



Minutes of the meeting of Covingham Parish Council on:

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

At 7pm via Zoom Conference Call

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

**Also in attendance:** Laura Evans (Clerk)

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Bacon (unavailable), Cllr Bennet (unavailable), Cllr Mills (unavailable), Cllr Waywell (unavailable), Cllr Westall (unavailable)

**2. Declaration of Interests**

Cllr Curtis reminded Members that they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered at the beginning of the meeting and during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting**

**Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 were approved, and are to be signed at a later date due to the current Covid-19 social distancing regulations

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

**Kerbside weedkilling** - SBC have prohibited kerbside weedkilling to be carried out by the Parish Councils. SBC have already carried out weedkilling in some areas of Covingham and the remainder is to be completed in July

**5. Public forum**

No questions or comments were received from members of the public.

**6. Chairs Verbal Update**

**Reopening of Play Parks** – Cllr Curtis read out the below statement

Measures taken in preparation of opening of the Play areas and Adult exercise equipment

Risk assessments carried out for:

1. Staff: Maintenance team to be instructed to wear masks and use gloves whilst working in the play area
2. Residents: Residents to be encouraged to take personal responsibility for their safety by following social distancing guidelines and maintaining good hand hygiene practices for them and their children.

Full safety inspection of all equipment i.e. play equipment in 3 play areas and adult exercise equipment carried out on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020. Areas cleaned where necessary.

Signage displayed in all play areas advising taking personal responsibility for their safety by following social distancing guidelines, adequate hand hygiene and frequent use of hand sanitiser.

Play areas opened on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

Facebook post with the following message

*The play areas will be open for use from 10am this morning.*

*Safety inspections were carried out on the play equipment and adult exercise equipment yesterday and the areas cleaned. Risk assessments have also been undertaken to identify potential hazards. Please take personal responsibility for your and your children's safety. The play areas and adult exercise equipment will not be disinfected.*

*Please maintain social distancing wherever possible.*

*Effective hand hygiene measures need to be observed with regular use of hand sanitiser and wipes.*

*Please dispose of any used wipes responsibly and use the litter bins or take them home.*

*Food and drink is not permitted to be consumed within the play areas.*

*The Parish Council reserves the right to close the areas if we receive reports of irresponsible behaviour or an unacceptable level of litter is experienced. We have a duty of care to our Maintenance staff and will not allow them to be exposed to any risks.*

Cllr Curtis explained that June has been remarkably busy hearing from residents regarding overgrown hedges and trees, one of which when reported to SBC who then not only sent it to the wrong Parish but the response to the resident had inaccurate wording. Cllr Curtis explained a reply has been sent to SBC and if no response is received by Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July this will be escalated.

Cllr Curtis and Cllr Hawkes virtually attended the Swindon Area Committee meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> June and the concern raised by all Parish Councils that there will have been no two way dialog with SBC for twelve months as the next meeting is not until December, which is an unacceptable level of support.

Cllr Curtis explained that an email had been received from Thermofisher as a matter of courtesy to explain that they are currently in the middle of building 70 extra parking spaces, and are moving the fence to the boundary line to provide colleagues with a greenspace to enjoy on breaks. An invite to visit the site was given to the Councillors with an opportunity to meet some of the Senior Management.

**Action – Cllr Curtis**

## **7. Clerks Verbal Update**

No update given.

## **8. Parish Maintenance Engineers**

- **Monthly Reports** – The Maintenance Engineers have had a massive amount of work this month including restaking the trees on Dorcan Way after the cages were removed.

Cllr Benfield suggested that as the amount of litter that is picked up is rather high, 47 bags over 6 days, this should be published. Cllr Curtis to put this onto the Facebook page and include in the Handymag article.

**Action- Cllr Curtis**

Cllr Curtis stated what an excellent job the Maintenance Engineers are doing – All councillors agreed.

