

Minutes of the ordinary Meeting of Covingham Parish Council held on:

Monday 2nd March 2026

At 7.00pm in the Small Hall at St Paul's Church and Community Centre, Covingham

Present: Councillors Bacon, Bates, Curtis (Chair), Kay, May, Ricketts, Wichall

Also in attendance: Laura Cutter (Clerk & RFO)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Sandle (unavailable), Hawkes (unavailable), Parsons (unavailable) and Walker (unavailable)

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Curtis reminded all 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 the previous meeting held on Monday 2nd February 2026

Proposed: Cllr P Bates; **Seconded:** Cllr D Kay

Vote: Agreed with one (1) abstention.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2nd February 2026 as a true record.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

- **Flood Alleviation Area** – The ground is still very damp, and Heras fencing remains in place around the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), which is located in the same area of Covingham Park where the trees are proposed to be planted. An inspection is scheduled for Friday 6th, after which a decision will be made on when the planting can go ahead.
- **Dorcan Brook** – A landslide has occurred on the bank between the school entrance and the footpath to Dorcan Way.
- **RoSPA / Caloo** – Clerk will continue to chase.
- **Weed Spraying** – A productive meeting was held with the Interim Services Manager at SBC. It was requested that Covingham can be excluded from borough-wide weed spraying, as separate arrangements are now in place and the service standard is satisfactory.
- **Web Reports** – Ongoing.
- **Swindon Half Marathon signs** – Clerk to check if these have now been collected.
- **Peregrine Close Flowerbox** – Has been built, located and filled by the resident.
- **Wanborough Allotments** – Meeting on 11th March 2026 with Wanborough Parish Council. *Cllr D Kay declared an interest.*
- **Sandpiper Bridge** – Work has been completed at the rear of Sandpiper; this was a tidy job and the fly tipping can now be removed by SBC.
- **Speed Indicator Devices** – Temporarily removed the Speed Indicator Devices and charged the batteries. There were no plans for reinstalling at the time of the meeting.
- **Accessibility Guidelines 2.2** – Several improvements have been made to the Parish Council's website and key documents, should have a positive response during the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).
- **Payroll package** – Will be downloaded and used at the beginning of April.

- **Accounting package** – Will be downloaded and used at the beginning of April, the current workbook will run concurrently for Quarter 1 (April – June) and then reviewed after, to ensure accurate handover.

5. Public Forum

There were no Members of the Public present.

6. Police Matters

No update was received as no Police personnel were in attendance.

7. Chairs Verbal Update

- Updates covered in the Matters Arising with relation to the Trees for Climate planting scheme.

8. Clerks Verbal Update

- **May '26 Elections:** Attended the Clerks Election Briefing and is now in receipt of the information from SBC, will circulate this to Members in due course. *Clerk to query how Members obtain their electoral role numbers to complete the nomination forms.*
- **Southern Connector Road:** Invitation from SBC to attend a meeting on Thursday 6th March in Lotmead Business Park to receive updates on the Southern Connector Road. *Cllrs Bates, Curtis and May will attend.*

9. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports:** Noted. The Maintenance Engineers have been active in monitoring the brook and liaising with the relevant authorities for action.
- **Play Inspection Reports:** Noted.

10. Multi Use Games Area, Covingham Park

Cllr May provided a verbal update on the progress of the MUGA. The playground inspection identified minor issues, including missing plastic spacers, a few finger entrapment concerns, and ground condition issues. The contractor advised that snagging works were initially planned for the end of March due to shipping delays for the caps, but this has now been brought forward to 16th March.

Remedial works are also required to reinstate the grass verge near the school. The Project Manager will attend to sign off the snagging. Cllr May has donated a pair of basketball hoop nets so that these are ready for the opening event. The aim is for the area to be open and ready during the Easter holidays.

Action: Cllr Curtis to ask the Grounds Maintenance Contractor whether the Trees for Climate Project can be deferred until 23rd March.

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

- **Data Protection & Governance** – No updates.

12. Planning Matters:

- a) **To consider any planning applications –**

Application Ref: S/ADV/26/0158

Description: Display of free-standing pole mounted flag.

Site Address: Thermo Fisher Scientific, Kingfisher Drive, Covingham, SN3 5BZ

Comment: No objection.

- b) **To note any comments from the Planning Working Party submitted between meetings –**
No comments have been submitted.
- c) **To note any decisions made by Swindon Borough Council –**

Application Ref: S/HOU/25/1625

Description: Erection of a ground and first floor extension to existing dwelling.

Site Address: 2 Popplechurch Drive, Covingham, SN3 5DE

Decision: Permission Granted.

13. Financial Matters

- a) To approve the Schedule of Payments for March 2026.
Proposed: Cllr D Kay; Seconded: Cllr S Wichall
Vote: Agreed unanimously.
Resolved: To approve the Schedule of Payments as presented.
- b) Members received the monthly accounts reconciliation as at 28th February 2026. *Query regarding year-end invoices, Cllr Curtis advised there may be an extra-ordinary meeting required in late March.*

14. Financial Regulations

Members received a proposed amendment to the Financial Regulations, to increase the Clerk & RFO's payment authorisation limit when using the debit card from £100.00 to £250.00. It was suggested to review the NALC (National Association of Local Council) template and defer the item until May 2026.

15. Parish Council Allowances for 2026-2027

Members received the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel for suggested Parish Council allowances for 2026-2027. Members discussed that this decision would be being Non-partisan parish council that supports the community, shouldn't accept the allowance Chair will take allowance of £300.00 for expenses incurred for Parish Council related activities i.e. Remembrance Day Wreaths.

Proposed: Cllr D Kay;

Seconded: Cllr R Bacon

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To decline the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel and to not withdraw any Parish Councillor allowances. To allow a £300.00 allowance for the Chair for any expenses incurred for Parish Council related activities.

16. Community Events

Members considered whether the Parish Council should host community events this year. Skate jams have previously been well attended and well received. Members noted the diverse community and agreed that any events programme should include a mix of activities representing different groups. It was suggested to start with a skate jam over the May Bank Holiday and invite residents to provide feedback and ideas for future events. Event providers will be required to hold public liability insurance.

17. Thermal Camera Loan Scheme

Members received a proposal from South Swindon Parish Council for a joint procurement project in relation to purchasing a Thermal Camera for loaning to residents. Members concurred that as the Parish Council does not have a building to operate the scheme from, logistically it would be difficult to manage. Consideration for trial hire from a larger parish council for a shorter period in the winter months if there was interest from Covingham residents rather than purchasing a device.

18. The Handy Mag

Members agreed to the contents for the Handy Mag article to include:

- Covingham Park MUGA (March)
- Trees for Climate Planting (March)
- Elections (April)
- ATB Skate Jam (May)
- Call Out For Community Event Ideas (May)

19. Matters for consideration

None.

The meeting ended at 19.58

Signed.....

Date.....

DRAFT