

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the **Annual Meeting** of the Parish Council held on Monday 12th May 2014
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

Present:

CLlr Wichall, CLlr Curtis, CLlr Godbold, CLlr Benfield, CLlr Hayward, CLlr Haigh, CLlr Osbourn, CLlr Sandle, CLlr Short (arrived late)

In attendance:

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

1. Election of the Chair

CLlr Curtis nominated for CLlr Osbourn to remain as Chair. This was seconded by CLlr Wichall. All councillors voted in agreement. CLlr Osbourn was elected as Chair.

2. Election of the Vice Chair

CLlr Wichall nominated for CLlr Benfield to remain as Vice Chair. This was seconded by CLlr Curtis. All councillors voted in agreement. CLlr Benfield was elected as Vice Chair.

3. Apologies

Received from CLlr Parry, CLlr Foss, CLlr Davis, and CLlr Stanbury.

4. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

5. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14th April 2014

Minutes were approved and signed subject to an amendment to the attendance record.

6. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Members discussed Item 6 of the April 2014 minutes (reference declaration of interest forms) and instructed the Clerk to write a reminder letter to CLlr Fitchett, requesting for the completed form to be returned to the Clerk. A completed Register of Interests table will be put on to the Parish website.

7. Public forum:

No comments or questions from the public.

8. Clerk's Report

Members received and noted the following report from the Clerk:

Audit Update

Clerk is in the process of sending financial documents to Internal Auditor. A VAT refund will be submitted to HMRC this month to reclaim VAT incurred for the last financial year. A notice of 'appointment of date for the exercise of electors' rights' has been placed on parish notice boards at the request of the external auditor.

Parish Council Vacancy

Currently one vacancy on the parish council.

Community Payback – Grass Cuttings

Work has now stopped due to a report on further cracks along the edge of pathways at Smitan Brook. Terry (Parish Groundsman) has removed grass cuttings due to a complaint from a nearby resident.

Precept Update

Received first half of Precept from SBC on 25th April, plus ½ payment of Council Tax Support Grant (total payment received was £20,692).

Update on Parish Purchases Required

The Groundsman has reported that a piece of triangular play equipment needs replacing and new dog bin inserts are needed due to rust. Parish Clerk to obtain quotes.

9. Verbal Update from the Chair

Cllr Osbourn reported that he had spoken to a resident at Dobbin Close regarding grass cuttings that were placed at the back of his fence by the Community Payback Team. The Groundsman has cleared the area. The resident and Cllr Osbourn raked the area to make it presentable. The Groundsman will place grass seeds down in due course. The resident is happy with the action that has been taken.

Cllr Osbourn spoke with Wanborough and Stratton Parish Councils regarding their use of dog bins. Wanborough Parish Council are still using dog bins, but will be replacing any future dog bins with litter bins. Stratton are continuing to use dog bins and will review the situation when they are out of stock. Cllr Osbourn reported that the Swindon Services depot did not have any dog bins available for purchase.

Cllr Osbourn and Cllr Short attended a meeting with Swindon Borough Council Officers regarding works required in Covingham (see Item 11, Reports from Committee Chairs for further information).

10. Police Matters

Members noted a report received from PC Stefan Watts which included an update on concerns about someone living in a car at Smitan Brook. The Police fully investigated the matter which has now reached a satisfactory conclusion.

The report also mentioned cars being broken into in East Swindon and an update on the progress of tracing the two suspects that were believed to be responsible for the large amount of cannabis being cultivated in a house in Merlin Way just before last Christmas. Forensic evidence and the examination of documents that were left behind have enabled the police to identify the two suspects.

