



Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on:

Monday 4th December 2023

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

Present: Cllr Curtis (Chair), Hawkes, Kay, May, Ricketts, Sandle, and Wichall.

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

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Bacon (unavailable), Cllr Bates (unavailable) and Cllr Walker (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 6th November 2023 were approved and signed as a true record.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Dorcan Brook bank – no further information or update available

Outstanding Historical issues – no further information or update available

Transfer of Services – Whilst some Councils might take on additional services in the next financial year, the expectation is that for the majority it will not happen, if at all, until 1st April 2025.

Wanborough Allotments – no progress to date

Skate Park ramp resurfacing- The order has been placed and work should be completed by the end of February 2024, weather permitting.

School Hedge – Cllr Kay raised concerns that the school hedge has not been cut back enough, obstructing some parts of the footpath. Cllr Curtis to find a contact at the school to make them aware of the problem.

Action- Cllr Curtis

5. Public forum

The resident in attendance raised concerns over the clothes bank that has appeared in Covingham Square car park. Cllr Curtis confirmed that the siting of the bank is unlawful, no permission has been given and the clothes bank is not linked to a charity it is a profit making business that is listed on the Companies House website as 'Collection of non hazardous waste'. Cllr Curtis has been in contact with the company and they have confirmed it will be removed.

6. Police Matters

The Neighbourhood Policing team gave an update on activity in the area. There are ongoing issues in Dorcan so extra patrols are taking place at school run times and in the evenings.

Speeding – Police Officers will be conducting patrols on the roads in Covingham, using the data provided from the Parish Council to enable targeted checks.

7. Chairs Verbal Update

Cllrs Curtis and Hawkes attended a meeting of Swindon Local Councils Forum on 23rd November. Matters discussed were the SBC/Parish protocol. Jon Harris, Head of Strategic Transport & Drainage, was also in attendance and talked about the Section 19 investigation that was currently underway for the recent flooding incidents in Swindon and requesting flood event evidence from local Councils. He also gave an introduction on a Flood Warden Scheme that SBC was looking to implement.

8. Clerks Verbal Update

SBC will be holding a Code Of Conduct hybrid training session for Parish Councillors on 9th January 2024. Cllr Curtis encouraged all Councillors to attend.

9. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** – Another busy month with 112 drain gullies cleared.
- **Rospa Play Equipment Inspection** – Cllr Ricketts explained that there was nothing in the report for cause for concern apart from the skate park ramps but these are being replaced in the New Year. Signage is required for the skate park, metal signage was suggested due to previous plastic signs being vandalised. Cllr Ricketts to confirm the legalisation required for the sign.
Action- Cllr Ricketts
- **Grounds Maintenance Matters**
Second round of hedge cutting is underway. The street sweeping has been provisionally booked for later in December, weather dependent.
- **Grounds Maintenance Contract** – to review and approve the proposed costs for 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025.
Resolved: Cllr Kay proposed acceptance of the proposed costs for the Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2024-25. Cllr Hawkes seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

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

- **Data Protection & Governance**
Nothing to report.
- **Planning Working Party**
Nothing to report.

11. Planning Matters:

a) To consider any planning applications.

Application: S/22/1574 (15th December 2023)

Location: Keypoint, Thornhill Road South Marston Swindon SN3 4RY

Proposal: Erection of a Class B8 warehouse, ancillary offices and gatehouse plus car parking and associated works

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

Application: S/HOU/23/1449 (18th December 2023)

Location: 33 Peregrine Close, Covingham, SN3 5BJ

Proposal: Conversion from attached garage to habitable room

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

b) **To note any comments from the Planning Working Party submitted between meetings.**
The meeting noted that no comments had been submitted.

c) **To note any decisions:**
The meeting noted that no planning decisions had been received.

12. 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 agreed the accounts were in a good position.

13. The Handy Mag

The meeting agreed that the following should be included in the January edition of the magazine:

- Precept
- Skate park ramp resurfacing

14. 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 and Personnel Matters

15. Draft Budget

First look at draft budget- draft figures were discussed. The meeting proposed approving the draft budget at January’s meeting.

16. Salary Increases

To approve the recommendation from the Personnel Committee to increase the staff salaries in line with the agreement reached by the National Joint Council

Resolved: Cllr Kay approved the recommendation from the Personnel Committee. Cllr May seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

17. Correspondence

The meeting noted that no correspondence had been received.

18. Matters for consideration

Cllr Curtis and Cllr Hawkes attended Heidi Alexander’s Big Conversation. Three residents in attendance approached Cllr Curtis and Cllr Hawkes with a suggestion that the footpath from Peregrine Close to St Paul’s Drive be named as a tribute to the late Derek Benfield. Cllr Curtis to contact Derek’s family and for this to be an agenda item in January.

Action- Cllr Curtis

The meeting closed at 8:14pm

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