

# Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017  
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

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**Present:** Cllr Curtis (Chair), Cllr Hawkes, Cllr Bacon, Cllr Willis, Cllr Kennedy, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Benfield (Vice Chair)

**In attendance:** Gemma Cheal (Parish Clerk), Emma Kingsley (new Parish Clerk), Members of the public

**1. Apologies**

Received from Cllr Paginton.

**2. Declaration of Interests**

None.

**3. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017**

Minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**4. Matters arising from the previous minutes**

Speedwatch update: The Clerk has contacted the Community Speedwatch liaison for the Covingham area to express an interest. Members noted that Ward Cllr Barbara Parry is also trying to set up Community Speedwatch. **ACTION:** Contact Ward Cllr Parry re. joint training (Clerk).

Parish van update: The Chair updated member on a recent issue involving the Parish van which was quickly resolved by the Handymen. The van MOT has been carried out. The previous issue with the van blowing out black smoke has been resolved. **ACTION:** Members resolved to postpone the purchase of a new van until the next financial year as current van is fit for purpose.

Lotmead Planning Appeal: Members noted that Cllrs Hawkes and Curtis will attend the forthcoming planning appeal on behalf of the Parish Council. The Clerk informed Cllr Hawkes that no response has been received to date from Ward Cllrs regarding the White Hart Roundabout letter sent.

**5. Public forum**

One member of the public present at the meeting enquired about epicormic growth and clearing out of brooks in the Parish. The Chair reported that the Handymen have been clearing the epicormic growth. Clearing of the brooks will be covered under Item 14, Covingham Flood Group update.

**6. Clerk's Verbal update**

The Clerk informed members that notes from the meeting with Allbuild Services covered under agenda item 10 had been previously circulated to members via email.

Signatories for the Parish Council bank accounts have now been updated. Current signatories are the Clerk (Gemma Cheal), Cllrs Sandle, Curtis, Benfield and Paginton. The Clerk has printed a mandate for Emma to complete and return to the bank to enable her to become a new signatory.

A handover to the new Parish Clerk is scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> November.

Members noted reports received from the Parish Handyman with thanks.

**ACTION:** On-going agenda item to be added for Handyman reports.

**7. Verbal Update from the Chair**

The Chair informed members that the yellow slide in the toddler play park was vandalised on 1<sup>st</sup> November between the hours of 8am and 3pm. This was reported to the Parish by Tony Foss. One child was injured as a result. The Handymen took immediate action by taping off the slide area. Any issues resulting in removal of the tape should be reported to the Handymen immediately. Due to urgency of requirement to make the slide safe, members **unanimously resolved** to purchase a new slide for the amount of £904 plus VAT with a 50% payment initially to secure the purchase of the slide. **ACTION:** Clerk to place order with Kompan.

Update on recycle bins: Swindon Borough Council confirmed today that paperwork for an enforcement process has started. If the bins have now been removed within two weeks, Swindon Borough Council will take enforcement action. Cllr Curtis will chase this up in two weeks' time. **ACTION:** Cllr Curtis to contact Swindon Borough Council.

The Chair reported that Ward Cllr Heenan had previously asked if the Parish could host monthly meetings in an alternative location. As this will be out of Parish in Liden Library, the Chair has declined.

The Chair informed members that the Swindon Borough Council Safeguarding Team are organising safeguarding training for Parish Council outside staff. Members resolved unanimously for the Parish Handymen to receive this training. **ACTION:** SBC to organise training and inform Parish Council of the arrangements. John and Martin to attend.

The chair reported that 13 Parish Councils had responded to the Council Tax Support Grant consultation. 12 out of 13 Parishes opted for the current methodology. Members noted that there may not be a Council Tax Support Grant from 2020 as the current Government will no longer be providing the funding.

