

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 13th January 2014
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

Present:

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

In attendance:

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

1. Apologies

Received from Cllr Davis, Cllr Fitchett, Cllr Curtis, Cllr Wichall and the Police

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Haigh declared an interest in Item 11 – grant request from Dorcan Performing Arts Group.

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

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

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Redlands: Cllr Osbourn informed members that he had spoken with the Chair of Wanborough about setting up a joint planning committee. No further communication has taken place to date. Cllr Osbourn to chase Chair of Wanborough for an update.

Members noted a complaint received from a local resident about the parish van driving on the parks which may be causing ruts. Photographs have been taken. Groundsman and dog bin contractor to be instructed not to drive on the parks. Members noted that although a complaint had been received, the local resident concerned praised the hard work of the parish groundsman.

Litter picking: Members noted serious litter problems in recent weeks due to high winds. In particular, there is a lot of rubbish on Dorcan Way from the Messenger roundabout to Smiths.

ACTION: Clerk to report problem to Cabinet Member for StreetSmart, Richard Hurley

5. Public forum:

Members received a flooding report from member of the public Gareth Hawkes, containing water level readings of various markers and landmarks. Photographic evidence was provided. Members noted a debris problem at the flood storage area. Cllr Osbourn thanked Mr Hawkes for his report.

The Clerk commented that the Groundsman has also been monitoring water levels in the parish and reported a blockage in the Dorcan Stream to the River Authority who has now sorted the problem. The Clerk advised Mr Hawkes to contact the River Authority to report any problems with the Dorcan Stream and to contact the Borough Council for any other culvert issues.

Mr Goodenough gave an update on the situation at Acorn Bridge. The culvert burst its banks and flooded the whole area which has a knock on effect. Planners are looking in to this. Mr Goodenough will discuss problems with Network Rail.

6. Clerk's Report

Members received and noted the following Clerk's Report:

Parish Council Vacancy

Currently one vacancy on the parish council. Vacancy will be advertised in the next issue of the Handy Mag.

Community Payback

Community Payback work is currently underway by the team at Smitan Brook. Groundsman to continue to monitor progress. Grass cuttings are OK at present. One small strip of cutting back to go.

Response from Swindon Borough Council on Eastern Villages SPD

As actioned at the December meeting, Clerk has written to Head of Planning on headed paper requesting an official acknowledgement regarding our response to the Eastern Villages SPD. Currently waiting for a reply.

Signage at Covingham Park

Groundsman has checked the current telephone number of signage which links to the Borough. No further action required.

Dog Bin Complaint

A complaint has been made to SBC regarding a damaged dog waste bin between Finchdale and Heronscroft at Covingham Park. Clerk has informed SBC that the matter will be looked into and any appropriate action will be taken. Clerk and Groundsman to meet 9th January to discuss. Clerk to ask Groundsman to check condition. A price will be obtained for replacement bin where applicable.

It has been reported that the dog bins have been badly overflowing in recent weeks. We are invoiced for weekly emptying; however we are not sure that the bins are being emptied as regularly as they should be. Groundsman is keeping a log so that we have a record of emptying dates. Any complaints are chased up with the contractor.

Clerk reported that new dog bins and posts are needed for Covingham Park. One dog bin and post is required urgently. Members agreed for a new dog bin and post to be purchased. Cllr Heenan agreed to see if the Borough has any they no longer require.

ACTION: Clerk to purchase new dog bin and post.

Update on Actions from December meeting:

- Speedwatch: Clerk & Cllr Sandle to find out further information from SBC. Update: Email received from SBC. Agenda item in January.
- Asset Register: Clerk, Cllr Benfield and Groundsman to meet at the end of January to complete register.
- Planning application deadlines: Clerk has written to SBC planning department for guidance on deadlines for responding to applications and to ask about the short deadline for Eastern Villages application. Waiting for a response.
- Grant application request from The Dorcan Church: Response letter has been written.
- Tyre tracks at Smitan Brook: Police have been asked to patrol the area. Police reported that tyre tracks are likely to have been caused by Police vehicle on duty.

7. Chairman's Report

The Chairman had no matters to discuss other than to provide an update from the Police (below).

