

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 4th April 2016
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

Present: Cllr Foss, Cllr Paginton, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Benfield, Cllr Haigh, Cllr Curtis, Cllr Hawkes, Cllr Short, Cllr Osbourn

In attendance:

Gemma Cheal (parish clerk), members of the public, 2 Police Officers from the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team

1. Apologies

None received.

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Curtis declared an interest in item 13, Financial Matters, last bullet point.

3. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2016

Minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2016 were approved and signed, subject to amendments to item 7 (Clerk's Report, Actions from February Parish Council meeting, 2nd bullet point) and item 17 (matters for consideration).

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Item 6 of the previous minutes: Cllr Curtis informed members that the flower boxes have been installed at Heronscroft.

Item 7 of the previous minutes: Cllr Foss informed members that he had spoken with Bev regarding the guest speaker item of the Annual Assembly. Unfortunately Bev was unable to make the date of the Annual Assembly.

Item 7 of the previous minutes: Cllr Paginton informed members that he will email the Clerk information regarding Association of Parish Councils and Local Councils.

5. Public forum

Tony Hillier, Independent Councillor standing in the forthcoming Swindon Borough Council elections introduced himself to members. Mr Hillier was welcomed to the meeting as an observer.

6. Clerk's Report

Members noted the following report from the Clerk:

Website

April agenda item for further discussion.

Appraisals

As agreed at the March Parish Council meeting, appraisals have been scheduled for the Clerk and Handyman on 6th April 2016 with the Chair of Finance.

Finance Update

Meeting: The Clerk and Chair of Finance have reviewed the Parish Council Asset Register and the Risk Assessment and Management documents. The Asset Register has been checked by the Parish Handyman. Minor amendments have been made since last year (removal of lawnmower, number of litter bins). Minor amendments have been made to the Risk Assessment and Management documents (change of wording from Working Party to Committee).

Audit: Correspondence has been received from Grant Thornton, external auditor for the year ended 31st March 2016. Completed Annual Return needs to be completed and returned by 24th June 2016. An item has been included on the agenda for appointment of internal auditor.

May Parish Council Meeting – change of date

Please note that the date of the May Parish Council meeting has been changed to **Monday 9th May** at 7.30pm due to bank holiday school closure.

Handyman Report

A report from John is attached to this report.

Issue to bring to Parish Council: John has reported that the playground gate has once again been vandalised. John has repaired the gate 5 times now since Christmas.

Members noted issue. Clerk to contact Terry Davis to see if he can repair the gate by welding (ACTION CLERK).

Actions from March Parish Council meeting

- Clerk to write to SSMPC re. beacon lighting on Ermin Street: Update – Clerk is fairly new at Stratton and was not part of the process. No information on costings available.
- Merlin Way Street signs: Clerk has requested action via SBC website.
- Association of Local Councils: Clerk has looked into this and cannot find any recent information on the internet.
- Planning training with South Marston PC: Currently waiting for some training dates to come through from South Marston Parish Clerk.
- Clerk to contact other parish councils re. website: Clerk has made contact with Haydon Wick and Stratton Parish Councils. Further discussion to take place at April PC meeting.

Meetings attended

Cllr Curtis and Clerk attended the SAC meeting on 17th March, 7.30pm at Haydon Wick Parish Council Offices as guests. Further information about membership costs is on the April agenda for consideration.

Parish Election

Papers for the forthcoming Parish Election have been emailed to members.

Nomination papers must be delivered to the Returning Officer, Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon SN1 2JH no later than **4 pm on Thursday, 7th April 2016.**

If any election is contested the poll will take place on **Thursday, 5th May 2016.**

If further support is required, please contact the Electoral Services Team on 01793 463999 who can answer any questions and check through your papers.

A notice of Parish Election has been placed on the Parish noticeboard.

7. Verbal Update from the Chairman

- Bus provision for Villages and Parishes: Cllr Osbourn informed members that correspondence has been received from the Chair of Wanborough Parish Council regarding a bus provision for villages and parishes.