- **Ground Maintenance**

- a) Hedge Cutting – to consider approving a second hedge cutting round in 2020/21  
Cllr Curtis explained that this is within budget as a contingency amount had been added to deal with any issues identified by the new Grounds Maintenance Contractor.  
**Resolved:** Cllr Sandle proposed the second hedge cutting round. Cllr Benfield seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.  
A quote had been provided for the removal of one problematic hedge.  
**Resolved:** Cllr Wichall proposed to proceed with the quotation for the removal of the hedge. Cllr Hawkes seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

- b) Ground Maintenance Contract – to consider an Addendum to the Grounds Maintenance contract to include a second hedge cutting round in 2021/22 and 2022/23

**Resolved:** Cllr Benfield proposed an Addendum to the Grounds Maintenance contract to be introduced at the annual review due in September 2020 Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed. **Action - Cllr Ricketts**

Covingham Park 'Hedge' – Numerous complaints had been received from residents about the saplings that had been planted in October/November 2018. Only 20% of the saplings had taken, the remainder were not growing.

**Resolved:** Cllr Ricketts proposed to remove all whips and wraps, then mow and strim the area. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

Complaints had been received from residents concerned about the amount of dogs not on leads. Cllr Curtis to place this concern in the Handy Mag article.

**Action – Cllr Curtis**

- c) Grass Verges – Cllr Bacon raised concerns over cars parking on the grass verges and damaging the grass. Cllr Benfield suggested including this in the Handy Mag article

**Action – Cllr Curtis**

- d) Wild Flower Meadow - to consider a Resident's suggestion of planting a wildflower meadow in hope to deter residents parking on the grass verges, the cost to do this is approximately £800-£1000 to cover an area of approximately 150 square metres. The meeting agreed that this was not an essential requirement and it was difficult to support the expense.

**Resolved:** Cllr Ricketts proposed not to plant a Wild Flower meadow. Cllr Hawkes seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

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

- **Environment Working Party**

Cllr Benfield explained that the flower boxes containing the sunflowers on Covingham Drive to the East are looking really good. Also the flower boxes on Kingfisher Drive have been replanted, sunflowers and geraniums have also been planted adjacent to the pub.

- **Data Protection & Governance**

Outstanding problem with Cllr Mills email- Cllr Hawkes to advise

- **Planning Working Party**

Nothing to report

## 10. Planning Matters:

a) **To consider any planning applications**

The Meeting noted that no applications had been received

b) **To note any comments from the Planning Working Party submitted between meetings**

The Meeting noted that no comments had been submitted

c) **The Meeting noted that the following decision had been received:**

**Application:** S/HOU/20/0463

**Location:** 3 Blackmore Close, Covingham, SN3 5DF

**Proposal:** Erection of a single storey side/rear extension- granted

## 11. Financial Matters

- a) To approve Finance Statement and payments approval list  
**Resolved:** Cllr Benfield proposed approval of Finance Statement and payments approval list. Cllr Sandle seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.
- b) To receive Monthly accounts reconciliation  
**Resolved:** The meeting agreed the accounts were in a good order.
- c) Q1 Budget Monitoring  
**Resolved:** The meeting agreed the budget is on track.

**12. Internal Audit**

The Internal Audit Report for 2019/20 as prepared by Auditing Solutions had been received and was positive with no advisories or actions needed. The Meeting thanked the Clerk and confirmed it was an excellent report.

**13. Play Area**

To consider approval to proceed with ordering the junior play area upgrade  
**Resolved:** Cllr Benfield proposed to proceed with ordering the junior play area upgrade. Cllr Hawkes seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed. **Action- Clerk**

**14. Flowerbox Request**

To agree installation of two flower boxes by the street signs on the corner of St Paul’s Drive and the corner of St Katherine’s Green – This item is deferred until the next meeting due to needing more clarity on location.

**15. Correspondence**

The meeting noted that no correspondence had been received

**16. Matters for consideration**

Cllr Bates asked if the new rural connections that were published in SBC Highways News would come to Covingham. Cllr Curtis believed that this service would not be coming into Covingham.

Cllr Wichall raised an issue of an overhanging crab apple tree in a residents garden obstructing the pathway in Fitzmaurice Close and suggested contacting the resident to trim the tree back. Cllr Wichall also commented on how good the grass cutting has been.  
 Cllr Benfield wished to thank Cllr Ricketts for the inspection work carried out on the play parks.

The meeting closed at 8:42pm

Signed.....Dated.....