



Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on:

Monday 8th April 2024

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

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

Also in attendance: Laura Evans (Clerk)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Roy (reason **not** stated), 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 4th March 2024 were approved and signed as a true record.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Outstanding Historical issues – no further information or update available

Wanborough Allotments – Cllrs Curtis and Hawkes attended the Wanborough Parish Council meeting as the methodology for the allocation of vacant plots was an agenda item, to ensure that Covingham residents were not penalised and the current arrangements continued. Wanborough Parish Council voted in favour of the status quo to remain.

Naming of a footpath – no update

Covingham Park School – The School's regular Contractor has been asked to return and cut the hedge to a more acceptable length. Due to the recent excessive rain and the conditions underfoot the work has been delayed.

Hedge in the Memorial area – The Grounds Maintenance Contractor confirmed that the aim of the Yew hedge was for a sloping A shape, i.e. the bottom should be wider than the top. The sides are lightly trimmed but due to the slow growing nature, the top is not touched until it has reached the desired height. (this has not been discussed to date, but will be when it is appropriate). This also applies to the hedge around the back of the crescent in Covingham Square. The sides of both hedges were given a light trim late last year. The tops may appear a bit messy whilst they are still in the growing phase.

Dog Bins – The situation regarding residents disposing of large bags containing several poo bags which have presumably been brought from their home, continues.

5. Public forum

No questions or comments received from members of the Public.

6. Police Matters

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

7. Chairs Verbal Update

Wanborough Allotments- A email was received from the Chair of Wanborough Allotments explaining that there had been a recent act of vandalism and theft, at the site, where water troughs were stolen and a Covingham residents hardwork on a plot destroyed. The incident was reported to the Police. The allotments currently have no security and part of this is due to the shared access with Thames Water. In the email from the Chair the question was asked if Covingham Parish Council would be willing to contribute to security provision at the site.

Resolved: The meeting agreed that, in principle, it wanted to provide support in general and specifically to the Covingham residents that are allotment holders. However, for the Parish Council to agree to contribute to the costs, the Meeting stated that there now needs to be a formal written agreement between the two Parishes detailing the arrangements for Covingham residents to be able to access a plot on site.

Action- Cllr Curtis/Hawkes

8. Clerks Verbal Update

The VAT Reclaim has been submitted for October 2023 to March 2024.

9. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** – The meeting noted what a good job was being carried out by the Maintenance Engineers.
- **Grounds Maintenance Matters**
The Contractor has begun the first grass cut but due to the excessive rain some areas are still too wet underfoot to be cut.

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:

The meeting noted that no applications were received.

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

The meeting noted that no comments were submitted.

c) To note any decisions:

Application: S/HOU/24/0112

Location: 13 Larksfield, Covingham, SN3 5AD

Proposal: Erection of a detached garage and rear dormer window- Granted.

Application: S/HOU/24/0150

Location: 37 Merlin Way, Covingham, SN3 5AN

Proposal: Erection of a two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, height increase to porch and material changes to front elevation- Granted.

Application: S/HOU/24/0113

Location: 3 Poltondale, Covingham, SN3 5BN

Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension and conversion of garage into habitable space – Granted.

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 ended the financial year in a good position.
- c) To review Q4 Budget Monitoring
Resolved: The meeting agreed that the Q4 budget ended the financial year in line with expectations.
- d) To review and approve Asset Register
Resolved: Cllr Hawkes proposed approval of the Asset Register. Cllr May seconded the proposal and was unanimously approved
- e) To review and approve Risk Assessment and Management
Resolved: Cllr Hawkes proposed approval of the Risk Assessment and Management. Cllr May seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.
- f) Internal Auditor – to agree that Auditing Solutions be appointed the Internal Auditor for Financial Year 2023/24
Resolved: Cllr Hawkes proposed appointing Auditing Solutions for the Internal Auditor for the Financial Year 2023/24. Cllr Bacon seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

13. Standing Orders

To review, approve and adopt version 3 of the Standing Orders

Resolved: Cllr Hawkes proposed the approval and adoption of version 3 of the Standing Orders. Cllr Ricketts seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

14. Memorial Bench

To discuss a request for a memorial bench in Covingham Park.

Cllr Curtis explained that a request had been received for a memorial bench to be placed in Covingham Park in memory of a resident, who sadly passed away, and who had for many years maintained the beautiful flower boxes in and around Robinsgreen. The bench will be made from recycled plastic which is maintenance free.

Resolved: Cllr Hawkes proposed that the request for a memorial bench be approved subject to the agreement of size and positioning. Cllr Kay seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

15. The Handy Mag

The meeting agreed that the following should be included in the article:

- Grass cutting
- Re-enforcing the use of dog waste bins
- Memorial area- Yew hedges.

16. Matters for consideration

Cllr Wichall suggested that the tree survey that was carried out in 2021 be carried out again this year as per the Arboriculturists advice. The Clerk to add as an agenda item for the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 8:09pm

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