



Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Parish Council held on
Monday 9th May 2022
At 7pm in the Small Hall at St Paul's Church and Community Centre, Covingham

Present: Cllr Bacon, Benfield, Curtis (Chair), Kay, Ricketts, Sandle, Wichall

Also in attendance: Laura Evans (Clerk) and one member of the public.

1. Election of Chair

Resolved: Cllr Wichall proposed Cllr Curtis as Chair. Cllr Bacon seconded the proposal and was agreed unanimously. The Chairs Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed and received.

2. Election of Vice Chair

Resolved: Cllr Curtis proposed Cllr Hawkes as Vice Chair. Cllr Benfield seconded the proposal and was agreed unanimously. The Vice Chairs Declaration of Acceptance of Office will be signed at the next meeting.

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Bates (unavailable), Cllr Hawkes (unavailable), Cllr Waywell (unavailable).

4. 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.

5. Minutes of previous meeting

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 4th April 2022 were approved and signed as a true record.

6. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Covingham Park extension of lease – no progress

Firecrest play area – no progress

Speed Indicator Device – no progress

Dorcan Brook Bank, St Pauls Drive – Still outstanding.

Crescent, Covingham Square – The hedge for the Crescent has been purchased but has yet to be planted due to the dry weather.

Memorial Area- The hedge has been purchased and will be planted by the Contractor as soon as possible.

Parking on Verges- An article was placed in the Handy Mag appealing to residents better nature not to park on the verges as to not damage the utilities infrastructure being laid only 2-3 feet below ground.

S137 Grant Request- As stated in the proposal for the contribution, the curtains have now been fitted at St Paul's Church and Community Centre. The meeting agreed that the Clerk can now make the payment.

Tree Preservation order for the Memorial Tree- This is still with SBC and no further update has been provided.

7. Public forum

The resident in attendance thanked the Parish Council for the marvellous job being done and how lovely the area looks. The resident raised concerns over vehicles parking not only on the verges but in the turning circles in the cul-de-sacs making this very difficult for Emergency Vehicles, it was asked if the Parish Council could produce a leaflet to place onto cars. Cllr Curtis explained that the Parish Council have no enforcement powers regarding parking. Parking enforcement is down to SBC, but would ask the Local Police Officer if the parking in turning circles is illegal.

Cllr Benfield suggested asking Covingham Parish Council's Ward Councillor to take a walk around the Parish to see the problem residents are facing regarding parking.

8. Police Matters

No Police personnel were present at the meeting so no update provided.

9. Chairs Verbal Update

Handy Mag – An email was received approaching the Parish Councils and Ward Councillors, who submit articles, for a small contribution to the cost of their articles. The suggested price was £45 per quarter page per month. Cllr Curtis explained that research shows that a Parish Council cannot pay for advertising under Local Council regulations, which even though the article is to update residents, it could be seen as advertising.

Resolved: The meeting agreed to defer this item until the next meeting, and to make it an agenda item.

10. Clerks Verbal Update

The VAT reclaim amount has been received.

11. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** – Another busy month for the Maintenance Engineers.
- **Grounds Maintenance Matters**
- To consider and approve purchasing replacements for one strimmer and the leaf blower – see attached document with details- The person who has been servicing and repairing the strimmer and leafblower has advised that these two pieces of equipment are passed their best and that it is not cost effective to spend any more money on them. A quote for the strimmer and leafblower was provided.
Resolved: Cllr Benfield proposed the purchases of a new strimmer and leaf blower. Cllr Bacon seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.
- The Owlets – Additional work needed in The Owlets in two stages
Two residents and the Contractor have raised serious concerns about the excessive overgrowth of the hedged area which is now dominated by large brambles. The Contractor has suggested clearing the two main areas of concern first, and tackling the rest in late Autumn/Winter.
Resolved: Cllr Bacon proposed that the Contractor proceed with the initial cut. Cllr Ricketts seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

12. Planning Matters:

a) To consider any planning applications.

Application: S/HOU/22/0611 (19th May)

Location: 7 Linnetsdene, Covingham, SN3 5AG

Proposal: Erection of two storey side/ rear and single storey rear extensions.

Resolved: The meeting agreed that there is no objection to this proposal.

Application: S/21/1417 (19th May)

Location: 19 Covingham Square, Covingham, SN3 5AA

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings; construction of mixed-use building to provide a dental surgery on the ground floor with 12 flats on first and second floors; and construction of parking and turning areas.

Resolved: The meeting agreed that the Parish Council has no further comments to make, previous responses are still appropriate.

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

The meeting noted that no comments have been submitted.

c) To note any decisions

Application: S/HOU/22/0280

Location: 43 Kestrel Drive, Covingham, SN3 5DP

Proposal: Erection of single storey front, side and rear extensions – Granted.

13. Financial Matters

a) To approve Finance Statement and payments approval list

Resolved: Cllr Wichall proposed approval of the Finance Statement and payment approval list. Cllr Sandle seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

b) To receive the monthly accounts reconciliation

Resolved : The meeting noted that the accounts were in a good position

c) To formally agree and approve amounts to be identified as ear marked reserves for 2022/23 costs outstanding, projects and contingency funds

Resolved: Cllr Kay proposed that for 2021/22, £1,000 had been identified as outstanding, a commensurate amount needed to be ear-marked for settlement of the invoices; £40,500 for reserves, £20,000 for Additional Services Contingency and £25,000 to be allocated for projects, Cllr Bacon seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.

d) To approve final budget for 2022/23

Resolved: Cllr Kay proposed the budget for 2022/23 be approved. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

e) To review and approve Asset Register

Resolved: The meeting approved the Asset Register

f) To review and approve Risk Assessment and Management Document

Resolved: The meeting approved the Risk Assessment and Management Document

14. Limited Assurance Review

It was **resolved** to approve and sign:

a) Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

b) Accounting Statements 2021/22

15. To re adopt

a) Covingham Parish Council Standing Orders

Resolved: Cllr Wichall proposed that the Standing Orders be re-adopted. Cllr Bacon seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

b) Covingham Parish Council Financial Regulations

Resolved: Cllr Wichall proposed that the Financial Regulations be re-adopted. Cllr Bacon seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

c) Covingham Parish Council Code of Conduct

Resolved: Cllr Wichall proposed that the Code of Conduct be re-adopted. Cllr Bacon seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

16. Appointments to and roles for Working Parties and Committees

To agree the roles and responsibilities and identify representatives of the Parish Council for outside meetings.

- Environment Working Party– Cllr Benfield to lead and all Councillors to be involved
- Data Protection & Governance -Cllr Hawkes, Cllr Curtis, Cllr Khan and Clerk
- Planning Working Party- Cllr Curtis, Cllr Hawkes and Cllr Wichall
- Personnel Committee- Cllr Ricketts, Cllr Benfield, Cllr Hawkes and Cllr Waywell
- NEV Liaison Meeting - Cllr Curtis and Cllr Hawkes
- Swindon Local Councils Forum - Cllr Curtis and Cllr Hawkes
- Chairs & Clerks Engagement Meeting- Cllr Curtis

17. Grounds Maintenance Contract Tender Process

Cllr Curtis explained that Adams & Watt was selected as the Parish Council's preferred supplier in 2019 to improve and enhance the area, provide a higher level of service with value for money and give reliable and realistic advice when required. The first two years of the Contract have been spent making good previous bad working practices and correcting the failure on the part of SBC in the transfer process, as not all areas had been accurately identified. This contractor has demonstrated good faith, hard work, fair prices and an excellent standard of work with flexibility, resulting in a transformation of the area. To go through the normal tender process would incur an excessive administrative burden for both the Parish Council and the contractor and would not add any value. I would recommend that Financial regulations, "Clause 11 (d)" When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council, be used on this occasion. This would provide the opportunity for continuation of the current level of service, without any disruption.

Resolved: Cllr Wichall proposed the recommendation. Cllr Benfield seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

Cllr Ricketts explained that the tender document was available on the website and Adams & Watt had been given the document to provide a quote for the next three years, therefore an informal process would still take place.

Cllr Kay questioned whether a more formal approach regarding compliance should be adopted to ensure that an effective review process was in place. Cllr Curtis confirmed that a formal review was undertaken on an annual basis, usually in September, by Members from the original Tender Panel. A formal report would be included for discussion at a Parish Council meeting going forwards.

18. To confirm the dates of meetings to be held for 2022/23

The dates of meetings to be held for 2022/23 were confirmed as:

- Monday 6th June 2022
- Monday 4th July 2022
- Monday 1st August 2022
- Monday 5th September 2022

- Monday 3rd October 2022
- Monday 7th November 2022
- Monday 5th December 2022
- Monday 9th January 2023
- Monday 6th February 2023
- Monday 6th March 2023
- Monday 3rd April 2023

19. Correspondence

The meeting noted that no correspondence had been received.

20. Matters for consideration

Cllr Benfield raised the issue that the flowers being laid by the commemorative stone are dying quickly due to no pot being available to place them in. Cllr Benfield has a pot that can be placed in the ground by the head of the stone. The meeting agreed to have the pot placed in the ground. Cllr Benfield is donating lots of bulbs which will be planted around the Memorial Tree.

The meeting closed at 8:26pm

Signed.....Date.....