8. Police Matters

Members noted a Police report received from PC Watts, which included a 'cannabis factory' found on Merlin Way and reports received about HGVs using Merlin Way exceeding weight restrictions. This is ongoing work for the Police who are writing to lorry companies concerned asking them not to use Merlin Way and Kingfisher Drive. PC Watts has been asked to communicate to the parish council through the Clerk in future.

9. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:

- Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):
 - Nythe allotments: Ward Cllr Heenan informed members that the allotments should be up and running by April 2014.

- Wanborough allotments: Wanborough Parish Council are meeting to discuss finance at the end of January and will be in touch to confirm what the annual fee will be for Covingham parish council for the next financial year.
 - Tree planting: Cllr Hayward has agreed to look at tree planting in Covingham. There is a possibility that we may be able to apply for free trees from The Woodland Trust.
 - Covingham Garden Competition: Cllr Stanbury presented a proposed plan for a garden competition to take place at the end of the summer as an opportunity to bring the community together and to provide money to charity. A publicity campaign would take place, professional judges would be needed and a presentation evening would conclude the competition.
 - After some discussion, members agreed in principal for the scheme to go ahead, after gauging the response from local residents. Further work on costing will be required.
 - **ACTION:** Notice to go in Handymag and on website.
- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):
 - Precept: The precept for the financial year 2014/15 has been agreed (as minuted in the December Parish Council minutes) and a submission will be sent to Swindon Borough Council.
 - Correspondence has been received from Swindon Borough Council to say it is likely that the money allocated to the parishes for 2014/2015 will be passported to Covingham (Council Tax Support Grant). Members agreed that this money will be used to provide additional services to residents of Covingham, if received.
 - Additional Purchases: Cllr Benfield pointed out that purchases will need to be made this coming year to improve the parish, including new dog bins, and improvements to tarmacked areas.
 - Highways and Recreation (Chair Cllr Short):
 - Relocation of new skate park equipment: Cllr Short will make arrangements to move the equipment on either 18th or 25th January, weather permitting.
 - Further meeting to take place with Bernie Brennan at the Borough Council to sort drainage issues at Covingham Park and to agree a programme at works. Cllr Osbourn agreed to attend a meeting with Cllr Short at the Borough.
 - Parish Plan Committee (Chair Cllr Curtis):
No report received.

10. Planning Matters

Members noted the following planning application notifications had been received from Swindon Borough Council this month:

- Application Number: S/13/1678 (revised documents)

Re: Erection of a two storey rear extension.

At: 16 Bullfinch Close, Covingham Swindon SN3 5HP

Comments: None required (Bullfinch close is not in Covingham parish).

- Application Number: S/EIA/13/1770

Re: EIA Scoping Report for proposed development at Lotmead Farm, Wanborough Road, Swindon.

Comments: Covingham Parish Council are in agreement with Wanborough Parish Council.

11. Financial Matters

- The financial summary and cheque list was approved.
- Members received and approved the 3rd quarter budget statement.
- Members reviewed a grant request from the Dorcan Performing Arts Group and agreed to award them £200.

12. Speedwatch Update

Members noted 2 upcoming training dates on Wednesday 22nd January and Saturday 25th January for speedwatch training. Volunteers are needed. There are currently 2 locally trained volunteers. Cllr Parry and Cllr Benfield may attend training. Other members expressed some interest; however alternative dates would be preferred.

13. Correspondence

Members noted the following received correspondence

Received from	Subject
Gareth Hawkes	Flood Group Report
Swindon Borough Council	Changes to household waste collections
Wiltshire Police	Consultation on the Police & crime element of Council Tax
Dorcan Performing Arts Group	Grant request

14. Matters for consideration

Cllr Godbold commented on the length of time taken on reporting from Sub-Committees during the meeting. Clerk recommended for the Chair of each committee to circulate committee reports to all parish councillors prior to full council meetings, to save time during future meetings.

Cllr Sandle commented on cars parking on grass verges and asked about the possibility of planting tyres. Cllr Sandle to contact Swindon Borough Council directly to seek permission.

Members noted rubbish on the school site. Permission for litter picking on site would be needed from the Headteacher. Cllr Foss agreed to raise with the school.

Members noted a collapsed wall by Larksfield.

Meeting closed at 21:23