



Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on

Monday 3rd October 2022

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

Present: Cllr Bacon, Bates, Curtis (Chair), Hawkes, Kay, Khan, Ricketts, Sandle, Walker, Wichall.

Also in attendance: Laura Evans (Clerk) and one member of the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

1. Consider Co-option of a Parish Councillor

Resolved: Co-option of Cllr Walker, proposed by Cllr Bates, Cllr Bacon seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed. Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed and received.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Benfield (unavailable) and Cllr Roy (unavailable).

3. 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.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 5th September 2022 were approved and signed as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Covingham Park extension of lease – no progress

Speed Indicator Device – Permission given by SBC to cover existing signs when the Speed Indicator Device in close proximity is in use. Licence to be issued. Project to be re-started to move this forward to completion. Revised quotations for Speed Indicator Devices to be obtained. **Action- Cllr Hawkes**

How Healthy is your Parish initiative – Ongoing.

Toddler Swing seat – seat now reinstalled.

Apple tree in Pipitdene – SBC will reduce the tree in the autumn.

Firecrest wooded area and the play area – Successful meeting held with the Grounds Maintenance Contractor to look at opening up the area and removing the threat posed by fires being started, anti-social behaviour and disrupting the drug related activity. Contact made with the Ward Councillor regarding the poor condition of the play area, specifically the floor, and the trees surrounding it. SBC has a policy to remove any play areas that Parish Councils do not want or are not maintaining, so equipment will be removed. However, flooring and railings are normally left – this is being looked at. The question re trees was ignored.

Redrow Estate and HGV's – email sent to Ward Councillor re the proposal to attach warning signs on the bridge stating 'No access to Dorcan Industrial Estate'. Cllr Parry confirmed his support for the Parish Council's original request for appropriate signage to be installed by Highways. Awaiting

confirmation of when this will be actioned. SBC Highways has also informed Google Maps who have updated the map data.

Grounds Maintenance contract April 2023 – March 2026 – Contract signed.

6. Public forum

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

7. Police Matters

The Neighbourhood Policing Team gave an update on recent activity within the area. 14 Crimes were reported last month, most of which were shoplifting incidents and 1 incident of Anti-Social Behaviour. There are still increased patrols at the Mini-Mart in Cole Close and Covingham Square. Cllr Wichall raised concerns over the speeding vehicles on St Paul's Drive, this information will be passed to the Traffic Patrol Officers. Cllr Wichall also raised concerns over a motorcross bike that had been seen driving at speed through Smitan Brook park, the Neighbourhood Policing Team are aware of this and action will be taken.

8. Chairs Verbal Update

Wanborough Allotments used by Covingham residents – due to the road and building works associated with the NEV, the allotments are now completely exposed. SBC has refused to rectify the situation and no S106 monies have been allocated to Wanborough. Wanborough Parish Council has requested assistance from Covingham PC to erect security fencing or similar. A meeting to be held in November to discuss a possible solution.

Swindon Local Councils Forum meeting 29th September 2022.

- Concerns were raised about the number of senior staff that had already or will shortly be leaving the Planning Department at SBC. The Department is already stretched and service levels have declined with timelines not met.
- Parish/Borough Charter – the document laying out how the relationship between the two organisations should work had recently been updated to reflect the additional responsibilities that Parish Councils had undertaken. The Cabinet Member responsible disagreed with it and proposed a completely rewritten document, which in turn has been rejected by Swindon Local Councils Forum.
- Several of the Parish Councils that have offices are creating 'warm room' facilities for use by residents during the colder months to try and alleviate the cost of living crisis. Some have also set up sessions with the Financial First Aiders from SBC.

9. Clerks Verbal Update

The VAT Reclaim has been submitted for 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022.

The external auditor interim report and certificate for the year ended 31 March 2022 has been received but states that although the Parish Council had submitted all documentation required by the deadline, the external auditor has not been able to complete their review in time to enable the Parish Council to publish the required documentation in line with statutory requirements. The Notice of conclusion of audit and inspection of audited accounts period was published on 30th September 2022 stating the audit has been carried out but not completed. Once the final documentation of completion is received this will be added as an agenda item and the website updated.

10. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** – As always the Maintenance Engineers are doing an excellent job. 41 drain gullies were cleared, 13 broken slabs were removed from the toddler play park, and 85 N20 cartridges were removed.
- **Grounds Maintenance Matters**
The crescent in Covingham Square needs tidying up and weeding. This will be included in the new Grounds Maintenance Contract from April 2023. A tidy-up session by the Councillors, has been arranged for 10:00am on 8th October 2022
Annual review walk around with Grounds Maintenance Contractor needs to be arranged.

Action- Cllr Ricketts/Bacon

Footpath to play areas in Covingham Park are to be re-laid.

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

- **Environment Working Party**
- **Data Protection & Governance**
Nothing to report
- **Planning Working Party**
Foxbridge North - The planning appeal starts on 11th October 2022. As SBC's reasons for refusing the application did not include drainage or flood risk, Covingham Parish Council does not have any input to the appeal and therefore will not speak at it.

Foxbridge South – Live application. Environment Agency are objecting.

Symmetry Park – Supreme Court hearing was held on 12th July, decision to be issued soon

Redlands - has been agreed and infrastructure works are to begin. House building should start by the end of the year.

Thames Water Pumping Station – an unspecified issue with signing of unilateral undertaking. High priority for SBC.

12. Planning Matters:

a) To consider any planning applications.

Application: S/OUT/22/1415 (23rd October)

Location: Land North Of Redlands Farm, Wanborough Road Swindon SN4 0AA

Proposal: A Hybrid Planning Application for a residential development, associated works, infrastructure, parking, new / retained habitats, and ancillary development to include - full details for the erection of 120 dwellings (Class C3), public open space, a LEAP, landscaping, sustainable drainage, roads, vehicular access and pedestrian / cycle paths and an outline proposal (Means of Access not reserved) for the erection of up to 128 dwellings (Class C3), public open space, landscaping, bridge crossings, safeguarded canal corridor, sustainable drainage, roads, vehicular access and pedestrian / cycle paths.

Resolved: The Planning Working Party to draft a response to this proposal.

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

Application: S/HOU/22/1293

Location: 29 Robinson Close, Covingham, SN3 5EE.

Proposal: Erection of a two storey rear extension.

Resolved: The following comment was submitted: Covingham Parish Council has no objections to this proposal.

Application: S/HOU/22/1329 (30th September)

Location: 2 Verney Close, Covingham, SN3 5EF

Proposal: Erection of a first floor rear extension and garden shed.

Resolved: The following comment was submitted; Covingham Parish Council objects to the above mentioned planning application.

The poor quality of the drawings makes it impossible to make an informed decision. However, the Parish Council believes that this proposal is too similar to the earlier application S/HOU/21/1090 that was objected to and subsequently declined by Swindon Borough Council.

c) To note any decisions:

The meeting noted that no decisions had been received.

13. 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 Wichall seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed

b) To receive the monthly accounts reconciliation

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

c) Q2 Budget Monitoring

Resolved: The meeting noted that the budget is on track.

14. Correspondence

The meeting noted that no correspondence had been received.

15. Handy Mag Article

The meeting agreed to put the following into the Handy Mag article

- New Councillor
- Footpaths
- Police Update
- Out and About

16 Matters for consideration

Cllr Bacon asked whether the basketball nets would be replaced again. Cllr Curtis explained that it was very disappointing that the metal nets purchased only lasted 6 days before being destroyed. This makes it hard to justify purchasing more at the approximate cost of £30.

The meeting closed at 8:35pm

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