

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

Monday 18th May 2026

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

Present: Councillors Anupindi, Bates, Curtis (Chair), Hawkes, May, Parsons, Ricketts and Wichall
Also in attendance: Laura Cutter (Clerk & RFO)

1. Election of Chair

Members noted that there were two nominations for Councillor Val Curtis who accepted the appointment and was duly elected as the Chair. Councillor Val Curtis signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Proposed: Cllr S May;

Seconded: Cllr S Wichall

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To elect Cllr V Curtis as Chair.

2. Election of Vice-Chair

Members received a nomination for Councillor Steve May who accepted the appointment and was duly elected as the Vice Chair. Councillor Steve May signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Proposed: Cllr V Curtis;

Seconded: Cllr S Wichall

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To elect Cllr S May as Vice Chair.

3. Declarations of Acceptance of Office and Register of Interest Forms following Election

Members signed the appropriate forms which were counter-signed by the Clerk and RFO.

4. Application for and approval of Dispensation

Members that live within the Covingham Parish boundary are required to apply for dispensation to be able to participate in any discussion or vote concerning the setting of the precept.

5. Adopt the General Power of Competence

Members confirmed that Covingham Parish Council meets the criteria to adopt the 'General Power of Competence' (Localism Act 2011) for the 2026-2030 term.

Proposed: Cllr S Wichall

Seconded: Cllr G Hawkes

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To adopt the 'General Power of Competence' for the 2026-2030 term.

6. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Bacon (unavailable) and Walker (unavailable).

7. 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.

8. Minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 13th April 2026.

Proposed: Cllr P Bates;

Seconded: Cllr S Wichall

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 13th April 2026.

9. Matters arising from the previous minutes

- **Dorcan Brook:** Continue to pursue a response from Swindon Borough Council.
- **Caloo:** Continue to chase a response.
- **Speed Indicator Devices:** Reinstalled on Merlin Way. Replacement batteries may need to be sought as the battery life is problematic lasting three days. Another set of batteries could be purchased but need the support from Councillors to help with the maintenance. Increased traffic at Kingfisher Drive and Merlin Way. *Action: Cllrs S May and S Anupindi to investigate options further and bring back to a future meeting.*
- **Payroll:** Completed the download and actively in use.
- **Accounts Package:** Being set up by software provider. Current spreadsheet will run concurrently until the Clerk & RFO is happy with the output.
- **MUGA:** Doing well, there is no excess litter and no requirement for the proposed new bin.
- **Public Participation:** Planning conditions for the Thermofisher air con is being reviewed.
- **Covingham Park Site Visit:** Agreed that the cut provided by the Contractor looks ok and will continue throughout the season. A couple of trees are failing, and the Contractor is hand watering the trees to help them thrive.

10. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

11. Police Updates

No Police personnel in attendance during the meeting as PCSO Rachel Gilding attended the Annual Parish Meeting which took place prior to tonight's ordinary Council meeting.

12. Chair's Verbal Update

Nothing to report.

13. Clerk's Verbal Update

- **Action Review Summary** – the Clerk would like to trial an Action Review Summary log, which will assist in tracking projects/actions, this will be reviewed in Matters Arising and save time looking through all the minutes.
- **Wiltshire Association of Local Council's Road Safety Seminar** – is taking place on Friday 17th July in Trowbridge and recommended that Cllrs involved in the Speed Indicator Devices may wish to go along.
- **Code of Conduct Training** – SBC to conduct remote training on 11th June, will circulate invitation.

14. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** – Members noted the reports.

15. Policies

Members reviewed and readopted the following policies for 2026/2027:

- Code of Conduct
- Financial Regulations
- Standing Orders
- Financial & Operational Risk Assessment

Proposed: Cllr G Hawkes;

Seconded: Cllr S Wichall

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To re-adopt the above policies for 2026/2027.

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

- **Data Protection & Governance** – No updates. Still working on the website improvements such as layout. All other documents are fully accessible. Members were reminded to please keep mailboxes tidy. Cllr Hawkes to update the accessibility statement to confirm methods of checking and evidence of how this has been compliant with requirements detailed in Assertion 10, which is mandatory governance requirement introduced by the Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) in the 2025 Practitioners' Guide for parish and town councils across England.

17. Planning Matters

a) To consider any planning applications:

Application Ref: S/HOU/26/0531

Description: Proposed rear extension.

Site Address: 27 Tealsbrook, Covingham, Swindon, SN3 5AU

Comments: No Objection.

Application Ref: S/26/0173

Description: Outline planning application with all matters reserved (except for access into the site) for the proposed development of up to 275 residential dwellings, a new community building (mixed use Class E and F2), open space, vehicular and pedestrian access, landscaping, draining measures and all other associated works.

Site Address: Inlands Farm, The Marsh, Wanborough, Swindon

Comments: Objection.

Reiterated previous comments - The proposal fails to acknowledge that the site lies outside the settlement boundary and is constrained by significant environmental, landscape, heritage, flood risk, and infrastructure issues, including its proximity to the North Wessex Downs AONB, a Country Wildlife Site, and key safeguarded transport routes. The development would also place unacceptable pressure on already constrained road networks, requiring substantial additional highway capacity improvements before it could be considered deliverable or suitable.

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

No decisions have been made by Swindon Borough Council.

18. Financial Matters

a) Members approved the Schedule of Payments for May 2026.

Proposed: Cllr S Wichall; **Seconded:** Cllr G Hawkes

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To approve the Schedule of Payments as presented.

b) Members noted the monthly accounts reconciliation as at 30th April 2026.

c) Members noted the allocation of carried forward funds from 2025/2026.

d) Members noted changes and approved the Final Budget for 2026/2027 – there is an amendment to the bank fees, created a new budget line, end budget figures stay the same.

Proposed: Cllr S May **Seconded:** Cllr G Hawkes

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To approve the final budget for 2026/2027.

e) Members received an update on the new accounting package – the set up stages are in progress with the initial data input being organised by the system provider.

