

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 9th February 2015
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

Present: Cllr Hayward, Cllr Short, Cllr Haigh, Cllr Curtis, Cllr Benfield, Cllr Osbourn, Cllr Foss, Cllr Sandle

In attendance:

Gemma Cheal (parish clerk), John Ricketts (Parish Handyman), Ward Councillor Heenan, members of the public

1. Apologies

Received from Cllr Wichall, Cllr Fitchett and Cllr Davis.

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Foss declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 12: Financial Matters with reference to a grant request from Covingham Park Primary School.

3. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2015

Minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2015 were approved and signed.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

The Chairman reported that he had contacted the Police with reference to the lack of reports sent to the Parish Council and attendance at Parish Council monthly meetings. No response has been received to date. Members noted that Cllr Foss spoke with the local PCO Stefan Watts recently. PCO Watts agreed to inform the manager for the Covingham area that there has not been Police attendance at Covingham Parish Council meetings for some time.

5. Public forum

No questions or comments.

6. Clerk's Report

Members received the following report from the Clerk:

Play park inspection

Rospa have now carried out a full inspection of the play equipment in Covingham and a report has been compiled and sent to myself. I have forwarded a copy to the Parish Handyman to have a look through. I am meeting with our Handyman on Thursday 5th to discuss the findings of the report and any subsequent action that needs to be taken. After a read through of the report prior to the meeting, there do not appear to be any urgent issues.

Precept Update

The precept request form from Covingham Parish Council has been returned to Swindon Borough Council. Currently awaiting confirmation of our precept request.

Report from Parish Handyman for January/February

1. 6.5 hours handover from Terry Young (Mon 12th & Tues 13th Jan)
2. £12.50 remaining float received from Terry Young
3. Hedges / Bushes at Lapwing were cutback in December by Terry Young and will not require further cutback until next Autumn
4. Terry told me that the contractor, Lee, will initially mark out football pitch after the grass is cut.
5. 2 trees re-staked in large park (19/01/2015). Ground saturated, can't guarantee how long they will last if we have high winds in the next few weeks.
6. New Triangle has been fitted to the climbing frame (with help from Terry Young)

7. Notified Environment Agency of Trolleys/Plastic/Bike in Dorcan Stream at 11.00am Fri 23rd. By 1.45pm they had visited and cleared the stream.

8. New tree(s) have been planted by SBC in the large park.

Complaint about tree planting near Passmore Close

I received a complaint from a resident of Passmore Close regarding a tree that had been planted near the back of her property. The lady was upset that she had not been consulted and then was surprised to see that the tree had been cut down. The lady wanted me to look into who had planted the tree (presumably SBC) and why the tree was cut down. She also wanted some assurance that no further trees would be planted. I have contacted SBC via the Officer who we ordered our new trees from. The Officer has emailed me back to say that Swindon Borough Council had no involvement with the matter.

Members noted a graph produced by the Parish Handyman showing the number of litter sacks collected each week. Members expressed some concern about the amount of litter collected during the month. Further comments can be seen on this matter under Item 10, Environment Committee Report. The Clerk thanked the Parish Handyman for producing a detailed report this month.

The Clerk informed members that she had met with the Handyman to discuss the findings of the play park inspection report and invited John Ricketts, Parish Handyman to comment. John reported that there were no concerns following the inspection. A number of low risk items had been reported and remedial action will be taken. Members noted that the carpeted surface of the play park areas was given a very low risk score. A concern had been noted previously by a member of the public about the safety of the carpeted area in the toddler play park.

Members noted that the Clerk will be taking holiday from Friday 13th February to Monday 23rd February. An 'out of office' message will be set on the Parish Council email with a divert to the Chairman for urgent matters.

7. Police Matters (Update from local neighbourhood policing team)

No report from the Police this month.

8. Dog Mess Complaint

The Chairman reported complaints received concerning dog mess on the pathways around Covingham Park. The Parish Handyman commented that he had noted dog mess on the grass area of the park, but not on the walkways.

Councillors agreed for Cllr Benfield to draft wording for the Handymag and notice boards concerning dog mess.

