

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 8th September 2014
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

Present: Cllr Benfield, Cllr Hayward, Cllr Parry, Cllr Foss, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Godbold, Cllr Osbourn.

In attendance: Gemma Cheal (Parish Clerk), members of the public.

- 1. Apologies:** Received from Cllr Curtis, Cllr Davis, Cllr Short, Cllr Haigh, Cllr Wichall.
- 2. Declaration of Interests:** None declared.
- 3. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2014**
Minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2014 were approved and signed, subject to an amendment to the attendance record and one amendment to Item 9.
- 4. Matters arising from the previous minutes:** None.
- 5. Public forum:**
Lee Wells, dog waste contractor for Covingham Parish Council was in attendance to update councillors on the current situation with the dog bins. The amount of dog waste was discussed. Lee raised concerns about the lack of a dog bin at Smitan Brook and asked councillors to consider purchasing an additional bin to cope with the dog waste. Cllr Benfield pointed out the change in the law meaning that residents can now dispose of dog waste in their black refuse bins.
ACTION: Councillors agreed to purchase one dog waste bin for Smitan Brook. Lee will continue to monitor the amount of dog waste and will report back any concerns to the Parish Council.
- 6. Clerk's Report**
Members received and noted the following report from the Clerk:

Audit Update

Grant Thornton has now audited the Annual Return for Covingham Parish Council. The original form has been returned to us. The external auditor noted the key recommendations from the internal auditor which were: All payments to be certified by the Clerk and approved by members, formally appointing Clerk as RFO and operating PAYE correctly for expenses. All matters reported have been discussed by Chair of Finance, Chairman and Clerk and will be actioned this financial year. A notice of completion of the audit of the annual return will be placed on parish notice boards.

VAT Refund

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

Dog waste update

New black sacks have been placed on the 4 key dog bins at Smitan Brook and Covingham Park that are particularly full to overflowing during the summer. The bins have been monitored by the dog waste contractor. Additional waste has been placed in the black sacks. No problems have been reported to the Clerk about dog waste or the sacks from residents since July. Awaiting an invoice from the dog waste contractor for the black sacks used.

Grass cutting update

Grass cutting contractor has now been keeping on top of the grass cutting. Contractor apologised for the recent standard of grass cutting and is now doing a good job. No complaints have been received from residents.

Play park equipment update

Triangular piece of play equipment has been ordered with Kompan. Rospa who carry out our play park inspection reported that this needed replacing as part of the report received last year. A play park inspection will take place after installation of the new equipment. Rubber Seals for the

supernova carousal have also been ordered. Deliveries of the new parts are expected at the end of September. Terry our Groundsman will carry out the improvements. A quote has been received for renewing the flooring of the larger play park area. To be discussed under finance in September.

Members noted that drainage works have now been completed at Covingham Park.

7. Verbal Update from the Chairman

Cllr Osbourn reported that a meeting had taken place with developers in August regarding development at the new EarlsCourt Villages in Wanborough. Cllr Osbourn expressed his disappointment at the lack of attendance from Covingham Parish Councillors at this meeting.

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

No report from the Police this month. Members discussed the recent theft of lead from the school roof and noted that the offenders had still not been apprehended or charged. Members agreed for the Clerk to write to the Police to clarify what has happened.

ACTION: Clerk to write a letter to the Police.

9. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:

- Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Best Garden Competition: Three winners have been selected by three independent judges. The presentations will take place at the November Parish Council meeting. The Mayor of Swindon, Councillor Teresa Page has agreed to present the awards.

A letter has been sent to the warden of Hanover Court, thanking the residents for maintaining their gardens to a very high standard. SBC gave the parish council delegated authority to give permission for street boxes. Members noted a survey was carried out last spring to find out where additional bulbs need to be planted in the parish. Members agreed unanimously for Cllr Benfield to purchase a bag of bulbs for planting.

Dead trees have been inspected at the parks in Covingham. There are currently 5/6 dead trees. The Borough has recommended planting silver birch. Cllr Sandle will find out the cost of replacing the trees as well as information on the best time to plant them.

Nythe allotments update: A letter has been sent to all residents currently on the waiting list for an allotment, asking them to contact Nythe directly if they are interested in an allotment at the new site.

- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):

Cllr Benfield reported that the Parish Council are currently working within budget. The ½ year budget report will be presented at the October Parish Council meeting.

The report from the External Auditor was noted and accepted by councillors. The internal audit report received was very thorough and has given the Parish Council a good base to work from in the future.

The Parish Council Asset Register will be reviewed with the Parish Council Groundsman. The inspection of the play parks will be carried out in October. Staff appraisals and a review of job descriptions for the Clerk and Groundsman will take place in due course.

Members noted that the transfer of the Redrow Estate into Covingham Parish will not take place until April 2016. This gives the council an opportunity to plan requirements for the future in plenty of time.

- Highways and Recreation (Chair Cllr Short):

Cllr Short was not present at the meeting. There has been no update on the moving of the skate park equipment to date. Cllr Osbourn will chase this up with Cllr Short.

- Parish Plan Committee (Chair Cllr Curtis):

Nothing to report this month.

- The Covingham Flood Group:

The Covingham Flood Group held the first multi-agency meeting on 14th August, where several points were raised and discussed. The meeting was positive and exceeded the expectations of both the Flood Group and the National Flood Forum. Responses re some items will be given at the next meeting on 8 October but in the meantime the following items can be reported on.

It was confirmed at the meeting that the Dorcan Stream is due to have some maintenance work, i.e. trimming the banks, weeding, rubbish removal, etc. undertaken in September and December 2014. The maintenance schedule is publicly available on the Environment Agency website.

Following several failures of the Kestrel Drive pumping station, it will be inspected by Thames Water and their response is expected at the October meeting.

The Environment Agency has made amendments to the trigger points for warnings to be given re possible flooding incidents, to Covingham residents registered for the flood alert service, in response to data that has previously been provided by Gareth Hawkes.

The size of the Wanborough Road culvert was discussed and the EA have agreed to review their flooding model in light of a) the flood risk to Covingham and b) the potential increase of flood risk due to the proposed Eastern developments.

10. Planning Matters

Application Number: S/14/1230

Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension.

Location: 34 Ravenscroft, Covingham, Swindon, SN3 5AE

DECISION: No objection.

11. Financial Matters

- Approve financial summary and cheque list:
Members approved the financial summary and cheque list subject to one amendment. The word 'certificate' was amended to 'vouchers' on the list of cheques for approval.
- Update on capital purchases (play equipment maintenance): Members agreed to discuss this item after the forthcoming inspection of the play parks.
- Consider any grant requests received (current grant money available £575): One grant request received from 'Hometruths'. Members noted the number of national companies providing a similar service to Hometruths and requested for the Clerk to write asking for further information.

12. Correspondence

Members noted the following received correspondence

Received from	Subject
Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service	Strengthening our Fire and Rescue Service: A briefing on the options
Grant Thornton	Audit certificate and opinion for 2013-14
SBC	Closing date for secondary school places for September 2015

13. Matters for consideration

Members noted that works to the improvements of Covingham Square have still not started.

Cllr Sandle informed members about a tree overhanging Covingham Park Primary School. Cllr Sandle has contacted the Caretaker of the school to report it.

Members noted that the hedges have been trimmed in Martinsfield but they haven't been trimmed by Ravenscroft.

There are still cracks on the footpaths at Covingham Park. Members noted that Cllr Short is due to have a meeting with the Borough to chase up outstanding jobs in Covingham.

Meeting closed at 20:47.