

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 4th January 2016 at 7.30pm
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

Present: Cllr Curtis, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Benfield, Cllr Osbourn (Chair), Cllr Foss and Cllr Haigh

In attendance:

Gemma Cheal (parish clerk), Scott Wichall, members of the public

- 1. Apologies**
Received from Cllr Hayward and Cllr Short.
- 2. Declaration of Interests**
None declared.
- 3. Presentation to Scott Wichall for his dedication and service to Covingham Parish Council**
Cllr Osbourn welcomed Scott Wichall to the Parish Council meeting and presented him with a salver in recognition for his service to the Parish Council during the last 13 years.
- 4. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2015**
Minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2015 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.
- 5. Matters arising from the previous minutes**
Cllr Benfield enquired about progress on updating the Parish website. The Clerk informed members that the login details have been given to Scott Wichall, who agreed to update the website when he has an opportunity.
- 6. Public forum:** Opportunity for members of the public to raise and issues
No comments or questions from members of the public.
- 7. Clerk's Report**
The Clerk informed members that the Handyman has purchased a new battery for the Parish Van. The invoice amount has been added to the list of cheque payments for approval.

Members noted that the Handyman collected 649 sacks of rubbish during 2015, which equates to between 6 to 6.5 tonnes of rubbish.

Members also noted a report that the gate to the play park on Covingham Park has been vandalised. Repairs will be carried out by the Handyman.
- 8. Verbal Update from the Chairman**
The Chairman informed members that Cllr Hayward would be unable to attend Parish Council meetings for the foreseeable future due to personal circumstances. Members agreed unanimously to grant extended leave of absence for Cllr Hayward.
- 9. Police Matters** (Update from local neighbourhood policing team)
No report from the Police this month.
- 10. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:**
 - Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Cllr Sandle informed members that Christmas cards had been delivered containing vouchers for local residents, towards the upkeep of the flower boxes. 3 thank you responses have been received.

Members noted that the daffodils are beginning to bloom, as a result of the recent mild weather.

- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):

Members resolved to defer until Item 12 on the agenda.

- Recreation (Chair Cllr Haigh and Cllr Osbourn):

Cllr Osbourn informed members that Cllr Davis had arranged to fix a piece of play park equipment at Covingham Park at no cost to the Parish Council. Members resolved for the Clerk to thank Cllr Davis on behalf of the Parish Council.

Cllr Haigh informed members that he had monitored the impact of heavy rain on the field at Covingham Park, near to the school that is usually flooded. The area near the pathway to the side of the school was flooded, however; the area by the path near the skateboard park was relatively clear which appears to show that the drainage improvement works have been successful.

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

Members noted that a forthcoming Parish Liaison meeting is scheduled with Swindon Borough Council in January. An agenda has not yet been circulated. Cllr Curtis would like to add an item on the agenda regarding SUDs review. Members were in agreement for this item to be added to the agenda.

- Covingham Flood Group report (Cllr Curtis):

Members noted that the next Flood Group meeting is scheduled for 18th January. Members noted issues regarding communication of appropriate flood alerts to residents of Covingham. Concerns will be followed up with the Environment Agency.

11. Planning Matters

No planning applications received this month.

12. Financial Matters

- Approve financial summary and cheque list:

Members approved the financial summary and cheque list, subject to the addition of £200.28 for the van battery.

- Receive Q3 budget statement:

Members resolved to defer this item until February Parish Council meeting.

- Transfer of Services from Swindon Borough Council to Covingham Parish Council – implications for Covingham (including Redrow Estate):

Members noted a presentation given by Swindon Borough Council Officer Kirsty Cole, prior to the Parish Council meeting regarding the transfer of services from Swindon Borough Council to Parish Councils.

Swindon Borough Council requested that in line with other parish councils, Covingham Parish Council take on some additional duties such as Grounds Maintenance (Summer), Grass cutting, hedges, shrubs, weed killing, verges, bedding, adhoc requests and Grounds Maintenance (Winter) to include hedges, shrubs, verges, adhoc requests, litter picking and street sweeping.

Members noted that pilot schemes in other parished areas have been successful and agreed that this could be an opportunity to make improvements to the parish, such as street cleaning.

Members noted that Swindon Borough Council agreed to provide transitional support to Covingham Parish Council from 1st April 2016 and will provide 100% funding for taking on additional services as a one off payment for the financial year 2016/17. This will then be reduced to 50% in year 2 (financial year 2017/18) and 25% in year 3 (financial year 2018/19).

Swindon Borough Council informed members that the cost of these services is £35,000.

Members resolved unanimously to take on additional services from 1st April 2016. Members resolved to form a Management Committee to aid the transition, with the following members: Cllr Osbourn (Chair), Cllr Benfield, Cllr Curtis, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Haigh and Cllr Foss.

ACTIONS: Cllr Osbourn, Cllr Benfield and the Clerk to meet to agree wording for a press release. Members agreed for a flyer to be generated and distributed to Covingham residents. Members instructed the Clerk to arrange a meeting with Kirsty Cole, to discuss the transfer of services in more detail.

- Approval of budget and precept for financial year 2016/17
In line with discussions above, members resolved unanimously to increase the precept for the financial year 2016-17 to £40,050.

This increase in costs will equate to 13.5 pence per week to local residents.

- Consider and grant requests received (current grant money available £850)
Members noted a grant request letter from Victim Support. The Clerk informed members for information, that Victim Support had received a grant from the Parish Council for the amount of £162.50 in April 2015.

Members resolved unanimously to decline the grant request on this occasion, as they have already received a grant payment in this financial year.

13. Correspondence

Members noted the following received correspondence

Received from	Subject
Victim Support	Grant Request
Lee Wells	Increase for dog waste collection service (from £2.25 to £2.50 per bin). Noted and agreed by members.

14. Matters for consideration

Cllr Foss raised concerns about tyre tracks on the parks in Covingham.

ACTION: Clerk agreed to write to dog waste contractor to ask him to carry out waste collections on foot in wet weather.

Cllr Curtis asked members about their views on the Community Governance Review. Members commented that they do not believe there is a requirement for 3 Ward Councillors representing each of the Wards.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed (Chairman):