

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 13th July 2015
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

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

In attendance:

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

1. Apologies

Received from Cllr Haigh and Cllr Davis.

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Foss declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 13, Financial Statement.

3. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2015

Minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2015 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Cllr Benfield enquired about whether the Police had been contacted, as agreed on Item 9 of the previous minutes. The Clerk informed members that a Police Officer telephoned her to respond to the information provided from the Parish Council regarding concerns from residents of Tealsbrook. The Police patrolled the area for one month and did not observe any anti-social behaviour.

Cllr Benfield reported that he has heard nothing from Mr and Mrs Goodwin regarding the seat to date.

5. Public forum

No comments or questions from members of the public.

6. Clerk's Report

Members received and noted the following report from the Clerk:

Parish Council Van
The Parish Van has been taxed for a further 6 months. I have requested reimbursement for the card payment made this month in my expenses.
Finance
I met with Cllr Benfield to discuss the audit update, Q1 Finance Statement and Contracts for myself and the Parish Groundsman. Cllr Benfield will provide a full report.
Audit update
The internal audit is now complete. The Annual Return was signed off by the internal auditor and was posted to the external auditor by the deadline date. We are currently waiting for the outcome.
Lotmead Planning Application
I have sent planning responses to Swindon Borough Council for the 2 planning applications discussed at the June Parish Council meeting, as agreed (S/OUT/15/0754 and S/OUT/15/0753).
August
Please be reminded that there is no Parish Council meeting in August.
Handyman Report
A full report from John is attached to this report.

Members thanked John Ricketts, Parish Handyman for his useful reporting each month.

7. Verbal Update from the Chairman

The Chairman informed members that the issues previously reported at Sandpiper have now been resolved, although some concerns were expressed by members about whether or not members of the public would be able to use the public access route should the local resident purchase the land he has been using from Swindon Borough Council. The Chairman agreed to get clarification from Swindon Borough Council.

Reference Covingham Square: The Chairman informed members about a forthcoming article in the Swindon Advertiser concerning Covingham Square due to complaints from local residents. The Chairman reiterated that members knew nothing of the staffing issues concerning Human Resources with a Council Officer that led to delays. Cllr Benfield was previously assured by Cllr Parry that the shops were going to be completed at the end of March.

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

No email report this month, although the Clerk received an update telephone call from the Police, as reported under Item 4.

9. Adult Exercise Equipment Update

The Clerk informed members that the adult exercise equipment is scheduled to be installed on the 24th and 25th August.

10. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:

- Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Allotments

There are still vacant plots available at the Nythe site and anyone interested in renting one needs to apply to nytheallotments@outlook.com.

Three Covingham residents have 'come off' the Wanborough waiting list. One has taken a plot, one asked to be removed as the plot was too big & the other asked to be removed due to work commitments.

Street Boxes

We have received some good feedback from the public on how lovely they are looking. The summer bedding plants will soon need to be replaced with autumn plants. My initial thoughts are for daffodils, tulips, bluebells and lily of the valley. I would very much welcome any suggestions from members. We will require more peat for the autumn planting, as the boxes will need to be "topped up".

Members agreed for Cllr Sandle to maintain and upkeep the planters as there is a budget in place for this.

Due to the lack of response (except from one kind member of the public) to my request for help with the watering, it was felt necessary to purchase two 10 litre water containers. Cllr Benfield has managed to rescue two containers, which were surplus to requirements from his neighbour. This now gives us a total of four, which has made the task of watering much easier for us, I have taken on the role of watering Kingfisher West and Cllr Benfield will water the eastern end as well as the box at the west end of Covingham Drive & with the kind help from our member of the public, who is watering the boxes at Covingham east, we now have a system & things seem to be working well & are looking good.

Street Signs

Last year we carried out a survey of the daffodils under the street signs on Kingfisher & Covingham Drive. New bulbs were planted along Kingfisher. We intend to complete the programme by doing Covingham Drive this autumn. As there is no meeting in August, maybe now is a good time to decide how many bulbs we required & to agree purchase arrangements.

Bus Shelters

This was discussed at our last meeting. Although a colour was suggested, I have asked for this to be reconsidered. John has suggests that we use Hammerite Gloss as this is a special metal paint which can be painted onto metal & rust without the need for rust treatment or undercoating. He would expect the cost to be about £25 per shelter, £200 in total. Another reason for using Hammerite is due to the quick drying time. Hammerite takes between 1 - 4 hrs depending on the colour. Most other paints take up to 12 - 16 hrs. The colours available are: Black, Red, Cream, Dark Green, Muted Clay, Blue, White, Yellow, Wild Thyme, Silver & Gold. It was highlighted that using a light colour, such as Cream, Silver or Gold, could be a high risk for graffiti.

Members resolved to paint the bus shelters blue. Members agreed that Cllr Sandle could make decisions as Chair of the Environment Committee going forward on such matters.

N20 Cartridges.