11. Appointment of Roles and Committees

Members resolved to leave the current Committee Structure as it stands for another year, to continue the good work that has taken place. Members therefore agreed unanimously to appoint the following Committees (including Chairperson of each Committee):

Responsibility	Persons agreed
Press Officer	Cllr Benfield
Environment Committee (including Allotments)	Chair: Lorraine Sandle , Cllr Benfield, Cllr Hayward, Cllr Curtis, Cllr Stanbury (Total 5)
Finance Committee	Chair: Cllr Benfield , Cllr Haigh, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Wichall, Cllr Short, Cllr Parry (Total 6)
Highways & Recreation Committee	Chair: Cllr Short , Cllr Godbold, Cllr Fitchett, Cllr Wichall Cllr Curtis, Cllr Davis, Cllr Foss (Total 7)
Parish Plan Committee	Chair: Cllr Curtis , Cllr Parry, Cllr Wichall, Cllr Godbold, Cllr Short, Cllr Haigh (Total 6)

Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:

Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Cllr Sandle thanked her committee members for the effort they had put in to work on the Environment Committee over the last year. Members received an Annual Report from Cllr Sandle, to include an update on the allotments at Nythe, Pickards Field, South Marston and Wanborough and the progress made to date. The report also included an update on Flood Watch, trees in Covingham, Best Garden Competition and bulb replacement.

Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):

Cllr Benfield reported that Covingham Parish Council now have a breakdown of the costs to Covingham Parish Council for the lease of allotments from Wanborough Parish Council to Covingham residents. The breakdown of the costs was presented and agreed by Councillors.

Highways and Recreation Committee (Chair Cllr Short):

Cllr Short reported that a meeting had taken place with Borough Officers, Cllr Osbourn and a member of Thames Water regarding drainage issues at Covingham Park. Thames Water are concerned about putting more surface water into the drainage systems. They did not comment on how they would resolve the water situation at the park. Little progress was made due to a lack of knowledge of the local area. Various options were discussed, although no solutions were finalised. A soak away would only be a temporary measure. Cllr Short requested assurance of S106 money for carrying out drainage works. Cllr Short also highlighted the need for the ditches around the school to be cleaned out.

ACTION: Clerk to write a letter from the Parish Council regarding lack of progress with drainage works. Cllr Short will continue to agree a schedule of works with Swindon Borough Council for Covingham.

Parish Plan Committee (Chair Cllr Curtis):

Members received and noted a report from Cllr Curtis on planning matters, including an update from the Clerk at Bourton Parish Council that a Statement of Common Ground has now been signed by all parties. A copy has been lodged with Swindon Borough Council. The Inspector of the Local Plan has been given a copy for reference during the examination of the Local Plan.

Cllr Curtis reported that she attended the first meeting of the Covingham Flood Action Group (as a resident, not as a Parish Councillor) on 24th April 2014. The next meeting will be held on 20th May 2014.

12. Planning Matters

Application Number: S/LDE/14/0665

Proposal: Certificate of lawful development (existing) for the erection of a rear conservatory.

Location: 8 Cornmarsh Way, Covingham, Swindon, SN3 5DH

DECISION: No objection.

13. Financial Matters

- The financial summary and cheque list were approved and signed.
- Consider grant requests from:
 - The BIOS Project
 - Scout Group (Wichelstowe)
 - SCWAD (Swindon children without a diagnosis or with rare disorders)

Members noted that the budget for grants has been reduced to £1,000 for this financial year.

Members considered each grant request in detail, and resolved to award the following:

The BIOS Group: Members agreed unanimously to award £100.

Scout Group (Wichelstowe): Members resolved to decline on this occasion.

SCWAD: Members agreed unanimously to award £150.

The Clerk agreed to include a monthly balance for Parish Council Grants on each agenda.

14. Correspondence

Members noted the following received correspondence

Received from	Subject
BIOS Project	Grant request
SCWAD	Grant request
Scout Group (Wichelstowe)	Grant request
10 Downing Street	New tax cuts for businesses and charities

15. Matters for consideration

Cllr Haigh discussed the recent notification and articles in the press about the £40 payment to Swindon Borough Council for green waste bins. Members discussed the possibility of the Cabinet Member for Streetsmart attending a future Parish Council meeting to give a full explanation.

Meeting closed at 20:24.