

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 6th June 2016
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

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

In attendance:

Gemma Cheal (parish clerk), members of the public

1. Apologies

Received from Cllr Hawkes.

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

Cllr Foss declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 11 (Financial Matters), 3rd bullet point (grant requests).

3. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on:

• **9th May 2016 and 18th May 2016 (Extraordinary meeting with Kirsty Cole)**

Minutes of the meeting held on 9th May 2016 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record, subject to an amendment to Item 5. Minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2016 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record, subject to the addition of attendees.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Public toilets: Cllr Haigh pointed out that local people are finding it increasingly difficult to access public toilets as there are so few. Members previously discussed the possibility of closing public toilets in Covingham Square with Swindon Borough Council. Cllr Haigh commented that any decision to close the toilets should be made by Swindon Borough Council.

5. Public forum

No comments or questions.

6. Clerk's Report

Members received the following report from the Clerk:

Website

Clerk has contacted Scott Wichall to ask for information on how to access the control panel of the website. Once this has been ascertained, Gareth will be able to look into the site in more detail.

Update: Login details have now been received from Scott, although we have no password.

Audit Update

Financial information is currently with the Internal Auditor. It is hoped that this will be completed by 6th June 2016.

Handyman Report

Members received a report from the Handyman.

Issues to note this month:

- 2 off road vehicles parked in bays at Pheasant Close (reported by John)
- Newly welded playground gate has once again been vandalised. Clerk has asked Terry Davis if he would be willing to repair. No response to date.
- The old waste bin on St Paul's Drive was "unbolted" over the weekend and the liner thrown down the bank nearly into the stream. John has put it back for now.
- John has suggested we buy at least one complete new waste bin & fixings, in order to replace it totally should it happen again. It is one of the bins that will need replacing soon anyway.
- John has removed a tyre & wheel hub; fly tipped on one of the communal areas on the Redrow estate.

- There is also a bed and a sofa, at the end of Larksfield Road in the park area. This will be monitored and reported to SBC if not removed.

Forthcoming Meetings:

- Covingham Parish Liaison Meeting (NEV update): Tuesday 21st June, 2pm.

Parish Council Insurance

Insurance for Covingham Parish Council has been renewed from 1st June 2016 as agreed at the May Parish Council meeting.

Comments from members:

- Website: Cllr Benfield asked all members to look at the Parish website in order to feedback comments. Clerk agreed to find out about 'Transparency Act' online.
- Cllr Curtis enquired about removal of abandoned vehicles. Clerk informed members that all reports of abandoned vehicles have been sent to the Police for investigation.

7. Verbal Update from the Chairman

No report this month.

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

Apologies received from the Police this month.

9. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:

- Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Members received the following report from Cllr Sandle:

Grass Cutting

There has been numerous comments regarding the state of the grass cutting or should I say lack of it around Covingham, in some area the grass is knee high. I have informed the complainants that they need to address these issues with either their Ward Councillors or the Borough, as this is not part of the parish remit, although Derek & myself have taken it upon ourselves to trim some of the offending areas.

As you are aware Lee currently cuts the grass on the parks, should we have to undertake all grass cutting in the parish, in the future, would it be beneficial to extend Lee's contract to also incorporate the whole of the area around the parks & put the remaining areas out to tender.

Floral display

It has been noted that the boxes that have been installed in Wrenwood have still not been adopted. There is an ongoing summer planting scheduled for our 7 boxes, which are still receiving favourable praise.

Future planning

We are looking at the possibility of erecting some bird boxes in some of the trees within the parish & would welcome any comments/suggestions regarding this or any ideas you feel would enhance the parish. ACTION: Cllr Sandle/Environment Committee to carry out a feasibility study for bird boxes.

Members discussed maintenance of flower boxes at Swallowdale now that Bev is no longer able to maintain them.

- Consider request of 2 floral boxes for Dovetrees:

ACTION: Clerk to contact Wrenwood resident to see if they will be adopting flower boxes. If they do not respond/wish to adopt, flower boxes will be given to Dovetrees.

- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):

No report this month.

- Recreation (Chair Cllr Haigh):

Members noted information received from 'Fields in Trust' – the operating name of the National Playing Fields Association. The Centenary Fields Programme – protecting valuable green space across

the Country, is inviting applications to secure local recreation spaces in perpetuity, in honour of the memory of millions of people who lost their lives in conflict. Members discussed applying to protect both Covingham Park and Smitan Brook. The Clerk pointed out that Covingham Parish Council lease the land from Swindon Borough Council. Members noted that the application does not require any change to the ownership and management of the site, which remains entirely at local level.

Members noted the cost of the contribution is £50 for a year (£100 for both fields).

Members resolved unanimously to complete the application for potential Centenary Fields (Action Clerk).

Update on seating discussed under Item 11, Financial Matters (5th bullet point).

Members noted a special offer currently available from Wicksteed Playgrounds for a basketball court. Members discussed the possibility of the basketball court as a replacement for the current basketball area in the corner of Covingham Park. Members noted the cost of £16,000 for the complete basketball unit, including surround fencing, plus £5,000 for installation.

The Clerk reminded councillors that in accordance with Parish Council Financial Regulations, three quotations would be required prior to any decision to purchase equipment.

Members resolved to delegate authority to Cllr Haigh to obtain three quotations to tarmac the current basketball court area on Covingham Park. Following quotations and deliberation, members can consider obtaining quotations for a new basketball court.

Cllr Sandle reminded councillors of previous drainage problems on Covingham Park, although this now seems to have been resolved by Swindon Borough Council Drainage Engineers.

