

# Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on  
Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 7pm  
at Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

**Present:** Cllr Curtis (Chair), Cllr Benfield, Cllr Hawkes, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Waywell, Cllr Wichall, Cllr Ricketts

**Also in attendance:** Emma Kingsley (Parish Clerk)

**1. Apologies**

Cllr Bacon

**2. Declaration of Interests**

None

**3. Minutes of previous meeting**

**Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record.

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

**SHELAA** – The two sites in Covingham Park have been removed.

**Inspection of the Deeds** from several properties in Covingham confirmed that there were conditions in place with regards to any future development.

**Business Cards** - remain on the to do list

**Coate Water roundabout road markings** - Cllr Heenan and Cllr Parry were informed by email as agreed with the resident that raised the issue. No update has been provided.

**Extension of lease for Covingham Park** - No update

**Street Sweeping** - street sweeping was actioned on the 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> December 2018. Cllrs commented on the exceptional job done. Due to the volume of leaves that had been collected, additional costs were incurred.

Cllr Sandle stated that Martinfield had not been swept

**Action - Cllr Curtis**

The draft **Tender document** for the grounds maintenance contract is being progressed and will be available at the February meeting.

**Transfer of Services Deed** - Swindon Area Committee agreed at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December to raise several issues at the Borough/Parish meeting 31<sup>st</sup> January.

**Tree in Covingham Park**- one has been removed, however there now appears to be a second tree in need of attention.

**Virgin Box** - Virgin Maintenance Engineers had been seen at the site and the unit re strapped.

Unsatisfactory response, to be escalated to Swindon Borough Council

**Action – Cllr Curtis**

**Flower Boxes** - Out of the five boxes that had been identified as unmaintained, two have now been planted and three removed from Falconscroft.

**5. Public forum**

As no members of the public were present, the Council continued with the meeting

**6. Chairs Verbal Update**

No update given

**7. Clerks Verbal Update**

The Clerk had attended the Clerk's Year Training which was informative.

**8. Parish Maintenance Engineers**

- **Monthly Reports** – Reports received.  
Cllr Ricketts commented that 10% more litter had been removed compared to last year (2017).

**9. Reports from Parish Council Working Parties and Committee's**

- **Environment Working Party**  
The Parish Council wanted to formally note and publicly thank the residents that are maintaining the flower boxes.
- **Data Protection & Governance**  
Cllr Hawkes informed the Councillors that the website has been renewed on a cheaper scale and now holds SSL certification, protecting against editing and the site as a whole.
- **Planning Working Party**  
No update

**10. Planning Matters:**

**To consider any planning applications:**

**Application:** S/18/1962

**Location:** Car Park, Covingham Square Covingham Swindon Wiltshire

**Proposal:** Change of use from car parking space to siting of hot food vending van.

**Resolved:** The Parish Council had submitted the following objections:

There will be a significant loss of amenity to both residents in Larksfield and those living above the shops due to the nature and operating hours of this business both weekdays and at the weekend. The customer demographic that will be attracted is of concern to both local residents living on or around Covingham Square and the Parish Council.

The retail balance at Covingham shops is acceptable as is and the Parish Council would like to ensure the viability and sustainability of the current retail outlets and the Public House. This proposed additional facility could well result in a diminishing of returns for the incumbent fast food outlet, the supermarket and the pub. With the over proliferation of other fast food outlets in the near vicinity, i.e. Greenbridge Retail Park and similar facilities as is being proposed in this application, at Swindon RFC and on Dorcan Industrial Estate, the granting of this proposal is, in our opinion unnecessary, and risks the financial viability of existing businesses.

Covingham Square is well used and on frequent occasions car parking can be difficult. The effect of this application would reduce the number of available car parking spaces. The facility would also encourage additional traffic that cannot be accommodated for, within the boundary of the car park and would result in inappropriate parking on the access road, side roads and around the area generally.

Covingham Parish Council are responsible for the general maintenance of Covingham Square in terms of litter picking, grass cutting and general tidiness. With the inevitable additional litter and rubbish that will be produced by this facility and any customers of the proposed operation, this may well create an unwanted and unnecessary extra cost to the Parish Council and ultimately the residents of Covingham.

We would therefore request that these observations are taken as a **formal objection** to the application and ask that the change of use is refused.

**Application:** S/OUT/18/1943

**Location:** Inlands Farm, The Marsh Wanborough Swindon SN4 0AS

**Proposal:** A Hybrid Planning Application for a Science Park and associated works to include full details of 33,507 sqm (GIA) of Use Class B1c (light industrial), with associated access, parking, landscaping and drainage and an outline proposal for up to 32,281 sqm (GIA) of Use Class B1b (research and development) and up to 16,400 sqm (GIA) B1c (light industrial), with associated access, parking, landscaping and drainage (all matter reserved).

The Meeting agreed to request an extension of time to allow for a more thorough response to be prepared

**11. Swindon Borough Local Plan:**

The Meeting agreed for Cllr Hawkes to represent the Parish Council at the meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and participate in the Local Plan Review.

**12. Flower Box request for Finchdale**

**Resolved:** Cllr Hawkes proposed the installation of one flowerbox under the Finchdale street sign. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.