**8. Feedback from adult exercise equipment site meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

The Chair informed members that Cllrs Curtis, Benfield, Hawkes and Sandle met onsite at Covingham Park and walked the area to consider possible site options to relocate one group of the adult exercise equipment. The most suitable location agreed was near the skateboard park. A subsequent conversation with the manufacturer confirmed that this location (between two mounds with a dipped area in the middle) would meet the criteria of being 25 metres away from any childrens play park. The previous quotation of £3050 has been reduced to £2590 due to one piece of work no longer being required (rubber matting). Members noted that 8 residents are not happy with location of one group of equipment, although no members had attended Parish Council meetings when the Parish Council had included an item on the agenda to discuss the relocation. Members noted that the Police previously confirmed that the location of the equipment has not added to anti-social behaviour issues and queried evidence of any problems raised by local residents. Members agreed unanimously to delay the decision to move the equipment until such a time as evidence of anti-social behaviour has been produced.

**9. Traveller prevention on Covingham Park – consider purchase of bollards**

Members noted an email received from the Nythe, Eldene and Liden Parish Clerk asking if the Parish would like to purchase the bollards at the cost of £250 per bollard. Members noted that they were offered free of charge previously with an amount to pay for transportation costs. Members resolved to find other, cheaper options should the need arise.

**ACTION:** Cllr Curtis to email response to Ward Cllr Kevin Parry and ask the reasoning behind the cost and report back to the Parish at the next meeting.

**10. Feedback from review meeting with Allbuild Services:**

- **Review of contract**
- **Agree funds for additional, unplanned works**

Members noted that Cllrs Curtis, Kennedy and the Clerk had a meeting with Lee Wells of Allbuild Services to review progress of current contract. Lee's plan was not clear enough to identify all areas that require works. Cllr Curtis has subsequently purchased a large (A1), labelled and colour coded map to help Lee to identify all areas for cutting within the Parish, using the Handymen's worksheet. Currently waiting for Lee to come back with a quotation before budget setting. The Parish Handymen are strimming side roads within the Parish. This can be removed from the contract. Leaves will be swept by the end of November. Hedge cutting has commenced. Road sweepers had been sited in the Parish during the summer months. Swindon Borough Council have a statutory duty to sweep all main roads in the Parish.

**ACTION:** SBC to be asked for confirmation that they will continue to sweep the four major roads through Covingham

**11. Agree allocation of Carrier bag Good Causes Funding from the Co-op (£564.35)**

Members noted that the money given from the carrier bag good causes fund has been received in the Parish Council bank account, with thanks. Members debated options of how the money could be spent, including new seating to replace the metal benches or new waste bins. The Chair reported of recent vandalism of the metal benches currently on Covingham Square. Swindon Borough Council informed the Chair that the guarantee period for the benches ended in March 2017. The benches were not fit for purchase. Cllr Bacon has investigated various options for seating and presented a quotation for a 4 seater bench for the amount of £400 excluding VAT. Cllr Benfield has discussed the idea of installing benches and/or waste bins with the Co-op manager who is happy.

**ACTION:** Parish Handymen to review benches under consideration to see if they can install them. If so, purchase to go-ahead.

**12. Reintroduction of number 20 hospital bus service**

Members noted an email received from the Nythe, Eldene and Liden Parish Clerk to ask if Covingham Parish Council would consider joint lobbying for the re-introduction of the number 20 hospital bus service. Members resolved unanimously to support this scheme.

**13. Update from Community Safety Forum held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 (Cllrs Sandle/Willis)**

Cllr Willis informed members that she attended with Community Safety Forum on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 with Cllr Sandle. The Forum was positively received. Rural Parishes were also in attendance. Issues of concern raised by rural parishes were fly tipping and antisocial behaviour. Police are keen to work with Parishes. They are no longer able to attend Parish Council meetings and encourage parishes to communicate through the Forum. Community Officers have not been seen as often patrolling due to lack of resources. Problem areas to be prioritised and patrolled. Ideas to reinstate Neighbourhood Watch was discussed. All non-urgent issues to be reported to the Police through the 101 number. Parishes to advertise this where possible. The next meeting will take place in January 2018.