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

Councillors noted correspondence received from the Borough regarding a highways proposal for Covingham Drive currently at a feasibility design stage. The off-road shared use cycle-pedestrian route between the Piccadilly Junction (Dorcan Way) and the junction of Merlin Way represents a missing link in the Swindon urban cycle network. The route will run along the northern verge of Covingham Drive. Members expressed concern about the potential flood impact and the removal of trees.

ACTION: Cllr Curtis to draft response to Swindon Borough Council. Response to be sent through the Clerk.

- Covingham Flood Group report (Cllr Curtis):

Members received and noted the following report from Cllr Curtis:

The latest multi-agency meeting between the group members, Swindon Borough Council and the Environment Agency was held on 18 April 2016. Swindon Borough Council is now in receipt of the Consultant's report about Coate Water. Two options have been suggested:

- a. Reduce lower operating level and maintain current storm weir level. This has been ruled out as a reduction in reservoir levels would result in losing habitats around the outside. Objections would be raised as Coate Water is designated a SSSI.
- b. Maintain current operating level and increase storm weir level. Modelling needs to be carried out. Under the Reservoirs Act an increase in height needs permission. Extra water could affect the strength of the dam. There are silt deposit & cracks but it has been deemed fit for purpose. Testing has been carried out to confirm that the volume of silt within the core of the dam is within acceptable levels. The Panel Engineer has also noted that minor maintenance to point

some of the flags protecting the upstream face of the dam would be beneficial. This is a routine activity and no structural cracks have been observed in the dam.

The group asked whether there could be a third option of maintaining the current operating level but increasing the width of the storm weir? This has been taken away for consideration. Updates will be provided at the next meeting.

The Environment Agency has been given £40m to look at assets that are not performing well. The attenuation area at the side of The Drive in Nythe is a good example. A project is currently underway to try and obtain the funds needed to reinstate the area to its original state. This will remain on the agenda and updates will be provided.

Under the EA's six-year plan, funding allocation letters have now been issued and SBC are expecting £50k to hopefully fund a feasibility and design study. The scheme would make use of the open green areas adjacent to highways to create space and capacity at source before entering the drainage system. SuDS and Swales would be landscaped into the existing grass verges with filter drainage to slow down the water flow before entering the drainage systems.

The Draft SuDS vision for the NEV has now been passed by the Planning Committee. The changes that were submitted to SBC as part of the early engagement process will be made to the document prior to it becoming available for public consultation in the near future.

It was confirmed that the 2007 flood event was classified as a 1 in 100-year event on The River Cole and a 1 in 300-year event on Dorcan Stream. The Flood Warning Service – flood alerts and flood warnings, were again discussed in detail. The group is working closely with the EA to make the messages applicable to the current situation to ensure residents are taking appropriate notice and if necessary action.

A camera, that is effective during all light levels, has been installed at the Flood Storage Area to enable remote monitoring of the trash screen.

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

Comments: Members noted that the flood attenuation area at Nythe is to be reinstated.

- Parish Website Working Party (Cllr Hawkes):
No report this month.

10. Planning Matters

Application Number: S/OUT/13/1555

Proposal: Outline planning application for up to 2,380 dwellings, mixed use local centres/ areas, community uses, sheltered and/or care accommodation, up to two primary schools, green infrastructure including formal and informal open space, play space, sports facilities, sustainable drainage, engineering works and including ground re-modelling, other infrastructure, demolition and the formation of new accesses from the A420, Old Vicarage Lane and Thornhill Road.

DECISION: No comments.

11. Financial Matters

- **Approve financial summary and cheque list**
Members approved the financial summary and cheque list.
- **Approval of Annual Return for financial year 2015-16**
Members approved the Annual Return for the financial year 2015-16 and noted that the internal auditor had successfully completed the internal audit of financial accounts for the financial year 2015-16.
- **Consider and grant requests received (current grant money available £750)**
(Cllr Foss declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item).
Members resolved to award £75 to Covingham Park Primary School for Head Boy and Head Girl Awards, as in previous years.
- **Receive any quotations received for additional grass cutting (as part of consideration for taking on additional services).**
Members resolved to defer this item until July 2016 meeting.
- **Receive any quotations received for additional seating on Covingham Park.**
Cllr Haigh informed members that information had been received from 2 companies (although prices were not included). Local company manufacture wooden furniture that will require some maintenance. Company do not install.

Second company manufacture seating using reusable plastic that are maintenance free. Seating is similar to what we currently have (recently adopted bench with plaque). Members noted that Lee Wells could install benches.

Cllr Haigh informed members that price would be approximately £1000 for 2 seats. Members resolved for a ceiling limit of up to £1000 for the purchase of 2 seats requiring no maintenance. ACTION Cllr Haigh/Clerk.

Members debated the location for the 2 seats and agreed that they should not be placed under street lighting and should be situated away from dwellings.

- Review of Clerk's salary and working hours against NALC Payscales (*press and public are requested to be excused for this item*).
Members resolved to ask members of the public to leave the room for this item. The Clerk requested to leave the room for this item.

12. Correspondence

Members noted the following received correspondence

Received from	Subject
Michael Enright, SBC	Proposed conversion of footpaths to cycle track (noted).
Ben Staite, SBC	Covingham Drive Scheme Proposal (off-road cycle pedestrian route) (Noted. Cllr Curtis to draft response).
Diane Phillips	Request for flower boxes at Dovetrees (noted. See Item 9, Environment)
Cllr Kevin Parry	Community Speedwatch (noted. Clerk to respond).
Aon	Renewal of Parish Council insurance from 1 st June 2016

13. Matters for consideration

None.

Meeting closed at 20:51.

Signed (Chairman):