Members resolved for notices to be attached the lamp-posts around the park areas reminding dog owners to pick up their dog mess, as this is an on-going issue for the Parish.

9. Terry Young

The Chairman informed members that the former Parish Handyman, Terry Young had worked approximately 5 days since leaving post in order to hand over to the new Handyman, and to help with litter picking at the parks prior to the new Handyman starting. The Chairman proposed to pay Terry £100 for his work which will be put through the HMRC system. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Foss. All councillors voted in favour of the proposal. Motion carried.

10. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:

- Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Members noted the following report from Cllr Sandle:

Tree replacement: The 2 dead trees on Covingham Park have been replaced by Swindon Borough Council and they look quite tall and sturdy. John, our Handyman, has replaced some of the stakes on the trees that were leaning; we do however need to monitor them in the future.

Litter: Litter has been a problem recently, but this was no more than expected over the Christmas and New Year period.

Future Plans/Projects: Cllr Sandle intends to call a meeting of the Environment Committee soon to discuss proposals for the coming year and would appreciate it if any councillors could talk with Cllr Sandle if they have any suggestions.

- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):

Cllr Benfield informed members that it has not been necessary to produce a report this month. Members noted that the Precept request form has been submitted to Swindon Borough Council and we are currently waiting for a confirmation. It is hoped that we will receive an element of the Council Tax Support Grant again this year.

- Highways and Recreation (Chair Cllr Short):

Members noted a report received from Simon Masters, Swindon Borough Council Drainage Engineer. It was noted that although improvements had been made to overcome the issue of ground water by the playground, basketball area and footpath at Covingham Park; there are areas that will have to be revisited and additional drainage added to meet the extents of the ground water within the field and play areas.

ACTION: Clerk to write letter of thanks to Simon Masters, Swindon Borough Council.

- Parish Plan Committee (Chair Cllr Curtis):

No report required this month.

- Covingham Flood Group report (Cllr Curtis):

Members noted that Grace Martin of the National Flood Forum will be leaving post shortly as she has a more local role from April. The National Flood Forum have organised an exhibition at Steam on 12th February. Other local flood groups will be present. The next Flood Group meeting is scheduled for 20th April 2015.

11. Planning Matters

No planning application notifications were received at the time of issuing the agenda; however a planning notification card has since been received regarding a revision to the application for employment development at Eastern Villages South, Land at and to the south of A420 (Great Stall Middle), Swindon. Cllr Curtis informed members that she would have a look through the plans and will contact members of the Planning Committee if a meeting is required. Members were reminded that the Parish Council had previously received a revision to the original planning application, but members resolved not to comment.

12. Financial Matters

- Approve financial summary and cheque list: The financial summary and cheque list was approved unanimously.
- Consider and grant requests received (current grant money available £575)
 - Covingham Park Primary School. Cllr Foss declared a non-pecuniary interest. Members noted a letter received from the school requesting a contribution towards freshening up the school hall and replacing the very old curtains.

Members noted that the school recently suffered loss/theft of the lower school roof last year. The school have replaced the roof area but now have a shortfall in funds from the insurance imbursement.

Cllr Benfield proposed £250. Cllr Short Seconded the proposal. All councillors able to vote were in favour of the proposal, motion carried.

13. Correspondence

Members noted the following received correspondence

Received from	Subject
Covingham Park Primary School	Grant request

14. Matters for consideration

Cllr Benfield commented that he had visited the lady of Passmore who made contact with the Parish Clerk concerning a tree that had been planted at the back of her property that was subsequently cut down. The Parish Council did not ask for a tree to be planted at Passmore and Swindon Borough Council has denied planting the tree.

Cllr Sandle asked Ward Cllr Heenan for information regarding the next Locality meeting. Ward Cllr Heenan informed members that the meetings will have more of a focused theme and will looking at holding a future jobs fair.

Members noted litter along the pathways alongside Dorcan School, going from St. Paul's Drive and along Dorcan Way. Although it is not the responsibility of the Parish Council to litter pick in this area, the school have previously arranged to carry out a litter pick.

Meeting closed at 20:11.

Signed (Chairman):