**Action – Clerk/Maintenance Engineers**

**13. WALC Buckingham Palace Garden Party**

No nominations were received

**14. Swindon Borough Council's Codes and Protocols**

**Resolved:** The Meeting agreed that the following comments would be submitted:

As per your email re the annual review of SBC's Code and Protocols, Covingham Parish Council agreed at its meeting on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019 that they would like to make the following comments. Whilst it was acknowledged these were previously sufficient, they do not reflect the Transfer of Responsibilities to Parish Councils that took place with effect from 1 April 2017. In our opinion we believe that there should be a formal requirement that Members fully consult with the relevant Parish Council on anything that will have a direct impact on the area now the day to day responsibility of others. It is unacceptable that decisions can be made without any regard or respect being shown to the Parish Council that has taken over responsibility to provide the additional services. As Parish Councils have signed a formal Deed of Transfer accepting the additional responsibilities, Members should be required to ensure that any decisions that they may wish to make will be in keeping with current plans and not have a negative impact on those that are now providing the services.

**15. Neighbourhood Planning: 10-minute rule**

**Resolved:** Cllr Curtis proposed that Covingham Parish Council responded to Wroughton Parish Council's request to support the 10-minute rule bill proposal by John Howell MP, by emailing Justin

Tomlinson, MP asking him to formally support the second reading of the bill on January 25th. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.

**Action – Cllr Curtis/Clerk**

The meeting agreed that the following comments be submitted:

Covingham Parish Council has considered the recent ten-minute rule bill, presented by John Howell MP to limit the grounds of appeal against decisions on planning applications consistent with a neighbourhood development plan or local plan; and for connected purposes. The Parish Council resolved to request that you formally support this bill and request that the 3-year housing supply required when a made neighbourhood plan is in place, be reduced to 18 months.

Covingham Parish Council has previously taken the view that there is no development land available within the Parish therefore a neighbourhood plan was not necessarily required. However, the recent exercise when the draft SHELAA was published has illustrated that we can no longer rely on that assumption and should reconsider our position. Due to neighbourhood plans being labour intensive and costly to put in place, and are so often ignored, it is difficult to justify incurring the expense. The Parish Council hopes that you will take the opportunity to formally support this bill, which will provide some reassurance that the effort in producing a neighbourhood plan is not in vain. We understand that the second reading is on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

#### **16. Covingham Parish Council Business Debit Card**

**Resolved:** Cllr Wichall proposed the provision of a business debit card to enable the Clerk to purchase small items, to a single transaction maximum value of £100, on behalf of Employees and Councillors. Cllr Hawkes seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed. **Action - Clerk**

#### **17. Community Library Trust – Covingham Library**

Covingham Parish Council was asked in 2016 to provide financial support of £3,600 per year for two years only, to enable a Charitable Trust to be created and take over the running of Covingham Library to ensure the continuance of a library facility in the area.

The Parish Council agreed to the request and gave a firm commitment at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016 to provide the monies for Covingham Library at £3,600 per year for two years, i.e. £3,600 in 2017/18 and £3,600 in 2018/19. As the Charitable trust will have planned and budgeted based on this knowledge and assumption, the Library Working Party recommendation is to pay the £3,600 for 2018/19.

**Resolved:** Cllr Hawkes proposed the recommendation to provide the payment of £3,600 for 2018/19. Cllr Waywell seconded the proposal and the majority agreed, with one objection.

A request for ongoing support has been received for the next three years with an increase of £1,000, so an annual contribution of £4,600 per year.

The pressures on the Parish Council budget are mounting up due to the capital equipment showing signs of age and wear, e.g. the children's playground equipment; the fixed price, fixed term landscape maintenance contract ending in March 2020; and the financial reserves being limited and underfunded.

Whilst Section 137 does not necessarily apply in its strictest interpretation as the Library is now a Charitable Trust; caution should still be applied when making donations, especially with an amount that equates to approximately 5% of the annual budget. The Parish Council has a duty of care to ensure that it is getting value for money and any amount should be to the benefit of a commensurate proportion of the residents. The Library Trust is unable to provide accurate information as to the number of Covingham residents actively making use of the facility.

In light of this the Library Working Party recommends the following:

Due to the known pressures on the budget, the Parish Council is unwilling to increase the Precept by an additional amount to cover the £4,600, therefore the recommendation is that financial support is not provided going forward from April 2019

**Resolved:** Cllr Hawkes proposed the recommendation that financial support is not provided going forward from April 2019. Cllr Waywell seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.

**Action – Cllr Curtis**

## 18. Financial Matters

- a) To approve Finance Statement and payments approval list

**Resolved:** Cllr Ricketts proposed that the Financial summary and cheque list was approved for payment. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

- b) To receive monthly bank accounts reconciliation - The Meeting agreed that the accounts are in good order.

- c) To review and approve 2018/19 Q3 budget monitoring

**Resolved:** The Parish Council agreed and approved the Q3 budget monitoring 2018/19

## 19. Correspondence

### • Grant Request

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service – Save Drive, Stay Alive Roadshows –

**Resolved:** The Parish Council supports Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service in their aim to educate and inform young people, however due to the limitations and constraints on the budget the request was refused.

**Action- Clerk**

## 20. Admission of Public and Press: To resolve in accordance with Standing Order 3 (c) that 'in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded, and they be instructed to withdraw'.

*Reason: Draft budget discussions, Precept setting*

## 21. To agree the Draft Budget for 2019/20

**Resolved:** Cllr Sandle proposed the approval of the draft budget. Cllr Waywell seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.

## 22. To agree the Precept for 2019/20

**Resolved:** Cllr Ricketts proposed that the precept be set at £98,230. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.

**Action – Clerk**

## 23. Matters for consideration

Cllr Waywell suggested the Parish Council hold another clean up event at Covingham Square to maintain the area. A date was agreed for this to be held on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 9:30am.

The meeting concluded at 8:25 pm

Signed.....

Date.....