**ACTION:** Cllrs Willis and Sandle to take Handyman fly tipping report to the next Forum.

**14. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:**

• **Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):**

Cllr Sandle thanked councillors that took part in the recent Green Day. 150 bulbs and flowers were planted in the crescent area in Covingham Square. Cllr Sandle discussed the idea of a low fence in this area. Cllrs Benfield and Sandle have weather proofed the flower boxes. Water canisters have been purchased. More plants will be required for the boxes in future. A bulb planting survey will take place in the spring of 2018 to ascertain any gaps that will need to be addressed in the autumn of that year.

**ACTION:** Clerk to email list of flower boxes in the parish and the persons responsible for them to Cllr Sandle.

• **Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):**

No report this month.

- **Parish Plan/Highways Committee (Chair Cllr Curtis):**

Cllr Hawkes informed members that Cllrs Curtis and Hawkes will be in attendance at the forthcoming Lotmead planning appeal to state objections to development going ahead prior to infrastructure and traffic implications this will have on Covingham. Cllr Hawkes to find date of December Planning Committee meeting via the Swindon Borough Council website.

- **Personnel Committee (Chair Cllr Bacon):**

Cllr Bacon thanked members that took part in the interview and appointment of the new Parish Clerk. The contract for the Clerk is in line with National Association Local Councils (NALC).

- **Covingham Flood Group report (Cllr Curtis):**

- **Joint Parish Council initiative**

Cllr Curtis updated members on a multi-agency meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October with representatives from the Environment Agency (EA) and Swindon Borough Council. One item of concern raised was the condition of Dorcan Stream and the River Cole, due to Himalayan Balsam and general overgrown condition. The EA made it clear that flood mitigation works only will be carried out. They will not make any attempt to remove the overgrowth or Himalayan Balsam. The Flood Group are looking to set up a joint initiative with other parishes to work together to clear the overgrowth and Himalayan Balsam and are approaching the Parish Council to request support.

Members voted in favour of taking part in joint initiative. Cllrs Hawkes and Curtis abstained from the vote.

- **Parish Website Working Party (Cllr Hawkes):**

- **Website hosting and .gov.uk domain**

Cllr Hawkes informed members that he has been looking into a '.gov.uk' website and email addresses for the Parish. A supplier has been identified to provide a '.gov.uk' domain name and hosting. Cllr Hawkes recommended the purchase of an SSL certificate for the website for the cost of £114 per year, plus VAT and to use Seiretto to create a new web site at the cost of £149 per year, which can be reduced to £89 if the lower price option provides enough resources (prices excluding VAT). Cllr Hawkes recommended keeping the existing hosting for the remainder of the current licensed year. Seconded by Cllr Benfield and agreed unanimously by members.

## 15. Planning Matters

**Application**      **S/HOU/17/1672**

**No:**

Re:                    Erection of single storey front extension

At:                    7 St Andrews Green, Covingham, SN3 5ER

COMMENTS      Query change to neighbouring property and raise concern.

**Application**      **S/HOU/17/1675**

**No:**

Re:                    Erection of two storey side extension

At:                    17 Swanbrook, Covingham, SN3 5AJ

COMMENTS      No concerns.

## 16. Financial Matters

- **Approve financial summary and cheque list**

Members unanimously approved the financial summary and cheque list.

- **Consider and grant requests received (current grant money available £760)**

None.

- **Receive Q2 Finance Statement**

Members unanimously approved the Q2 Finance Statement.

**17. Correspondence**

Members noted the following received correspondence

Received from	Subject
Co-op	Information for Grant Recipients.
Rosy Presley	Swindon Link Distribution

**ACTION:** Letter of thanks to be sent to the Handymen to express thanks for hard work throughout the year, from the Vice Chairman.

**18. Matters for consideration**

Cllr Sandle updated members on the Parish Council Christmas meal.

Cllr Benfield congratulated Cllr Willis about her forthcoming poetry reading on Remembrance Day. Curtis informed members that all Parish Chairs have been invited to lay a wreath.

Meeting closed at 20:43.

*Signed (Chair):*

*Date:*