

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 9th December 2013
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

Present:

Cllr Curtis, Cllr Benfield, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Haigh, Cllr Godbold, Cllr Fitchett, Cllr Parry, Cllr Foss, Cllr Stanbury, Cllr Davis, Cllr Short, Cllr Hayward, Cllr Osbourn

In attendance:

Gemma Cheal (parish clerk), Ward Cllr Heenan, Members of the public

1. Apologies

Received from Cllr Wichall.

2. Declaration of Interests

None.

3. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2013

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

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Signage on Merlin Way: The traffic regulation order along Merlin Way banning lorries over 7.5 tonnes in weight is now in place. The order commences on 19th December.

Proposed Development at Redlands: Cllr Osbourn has spoken with Chair of Wanborough Parish Council. A joint committee will be formed with Wanborough and Bishopstone parish councils. Cllr Short pointed out remaining issues regarding drainage systems and infrastructure. Members queried whether the 'red line' had been put back to its original location after it was re-drawn by Ward Cllr Heenan. No response has been received on this to date.

5. Public forum:

Members received the following flood report from member of the public Mr Hawkes:

The Environment Agency has responded to our MP with regard to our request that the Dorcan Stream (Brook) Flood Storage Area be removed and the Wanborough Road culvert be doubled in size. The Environment Agency has agreed to review the effects of removing the Dorcan Brook Flood Storage Area. Their initial view is that this would increase the flood risk to the area between the Wanborough Road and Acorn Bridge. Financial support from Swindon Borough Council would be essential to achieve these objectives.

I believe that we now have a direct conflict between reducing the flood risk in Covingham and the potential to increase the flood risk in Covingham with the development of the Eastern Villages.

I have met with Grace Martin again, as shown her all of the problem areas on the Dorcan Stream. I also showed her the River Cole, but did not get down as far as the A419 culvert for the River Cole (the structure blamed for the 2007 flooding adjacent to the River Cole). I have suggested that the most effective public action group would be one that actively monitored the proposals for the Eastern Villages.

An objection has been submitted to S/OUT/13/1555, on the grounds that the position of the ditch which will take water from the new development into the River Cole, is too close to the railway culvert, and is likely to impede the flow of water thus increasing the upstream risk.

Member of the public Mr Goodenough reported that the Wanborough anti-flood group are currently working on the Acorn Bridge area and the South Marston development. A few faults have been found regarding flooding in the eastern villages planning document. Issues are being discussed with the Environment Agency.

6. Clerk's Report

Members received the following report from the Clerk:

<p>Parish Council Vacancy Currently one vacancy on the parish council. The website has been updated with a current vacancy notice. Also to be advertised in the Handy mag in February. A 'new councillor' pack has been compiled and sent to Melanie Stanbury.</p>
<p>Community Payback Community Payback has confirmed that the remainder of the work will be completed at Smitan Brook. Clerk and groundsman to monitor progress.</p>
<p>Tree Preservation Order A letter has been received from Swindon Borough Council regarding a request for a TPO on trees along Covingham Drive. Chair of Environment Committee to provide an update at December meeting under Committee Reports.</p>
<p>Response from Swindon Borough Council on Eastern Villages SPD Although Clerk has requested a response, to date no response has been received. Clerk to continue to chase. Clerk to write to SBC on headed paper addressed to head of planning.</p>
<p>Meeting with Chair of Finance Committee Clerk and Cllr Benfield have met to discuss financial matters, including draft budget and precept. Draft Budget and Precept to be agreed at December meeting. Full update to be given under agenda item 9 at the December meeting. As actioned at the November meeting, a letter has been sent to the Borough regarding precept money coming back to Covingham parish council. Awaiting response. Cabinet to discuss outcome of money coming back to parishes on 11th December 2013.</p>
<p>Relocating new skate park equipment To date, the equipment has not been moved. Cllr Short to give further update under agenda item 8 (Committee Reports) at December meeting.</p>
<p>Signage at Covingham Park Clerk has requested for the signage at Covingham Park to be updated with current telephone number.</p>

7. Chairman's Report

The Chairman asked councillors if they could respond to emails sent, to acknowledge that email correspondence has been received. Emails are not always acknowledged or responded to. Telephone messages may be left if this is more convenient.

8. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:

- Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Environment Committee met on 26th November. The following points were noted:

- Tree Preservation Order along Covingham Drive: Application was rejected by the Borough. No further action required.
- Environment Committee roles: Cllr Curtis and Cllr Hayward will be leading on the new Nythe allotments. No update has been received to date from Ward Cllr Heenan on progress. Cllr Benfield will be leading on flooding with Grace Martin. The Parish Council will be a facilitating body. Grace will provide flooding update to Cllr Benfield each month to be fed back to members. Grace will be a guest speaker at the Annual Assembly. Cllr Stanbury will be leading on 'best gardens in Covingham' in 2014. Composting scheme for residents will be discussed further.
- Wanborough allotments: More plots could be available. Currently waiting for a response from Wanborough Clerk about anticipated costs for the next financial year.

