

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 14th July 2014
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

Present: Cllr Hayward, Cllr Foss, Cllr Davis, Cllr Short, Cllr Haigh, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Benfield (Vice Chair), Cllr Curtis, Cllr Osbourn (Chair), Cllr Parry

In attendance:

Gemma Cheal (parish clerk), members of the public.

1. Apologies

Cllr Godbold, Cllr Wichall, Cllr Fitchett

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Benfield declared an interest in Item 11 (Financial Matters), reference grant request from the Bobby Van Trust.

3. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2014

Minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2014 were approved and signed.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Cllr Foss informed members that the Headteacher has conveyed thanks to the Parish Council for once again supporting the school with the award for the head boy and head girl. The awards will be presented during the Year 6 leavers assembly. The Business Manager has been asked to forward a receipt to the Clerk.

5. Public forum

No questions or comments raised.

6. Clerk's Report

Members received the following report from the Clerk:

Audit Update

The Clerk, Chair of Finance and Chairman met to discuss findings of the internal audit report. Appropriate actions were noted and returned to the internal auditor. The Annual Return form has been sent to Mazars, the external auditor.

VAT Refund

Currently waiting for our requested refund of £3,215.92.

Update on Parish Purchases Required

To be discussed under 'Finance' at July Parish Council meeting.

Declaration of Interest Forms

While uploading information from the forms onto our parish website, I noticed that many of the forms had not been fully completed. Please can councillors fully complete forms? (To be requested at July Parish Council meeting).

Drainage at Covingham Park – Update

Tim Price from SBC contacted the Clerk to say that an investigation will take place on site to find out the best solution to the problem. The Parish Council will be kept informed of investigation dates. SBC will look at findings and will cost up the work, which will be done in-house at SBC. SBC are currently looking into whether or not Section 106 money can be used towards the cost of the work. Awaiting confirmation in writing from SBC.

Report from Groundsman

2 dead trees at Smitan Brook were snapped. Terry has now removed the trees.
A picnic bench was dragged on to the skate park. Terry has taken the bench to the tip, as it was

<p>unsafe.</p> <p>The carpeted area of the toddler play park has been damaged by vandals. Terry has tried to patch up the area, but unfortunately this has also been torn up. Clerk has requested for Komplan to visit the park to provide a quote for replacing the flooring.</p>
<p>Purchases</p> <p>A dog bin has been purchased this month to replace a badly rusted bin that Terry removed for health and safety reasons at Covingham Park. The new bin is now in place.</p>
<p>Grass Cutting</p> <p>A number of complaints have been received about the standard of grass cutting by our contractor this month. Clerk to request for the contractor to lower the blades on his lawn mower.</p>
<p>Dog waste complaints</p> <p>A number of complaints have been received this month about over-flowing dog bins from SBC, parish councillors and members of the public. The Clerk has spoken to the contractor, who apologised for in-frequent emptying of the dog bins recently and explained that he has recently suffered bereavement. Our grass cutting and dog waste service is carried out by the same contractor. To be discussed at the July Parish Council meeting.</p>

Members asked about progress with Section 106 money. **ACTION:** Cllr Osbourn and Cllr Short to arrange a meeting with Bernie Brennan and Tim Price at Swindon Borough Council.

Cllr Hayward informed members that he has looked at the trees at Smitan Brook.

7. Verbal Update from the Chairman

Cllr Osbourn informed members that Cllr Stanbury has written to give her resignation as parish councillor with immediate effect. Cllr Osbourn has accepted her resignation.

Cllr Osbourn met with Robert Buckland , MP for South Swindon with reference to the leaflets for the TRO order in Covingham. Robert Buckland stated that he has nothing against the TRO order on Merlin Way. All he wants is for the order to be extended. Members were reminded that this is a temporary order. Councillors need to be proactive about conveying the thoughts of the Parish Council to Swindon Borough Council. Mr Buckland would have no objections to a permanent order.

Cllr Osbourn informed members that the numbers have increased to 2600 for housing development at Lotmead, to include a local centre, primary school and open spaces with allotments. Cllr Osbourn has arranged a meeting with the Chair of Wanborough Parish Council, developers and Cllr Curtis on 17th July before the development goes to public consultation. Public viewing of the plans will take place between 3.30pm and 7.30pm on Wednesday 23rd July at Covingham Park Primary School. Councillors are welcome to attend.

8. Police Matters (update from local neighbourhood policing team).

There were no representatives of the Police present; however a report was received asking for parents and carers of children around Covingham to be vigilant as there have been reports of a stalker around the school. The person involved was reportedly driving a silver saloon car. Letters have been sent to parents and carers. There has been a report in the Swindon Advertiser.

9. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:

Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Cllr Sandle thanked her team for their hard work. Specific thanks were noted to Cllr Stanbury for her contribution to the committee. Cllr Sandle gave an update on the ‘best front gardens competition’. Certificates have been produced. Cllr Sandle presented copies. Cllrs were happy with the certificates. Letters have been posted to residents. 9 residents have contacted to say they do not wish to take part. An independent person can decide on the overall winner. The closing date is 13th July. Cllr Haigh congratulated the committee on their work and reported that local residents have fed back

that they were highly delighted to receive a letter. Cllr Short has also received positive feedback. Members discussed the possibility of having floral boxes at the entrance to some of the streets in Covingham.

