



Minutes of The Parish Council's

**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING**

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2016, 7pm in Covingham Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

**Meeting with Kirsty Cole, Head of Finance and Change, Swindon Borough Council**

In attendance: Cllr Benfield (Chair), Cllr Curtis, Cllr Foss, Cllr Haigh, Cllr Paginton, Kirsty Cole (Head of Finance and Change, Swindon Borough Council), Gemma Cheal (Parish Clerk).

**1. Apologies**

Received from Cllr Osbourn and Cllr Sandle.

Cllr Benfield welcomed Kirsty Cole, Head of Finance and Change to the meeting. Introductions were given.

**2. Declaration of Interests** *councillors are reminded that they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered.*

None declared.

**3. Update on the current status of the parishing of Swindon and what the Borough parishes have committed to (KC).**

Kirsty Cole distributed a hard copy of the 'Potential Transfer of Services to Parish Councils' document to members.

Kirsty Cole referred to the 'Current Status' slide on the presentation. 6 Parish Councils have taken on additional services to date (Bishopstone, Haydon Wick, Highworth, Nythe, Wanborough and Wroughton). 6 Parish Councils are currently in discussion with Kirsty Cole about the possibility of taking on additional services (Blunsdon St. Andrews, Chiseldon, Covingham, Liddington, South Marston and Stratton St Margaret) and 3 Parish Councils have not agreed to take on any additional services (Castle Eaton, Hannington and Stanton Fitzwarren).

Kirsty explained the wider context of the potential transfer of services, namely that Swindon Borough Council is required to find £19m each and every year from now to 2020, at which point 80p in every pound of Council Tax will be spent on vulnerable residents. Swindon Borough Council will therefore be spending less on 'maintenance' services. Continual maintenance by the Borough will lead to a worse standard which will eventually discontinue by 2017. Swindon Borough Council will be available to aid smooth transition and transitional funding will be provided.

Members noted the forthcoming Community Governance Review that will determine the future parishing of Swindon. Swindon Borough Council administration are still minded to continue with the transfer of services.

Members questioned the requirement for the current number of Ward Councillor as well as questioning the payment of allowances.

Kirsty confirmed that nothing is set out in Statues regarding the Statutory responsibility of Swindon Borough Council to retain the current maintenance services provided although Swindon Borough Council do have a statutory responsibility to ensure health and safety requirements.

**4. Financial recompense for Servicing Redrow for 2016/17.**



Cllr Benfield pointed out that Covingham Parish Council had taken on the maintenance of Redrow from 1<sup>st</sup> April, with no funding from Swindon Borough Council. Kirsty Cole apologised for timing mistakes which resulted in a financial loss to Covingham Parish for the upkeep of the Redrow Estate and assured that an additional payment will be made to Covingham Parish Council to make up for the financial loss to the Parish as part of an agreement of transfer of services.

Kirsty pointed out that the Redrow estate has little requirement currently for street cleaning. Proposed additional transitional funding to cover Grounds maintenance of Redrow would be £1,750 over 3 years (£1K year one).

**5. Swindon Borough Council proposal to transfer services to Covingham Parish Council.**

Kirsty Cole referred to the current Borough funded services provided for Covingham, including grounds maintenance (Summer) – grass cutting, hedges, shrubs, weed killing, verges, bedding and ad hoc. Requests. Grounds maintenance (winter) – hedges, shrubs, verges and ad hoc. requests and litter picking and street sweeping (hand tools and small sweeper).

**Members raised the following concerns with Kirsty Cole:**

- Street sweeping – sweepers not seen in Covingham
- **Public toilets by Covingham Shops** (noted by Kirsty as a major concern)
- Fly tipping
- Car park resurfacing
- Reporting issues- members of the public currently report concerns to Swindon Borough Council. Concerns currently are responded to within a short timescale. Parish Clerk works part time hours and would not be able to meet current timescales in responding to issues. Kirsty confirmed that an arrangement could be made whereby switchboard could forward correspondence to Clerk on short term basis.

**Services to be retained by Swindon Borough Council:**

- Maintenance and cleaning of major highways
- Collection and disposal of green waste
- Tree servicing

**After the vote Members resolved to rescind the previous motion made by the Parish Council that the Parish Council will not take on additional services, and actively look at and investigate the possibility of taking on additional grass cutting, hedge trimming and litter picking (excluding areas at both shops).** (Cllr Paginton voted against this motion).

**ACTIONS AGREED:**

- Kirsty Cole to email 'draft legal agreement' to Clerk for circulation
- Kirsty Cole to check with Rob Core and Martin Hambidge about removal of rubbish (fly tipping)
- Kirsty Cole to enquire about resurfacing of car park (by smaller shop)
- Kirsty Cole to check frequency of street sweeping (including smaller hand sweeper)