- Covingham Square: Viewing of Covingham Square has taken place. Works to start in March 2014. Members noted that the wall between the car park and Larksfield is to remain after pressure from the Parish Council.
- Speedwatch on Merlin Way: Cllr Sandle & Clerk to find out further information from the Borough.
- Members noted that the Woodland Trust are offering free trees. To be discussed at next committee meeting.

- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):

Members noted that the asset register is a work in progress. Cllr Benfield, Clerk and Groundsman will meet to put current values and replacement costs for all assets.

- Highways and Recreation (Chair Cllr Short):

Members noted the following points from Cllr Short:

- Skate park equipment: The new equipment will be repositioned on 14th December subject to weather and ground conditions.
- Drainage at Covingham Park: Further meeting required with the Borough. No progress has been made to date.
- Footpaths: Issues with cracks on footpaths around parks in Covingham have been noted and inspected by the Borough. Works are on-going.
- Bollards at Covingham Shops: Stronger, more robust bollards have now been installed.
- Routine works for Covingham: Cllr Short requested for a number of jobs to be completed in Covingham, including repairs to paths, gully cleaning and litter picking. Cllr Short to arrange further meeting to see if firm programme dates can be put in place.

- Parish Plan Committee (Chair Cllr Curtis):

See comments below under 'Planning Matters'.

9. Planning Matters

Application Number: S/OUT/13/1555

Proposal: Outline planning permission for a sustainable urban extension for up to 2,380 dwellings, a mixed use local centre and mixed use areas, community uses, sheltered accommodation, a primary school, green infrastructure including formal and informal open space, sports facilities, sustainable drainage, engineering works including re-modelling, other infrastructure, demolition and the formation of new accesses from the A420, Old Vicarage Lane, Thornhill Road.

Location: Eastern Villages, Land North Of A420 South Marston and Rowborough, Swindon, Wilts.

Comments: Members noted that a scoping report has been received for outline planning at Lotmead Farm. Main issues are flooding, drainage and infrastructure.

ACTION: Cllr Curtis to discuss with South Marston, Wanborough and Bishopstone parish councils prior to submitting a response. Cllr Curtis to attend the forthcoming Eastern Villages exhibition at the South Marston Hotel.

Cllr Curtis pointed out that the planning application was sent electronically and is difficult to view. The planning department have not given much time to respond to the planning application.

ACTION: Clerk to contact the Borough regarding deadlines for submitting planning responses.

10. Financial Matters

- The financial summary and cheque list was approved.
- Approval of Budget and Precept for financial year 2014-15:

Members of the public were asked to leave the room as part of the financial discussion concerned staff salaries.

Cllr Benfield presented a proposed budget for the financial year 2014-15 on behalf of the Finance Committee. Members noted that careful consideration has been made to the budget in light of the decision by the Borough to retain money for the financial year 2013-14. In light of careful spending, Cllr Benfield proposed for no increase in the parish precept for the next financial year.

After discussion by members, Councillors voted in favour of the proposed budget. There will be no increase to the precept for the financial year 2014-15.

A discussion took place regarding a Christmas bonus for the parish council Groundsman. Members resolved to award the parish council groundsman a bonus of £150.

Members of the public were invited back in to the meeting hall.

- **Consider grant request from The Dorcan Church**

Members noted that the parish council have contributed to the church on a number of occasions in the past. The Diocese has recently sold land to build 5 houses. The request should have gone directly from the diocese. The diocese should be funding the works required.

ACTION: Clerk to write a polite letter of response.

11. Police Matters: Update from local neighbourhood policing team

Cllr Benfield confirmed that a neighbourhood watch meeting has taken place. A data base has been recommended to the police for contact email addresses of Covingham residents to enable email reports to be circulated. Members noted the police are highlighting the importance to residents of securing their property due to recent break-ins to sheds and garages in the East sector of Swindon.

12. Correspondence

Members noted the following received correspondence:

Received from	Subject
Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service	Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service's Public Safety Plan 2013/14-2016/17.
The North Dorcan Senior Citizens Club	Thank you letter for grant of £200 received.
The Borough of Swindon – Mayor's Office	Nomination request for Pride of Swindon Awards.
SBC Property Services	Confirmation of electricity cabling works in Covingham in first quarter of 2014.
SBC Finance Department	Precept and related matter 2014/15
SBC School Admissions	Formal consultation of primary, infant to junior admissions arrangements and secondary coordinated admissions scheme and education transport policy for 2015-16.

13. Matters for consideration

Cllr Benfield has developed a 'member's interests form' for completion by every councillor. This will ensure the register of members interests form is kept up to date. Cllr Benfield suggested issuing a co-option form to all potential new parish councillors.

Cllr Haigh mentioned litter picking in Covingham, along Dorcan Way by the school. Members noted that school children had previously carried out a litter pick. This needs to be looked at. Members noted that litter has been blown about due to high winds which are causing lids to blow off of recycling boxes. Lids on recycling boxes should be weighted down.

Members noted that there are deep tyre tracks on Smitan Brook.

ACTION: Clerk to ask Police to patrol the area.

Meeting closed at 21:42