

## **Report for Swells Parish Council November 2020**

### Full Council meeting 2 pm November 18th.

CDC has been trialling different times for meetings to see which is most popular with members & the public. At the moment, meetings start at 2 pm in the winter & 6 pm in the summer (British Summer Time.) We will have a members survey in the next few months as some people would like to revert to a start time of 10. am. Members of the public are welcome to attend, virtually at the moment, & in future the meetings will be webcast from the chamber. I shall be interested to hear your opinions!

Planning. One of the most important item on Wednesday's agenda is a review of the planning system, This includes the scheme of delegation which allows officers to make decisions on applications, & also a major change in the way in which challenges to the officers' decisions are brought to the planning committee. At the moment ,any ward member can bring an application to committee. This should only be done if there is a valid reason under planning law to contest the officer's decision, i.e. s challenge which can be supported from the adopted local plan or the National Planning Policy Framework. From time to time, we have applications brought to committee on the grounds that there is a lot of local opposition or for subjective reasons with no sound planning argument. All applications brought to committee involve a lot of the planning officers' time as well as that of the planning committee members. All ward councillors undergo planning training, but many of them have never sat on the planning committee & would benefit from advice about whether bringing an application to committee is appropriate. So the proposal to be debated at the Council meeting is that applications are screened by a committee consisting of the chair & vice chair of the planning committee together with a couple of the senior planning officers. Ward members will have to supply a valid planning reason for brining the application to committee, & if they are unable to do this, the case will not be taken to committee. I have been on the planning committee for four years, so I am confident that I can see in which contested cases in my ward there is a chance that the officer's recommendation would be overturned, & as you know, I am always ready to discuss applications with any residents of the Swells as well as the Parish Council

New lockdown measures The Government has asked local authorities to enforce lockdown measures over the next few weeks. CDC & GCC will be cooperating to achieve this.

Further business grants are available, not as generous as earlier in the year & businesses will need to apply for them.

The waste service should not be affected by this second lockdown.

CDC officers will be getting in touch with vulnerable people by letter & by phone to offer support & signposting to vulnerable people.

I hope that by the time of the County Council elections, we will be well out of lockdown, but anyone who would prefer to vote by post should apply to CDC.

Budget consultation. Each year, the District Council sets a budget which this year has been significantly impacted by Covid 19. The budget proposals for next year are available on the CDC website together with a residents' survey on the proposals. This is available at [cotswold.gov.uk/budgetconsultation](https://cotswold.gov.uk/budgetconsultation). Please do take a look, the survey will only take a few minutes & the administration is keen to get as many responses as possible.

Road closure I am sure Nigel will mention this, but the road between Swell & Stow will be sliced for surface repairs on 26th & 27th November.

Covid vaccine & Fake news. I am sure that local authorities will be asked to encourage people to take up the Covid vaccine when it is available, or more likely a choice of vaccines. I have been surprised at how many people have told me that they won't have the vaccine as "it's not safe." This opinion seems to be entirely based on rumour & the fact that the timescale to produce the vaccine has been so short. Wearing my medical hat, I would like to tell you that mass vaccination is probably the single medical advance which has been of most benefit to humanity over the last century. All treatments have side effects, but for most vaccines they are minimal & vastly less horrible than the disease itself. I have followed closely the progress of the vaccine trials, particularly the Oxford vaccine. All the stages of testing and approval have been or will have been done by the time the vaccine is released for public use. The speed with which a trial is completed depends on how rapidly patients or volunteers can be recruited: getting statistically significant results both in terms of effectiveness & side effects is achieved more rapidly if groups cooperate together to recruit. In the case of the Covid vaccine, because it is a global pandemic, there has been unprecedented international cooperation, with tens of thousands of people taking part in each trial. These vaccines have been developed & tested so quickly not by cutting corners but by working together globally. Mass vaccination is what will bring about the end of the pandemic, though the virus may linger, I will be having it as soon as it is offered to me & I hope that you will too. I would be very happy to talk to anyone who is concerned about the safety of the vaccine.