams and Andy Best for their help with the heavy work required, and to St Mary's Church for allowing the group to use the external water tap at the Church free of charge. The group has faced several challenges with last year's especially dry summer and wet winter, but highlighted the success of the daffodils and an aim to extend the daffodil planting in the forthcoming year. The old flower boxes on the green have been replaced and will be planted up in summer, and two new planters have also been installed on the green near North Lodge. The group continues to commit to improving its environmental considerations and are eliminating the use of bedding plants and moving to the use of perennials. Due to volunteer numbers, health issues and caring responsibilities, the number of boxes and beds has been reduced in order to ensure that all are well cared for within the group's capacity. The group would welcome new volunteers or financial sponsors.

3.3 Friends of Swillington Church

Rebecca Donnelly and Lauren McDonald spoke on behalf of Friends of Swillington Church. This is the group's third year running events to raise funds for the church and bring the community together. Highlights from the last year included the first Scarecrow Festival, wreath-making, the Christmas lights switch-on event, and free craft events for children at the church. The group thanked the Club for their support in holding children's parties there. The group raised just over £6000 last year and hopes to improve on that this year, and encouraged residents to take part in this year's Scarecrow Festival by signing up.

The Clerk read two reports from groups invited to speak who were unable to attend due to other commitments:

Swillington Scorpions rounders team - The team thanked the Village Council for their continued support. The team trains on Wednesdays from 6pm on the field and always welcomes new members.

Swillington Saints junior football club - The club thanked the Village Council for their continued support with the renewed funding for the U13s team, who worked hard to fundraise for a trip to Barcelona where they enjoyed several experiences including training sessions with Spanish coaches and friendly matches against local Spanish teams. Over the last year facilities improvements have taken place including car parking and rugby pitch floodlights. The Club is placing importance on growing its girls teams this coming year, and undertaking further groundwork on the site. Furthermore, the annual gala will take place on 27th and 28th June, following feedback this is not being placed on the bank holiday weekend, scheduling changes have been made to allow for more staggered arrivals and departures, and more volunteers on the roadside - they invite any comments or suggestions to be made to swilysaints@gmail.com.

4. Opportunity for attendees to raise any other business for discussion by villagers

- A resident stated that the precept had increased this year and queried if it was for a particular project to be undertaken by the Council. The Council has raised the precept in order to complete the renovation works on the playground. Partial funding has been secured and the Council will fund the remainder.
- Residents discussed the loss of the GP surgery in the village this year, and that several rumours are circulating on the future use of the building, including a conversion to a community centre, a care home, or it being taken over by another GP practice. Cllr Young noted that he has been in touch with Health Secretary Wes Streeting about the issue and will

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continue to keep up enquiries. A resident suggested that village residents should all write individually to the local MP to raise the issue again as it is now extremely difficult for people with limited mobility or without their own transport to reach a GP.

- 5. Closing address by Cllr Pete Young** - Cllr Young thanked all for coming and noted that the speakers this year did not include any political speakers; the Village Council traditionally invites the sitting ward councillors and MP. Due to the proximity of the local elections, and the importance of the Village Council remaining non-political, the Council made the decision not to issue these invites this year in order to ensure that it was not offering a platform to any particular individuals or parties at a detriment to other candidates. The Village Council remains committed to working with ward councillors and MPs. Cllr Young once again encouraged all residents to attend the monthly council meetings.

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