Cllr Sandle agreed to contact Swindon Borough Council about two trees along Dorcan Way and Covingham Drive that require support.

Members noted that Nythe has been granted parish status.

Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):

Members noted and received the email report circulated to the Parish Council. The internal auditors report was reviewed by the Clerk, Chairman and Cllr Benfield and the necessary corrective actions have been taken. The report has been sent to the external auditor. We are currently awaiting a report from the external auditor.

Highways and Recreation (Chair Cllr Short):

Members noted that the skate park equipment has not been moved to date as Cllr Davis has been on holiday. Cllr Short informed members that the equipment will be moved on Saturday 26th July (weather permitting) and invited any available councillors to come on site to help. Cllr Short informed members that the new skate park equipment is free standing. The equipment will only be moved slightly to ensure that children do not come off the equipment on to the path.

Correspondence is on-going with Swindon Borough Council regarding drainage issues at Covingham Park. Members noted that Swindon Borough Council have a number of outstanding maintenance tasks in Covingham. These will be chased up by Cllr Short.

Parish Plan Committee (Chair Cllr Curtis):

No report required this month. Cllr Curtis informed members about the lack of time given by Swindon Borough Council to respond to planning applications.

Covingham Flood Group report (Cllr Curtis): Cllr Curtis circulated a report on the constitution of the Covingham Flood Group. Grace Martin of the National Flood Forum has emailed Cllr Curtis to say that individuals from different agencies have been identified and hope to meet in August.

10. Planning Matters

<p>Application Number: S/14/0956 Proposal: Erection of a conservatory and a 1.8m high fence. Location: 12 Dovetrees, Covingham, SN3 5AX DECISION: No objections.</p>	<p>Planning Application Number: S/EIA/14/0966 Proposal: Request for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening and Scoping Opinions for proposed development. Location: New Eastern Villages, Land South of the A420 and East and West of the A419, Swindon. DECISION: Cllr Curtis to discuss with Chair of Wanborough PC. Cllr Curtis to circulate update.</p>
<p>Application Number: S/14/1024 Proposal: Erection of front extension to porch and single storey side extension. Location: 7 Poltondale, Covingham, Swindon, SN3 5BN DECISION: No objections.</p>	

11. Financial Matters

- The financial Summary and Cheque List were approved, subject to one amended to a payment to the Groundsman of £100. This was approved unanimously by councillors.

- Members received and approved the Q1 Budget Monitoring sheet.
- Discuss proposed capital purchases (dog bins and play equipment maintenance) and review of dog waste contract: Members discussed the issue of overflowing dog waste bins in the parish. Cllr Benfield pointed out a change in the Law meaning that dog owners may dispose of dog waste in general waste bins.

Members discussed whether or not to increase the frequency of the dog bin emptying service, especially during the summer months. The Parish Council previously paid for the bins to be emptied more frequently however; this agreement was not carried over with the new dog bin contractor.

Cllr Benfield pointed out the added strain that any increase in the frequency of the emptying of the bins would have on the budget. Currently there is surplus in the budget to replace any dog bins if required.

Cllr Short mentioned additional black sacks attached to dog waste bins at the Polo Ground. This could be a possible solution to the problem of overflowing waste.

ACTION: Members agreed for heavy duty black sacks to be purchased and attached to the dog bins at the parks in Covingham. This will be reviewed in September. Cllr Benfield will put a notice in the Handy Mag.

- Consider any grant requests received (current grant money £675):
Members received a grant request from The Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust. Members resolved to award £100 to The Bobby Van Trust. It was noted that they attended the AGM last year and have provided services to the residents of Covingham over recent years.
- Review of Clerk's salary (press and public were asked to be excused during this item).
Members discussed the current salary and working from home allowance paid to the Clerk and agreed unanimously to continue to pay the current level of quarterly working from home allowance to the Clerk in accordance with the Clerk's contract. The Clerk confirmed that all payments are subject to PAYE and are sent electronically to HMRC every month.

12. Correspondence

Received from	Subject
Ainscough Strategic Land	Invitation to public exhibition regarding proposed development at Lotmead, Wanborough on 22 nd and 23 rd July 2014.
BIOS	Thank you letter and notice for grant request received.
Bobby Van Trust	Bobby Van News 2014.

13. Matters for consideration

Cllr Haigh commented on the possibility of having wild flower sections to brighten up certain grassed areas at the parks in Covingham. Members noted that the land is owned by Swindon Borough Council so the relevant permissions would be required. Members also discussed the possibility of having exercise equipment installed in the Parish. This has been mentioned by local residents. Members noted that a study had taken place on exercise equipment last year. Some councillors also visited exercise equipment that had been installed in Poole.

ACTION: To be discussed as future agenda items.

The meeting closed at 21:32.