

Covingham Parish Council

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

Present: Cllr Osbourn, Cllr Benfield, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Wichall, Cllr Haigh, Cllr Short, Cllr Davis, Cllr Foss and Cllr Hayward

In attendance:

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

1. Apologies

Received from Cllr Curtis.

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Benfield declared an interest in Item 12 – Financial Matters, regarding a grant request from Diabetes UK.

3. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2015

Minutes of the meeting held on 9th February were approved and signed, subject to an amendment to items 2 and 12.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Members noted that future Locality meetings would be held in Ward areas rather than in larger areas.

5. Public forum

No comments or questions.

6. Clerk's Report

Precept Update

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

Inspector's Report on the Swindon Borough Council Local Plan 2026

A hard copy of the report has been received from Swindon Borough Council. A copy will be passed on to Cllr Curtis, Chair of Parish Plan Committee. Cllr Curtis will report on findings.

Annual Jobs

I am meeting with the Chair of Finance on Wednesday 11th March to discuss the following:

- Asset register – review,
- Discuss internal audit work ,
- Review Contract for Clerk and Handyman

A full update will be given at the April meeting, along with end of financial year statement.

Outstanding Actions

I had an action at the February meeting to laminate and put up 'bag it and bin it' notices for dog waste around the parks in Covingham. Notices will be made and put up in the next week or so.

Complaints/issues this month

- I have received a 'request for service' email from Swindon Borough Council Environmental Services to ask if the swings at Covingham Park are due to be replaced. I have been given the name and contact number for the resident who presumably raised the query. I will contact the resident to discuss the outcome of the Rospa Inspection report for the swings.
- I have been copied in to an email sent to Swindon Borough Council from a Covingham resident. The resident is chasing up a previously reported street light problem at Hawkswood and Linnetsdene. I have forwarded the copy email to the Ward Councillors with a copy to the

resident concerned, asking them to chase this up.

- I have been made aware of a burned out car at Covingham Shops. I am liaising with Swindon Borough Council regarding the damage to the car park.
Update: The Chairman commented that the issue had been reported to Swindon Borough Council. It is currently in the hands of the insurance company who are due to come out to make an assessment. It is up to the insurance company to make any repairs to the tarmac underneath and to remove the vehicle.

Report from Handyman for February

1. New Protective Clothing ordered 2/2/2015. Collected 9/2/2015.
2. ROSPA report received and investigated. Discussed with Gemma.
3. 2 slow punctures repaired on NFS tyre on van - cost £24.50
4. Sorted out the lock up. Lawnmower casing/cover is significantly damaged/rusted through and the mower is currently unusable.
5. Removed office swivel chair fly tipped on St Pauls Drive.
6. 4 bags of litter picked from Gibbs Close 25/2/2015
7. Removed old bike from bank of Dorcan Stream.
8. I believe the waste bins need to be disinfected every week. Approx additional cost £50/year. Am getting a lot of food discarded e.g. chicken carcasses, sandwiches & cakes.

Signed: John Ricketts

Date: 27 February 2015

Members noted the report from the Handyman this month and agreed unanimously for the bins to be disinfected every week.

Members also noted significant damage to the lawnmower and decided not to replace the item at the present time. This could be reviewed if necessary.

Members pointed out damage on Covingham Park due to tyre marks. This is an on-going problem, particularly with the wet weather.

7. Verbal Update from the Chairman

Cllr Osbourn informed members that the Annual Parish Assembly will take place at 7pm on Monday 13th April, followed by the April Parish Council meeting. Cllr Benfield agreed to advertise the Annual Assembly in the Handymag. Members resolved for a presentation to be given by Cllr Benfield on Diabetes.

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

Members were pleased that a report had been received from the Police this month. In relation to Covingham, members noted an increase in shop lifting at the shops in Covingham Square. Most of the offenders had been caught and prosecuted.

9. Adult Exercise Equipment

Cllr Benfield informed members that he visited the adult exercise equipment located near the Old Town Gardens. This equipment had previously been visited 2 years ago and is still in perfect condition.

A discussion took place about the possible siting of any future adult exercise equipment. Members resolved for Cllr Haigh to get some quotes as a way forward. Cllr Haigh will report back to the Parish Council.

10. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:

- Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Members received the following report from Cllr Sandle:

Street Boxes

Cllr Sandle proposed for flower boxes to be installed, similar to those already installed by some of our residents. The proposed number is 7. 2 at the both end of Kingfisher Drive - Total 4. 1 at the west end of Covingham Drive and 2 at the east end. Approximate cost per box, which includes wood, compost and plants (2 plantings per year), is £50.00 per box, which equates to £350 for the first year then addition maintenance costs for the following years. These costs are for self- assembly and installation.

Sun Flowers

Cllr Sandle put forward the idea of planting sunflowers in various areas across the estate – entrances of Covingham and discussed hosting a tallest sunflower competition.

Bulb Planting

A review of Covingham Drive will take place in preparation for the autumn planting as carried out in Kingfisher Drive last year.

