

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 14th October 2013
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

Present:

Cllr Osbourn, Cllr Benfield, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Godbold, Cllr Hayward, Cllr Short, Cllr Parry, Cllr Foss, Cllr Davis, Cllr Haigh, Cllr Wichall (left the meeting early)

In attendance:

Gemma Cheal (parish clerk), Members of the public

Opening statement from the Chairman:

The Chairman thanked councillors for their hard work and commitment to the parish council. The Chairman asked Councillors to be mindful of conduct at parish council meetings. Councillors are to make all statements without interruption through the Chairman. All debate should take place in a polite and professional manner. The Chairman distributed Standing Orders Point 21 to councillors reference Disorderly Conduct and asked all councillors to observe this order at all times.

1. Apologies

Cllr Curtis, Ward Cllr Price, PC Stefan Watts

2. Declaration of Interests

None.

3. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2013

Minutes were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Tree inspection: Report received from Cllr Hayward on status of trees at Smitan Brook: 2 Paul Scarlets are in good health although berries are not fertile. 1 silver birch will be ok in 2014. 1 Golden Acasia (birch) will be ok in 2014, 1 Prunus (cherry) will be ok in 2014. All trees have die back at the top due to very cold weather in 2012/13.

Community payback: Currently on hold due to cracks on the side of pathway at Covingham Park.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Community Payback asking them to continue works at Smitan Brook.

Cllr Short reported that a programme of works for Covingham will be produced to pass on to the Borough Council for completion, including cracks along the path at Covingham Park which are dangerous. This will be reported immediately.

Playground inspection: Inspection has taken place. Full report has been passed on to the Parish Council groundsman. Groundsman reported that no works have been noted requiring immediate action. The new skate park equipment was not inspected.

Football pitches: Current grass contractor to mark out pitches.

Councillors noted that Blackbird Close was the chosen name for the 5 new dwellings off St Paul's Drive.

5. Public forum:

2 members of the public present.

Councillors noted comments received about communication regarding the eastern villages. People of Covingham need to be aware of what is going on. Concerns were raised about the safety of the location of the new skate park equipment. 2 near accidents were noted.

The Chairman commented that a clear response has been sent to the Borough Council from Covingham Parish Council regarding the eastern villages.

The Chairman informed all present that the new skate park equipment will be relocated to a safer position as soon as possible, as both pieces of equipment were installed too close to the path.

6. Chairman's Report

The Chairman had nothing to report other than to say that the location of the skate park equipment will be discussed on site tomorrow.

7. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:

- Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Cllr Benfield and Cllr Sandle attended an allotment AGM at Wanborough on 16th September. Current allotment waiting list has been updated and circulated to the Clerk at Wanborough.

Meeting to take place on 22nd October at Nythe Community Centre for the new allotment residents group organised by Ward Cllr Heenan for proposed allotments off Greenbridge Road. Allotments to be up and running in 2014. To be managed by the new Nythe Parish Council. Cllr Sandle and Cllr Benfield will attend the allotment meeting.

Terms of reference for the new allotments for representatives of Covingham Parish Council on the joint working party were agreed by the Parish Council.

Members agreed to apply for a tree preservation order (TPO) for the trees along Covingham Drive.

ACTION: Clerk to send letter from the Parish Council.

- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield)

Members noted that the external auditors report has been received. The audit was favourable, except for the risk assessment that was not carried out in the last financial year. This will be carried out in time for the next audit.

Members noted that the current asset register is very out of date. Work needs to be completed on this in order to have an up to date list ready for the next audit.

- Highways and Recreation (Chair Cllr Short):

The Chairman reported that Cllr Davis has stepped down. Cllr Short has agreed to take over as Chair.

Cllr Hayward was thanked for his work on assessing the health of the trees at Smitan Brook.

Drainage works at Covingham Park are on-going due to delays from the Borough Council. The issue will be taken to the Head of Highways at the Borough. Drainage company have agreed to keep the quote to carry out works until December.

ACTION: Cllr Short to arrange a meeting with the Borough Council regarding obtaining relevant permission to vary out works. Cllr Foss to be kept informed due to contact with the school.

No update was received on the Merlin Way weight restriction.

- Parish Plan Committee (Chair Cllr Curtis):

The Chairman reported that Cllr Wichall has stepped down. Cllr Curtis has agreed to take over as Chair. No further report received.

8. Planning Matters

<p>Application Number: S/13/1301</p> <p>Proposal: garage conversion and new pitched roof with garage</p> <p>Location: 21 St Katherine Green, Covingham</p> <p>Comments: No objections</p>	<p>Planning Application Number: S/13/1382</p> <p>Proposal: Erection of first floor extension to side</p> <p>Location: 5 Fitzmaurice Close, Swindon, SN3 5BS</p> <p>Comments: One concern noted re. applicants not living in the property.</p>
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One pre-application enquiry received from the Borough Council regarding a proposed ATM at Martin McColl's at Covingham Square. No objection from the Parish Council.

9. Police matters:

Apologies received from PC Stefan Watts. No update from the police.

10. Financial Matters

The 2nd quarter finance statement was received and approved by members.

The Chairman congratulated members for not claiming expenses. Parish Councillor expenses are minimal.

Cllr Benfield asked members to be mindful about how parish money is spent in the future due to additional skate park equipment purchased and forthcoming drainage works.

A parish 'shopping list' is required so that money can be allocated to various purchases and improvements needed for the parish, e.g. tarmac and seats at Covingham Park.

ACTION: Cllr Short agreed to look at tarmac areas to give his opinion on amount of work required.

Members agreed to award the Dorcan Senior Citizens a £200 grant. Members noted that the Parish Council have supported them in the past and their finances are declining.

Members agreed to defer a decision on whether or not to award a grant to Cruse Bereavement until 2014.

11. Correspondence

Members noted the following received correspondence

Received from	Subject
Melanie Stanbury	Letter of application re. parish councillor vacancy ACTION: MS to be interviewed in private (excluding press and public) at the next Parish Council meeting.
Swindon Borough Council	Poll Cards. No further action required
Swindon Borough Council	Swindon Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. Noted by members. No further action required.
Cruse Bereavement Care	Grant request. Deferred by members (minute number 10).
Senior Citizens Club	Grant request. Members agreed £200 (minute number 10).

12. Matters for consideration

Cllr Benfield mentioned 'Walk for Health'. Information will be placed on the notice boards.

Cllr Sandle commented that it is positive to see the local hairdressers has re-opened

The Clerk agreed to recirculate committee membership list to all councillors.

Cllr Haigh has discussed fears of the Eastern Villages with parishioners and commented on the forthcoming Government inspectorate of the Local Plan due to take place in November. Information received about the meeting does not specify what the Inspector is specifically unhappy about.

ACTION: Clerk to re-circulate information about the forthcoming inspectorate meeting in November to councillors.

Members noted that the Borough Council have not acknowledged the response from the Parish Council regarding the Eastern Villages SPD.

ACTION: Clerk to chase a response from Swindon Borough Council.

Cllr Short reminded parish councillors that anyone wishing to be parish councillor can apply if they live within 3 miles of Covingham.

Meeting closed at 21:03

Signed (Chairman):