



Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on

Monday 6th June 2022

At 7pm in the Small Hall at St Paul's Church and Community Centre, Covingham

Present: Cllr Bacon, Bates, Benfield, Curtis (Chair), Hawkes, Khan, Ricketts, Roy, Sandle, Wichall

Also in attendance: Laura Evans (Clerk) and one of the Maintenance Engineers.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Kay (unavailable) and Cllr Waywell (unavailable). Cllr Curtis proposed that permission be granted to Cllr Waywell for a leave of absence, with no time limit. Cllr Hawkes seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

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 9th May 2022 were approved and signed as a true record.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Covingham Park extension of lease – no progress

Firecrest play area – no progress

Speed Indicator Device – Limited progress. Out of the four roads included in the application for a licence, two need to revisit the location of the posts as they are too close to the current VAS' in situ.

Dorcan Brook Bank, St Pauls Drive – Covingham Flood Group is holding a meeting with the Environment Agency and SBC on Tuesday 21st June

Crescent, Covingham Square - planting has been started.

Memorial area – hedge planted.

Strimmer and Leaf Blower – both received and in use.

5. Public forum

No questions or comments were received from members of the public, as none were present at the meeting.

6. Police Matters

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

7. Chairs Verbal Update

How Healthy is your Parish presentation – As part of a general wellbeing and health initiative all Parish Councils across the Borough are being encouraged to promote events, sessions and group activities, such as Health walks, Park gym, Park yoga, Park play and meet and chat groups that take place in their areas. The Parish Council does not have to be the deliverer of these activities but act as a facilitator to publicise and raise awareness. As several of these activities are already up and running in Covingham, subject to agreement of the Full Council, it would be easy to comply with the request. Funding is available subject to certain criteria for Community Groups arranging the activities, supported by Parish Councils.

Resolved: The meeting agreed for Cllr Curtis to contact Dorcan Church and Community Centre to request details of the activities taking place within the Parish, so these can be publicised via Facebook and the Website.

Basketball nets – new nets installed in March have been destroyed. A suggestion from the Sports Forum is to use metal nets at a cost of approximately £30 - £40.

Resolved: Cllr Wichall proposed purchasing the metal nets. Cllr Bacon seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed. Cllr Curtis to purchase.

Action – Cllr Curtis

Swindon Local Councils Forum – due to the change in the Cabinet Member responsible for working with Parish Councils, the process for the SBC/Parish Protocol is being re-started. It is understood that the majority of Borough Councillors are in agreement, with one or two not in agreement with it.

Peer Review – SLCF are requesting sight of the report as Parish Councils are mentioned and asking what steps are being taken to address the issues identified?

Several items to be included on the Agenda for the Chairs and Clerks Engagement Meeting to be held on 13th June 2022, the key items are stalled projects and lack of progress with land and asset transfers.

Merlin Way – Contacts from several residents complaining about the speeding lorries from the Southern Connector Road construction site. Emails sent to the Cabinet Member responsible and the local Neighbourhood Police Sergeant, both responded positively. The project team at SBC were asked to inform Buckingham, the contractor company, that the drivers should respect the speed limit, the fact that it was a residential road and a bus route. The Police would arrange for a marked Police car to be visible and if the problem persisted the Officers that were able to issue speeding tickets to be deployed.

8. Clerks Verbal Update

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

9. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** – Another busy month including the removal of 148 N20 cartridges, removal of syringe and needle and the removal of offensive graffiti from the Skate Park.
- **Grounds Maintenance Matters**
No matters needed to be addressed.

10. Planning Matters:

a) To consider any planning applications.

Application: S/OUT/20/0160 (13th June)

Location: Land At Foxbridge Village, New Eastern Villages Wanborough Road Wanborough

Proposal: Outline application for mixed use development comprising up to 358 dwellings and a mixed use hub of up to 1,550sqm (use classes A1/A2/A3/A4/A5 and D1) with associated works. Details of the access from the Southern Connector Road to be determined with all other matters reserved (Revised details).

b) **Resolved:** Cllr Hawkes explained that there are serious concerns about the level of understanding by SBC of the way that the two parts of Foxbridge drained and the impact one has on the other. Covingham Flood Group will be meeting with the Environment Agency and SBC on 21st June to discuss, after which a response will be sent to the application.

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

The meeting noted that no comments had been submitted.

d) To note any decisions

The meeting noted that no decisions had been received.

11. Financial Matters

a) To approve Finance Statement and payments approval list

Resolved: Cllr Sandle proposed approval of the Finance Statement and payment approval list. Cllr Benfield 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

12. Reports from Parish Council Working Parties and Committee's

- **Environment Working Party**

Cllr Benfield and Cllr Sandle have trimmed the flowerboxes and placed bunting on the boxes for the Jubilee celebrations.

- **Data Protection & Governance**

Cllr Hawkes explained that there had been a few issues with the website but this has now been rectified.

- **Planning Working Party**

Wanborough Road - closed for 3 months from June until September.

South of A420 - Symmetry Park - High Court date set for hearing of 12th July 2022

Local Plan – Contrary to recent publicity Great Stall Bridge is still included in the Local Plan and only for use of buses, cyclists and pedestrians. As a further Public Consultation of the Local Plan is due to be carried out towards the end of the year, despite assurances of no fundamental change, it is of paramount importance to ensure that it remains so.

Thames Water Pumping Station – no progress

13. Insurance Renewal

To discuss the Insurance Renewal quote – see document attached.

Resolved: Cllr Curtis explained that several insurers have withdrawn from the Local Council Insurance market resulting in just one willing to provide a quote, at a cost of £1,860.32. Cllr Benfield proposed acceptance of the Insurance Renewal of £1,860.32. Cllr Roy seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

14. Handy Mag

To consider a small contribution to the cost of the article.

Cllr Curtis explained that a contribution of £45 per month for a quarter page has been requested. Total cost for the year £495 (11 editions). Central Swindon South, NEL and Stratton Parish Councils have all agreed to pay, with immediate effect, meaning that Covingham PC’s contribution was not included in the latest edition. The Editor has confirmed that it may not be possible for the individual politicians to pay but if it had been known that Parish Councils had the ‘means’ it would have been requested earlier. As this is a significant cost it needs to be agreed by Full Council. An unofficial straw poll from a post on our Facebook page last week, has provided a valuable input. Out of 930 members, the post reached 579 people, with 59 responses, over 10% response rate, which is above the industry standard. Yes to continue (and pay) – 48, No – 11. Residents regularly respond to the points raised in the article directly to the author.

Resolved: Cllr Khan proposed a 6-month trial of paying for the article, then review how much feedback is received. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal which was agreed with a majority vote as there was one vote against contributing.

The meeting agreed to add the Handy Mag to each agenda to agree the input to the article being submitted.

15. Correspondence

The meeting noted that no correspondence had been received.

16. Matters for consideration

Cllr Bates asked if there had been any further update regarding the coping stones being placed back on the Gateway on Kingfisher Drive. Cllr Curtis confirmed that no update had been received from SBC.

The meeting closed at 8:15pm

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