Covingham in Bloom

Some years ago, Covingham Parish Council started a project to enhance our estate by commencing a community planting scheme. The parish supplied the bulbs and the residents planted them. This still continues, but it is fair to say that there are now many areas that have been funded and planted by the residents. We, as councillors, often get praised for the beauty and cleanliness of Covingham but praise must also go to the residents for the part they have played in making spring in Covingham such a pretty and colourful area. I would like to propose that we recommence the scheme where the parish council provide the bulbs & residents are able to obtain the bulbs from us, planting them in areas within Covingham themselves.

Members noted comments received from Cllr Haigh regarding the flower boxes on the end of Tealsbrook. The flower boxes have received a really positive response, but unfortunately someone had pulled out the flowers. A neighbour had kindly replanted everything. This may happen again.

Members noted that Cllr Foss was aware of one problem with the flower boxes at Swallowdale.

Members agreed for the flower boxes to be made. The Clerk agreed to find out if the Handyman would be willing to make and maintain the flower boxes, as well as keeping the flowers watered.

Members discussed the idea of a ‘tallest sunflower’ competition and agreed it would be a good idea to ask the school about the children taking part, although the competition would be opened up to the wider parish through the Handymag. Cllr Foss agreed to discuss the idea with the school.

- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):
Cllr Benfield informed members that the Clerk is still waiting to hear confirmation from Swindon Borough Council regarding the Precept and the Council Tax Support Grant. Covingham Parish Council has submitted a precept request form to Swindon Borough Council.

Members noted that Cllr Benfield attended the recent Swindon Borough Council budget meeting. Members noted that the Borough are cutting the budget for street cleaning by 80% and are passing more cleaning and maintenance responsibilities on to Parish Councils.

- Highways and Recreation (Chair Cllr Short):
Cllr Short reported that clarification is needed with Bernie Brennan about street cleaning and litter picking for Covingham Parish. We are still awaiting a schedule of works from Swindon Borough Council. Attention will be given to patching of the footpaths around the parks in Covingham due to substantial cracks.

Swindon Borough Council has assured that works will be carried out to solve drainage issues on Covingham Park as soon as the weather improves.

- Parish Plan Committee (Chair Cllr Curtis):
The Clerk informed members that a copy of the Inspector’s Report on the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 and the Examiner’s Report on the Swindon Borough Council Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule had been received and passed to Cllr Curtis for information. The Clerk referred members to the Swindon Borough Council website for further information.
- Covingham Flood Group report (Cllr Curtis):
No report this month.

11. Planning Matters
None.

12. Financial Matters

- Approve financial summary and cheque list:
The financial summary and cheque list was approved and signed.
- Consider and grant requests received (current grant money available £325):
2 Grant requests were received this month from Victim Support and Diabetes UK (Cllr Benfield declared a non-pecuniary interest in the grant request from Diabetes UK).

Cllr Foss proposed for an equal split of £162.50 between Diabetes UK and Victim Support. This was seconded by Cllr Haigh.

Cllr Sandle proposed to give £200 to Diabetes UK and £125 to Victim Support. This was seconded by Cllr Hayward.

A vote was taken and a motion was subsequently carried to give an equal split of £162.50 to Victim Support and Diabetes UK.

13. Correspondence

Members noted the following received correspondence

Received from	Subject
Victim Support	Grant request
Diabetes UK	Grant request
Life Cycle UK	Free cycle stands in Swindon
Oil Buying Club	Introduction letter
Local resident	Street lighting problem (copy of email sent to SBC)
SBC	Low carbon development orders for public consultation
WALC	Newsletter – particular attention to a Local Government amendment to the way councillors may receive an agenda electronically.

14. Matters for consideration

Cllr Benfield informed members that he had received correspondence from a local resident regarding the amount of litter in his street. The resident has taken to collecting litter himself. Cllr Benfield replied to the email correspondence accordingly and referred the resident to Swindon Borough Council.

Cllr Haigh commented that in light of a recent programme on television, there has been a lot of concern about asbestos within schools. Cllr Haigh asked if the Parish Council knew whether asbestos has been removed from schools in the area. Cllr Foss assured Cllr Haigh that an extensive survey was carried out in 1997 of all schools and subsequent action was taken.

Cllr Sandle commented on the need to recruit new councillors on the Parish Council. This will be discussed again in the future. Members agreed that Cllr Benfield could seek advice from Swindon Borough Council Law and Democratic Services to seek clarification on altering the size of a Parish Council.

Members noted that one of the more established trees has broken by the Skate Park on Covingham Park.

Cllr Benfield informed members that the long awaited refurbishment of Covingham Square will commence shortly.

Members agreed for Cllr Benfield to make contact with Covingham Ward Councillors regarding the £6,000 Section 106 money for Covingham.

Members discussed the possibility of forming a future committee for Redrow planning. The Chairman will progress this in the future.

Meeting closed at 20:44

Signed (Chairman):