

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 10th October 2011
in Covingham Park Junior School, The Harriers, Covingham

Present:

Cllr D Benfield, Cllr P Bennell, Cllr A Foss, Cllr E Godbold, Cllr B Osbourn, Cllr L Sandle,
Cllr L Thompson, Cllr S Wichall

In attendance: Jo Wheeler (parish clerk), members of the public

48. Apologies

Apologies from Cllr P Davis, Cllr J Day, Cllr D Fitchett, Cllr D Haigh, Cllr L Kellaway,
Cllr W Reddaway

49. Declaration of Interests

None.

50. Minutes of the meeting on 12th September 2011

One amendment was made to the minutes of the 12th September, these will be signed at
the next meeting.

51. Matters arising

Item 41: Parish clerk to chase Swindon Borough Council Enforcement Officer about 1 Brind
Close.

Item 47: speeding will be covered under Item 5 on the agenda.

52. Police matters

The council welcomed PC Jack Newman. He reported that there were 10 crimes in the last
month, mainly thefts from shops.

Cllr Bennell reported the problem with eggs being thrown at windows. Jack made it clear
that residents must report criminal and anti-social behaviour to the police, otherwise they
have no record of it and can't respond.

Cllr Osbourn reported on his meeting with the Neighbourhood Task Group:

- Crime in the area has been reduced by 20%.

- The police have offered to patrol the skate park area until 1am, to move youths away from the area
- The Inspector is looking into a possible dispersement order.
- Police have also been stopping people who are causing a nuisance on their scooters.
- One option for the skate park could be installing CCTV. This will be explored further by the Inspector. Jack Newman suggested a portable mobile camera.
- Youth Offenders will be litter picking around the parks in Covingham as part of community service.
- There haven't been anymore incidents of horses being ridden across the park.

The chairman reminded one member of the public that he has an opportunity to speak in the public forum section and warned him that he would be asked to leave if he kept interrupting the meeting.

53. Public questions

- i) Member of the public asked where the PCSOs patrol, as they haven't seen many in the parks.

Jack Newman replied that there are two Police Community Support Officers who cover Covingham. They work shifts and patrol on foot or by car. Their function of PCSOs in Wiltshire is to monitor CCTV and provide house enquiries. PC Jack Newman read out dates and times of police patrols in the area to demonstrate that the area has been patrolled by police regularly.

He stated that weekend shifts are changing so there will be even more patrols on Friday and Saturday evenings.

- ii) A member of the public reported a number of incidents where gangs have caused damage to his property.

While the parish council sympathised, it advised the resident that it is a police matter and they should report these incidents to the police. Cllr Benfield pointed out that the new 101 phone number that can be used to report non-emergency crimes.

- iii) A member of the public asked about working with the children at the skate park.

The parish council agreed this was a great idea and suggested he contact the ward councillors to get in touch with Youth Services at Swindon Borough Council.

54. Green Flag Award

The vice-chairman presented a report on the costs and benefits of trying to achieve Green Flag status for the parks in Covingham. Green Flag status is a national award that recognises high quality green spaces in England and Wales, that are managed by voluntary and community groups. Green Flag status requires a much higher level of management and a business plan (which could be expensive).

The council agreed not to pursue the Green Flag award as the costs outweigh the benefits, but thanked the vice chair for all his work.

The vice-chairman has also looked into putting the parks into a Community Land, which are currently leased from Swindon Borough Council. It was decided that it may be an expensive way of securing the parks as open spaces. The vice chair suggested an irrevocable long lease as an alternative. The council agreed to explore this with Swindon Borough Council.

55. Allotments

As the new allotment plots in Wanborough can no longer be offered to Covingham residents, and because there is a high demand, the parish council agreed to approach Swindon Borough Council to help find some land.

56. Recreation and Amenities Group report

Replacement trees for the parks have been ordered from Swindon Commercial Services.

57. Planning matters

None

58. Financial matters

Discussed the option of a pre-paid credit card for the groundsman to use to make hardware and fuel purchases on behalf of the council. Agreed to explore this option.

The financial summary and cheque list were approved.

59. Matters for Consideration

Cllr Godbold reported the epicormic tree growth are being treated by Swindon Borough Council.

Cllr Foss made everyone aware that there is a fungi (created by a moth) affecting horse chestnuts over the UK.

Cllr Benfield reported that the sandwich bar has closed.

Cllr Osbourn asked whether the school had made a decision regarding the drainage. Cllr Foss agreed to look through his records and report back.

Cllr Thompson reported problem parking at Covingham shops. Parish clerk to send contact details for Swindon Borough Council, to report dangerous and illegal parking.

Cllr Wichall reported that the mini-market is doing a roaring trade and is kept spotlessly clean.

The meeting closed at 9.12pm

Signed:

Date: