

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 1st February 2016
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

Present: Cllr Haigh, Cllr Foss, Cllr Curtis, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Benfield, Cllr Osbourn, Cllr Hawkes

In attendance:

Gemma Cheal (parish clerk), members of the public

1. Apologies

Received from Cllr Short.

2. Declaration of Interests

None declared.

3. To consider the Co-option of Parish Councillors

The Chairman welcomed Gareth Hawkes to the meeting. The Clerk has received a formal expression of interest in becoming a Parish Councillor from Gareth and confirmed that Gareth meets the criteria for becoming a Parish Councillor. Cllr Curtis proposed for Gareth to become a Parish Councillor. This was seconded by Cllr Foss. Members resolved unanimously for Gareth Hawkes to become a member of Covingham Parish Council. The Clerk asked Cllr Hawkes to sign a declaration of acceptance of office and gave him a welcome pack, including Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Declaration of Interest forms.

Cllr Hawkes agreed to join the Parish Planning Committee. ACTION CLERK: Clerk to add Cllr Hawkes to committee list and circulate.

4. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 4th January 2016

Minutes of the meeting held on 4th January 2016 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Cllr Benfield asked for an update on the website. The Clerk informed members that Scott Wichall has not yet updated the website. ACTION CHAIRMAN: The Chairman agreed to speak to Scott Wichall to check on progress.

6. Public forum

One member of the public raised concerns about the number of stinging nettles by the embankment near Osprey Close. Cllr Benfield informed the resident that it is the responsibility of Swindon Borough Council to resolve such issues and encouraged the resident to contact Ward Councillor Hurley. Cllr Osbourn asked the resident to copy him in on correspondence sent, for him to follow up.

Another member of the public noted a planning application on the agenda for the Redlands development and raised concerns about the increase on traffic that will be generated, through Covingham. Particularly if the new school is not built in conjunction with the new houses. This will have traffic implications on Kingfisher Drive due to more children coming to school in Covingham. The local resident also raised concern about the lack of a southern connector road.

The resident did not agree that Covingham Parish Council should take on additional services from Swindon Borough Council and raised concerns that residents will be charged twice for less. He commented that there will be no need for 3 Ward Councillors and that 1 will be enough.

The Chairman replied that the Parish Council are in agreement with comments made regarding the Redlands development. Members will discuss the planning application under Item 12. A discussion will take place under Item 8 regarding an update on the transfer of services. ACTION CLERK: The Clerk agreed to keep resident informed of the outcome of discussions regarding the transfer of services following the meeting.

Cllr Haigh mentioned comments from a neighbour regarding housing development at Wichelstowe. Swindon Borough Council should be encouraged to finish this development first as it will add significantly to Swindon's housing quota, prior to further development.

7. Clerk's Report

Members received the following report from the Clerk and noted a report from the Handyman.

<p>Website</p> <p>I have updated contact information on the Parish Council website to reflect our current membership. Scott Wichall has not yet updated 'the bones' of the site.</p>
<p>Handyman Report</p> <p>A full report from John is attached to this report.</p>
<p>Police</p> <p>The Handyman reported that a kitchen knife with a 5 inch blade was found in a waste bin by the skate park on Covingham Park. The Handyman has also received reports from local residents of joy riding on Covingham Park on Saturday 16th January. The park is rutted from one side of the park to the other. This has been reported the above to the Police.</p>
<p>Responses to SBC</p> <p>I have forwarded the precept request form (as agreed at the January 2016 Parish Council meeting) on behalf of Covingham Parish Council to the Head of Finance, Swindon Borough Council.</p>
<p>Meeting with Swindon Borough Council re. transfer of services</p> <p>A meeting is scheduled with the Chair and Vice Chair, myself and Swindon Borough Council Officers on 27th January to discuss transfer of services to Covingham Parish Council from 1st April 2016. The Chair will give an update as part of his verbal report at the February Parish Council meeting.</p>
<p>Actions from January Parish Council meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An email has been sent to Lee Wells (dog bin contractor re. rutting on Covingham Park from tyres). Lee has apologised and reminded his team not to drive on the grass. • Thank you email has been sent to Terry Davis on behalf of the Parish Council for carrying out repairs to play park equipment so promptly. • Precept request sent to Swindon Borough Council.

8. Verbal Update from the Chairman

The Chairman read a report produced by the Clerk, following a meeting with Swindon Borough Council (SBC) Officers on 27th January 2016.

Members noted that at the meeting, SBC could not provide a detailed breakdown of costs for grass cutting and hedge cutting that they currently provide. Further information and clarification is also required regarding future services of waste disposal (including licensing) and the cleaning of public toilets. This is something that was not previously mentioned when Kirsty Cole, Head of Finance presented to members of Covingham Parish Council.

Members discussed the various decisions taken by neighbouring parish councils and noted that Stratton Parish Council will be holding a Parish Poll prior to making a decision. Members discussed feedback received from a recent distribution of flyers to local residents. Cllr Benfield and the Clerk commented on the various feedback received, namely double taxation.