Good news is there were no N20 cartridges found in our parks or the grass verges during the month of June but the disappointing news is that 26 were found in the Dorcan Stream last week. John believes there is not any environmental risk from the cartridges, as they will be closed and not leaking. However, I would like to suggest that this latest incident is reported to the police.

Tree survey: Cllr Sandle informed members that a number of trees within the Parish have epicormics growth, particularly within the parks. The trees require observation and attention.

- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):

Contracts of employment have been reviewed and are now waiting to be signed off by the Clerk, Handyman and Chairman.

The quarterly outturn statement shows we are still in a healthy financial situation but as in previous years bills do not always come equally in each quarter. In the early part of the year it can show we could be facing a deficit at year end, but by year end a true picture will emerge and once again I anticipate we will perform within budget.

It was decided not to rewrite the Budget Monitoring sheet for 2015-16 and to place any costs for the plants, boxes, water containers and peat in the capital budget. Next year 2016-17 a cost centre will be generated for these items.

The Handyman's expenses are being shown in the cost centre for Park and Parish Maintenance.

The internal audit has been completed and was cleared and the results sent to the District Auditors. I would like to recommend that a sum of £100 be forwarded to the Internal Auditor. I believe he would then give it as a donation to his local church. **Members agreed unanimously to pay £100 to the internal auditor for his work.**

Finally, we need to set up a meeting with the Clerk and Handyman for formal appraisals. **After some debate, members resolved for appraisals to be carried out in the form of one-to-one meetings for the Clerk and Handyman. Members also resolved for a work mobile telephone to be purchased for the Clerk and the Handyman.**

- Recreation (Chair Cllr Haigh and Cllr Osbourn)

Covered under Item 9 of the minutes.

- Parish Plan/Highways Committee (Chair Cllr Curtis):

Cllr Curtis informed members that she recently attended a developer exhibition at Redlands, Wanborough with Cllr Benfield and Cllr Sandle. Attendance at the exhibition was very disappointing. Cllr Benfield asked if the Traffic Regulation Order has been renewed on Merlin way. The answer was no and it is not going to be renewed. The announcement is due to be made next month.

Members discussed concerns about lorries trying to go through Kingfisher Drive. The Chairman stated that the Parish Council were always on the understanding that the Traffic Regulation Order was only temporary on Merlin Way and would also include Kingfisher Drive. Members require absolute assurance that Kingfisher Drive will be not impacted by heavy goods vehicles.

The next meeting on the Flood Forum is scheduled for 20th July. There is an item on the agenda to discuss flood attenuation issues, as discussed at the developer meeting.

Cllr Curtis pointed out that there was no mention at the development exhibition of having an access road from the northern side of the A420. Members requested for the Clerk to contact the developers to organise a Special Meeting of the Parish Council.

- Covingham Flood Group report (Cllr Curtis):

Report to follow, following the next meeting of the Flood Group on 20th July.

11. Planning Matters

Application Number: S/15/0950

Re: Erection of a dormer window to rear.

At: 6 Falconscroft, Covingham Swindon SN3 5AF

No objections.

Application Number: S/15/0758

Re: Erection of a pergola to front entrance and smoking shelter to garden area.

At: The Messenger , Covingham Square Covingham Swindon SN3 5AA

Noise impact and smoking to the front of premises comments noted.

Application Number: S/15/0857

Re: Conversion of garage to living accommodation.

At: 15 Lapwing Close, Covingham Swindon SN3 5EB

No objections.

Application Number: S/15/0972

Re: Erection of a first floor extension over existing garage/utility room to provide a granny annex.

At: 7 St Ambrose Close, Covingham Swindon SN3 5EG

No objections.

12. Financial Matters

- Approve financial summary and cheque list (Cllr Foss declared an interest):
The financial summary and cheque list was approved by members.
- Receive Q1 budget statement:
The Q1 budget statement was approved by members.
- Consider and grant requests received (current grant money available £850)
No grant requests received.

13. Correspondence

Members noted the following received correspondence:

Received from	Subject
SBC	Code of Conduct training for councillors.

Victim Support	Letter of thanks for recent grant.
Harris Lamb	Invitation to Community Consultation at Redlands

14. Matters for consideration

Cllr Foss discussed a car parked illegally over the paths at Martinfield. Cllr Foss to take registration number of the vehicle. The Chairman will then pass this to the Police.

Cllr Short asked members to keep an eye on the Swindon Borough Council website, as they will be publishing schedules of works for the Borough and for all parishes.

Cllr Sandle mentioned an area of Covingham Park that was flooded in previous years. Members agreed that more work needs to be done in this area. An assessment will be carried out again in the winter.

Cllr Benfield informed members that he had observed that the 3 Ward Councillors recently carried out a 'clean up in Coleview' project that was announced on Facebook. They plan to carry out a 'clean up Covingham' in the future.

Cllr Curtis informed members that she is the named person on letters that are to be distributed through resident's doors about local number 20 bus service that is being stopped. This is not Parish Council business and is for information only.

Meeting closed at 20:56.

Signed (Chairman):