Members noted interest in supporting the service, however any decision will be deferred until we understand the financial implications. ACTION: Cllr Osbourn to maintain correspondence with Chair of Wanborough Parish Council about this.

- Update from Borough/Parish meeting:
Members noted that the Chair and Clerk attended a Borough/Parish meeting on 31st March 2016. Cllr Osbourn informed members that Kirsty Cole gave a presentation to parish councils present regarding the transfer of services to Parish Councils and the effect this will have on special expenses. This was followed by a question and answer session. Cllr Osbourn informed members that Swindon Borough Council will not provide some services by 2020. Parish Councils will be required to pick up these services to ensure that they continue. If they do not, those services previously provided by the Borough will stop.

Members discussed disparity in figures presented previously by Kirsty Cole to Covingham Parish Council. Kirsty Cole would like a further meeting with Covingham Parish Council.

Members resolved to call a Special meeting of the Parish Council at the end of May, prior to the June Parish Council meeting with Kirsty Cole and relevant Borough Officers.

8. Police Matters (Update from local neighbourhood policing team)

Members welcomed PCSOs Garath Reynolds and Dean Tilling to the meeting to provide an update from the Police. PCSO Reynolds apologised for arriving late to the meeting as they were scheduled to present at the Annual Assembly. PCSO Reynolds updated members on staffing changes. Police Constable Watts has moved to another Neighbourhood Policing Team. Police Constable Claire Leakey is now in charge of the Covingham area. PC Leakey has been in contact with the Clerk.

Members noted the following issues for Covingham, although it was noted that Covingham is generally a low crime area:

- Rogue traders: Targeting vulnerable people in Covingham and Nythe areas. Police issue 'no rogue traders' stickers to residents.
- Distraction burglary: Residents encouraged to be observant and to keep property secured, particularly in warmer weather.
- Anti-social behaviour: Police targeting skateboard park and the area outside St. Paul's Church

Members noted that the Police hold a drop in session on the first Tuesday of every month at Morrisons. Police agreed to pass 'no rogue trader' flyers to the Clerk.

9. Update regarding further seating around Covingham Park

Cllr Osbourn informed members that he is currently trying to ascertain costings from neighbouring parish councils.

Cllr Benfield showed members a photograph of a bench recently refurbished with a memorial plaque installed.

10. Update on website improvements

Members resolved for Cllr Hawkes to carry out a technical overview of the Parish website. The Clerk agreed to liaise with Cllr Hawkes outside of the meeting.

11. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:

- Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Members noted the following report from Cllr Sandle:

Covingham Square

We have received written confirmation of the area the Parish has agreed to adopt from the Swindon Borough Council, which will be kept on record.

Although the square is looking tidier, it is not totally completed to the specification the original plans disclosed. These plans not only included a wall screening of the recycling bins, to obscure them from view from Covingham Drive, (the new fence currently installed – seems to serve very little purpose) it was also discussed that the wall & wooden panels, between Larksfield & the car park would be renovated, to date this has not been done & I believe is not likely to be carried out – no reason given.. Like me, I am sure you would be interested to know what the final monetary outlay has been & the difference between what was original allocated to this project. ACTION: Clerk to request a copy of the plans that SBC worked to for Covingham Square.

Parks

We have again encountered some vandalism on our parks, as the lighter nights draw in & these facilities will be greatly enjoyed, we need to be vigilant, reporting anyone seen abusing them to our local police, who are monitoring these issues.

Bulbs

A survey has been completed of both Covingham & Smitanbrook Parks. A plan has been compiled showing us where new or replacements planting are required, which will be actioned in the autumn.

Seats

As additional seating has been planned for Covingham Park & a possible adoption of one of the seats around the park, it may be a good time to take a look at the seats around the parish in view of painting them. Members resolved for seats to be painted when new seats are installed.

Floral display

I am pleased to report that enquiries are still coming in regarding boxes, with two requests recently received for three boxes in Heronscroft & two in Wrenwood. As agreed, John is making these boxes & installing them, the residents are then responsible for maintaining them accordingly. If anyone in the parish is interested in having floral boxes installed in their street, their first port of contact is Gemma Cheal, clerk for Covingham parish.

- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):

Covered under Item 13.

- Recreation Committee (Chair Haigh/Cllr Osbourn):

Nothing to report, although members noted that the Parish Council may have money to look at future projects in the next financial year. Members noted the success of the adult exercise equipment and noted previous resolution taken by Covingham Parish Council for the adult exercise equipment to stand the test of time.

- Parish Plan Committee (Chair Cllr Curtis):

Members noted proposed Government changes to the planning regulations to include proposals for 5 weeks' timescale for planning approval. Cllr Curtis agreed to circulate planning information to members.

Members noted CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) training recently organised by Swindon Borough Council. This is a replacement that goes alongside Section 106. Members discussed the possible advantages of having a neighbourhood plan, in terms of receiving increased % money to Parish Council funds with a plan in place. Members noted that neighbourhood plan is not only regarding development, but could include guidelines about property expansion that would be taken into account by the Borough Planning Department. A neighbourhood plan could also safeguard the parks in Covingham.

Members resolved to look at a neighbourhood plan for Covingham following May elections. Cllr Curtis suggested regular planning committee meetings going forward. Clerk agreed to add Cllr Paginton to Committee membership list for the Planning Committee.

- Covingham Flood Group report (Cllr Curtis):

No report this month.

12. Planning Matters

Application Number: S/16/0392

Proposal: Erection of a two storey/single storey rear extension at 1 Foxbridge, Covingham, Swindon, SN3 5BW.

DECISION: Members noted that this is a single storey with dormer upon inspection. No objections.

13. Financial Matters

- **Approve financial summary and cheque list.**

Financial summary and cheque list approved and signed.

- **Consider renewal of membership of Swindon Area Committee (£55 for 2016/17)**

Members resolved to renewal membership of Swindon Area Committee for £55.

- **Receive revised quotation for additional grass cutting at Redrow**

Members resolved to accept the revised quotation of £950 plus VAT for additional grass cutting at Redrow.

- **Receive Q4 finance statement and agree budget for 2016/17**

Members approved Q4 finance statement and agreed budget for 2016/17.

Members noted outstanding VAT refund of approximately £4,000.

- **Review of Asset Register and Risk Assessment and Management documents**

Members noted that a review of the Parish Council Asset Register and Risk Assessment and Management documents had taken place by the Clerk and Chair of Finance.

- **Appoint Internal Auditor**

Members resolved to appoint previous internal auditor, Mr Peter Dennison to carry out an internal audit for the financial year 2015/16.

- **Consider and grant requests received**

No grant requests received this month.

- **Review of Contracts and Pay for Clerk and Handyman against NALC Pay Scales (press and public are requested to be excused from the meeting for this item).**

Cllr Curtis left the meeting room for this discussion. Members reviewed contract and pay for Parish Handyman and resolved to defer review of contract and pay for the Clerk until relevant information on pay-scales were sent from NALC.

Members resolved unanimously to increase the working hours of the Handyman to 25 hours per week. Members resolved unanimously to increase the salary of the Handyman to £10,488.40 per annum (NALC LC Scale Point 12).

14. Correspondence

Members noted the following received correspondence

Received from	Subject
Wrenswood Owners Co. Ltd	Installation of flower boxes. Members resolved for flower boxes to be made for Wrenswood.
The Pensions Regulator	Guidance on changes to the Law for workplace pensions.

15. Matters for consideration

Cllr Paginton asked about detailed plans for the Redlands development. Cllr Curtis agreed to send links to relevant planning information. All planning application information can be found on the Swindon Borough Council website.

Cllr Sandle commented on the recent 'Green Day' carried out on 2nd April 2016 organised by Ward Cllr Parry. Members noted that a local resident had an issue with a tree at the back of her house. Ward Cllr Parry arranged for the tree to be chopped down within two weeks.

Meeting closed at 21:00

Signed (Chair):