Members discussed the importance of communicating with other Parish Councils at this time and considered re-joining the Swindon Area Committee (SAC) as a good forum for doing this.

After further debate, members passed the following resolution: At this present moment in time, Covingham Parish Council do not wish to proceed with the transfer of services from Swindon Borough Council to Covingham Parish Council from 1st April 2016. We are open to continued dialogue at the request of Swindon Borough Council.

Members agreed that all Parish Councillors will be invited to future meetings to discuss the potential transfer of services with Swindon Borough Council going forward.

9. Police Matters

No report received this month.

10. Discuss requirement for further seating around Covingham Park

Cllr Foss informed members that the seats on Covingham Park were originally installed in the 1980's. Since that time, new equipment has been installed on the park. Some residents, particularly the elderly and disabled have difficulty accessing all of the adult exercise equipment without having a rest. Cllr Foss suggested putting one seat between Heronscroft and Linnetsdene and one between the skateboard park and the play area as a minimum. The 2 proposed locations will be away from houses.

Members noted that the Parish Council had previously agreed that seating would never be installed under street lighting.

ACTION CLLR OSBOURN AND CLLR HAIGH: The Chairman agreed to get costings to come back to the Parish Council.

11. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:

- Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

No report this month, however members noted an email complaint received from a resident regarding a pot hole on Wrenswood and noted a further pot hole on Robinsgreen. Members also noted concern about surface water by the end of Swallowdale and acknowledged that this is a low spot.

- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):

Discussed under Item 13.

- Recreation Committee (Chair Cllr Haigh and Cllr Osbourn):

No report this month.

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

Members received and noted a report from Cllr Curtis regarding a liaison meeting with 2 Swindon Borough Council planning officers regarding the New Eastern Villages (NEV) development on 25th January 2016 with 4 Covingham Parish Councillors in attendance. All Planning applications relevant to the NEV were discussed.

- Covingham Flood Group report (Cllr Curtis):

Members received and noted a report on the latest multi-agency meeting was held on 18 January 2016.

For the purpose of residents, as previously stated **ALL** sewerage incidents need to be reported to Thames Water immediately. They can be contacted on **0800 316 9800**

The Environment Agency's flood line 24 hour service can be contacted on **0345 988 1188**

River levels can be viewed on the Environment Agency website or via 'Google' *environment agency river levels Dorcan brook*

The Covingham Flood group can be contacted via email – Covinghamfloodgroup@gmail.com

12. Planning Matters

- S/16/0089NIHO

Re: Erection of a single storey side/rear extension and demolition of existing garage

At: 15 Brind Close, Covingham, Swindon, SN3 5EJ

Decision: No objections.

- S/OUT/16/0021

Re: Application for the erection of up to 370no. dwellings, a local convenience store, a primary school, open space, landscaping, on site infrastructure. Means of access not reserved.

At: Redlands Eastern Villages, Swindon

Members noted concerns about increased traffic problems and flooding. Members noted that the figure of 370 dwellings is different from the figure in the Local Plan.

ACTION CLLR CURTIS AND CLERK: Cllr Curtis to produce wording for a response that will be sent by the Clerk. Wording to be circulated to members.

13. Financial Matters

- Approve financial summary and cheque list

Members unanimously approved the financial summary and cheque list.

- Receive Q3 budget statement

Members received and accepted the Q3 budget statement. Cllr Benfield informed members that next year's budget figures cannot be developed until we have confirmation of our precept request from Swindon Borough Council.

- Consider and grant requests received

No grants received. ACTION CLERK: Clerk to check money available for grants.

14. Correspondence

Members noted the following received correspondence

Received from	Subject
Anthony Paginton	Copy of response sent to SBC re. Redlands planning application
Gareth Hawkes	Expression of interested on becoming a parish councillor
Aaron, Wrenswood Owners Co. Ltd	Planting boxes and road surface
Sue Young	Rubbish on Covingham Drive
Barbara Kimber	Update on gym equipment by Falconscroft
Matthew Braley	Freedom of information request
Swindon Borough Council	Community Governance Review Open Sessions information
Swindon Borough Council	Consultation on the South Marston Village Neighbourhood Plan Submission Documents
Swindon Borough Council	Ethics training – 9 th March 2016, 7pm at Haydon Wick Parish Council offices

15. Matters for consideration

Cllr Benfield pointed out that Covingham Square is now looking a lot better and noted newly planted trees.

Cllr Curtis mentioned a forthcoming Borough/Parish meeting with Stephen Taylor on 10th March. This could be a good opportunity to discuss the potential transfer of services with other parishes. The next meeting of the Swindon Area Committee (SAC) will be 17th March.

ACTION CLERK: Clerk to contact SAC regarding membership costs.

Cllr Haigh discussed poor lighting at the crossing on Kingfisher Drive and used Ermin Street crossing as a good example of better beacon lighting. ACTION: Clerk to contact Ward Councillor Heenan about improved lighting at Kingfisher.

Members discussed the grass supports for the adult exercise equipment and noted that they would like to see the supports further back from the path.

Meeting closed at 20:55

Signed (Chairman):